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# Falls Church News-Press

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

## 3rd Annual Restaurant Week is Off & Running

From Jan. 23 to Feb. 1,  
60 Eateries Partaking

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON  
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

Starting this Friday, Jan. 23, through Sunday, Feb. 1, the City of Falls Church-sponsored Restaurant Week in the Little City now includes over 60 participating local eateries with some remarkable deals designed to attract new customers.

The City of Falls Church Restaurant Week 2026 is a much-anticipated annual event celebrating the rich tapestry of flavors found throughout this compact yet culturally vibrant community. Scheduled to run for 10 days, this year's Restaurant Week returns with record participation and a dynamic array of offerings that appeal to locals, food lovers, and visitors alike.

At its core, Restaurant Week is an invitation to explore the city's diverse and international culinary landscape. Despite Falls Church covering just 2.2 square miles, its restaurant scene spans global cuisines—from Afghan and Bolivian to Italian,

*Continued on Page 3*

2026 Winter  
Home & Real Estate Guide



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## LEGACY OF MLK



AN ANNUAL TRADITION in the City of Falls Church has become the annual Tinner Hill Foundation sponsored march from the civil rights monument on S. Washington St. to the historic Falls Church Episcopal. Despite the cold, a large turnout animated this year's event celebrating the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. on the holiday set aside for just that. The Falls Church City Council also urged citizens to participate in a Day of Service to mark Dr. King's legacy. (Photo: Gary Mester)

## The Transcript of Gov. Spanberger's Inaugural Address

BY NICHOLAS F. BENTON  
FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

The following is a transcript of remarks as prepared made by Virginia Governor Abigail Spanberger upon her swearing in last Saturday in Richmond:

Mr. Speaker; Madam President Pro Tempore; Madam Lieutenant Governor; Mr. Attorney General; Members of the General Assembly; Justices of the Supreme Court; honored guests;

To my parents Martin and Eileen Davis, my sisters Hilary and Meredith, my husband Adam and my daughters, Claire, Charlotte, Catherine; neighbors, friends, and our fellow Virginians: it is my honor

to be with all of you today.

An inauguration ceremony like this one — with all its tradition and pageantry — represents something profound, and in its origins, something uniquely American... the peaceful transfer of power. It is a cornerstone of our American democratic experiment, a tradition and precedent begun by a Virginian, George Washington, and carried forth every time we celebrate an election and the inauguration of new leaders who will be entrusted to govern and serve — for a time.

Every four years, Virginians have the unique responsibility of choosing those leaders, as we all write the next chapter of our Commonwealth's story. And today, that tradition con-

tinues.

Adam and I extend our appreciation to you, Governor Youngkin and First Lady Suzanne Youngkin, for the time you have both spent with us during this transition. I thank you for your service, and we wish you and your family the best as you exit this role and begin a new chapter.

And to Lieutenant Governor Earle-Sears — herself a trailblazer, to Attorney General Miyares, and to those who served in the Youngkin Administration, thank you for your service to the Commonwealth we all love.

To the former Governors in attendance today, I am grateful that you are here. I thank you for your outreach, your offers of support and

help, and for your continued commitment to Virginia.

As I begin my service as Governor, I want to thank the men and women of our armed forces — the Virginians serving overseas and those who serve at military installations across our Commonwealth. Thank you for your defense of our freedom.

I thank the members of the Virginia National Guard — those serving far from home or right here today. I thank our Commonwealth's law enforcement officers, firefighters, and first responders — for your tireless commitment to our fellow Virginians.

*Continued on Page 4*



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CITY OF  
**FALLS**  
**CHURCH**

## 3rd Annual F.C. Restaurant Week Offers Over 60 Local Eateries

Continued from Page 1

Thai, Vietnamese, and beyond. This celebration reflects the city's identity as a cultural crossroads where immigrant-owned eateries, long-time local favorites, and innovative new concepts thrive side by side.

One of the signature features of Restaurant Week is the wide range of participation by local restaurants. In 2026, over 60 establishments are taking part, offering special menus, unique dishes, prix-fixe options, discounts, and other creative deals designed to showcase both culinary excellence and local character. From casual bites and comfort food to refined multi-course experiences, there's something for every palate and price point, encouraging diners to try spots they may not have visited before.

Participating restaurants span the entire culinary spectrum. Standout examples include modern and elevated dining at places like Ellie Bird and Seoul Prime, casual favorites such as Dogwood Tavern and Banh Mi Oi, and hidden gems offering niche global cuisines like Honey Pig Cupbap and Dōppō Coffee Shop. Special offers vary

dramatically: some restaurants present curated prix-fixe menus at set prices, while others feature buy-one-get-one deals, complimentary add-ons, or discounts upon mention of Falls Church Restaurant Week.

For visitors and residents alike, Restaurant Week offers an easy and fun way to experience the city's culinary depth. No tickets or passes are required to participate; diners simply stop by a participating restaurant to enjoy that venue's special menu or deal. In addition, Falls Church often offers a Restaurant Week "Passport", where people can collect stamps at different establishments. Those who get stamps from at least eight restaurants and return the completed passport by the deadline are entered into a raffle to win gift cards—a playful incentive that further encourages exploration and repeat visits.

From a community perspective, Restaurant Week plays an important role in supporting local businesses during one of the slower seasons of the year. Restaurant owners and operators often face a downturn in customer traffic after the holiday rush, and Restaurant Week helps boost patronage and visibility.

Falls Church Mayor Letty Hardi has emphasized how such initiatives benefit not only individual establishments but also the broader community, reinforcing the city's reputation as a welcoming and economically vibrant place to live and dine.

Rather than charging participating restaurants a fee—which is common in some nearby localities—the City of Falls Church empowers its eateries to join freely, leveling the playing field for small and independent operators. This approach strengthens relationships within the local business community and ensures a rich and varied lineup of participants.

For diners, Restaurant Week also serves as a cultural experience. In a city known for its international population and culinary diversity, this event becomes a weekly tour of global traditions and tastes. Families can enjoy kid-friendly deals at certain restaurants, groups of friends might plan evenings around multi-course menus, and intrepid foodies may spend the week sampling dishes they've never tried before. Whether someone wants a casu-

al lunch special, an imaginative dinner offering, or an indulgent dessert deal, the city's restaurant roster delivers.

Practical considerations are straightforward: free public and garage parking options are available near most participating restaurants, making it easy to move around the city on foot and dine at multiple spots in a single outing. No reservations or purchases beyond what each restaurant requires are necessary for participation—simply show up and enjoy the offerings during the event window.

Falls Church Restaurant Week

2026 is more than a series of dining deals; it's a celebration of community, culture, and cuisine. It highlights how even a small city can punch well above its weight in culinary variety and creativity.

With over 60 restaurants participating, unique special menus and deals, and a welcoming, walkable setting, Restaurant Week continues to be a highlight of the winter calendar for food lovers across Northern Virginia and beyond. Whether you're a longtime resident or a visitor from elsewhere, it's a delicious opportunity to taste the character of Falls Church one plate at a time.

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## Gov. Spanberger Spells Out Top Priorities in Her Inaugural Address

*Continued from Page 1*

Seventy five times. Seventy five times in Virginia's storied history, we have witnessed this transfer from one Governor to the next. 75 times, a Governor has taken this oath, and so many of those times, it's been right here, on these steps that those words have been spoken.

It is the honor of my life to stand before you and take the oath today. The history and the gravity of this moment are not lost on me — I maintain an abiding sense of gratitude to those who worked generation after generation to ensure women could be among those casting ballots, but who could only dream of a day like today.

I stand before those who made it possible for a woman to also participate in that peaceful transfer of power and take that oath...

And it is with a profound sense of duty to all Virginians that I assume the Governorship and pledge myself to work tirelessly on behalf of our Commonwealth.

This year marks the 250th anniversary of two milestones in American democracy: the first is the signing of our Declaration of Independence — drafted by Thomas Jefferson — Virginia's second Governor and the man who designed the very building behind us today. And the second milestone we remember this year is the inauguration of Patrick Henry as Virginia's first Governor.

Governor Henry is best known for his call against tyranny at St. John's Church, just up the road — words that helped launch the American Revolution. But in his final public speech, delivered in Virginia years later in 1799, he made an appeal to his fellow citizens, warning against the divisions that were threatening our young country.

His appeal remains timeless. He said:

"United we stand, divided we fall. Let us not split into factions which must destroy that union upon which our existence hangs."

I'll say that again. "Let us not split into factions..." which would "destroy that union upon which our existence hangs."

That was the challenge Governor Henry put to Virginia at the close of the 18th Century. And it is the charge we must answer again today. I know that the work of perfecting our democracy has never been finished.

But I am heartened by the fact that so much of that work has been done right here, on these very steps and across this city — where Virginia's history, and America's history, has so often been written.

This square has been the scene of remarkable dramas of equality and justice. It has been the site of great struggles and hard-won triumphs, whose consequences have been heard across America.

On these steps, Virginia's suffragists brought their cause to the General Assembly session after session, decade after decade. And though these brave women were voted down, time and time again, they refused to give up.

And while the 19th amendment gave women the right to vote in 1920, it would not be until 1952 that Virginia finally ratified it. And yet for so many women, the right to vote was not truly secured until the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965.

And in 1960, Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. addressed a crowd of more than 2,500 here in Richmond. He implored the then-Governor to comply with the *Brown v. Board of Education* ruling.

Building upon a message he had issued one year prior when he wrote: "Today is a day for great men, great ideas, great movements..." and in his urgent appeals for progress, he wrote, "As Virginia goes, so goes the South, perhaps America, and the world."

In 1960, following his impassioned words at the Pilgrimage of Prayer, they marched here to these steps.

In the generations since Governor Henry's plea, as rights have been won and progress has been made, our Commonwealth and our country have faced hurdles, hardships, divisions, and bitterness.

And yet, along the way, what has been necessary is leaders who clearly see and willingly confront challenges. And even more importantly, what has always been essential is for people, everyday people — we Virginians — to do the same.

And so it was in 1970, as our Commonwealth once again faced deep divisions, that Virginia's 61st Governor didn't shy away from the challenges before him. Governor Linwood Holton stared them down.

*Continued on Page 18*

# FALLS CHURCH NEWS BRIEFS

## Falls Church News-Press Inducts 6 Into Its 'Hall of Fame'

In a presentation at this Tuesday's luncheon of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce, *Falls Church News-Press* founder, owner and editor Nicholas F. Benton presented plaques marking formal induction into the *News-Press*' Hall of Fame to six current and former employees and advertisers, three of whom were present to accept the honor, and three who were being honored posthumously.

Recipients were former managing editor and employee for more than 20 years Jody Fellows, current managing editor and employee for almost 20 years Nick Gatz, weekly columnist for almost 30 years, former Fairfax County Supervisor Penny Gross, all of whom were present and made remarks upon becoming honored. Also inducted were the late Charlie Clark, author of the "Our Man in Arlington" column for 13 years and of the thoroughly researched book, "The Life and Times of the Falls Church News-Press," the late realtor Merelyn Kaye, who was the first major advertiser in the *News-Press* beginning with its founding in March 1991, and the late Blackwell Hawthorne, who was the paper's first truly professional ad salesman, who put in over a dozen years despite coming on board as a senior citizen.

+ Jody Fellows – From 1997 to 2000, he became the most important employee as first managing editor for over 20 years starting in 2000. He began as a high school student, and spent his breaks from West Virginia University working at the paper, then upon his graduation was hired by Benton as his first full time employee.

+ Nick Gatz – From 2007 to present, he followed in Fellows' footsteps, starting at the paper as a designer and becoming managing editor when Fellows left, a position he currently commands with great skill and commitment.

+ Penny Gross – In the summer of 1997 she and Benton met, and was offered a weekly column as the Fairfax County Supervisor from the Mason District. From that moment to today, she has written an informative and feisty weekly column, over 1400 to date.

+ Charlie Clark – For 13 years until his passing in 2023, he wrote the iconic "Our Man in Arlington" column for the *News-Press*, which became wildly popular throughout the region, and had his latest book, "The Life and Times of the Falls Church News-Press" published.

+ Blackwell Hawthorne – He came to the *News-Press* at age 76 in the late 1998 to become the director of advertising for a decade until his passing. A World War 2 veteran and POW, he led the paper to its highest advertising revenue numbers in its history on the strength of his southern charm and skill.

+ Merelyn Kaye – She was the first person to commit to a major, long term advertising contract with the paper, signing on before its first ever issue in March 1991, and as a result became the premier realtor in Falls Church on the strength of her weekly half-page ads on its back page.

## Global CTE Conference Set Feb. 2 in San Francisco

The annual conference of Global CTE (chronic traumatic encephalitis) consortium is being held Monday, Feb. 2, in San Francisco. CTE is a brain injury condition that can only be diagnosed after death.

An advance statement stated, "We do not yet know how many people are living with CTE, but researchers believe the number could be significant. Out of more than 400 former National Football League players studied after death, more than 90 percent have had CTE. CTE continues to be diagnosed post-mortem in former high school football players, and there are more than 20 million men alive right now in the U.S. who have played."

The focus of the summit is Caring for Patients with Suspected CTE and programming will cover real-world care strategies, emerging diagnostics, and the lived experience of NFL players and their families. Participants will learn about all aspects of CTE, including its pathology, genetics, biomarkers, imaging, clinical syndromes, clinical criteria, differential diagnosis, impact on families, and what it is like to live with suspected CTE.

The summit is organized by the Concussion & CTE Foundation with the content developed in collaboration with the Boston University CTE Center and the UCSF Weill Institute for Neurosciences Memory and Aging Center.

## Rep. Beyer Speaks in F.C. on MLK Jr. Day

On Monday morning, U.S. Rep. Don Beyer addressed a large assemblage as it prepared for a symbolic march from the Little City's Civil Rights monument to the historic Falls Church Episcopal a quarter-mile away.

On the holiday, Beyer said, "One evening in Memphis, Dr. King spoke to striking workers, saying, 'I would like to live a long life. Longevity has its place, but I'm not concerned about that now. I just want to do God's will. He's allowed me to go up to the mountain, and I've looked over, and I've seen the Promised Land. I may not get there with you, but I want you to know, tonight, that we as a people will get to the Promised Land.'

"The next evening, almost to the minute, Dr. King was murdered. Fifty-seven years later, some would like us to believe we have arrived, that America is free of racism and discrimination, and that everyone begins at the same starting line with nothing to hold them back and no burdens in their path.

"But, if we look at the numbers in areas like education, prison population, income, home ownership, and access to capital, there is no doubt that fifty-seven years is not enough time to overcome generations of slavery, segregation, and discrimination.

"America's journey to Dr. King's Promised Land is not over. Those who preach otherwise are false prophets pushing their own agenda.

"We spend time today recommitting to the furtherance of Dr. King's mission and reflecting on his words, his passion, and his vision, because we can't let them be forgotten. With troops once again in the streets, targeting the most vulnerable among us, we need Dr. King's guidance as we did in 1968. We need his call for protest. His dedication to peace. His belief in a better future."



AT TUESDAY'S Falls Church Chamber of Commerce luncheon, the *Falls Church News-Press*' Nicholas F. Benton (foreground) inducted six people into the newspaper's Hall of Fame, and the three living were all present (l. to r. behind Benton) Penny Gross, Nick Gatz and Jody Fellows. The other three have all passed, Merelyn Kaye, Blackwell Hawthorne and Charlie Clark. It marked the start of the newspaper's 35th year of consecutive weekly publication. (Photos: News-Press)

# Falls Church News-Press

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

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## EDITORIAL

### Spanberger's 10 Commandments

Last weekend, Virginia's newly sworn-in Governor Abigail Spanberger made history not just in her inauguration but in how quickly she set the tone for her administration by signing ten executive orders on Day One aimed at affordability, education, economic resilience, inclusion, and reversing key policies of her Republican predecessor. The slate broadly reflects her campaign priorities — especially addressing cost pressures on everyday Virginians — and signals a shift in policy direction from the Youngkin era.

Most significant is the 10th, rescinding former Gov. Youngkin's order for state and local law enforcement to work with federal ICE operations. But all are, in fact, profoundly important.

1. Affordability Across the Commonwealth. Spanberger's first order directs all executive branch agencies and cabinet secretaries to identify concrete ways to reduce costs for Virginians. This includes reviewing housing, health care, energy, child care, education, and everyday living expenses, with a requirement to deliver actionable recommendations within a set timeframe.

2. Health Care Cost Task Force. The second order establishes an Interagency Health Financing Task Force to develop strategies to strengthen Virginia's health care system and ensure affordability, particularly amid federal policy changes and funding shifts.

3. Housing Development Review. Recognizing housing affordability challenges, the third order mandates a comprehensive review of regulatory and permitting practices that affect housing development statewide, with an aim to identify barriers and recommend reforms.

4. Public Education Strengthening. This directive focuses on enhancing Virginia's public education system by reviewing instructional systems and establishing expert work groups to bolster literacy, math achievement, and accountability.

5. Economic Resiliency Task Force. Spanberger created a statewide Economic Resiliency Task Force to coordinate responses to federal workforce reductions, funding cuts, tariffs, and immigration impacts. The group is tasked with assessing potential economic disruptions and mitigation strategies.

6. Higher Education Governance Review. This order directs a review of the process for appointing members to public higher education governing boards and seeks recommendations to improve governance and appointments.

7. Emergency Powers Delegation. Spanberger delegated authority to her chief of staff and other officials to declare a state of emergency or activate the Virginia National Guard if she is unreachable or incapacitated, ensuring continuity of government operations.

8. Expanded Chief of Staff Authority. The eighth order grants significant planning, budgetary, personnel, and administrative authority to the governor's chief of staff, while reserving ultimate decision-making power to the governor herself.

9. Equal Opportunity Directive. This order declares that the Commonwealth will ensure equal opportunity in hiring, appointments, procurement, and public services and directs proactive recruitment across a broad range of protected characteristics.

10. Rescinding Youngkin's Immigration Enforcement Mandate. The most politically notable, the tenth order rescinds former Gov. Glenn Youngkin's directive that state and local law enforcement pursue immigration-related enforcement duties under 287(g) agreements — effectively rolling back cooperation with federal immigration enforcement.

Taken together, these executive orders establish Spanberger's priorities: controlling costs for families, strengthening public services, promoting equity, safeguarding economic stability, and reorienting the state's policies on law enforcement collaboration with federal immigration authorities.

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# 2026 Home & Real Estate Guide

## Winter



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 3. 2123 NATAHOA CT, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22043 • 4. 6211 WATERWAY DR, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22044 • 5. 6320 CROSSWOODS CIR, FALLS CHURCH, VA 22044

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**\$1,508,746**

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**\$867,833**

Bailey's X-roads (22041)

**\$859,642**

Sleepy Hollow (22042)

**\$1,371,800**

Pimmit Hills (22043)

**\$1,309,000**

Lake Barcroft (22044)

# Days on the Market

**19**

Falls Church City (22046)

**20**

Bailey's X-roads (22041)

**22**

Sleepy Hollow (22042)

**32**

Pimmit Hills (22043)

**29**

Lake Barcroft (22044)



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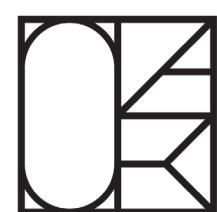


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## When Appraisals and List Prices Clash: What Buyers Should Expect

BY FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

### Appraisals vs. List Price: What Homebuyers and Sellers Should Expect and Why Professionals Matter

In a fast-moving real estate market, it is easy to assume that a home's list price tells the whole story. After all, buyers make offers based on it, sellers celebrate when it is exceeded, and neighbors use it as a benchmark for their own property values. But between a signed contract and a successful closing stands a critical checkpoint that can either validate a deal or force a difficult renegotiation: the appraisal.

Understanding the difference between list price and appraised value, and what goes into determining each, can help buyers and sellers avoid surprises and protect their financial interests.

#### List Price vs. Appraised Value

The list price is what a seller, advised by a real estate professional, believes the home can

reasonably sell for in the current market. It reflects recent comparable sales, local demand, condition, upgrades, and broader market trends. In competitive markets, list prices may even be intentionally set to encourage multiple offers.

An appraisal, by contrast, is an independent, third-party assessment of a home's fair market value. Lenders require appraisals to ensure the property is worth at least the amount being financed. If the appraisal comes in below the agreed-upon purchase price, the lender will not cover the difference, regardless of how competitive the market may be.

This is where deals can stall or fall apart.

#### What Goes Into an Appraisal

A licensed appraiser evaluates a home using standardized methods designed to remove emotion from the equation. While the exact process varies, most appraisals consider:

- Comparable sales, often

called "comps," meaning recently sold homes similar in size, location, age, and condition, typically within the last six months

- Square footage and layout, including above-grade living space, bedroom and bathroom count, and overall functionality

- Condition and improvements, such as renovations, structural integrity, roof age, HVAC systems, and visible maintenance issues

- Location factors, including school districts, proximity to amenities, traffic patterns, and neighborhood stability

- Market conditions, whether prices are trending upward, flat, or declining

Importantly, appraisers focus on closed sales, not asking prices or pending contracts. That distinction alone can explain why appraisals sometimes lag behind rapidly rising markets.

#### Why Appraisals Come in Low

A low appraisal does not necessarily mean a home is overpriced, but it does signal a disconnect

between the contract price and documented market data. This can happen when demand surges faster than sales data can keep up, when unique upgrades are difficult to quantify, or when a buyer is willing to pay a premium that the lender cannot justify.

When this occurs, buyers may need to bring additional cash to closing, sellers may need to reduce the price, or both parties must renegotiate terms. Without professional guidance, these moments can become emotional and contentious.

#### The Value of Hiring Professionals

This is where experienced real estate and appraisal professionals play an essential role.

A skilled real estate agent does far more than suggest a list price. They analyze comparable sales strategically, anticipate appraisal risks, and help structure contracts that protect their clients. This can include appraisal contingencies, escalation clauses, or detailed documentation of upgrades that can

help support value.

Licensed appraisers, meanwhile, provide the objective foundation lenders rely on. Their independence safeguards both buyers and financial institutions, ensuring homes are not overleveraged and values remain grounded in reality.

Together, these professionals help translate market dynamics into informed decisions, especially in competitive or shifting markets.

#### The Bottom Line

In real estate, price is not the same as value, and understanding that difference can save buyers and sellers time, money, and stress. Appraisals are not obstacles. They are safeguards. While no professional can eliminate every surprise, working with experienced, local experts dramatically improves the odds of a smooth transaction.

In the end, the strongest deals are not just the ones that win bidding wars, but the ones that hold up under scrutiny from contract to closing.




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## What's Changed in the Market as Workers Return to the Office?

BY FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

As the pandemic recedes further into the rearview mirror and office buildings refill, the real estate market is undergoing another important transition. The widespread shift to remote work reshaped housing preferences almost overnight, sending buyers in search of space, flexibility, and comfort. Now, as more people return to offices either full time or in hybrid arrangements, buyers are reassessing what they truly need from their homes and where they want to live.

During the height of remote work, homes became multifunctional spaces. They served as offices, classrooms, gyms, and sanctuaries. Extra bedrooms, finished basements, and dedicated workspaces moved from luxury to necessity. Buyers were willing to trade longer commutes for larger homes, and suburban and exurban markets surged as city living temporarily lost its appeal.

That shift is no longer as absolute. While remote and hybrid

work remain common, more employers are asking workers to return to the office several days a week. This change is not reversing the real estate trends of the past few years, but it is reshaping them.

Space is still important, but it is no longer the single driving factor it once was. Buyers still value home offices, yet they are now looking for flexibility rather than a room with a permanent desk and door. A guest room that can double as an office, or a dining area that converts into a workspace, is often sufficient. Many homeowners discovered during the pandemic that large houses come with higher maintenance costs, longer cleaning times, and increased energy use. As commuting becomes a regular part of life again, those tradeoffs are being reconsidered.

Location is regaining importance. Buyers who once moved far from employment centers are once again factoring commute times into their decisions. Neighborhoods within reason-

able driving or transit distance of major job hubs are seeing renewed interest. Walkability, access to public transportation, and proximity to restaurants, parks, and shops are once again strong selling points.

Urban areas that experienced an exodus during the remote-work boom are gradually reawakening. Younger professionals, in particular, are rediscovering the appeal of city living. Cultural events, dining, entertainment, and social connection matter more when people are not spending every workday at home. Condos and townhomes near downtowns and transit corridors are drawing more attention than they did just a few years ago.

Suburban markets remain strong, especially for families seeking good schools and safe neighborhoods, but the picture is more mixed. Inner-ring suburbs close to employment centers continue to attract buyers, while farther-out areas are seeing demand cool slightly. Some sellers are adjusting expectations as buyers

become more selective and price growth moderates.

Hybrid work has left a permanent imprint on housing preferences. Even workers returning to offices often do so only part of the week. As a result, homes still need to support remote work, but without being designed entirely around it. Multi-purpose rooms, comfortable layouts, and outdoor spaces remain appealing. Energy efficiency, strong internet connectivity, and smart-home features are also high on buyers' lists.

Today's buyers are seeking balance. They want homes that support productivity on remote days and convenience on office days. They are prioritizing neighborhoods that offer both quality of life and reasonable access to work. Rather than chasing extremes, either all-remote or fully office-centered living, buyers are settling into a middle ground.

The real estate market is not returning to its pre-pandemic form, but it is stabilizing into

something more sustainable. The lessons of remote work have not been forgotten, yet the value of community, proximity, and connection is reasserting itself. For buyers and sellers alike, understanding this shift is key to navigating today's market.

Mortgage rates and affordability are also shaping how return-to-office pressures play out. Even buyers who would prefer to move closer to work may find themselves priced out of certain neighborhoods or locked into low-rate mortgages they secured years ago. That "rate lock-in" effect is keeping inventory tight in many markets and limiting mobility. The result is that some households are adapting their existing homes with modest renovations, such as adding built-ins or improving soundproofing, instead of relocating.

Home is still more than a place to live. It reflects how we work, how we connect, and how we choose to spend our time. As work patterns evolve, so too will the places we call home.

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### Bethany Ellis - Long & Foster

Hi, I'm Bethany...



With two decades of experience in the real estate industry, I am committed to providing my clients with the highest level of service and expertise. My journey as a real estate agent has been driven by a passion for helping people find their dream homes and make sound investments. Honesty and integrity are the cornerstones of my practice. I believe in building strong, lasting relationships with my clients based on trust and open communication. My deep knowledge of the local market allows me to guide you through every step of the buying or selling process with confidence and clarity. I take pride in going above and beyond to ensure my clients' needs are met. Whether you're a first-time homebuyer, looking to sell, or seeking an investment property, I am here to provide personalized support tailored to your unique situation. My dedication to your success is unwavering, and I am always ready to advocate for your best interests. Let's work together to turn your real estate goals into reality!

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### ROCK STAR realty group



#### Happy New Year!

As the new year begins, it's the perfect moment to embrace fresh starts and new possibilities. While winter is often thought of as a slower season, the real estate market is alive with opportunity—especially for buyers and motivated sellers ready to make a move. We are seeing an increase in inventory, which means:

For buyers, this creates more choices, better negotiating power, and the ability to make more confident decisions.

For sellers, it signals stability and motivated buyers—especially for homes that are well-priced and well-presented

My ROCK STAR realty group and I are your go-to resource for all-things real estate. Stop by Northside Social, Falls Church, on Wednesdays | 10:00-11:00 AM for our ROCK the House coffee to talk more. We'll buy you a cuppa!

Cheers to an exciting year ahead!

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### Kelly Millspaugh Thompson, Concierge Real Estate Services

As a Falls Church City native and small business owner Kelly strives to make buying and selling less overwhelming for her clients. Kelly opened STYLISH PATINA her Home+Gift shop in 2012 and has been a licensed Realtor since 2019. She has been recognized as a Platinum Producer by NVAR and Top Producer by Arlington Magazine. Kelly is known for her cutting edge marketing, business savvy and concierge approach to Real Estate. She and her team are able to manage all aspects of buying and selling a home: home prep, liquidation, organization, renovation, moving, and design. This has proven to be a unique and highly sought after combination of skills. Kelly has a passion for helping folks as they transition through life stages - needing a larger home for a growing family or downsizing. Kelly is a mother of 5 and understands the stress of moving with children and the overwhelm of transitioning out of a home you raised your family in when it comes time to simplify. These big life transitions are where she finds the most joy in helping families. If you are looking for a Realtor with compassion and commitment to making your next Real Estate transaction less stressful contact Kelly, 703-303-3700.

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Angie is a trusted Real Estate Professional with KWMC and proud Northern Virginia native, Licensed in VA since 2019, Angie brings more than 35 years of experience in customer service and sales, delivering personalized top-notch service to every client. Her background in relationship-driven sales and client advocacy allows her to anticipate needs, communicate clearly, and negotiate effectively. Angie approaches every transaction with a strategic mindset and a commitment to excellence. She is recognized for her professionalism, strong work ethic and client first approach. Angie is dedicated to guiding buyers and sellers with integrity, care, and exceptional results.



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## Stories of 2 Old Friends in Passing

NICHOLAS F.  
BENTON

FALLS CHURCH NEWS-PRESS

A dear lifelong friend passed away recently. Darwin Gordon (Don) Tate, October 25, 1942 to October 22, 2025, 82, of Corona, California, passed away peacefully at home after a long illness. Don was a tour bus driver and guide for many years in both Oregon and California. He was known for being a very generous, kind and responsible man with a great sense of humor and a great love for his family.

Both from the same home town, we both wound up in Berkeley, Calif., where I was attending seminary. We got together on countless nights for coffee and conversation, and began a singularly important practice of exchanging cards at Christmas with detailed accounts of what we were up to and were thinking about things each year.

Neither of us ever missed a year, even though we never again met in person. This year, when his card did not arrive, I became concerned. I scoured the Internet until I found the news of his passing.

I am reminded of another dear friend who passed away many years after we'd last seen each other. On August 9, 2005 at age 63. Jimmie Ray Rankin died in his sleep, a friend wrote, with "a radiant smile that remained on his face in spite of death." You see, "Jim beat the bad guy in high style, whupped his ugly ass, in fact, and found the God that he had sought all his life," this friend wrote.

The account is published in Rankin's book, "Divine and Healing Path, An Old Catholic Catechism," by Jim Rankin, Old Catholic Bishop of San Francisco, Mystic Ways Books, 2000.

In it, Rankin wrote briefly about me without naming me.

"A dear friend of mine," he wrote, "a seminarian then in the United Church of Christ seminary at the Graduate Theological Union in Berkeley, a man with a marvelous sense of humor, once wrote an explication of repentance using the Byrds song,

"Turn, Turn, Turn.

"As you recall, the song takes the words of Solomon in the Old Testament Book of Ecclesiastes, that 'to everything there is a season,' as its basis, and repeats the phrase, 'Turn, turn, turn' antiphonally.

"In everything (Turn, turn, turn), There is a season (Turn, turn, turn), And a time for every purpose under Heaven."

"I doubt that many people knew that this was a direct quotation from Ecclesiastes, who proclaims 'Vanity of vanities, and all is vanity.' Yet what does the Preacher say, at the end, all earthly things are vanity, and only to walk with God is our calling. Nonetheless, it took my friend, with his wry sense of humor, to point out to me the implied call to repentance, and its echo in the Byrds song.

"To repent is to turn. But more than turn, to turn back to fundamental principles. And as Hannah Arendt says in *On Revolution*, that is the actual meaning of 'revolution' as well: to revolve as if upon one's axis, and turn again to that which we held of old. There is nothing so revolutionary as repentance.

"Arendt used the American Revolution of 1776 as the primary example of what she was trying to say, pointing out that the relative success of the American Revolution was based on the fact that the Founding Fathers knew this. They did not 'overthrow' kings and princes, or cast down the old order, but rather sought out those fundamental principles of justice and social order that would allow any people to govern themselves well – if they would. Sometimes, it does look as if we won't, but that is another matter. As Benjamin Franklin, asked when the Constitution was written and proposed to the States, replied, 'We have given you a Republic – if you can keep it....'

"Only the pure of heart can repent, only the meek can repent, accepting the changes in the soul that must come as we turn away from what draws us, and turn to God."

Jim Rankin and I founded the *Effeminst* newspaper in Berkeley in 1971, after I last saw Don Tate, and shared being pioneers of the pro-feminist wing of the Gay Liberation movement. Our last meeting was in 1974.



## A Penny for Your Thoughts

By Penny Gross  
Former Fairfax County Supervisor

Virginia's gubernatorial inaugurations are historic because, almost always, someone new is sworn in, courtesy of the Commonwealth's limit that a governor cannot serve a second consecutive term. Saturday's inauguration ceremony had some stuffy traditions – dozens of men in morning coats and the occasional top hat (one wonders how many men's formal rental stores had to be contacted to ensure that enough morning coat outfits, in multiple sizes, were available), judges in somber black robes, and the Speaker of the House conducting the ceremonies like an orchestra maestro. The extraordinary nature of the ceremony quickly was apparent when Abigail Spanberger, wearing a splendid maxi-coat in suffragist white, appeared on the steps of the Capitol in Richmond. With a dazzling smile for everyone, Governor-elect Spanberger shone like a sunbeam on a cold, drizzly day.

Her oath as the first female governor in the Commonwealth's 250th year history was the culmination, not only of a hard-fought two-year campaign for the office, but more than 100 years of women's voting rights, as she noted "an abiding sense of gratitude to those who worked generation after generation to ensure women could be among those casting ballots, but who could only dream of a day like today."

Her three daughters, two teens and a 10-year-old, were clearly on her mind, and the youngest captivated cameras as she wavered between watching her mother take the oath and staring out at the thousands of people watching her mother take the oath. Maintaining a normal life for their daughters in the Governor's Mansion will be challenging for the family. The historic house is on the grounds of the Capital, surrounded by security and state office buildings. You can't just go next door to play with friends after school.

Poignant moments preceded the governor's oath. Attorney General Jay Jones held his young son in his arms to take the oath; the judge's voice cracked as she administered the oath, clearly emotional about the Commonwealth's first Black attorney general. Lieutenant Governor Ghazala Hashmi took the oath with her hand on the Koran, another first for the Commonwealth and its broad diversity of faiths.

The Governor's formal inaugural speech featured a history of Virginia's role in the new American experiment. Her selection of Patrick Henry, the Commonwealth's first governor, echoed issues of today, quoting "Let us not split into factions which would destroy that union upon which our existence hangs." It is a charge, she said, that we must answer again today.

Moving forward nearly 200 years, she quoted Governor Linwood Holton in a similar vein: "No longer can we be divided into opposing camps of political philosophies. Let us act together..." Governor Holton's daughter, Anne, was visibly moved as the new governor quoted her late beloved father. Children and education were highlighted in the speech and the parade following. The entire cadet brigade from Virginia Military Institute marched, Spanberger's suburban high school band played, all of Virginia's state colleges and universities were represented, and dozens of Girl Scouts from across the Commonwealth walked by as the parade emcee asked how many boxes of cookies the new governor would sign up for. Most of the seats in the reviewing stand emptied out early, but the governor and her family stayed engaged to the very end, shaking hands with the final performers.

The ceremonies are done, and the hard work of governance begins. All three branches of government are under Democratic control, but House Speaker Don Scott has cautioned that restraint must be practiced. The new governor's centrist approach may rattle some progressives, but Spanberger concluded her inaugural speech with a pledge inspired by Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, that the path forward must be a Pilgrimage of Promise, Progress, and Prosperity. Virginia's election results captivated the nation in November and raised hopes for the mid-terms. Can Virginia "act together" and show other states how governance should be done?

## CITY OF FALLS CHURCH CRIME REPORT

Week of  
Jan 12 - 18, 2026

Trespass, W Broad St, Jan 12, 9:13 a.m., a male, 30, of no fixed address, was issued a summons for Trespass.

Fraud, W Annandale Rd, Jan 13, 4:12 p.m., an incident of fraud was reported.

Shoplifting, W Broad St, (late report) on Jan 11 at 2:37 p.m., two white females took items of value without paying. Items totaled \$2,679.19. Investigation continues.

Shoplifting, W Broad St, (late report) on Jan 12 at 3:37 p.m., unknown suspects took items of value without paying. Suspects described as a white male wearing a black beanie knitted hat and a long black puffy coat. The second suspect is described as a black male with a

beard wearing a blue puffy coat and knitted hat. Both individuals carried duffle bags. Investigation continues.

Fraud – Identity Theft, W Broad St, Jan 14, 9:35 p.m., unknown suspect(s) opened a bank account in victim's name. No loss was incurred.

Drunk in Public, Obstruction of Justice, Wilson Blvd, Jan 17, 11:28 p.m., a male, 25, of an unknown address, was arrested for Drunk in Public and Obstructing Justice.

Shoplifting, W Broad St, Jan 18, 1:26 p.m., unknown suspect took items of value without paying. Suspect described as a black male, 5 feet 10 inches tall, with facial hair and a small beard, wearing a gray beanie, blue jacket, gray pants, gray sneakers and carrying a blue shopping bag. Investigation continues.

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## Full Text of Spanberger's Historic Inaugural Address This Week

*Continued from Page 4*

On these steps, he proclaimed — and I'm quoting again:

"No longer can we be divided into opposing camps of political philosophy."

He said, "The time for partisan politics is over. It is time now for leadership, for action, for progress through unity."

He went on to issue a challenge: "I turn today to all Virginians, whatever their political persuasion, and say: Let us act together."

And just 20 years later, on these steps, Virginia inaugurated our 66th Governor and our nation's first elected African American Governor.

Governor L. Douglas Wilder changed what so many of our fellow citizens believed was even possible. And today, on your 95th Birthday, I thank you Governor, for being here to celebrate this Virginia tradition as we continue to write our Commonwealth's story.

It was by design that we are a Commonwealth. In Virginia's first constitution, written 250 years ago, they designated us as such. Virginia — no longer a colony, and not simply a state in our fledgling nation, but a Commonwealth.

What's the difference? Kids, pay attention, because eventually someone may ask you!

There's no difference in how we operate or function as a state. The difference lies in the intention of our forefathers and the choice to indicate that here our government should serve the common good — that the voices of everyday Virginians — not kings or aristocrats or oligarchs — should drive us forward, and that our prosperity depends upon that union.

That our leaders and our fellow Virginians should join in common cause, find common ground, and pursue common purpose — this is the concept at the heart of what it means to be a Commonwealth.

This is what it means to be united for Virginia's future.

And while I have spoken at length about our history, today must be about our future and the story we will write together.

I know many of you are worried about the recklessness coming out of Washington. You are worried about policies that are hurting our communities — cutting healthcare access, imperiling rural hospitals, and driving up costs. You are worried about Washington policies that are closing off markets, hurting innovation and private industry, and attacking those who have devoted their lives to public service.

You are worried about an administration that is gilding buildings while schools crumble, breaking the social safety net, and sowing fear across our communities — betraying the values of who we are as Americans, the very values we celebrate here on these steps.

And across the Commonwealth, everything keeps getting more expensive — groceries, medicine, daycare, the electricity bill, rent, and the mortgage. Families are strained, kids are stressed, and so much just seems to be getting harder and harder.

Growing up, my parents always taught me that when faced with something unacceptable, you must speak up. You must take action, right what you believe is wrong, and fix what isn't working.

I know that some who are here today or watching from home may disagree with the litany of challenges and hardships I laid out. Your perspective may differ from mine, but that does not preclude us working together where we may find common cause. My priorities for the people of Virginia are drawn from my own background and experience.

I grew up in a family where my parents modeled a commitment to service and community — my father in law enforcement and my mother in nursing.

My middle class upbringing was a result of their struggle, their hard work, and programs like the GI Bill that sent my dad to college and strong community colleges that allowed my mom to put herself through nursing school as she worked more than fulltime.

I followed my father's footsteps into law enforcement. At my academy graduation, he handed me my badge and credentials, and I entered a world where I had to get it right every time and do right by everyone I encountered — victims, witnesses, fellow agents, and even the person whose name was on an arrest warrant.

Then, as a CIA officer, I worked to combat the greatest threats facing America. I worked to keep our nation safe at home and abroad, and I saw firsthand that the world is safer when the United States shows our mighty strength through the lives we save, the diseases we eradicate, the technologies we create, and the leadership we show on a global stage.

Today, I am a mother to three daughters who are my everything. There is nothing more important to me than their safety, their health, their education, and their future. And I know that far too many parents

work hard to make ends meet, but still worry how they'll put food on the table, take their sick child to the doctor, or keep the lights on. When today is so uncertain, it's hard to dream big for tomorrow.

Today, I stand before you on these steps not only as Virginia's 75th Governor, but as someone who believes it is our duty to write the next chapter of our Commonwealth's story. It is our duty to demonstrate for the generations to come that when faced with hardships, challenges, divisions, and even bitterness, we too forged a path forward and pursued progress.

And as we write this next chapter, we will work relentlessly to make life more affordable for our fellow Virginians.

We will tackle the high cost of housing — whether you're renting, buying, or trying to stay in your home. We'll work to cut red tape, increase housing supply, and help communities keep housing affordable.

We will work to lower energy costs by producing more energy and by ensuring that high energy users pay their fair share.

And we will contend with an impending healthcare crisis by protecting healthcare access, cracking down on the middlemen who are driving up drug prices, and making sure Virginians aren't going into spiraling medical debt because of a single emergency.

And as we write this next chapter, we will make Virginia's public schools the best in the nation.

We will work to ensure every child in the Commonwealth receives a world-class education at every level — providing them a solid foundation in reading and math, and preparing our kids for a prosperous future.

And we will invest in the schools and educators that are essential to this goal.

And as we write this next chapter, we will grow Virginia's economy in every corner of the Commonwealth.

We will invest in the apprenticeships and job training of the future. We will bring capital investment into every region of our Commonwealth. We will stand up for Virginia's workers — including our federal workforce. And we will expand opportunities for Virginia agriculture — our farmers, producers, agribusinesses, and farm families.

And as we write this next chapter, we will focus on the security and safety of all of our neighbors.

And we will take action to prevent gun violence, to support Virginians struggling with addiction,

and to address the mental health crisis impacting our kids and neighbors. And in Virginia, our hardworking, law-abiding immigrant neighbors will know that when we say we'll focus on the security and safety of all of our neighbors, we mean them too.

We will write this next chapter together, because throughout our history, no leader has ever made progress alone.

To my friends in the General Assembly — on both sides of the aisle — I look forward to working with you. I know what it means to represent your constituents, to work hard for your district, and to pursue policies you believe in.

We will not agree on everything, but I speak from personal experience when I say that we do not have to see eye-to-eye on every issue in order to stand shoulder-to-shoulder on others.

Because Virginia has always been a place where we confront challenges, where we build coalitions, and where we prove that democracy still works.

To Lieutenant Governor Hashmi and Attorney General Jones, I look forward to working together with you both as we serve our fellow Virginians over the next four years.

And most importantly, to the people of Virginia: we are beginning a new chapter in our Commonwealth's story. We need you to help us write it.

As we mark 250 years since the dawn of American freedom: What will our children, grandchildren, and their descendants write about this time in our Commonwealth's history

— this chapter — 50, 100, and 250 years from now?

Will they say that we let divisions fester or challenges overwhelm us? Or will they say that we stood up for what is right, fixed what is broken, and served the common good here in Virginia?

Today, we're hearing the call to connect more deeply to our American Experiment — to understand our shared history, not as a single point in time, but as a lesson for how we create our more prosperous future. And so I ask — what will you do to help us author this next chapter?

As your Governor, I pledge to you that I will work tirelessly for you and for our Commonwealth.

Today, I find myself thinking about Dr. King's Pilgrimage of Prayer... Such a powerful phrase.

And it gives me cause to reflect on what our path forward must be... not a Pilgrimage of Politics, certainly not a Pilgrimage of Partisanship... but rather a Pilgrimage of Promise, Progress, and Prosperity.

My fellow Virginians, as we set an example for the country, the world, and most importantly, our children, let us:

Choose to stand united. Choose to serve one another. Choose to act together.

As we continue forward, let us be united for Virginia's future.

Thank you all very much! May God Bless the Commonwealth of Virginia. And may God Bless the United States of America.



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

The following was given first reading at the November 24, 2025 City Council meeting. Public hearings, second readings, and possible City Council actions are scheduled for Monday, January 26, 2026 at 7:30 p.m., or as soon thereafter as the matter may be heard.

(TO25-21) ORDINANCE TO AMEND THE CITY CODE OF THE CITY OF FALLS OF CHURCH CHAPTER 48 "ZONING," ARTICLE I "IN GENERAL," AMENDING THE HALF STORY DEFINITION AND ARTICLE V "SUPPLEMENTARY REGULATIONS" DIVISION 6 "HEIGHT, LOT AND YARD REGULATIONS," DELETING SECTION 48-1104 "CONDITIONAL USES PERMITTED BY SPECIAL USE PERMIT" AS AN OBSOLETE SECTION, AND AMENDING DIVISION 9 "ANTENNAS" CLARIFYING REGULATIONS APPLYING TO ALL ANTENNA TYPES"

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 [cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov). Remote participation information at [www.fallschurchva.gov/publiccomment](http://www.fallschurchva.gov/publiccomment). For copies of legislation and other information, contact the City Clerk's office at 703-248-5014 or [cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov) or visit [www.fallschurchva.gov/councilmeetings](http://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 [cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov).

CELESTE HEATH, CITY CLERK

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, January 29, 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 258 N WASHINGTON STREET and 207 E COLUMBIA STREET

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](mailto: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)

[fcnp.com](http://fcnp.com)

## CLASSIFIEDS

## LEGAL NOTICE

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

Volunteers who live in the City of Falls Church are needed to serve on the boards and commissions listed below. Contact the City Clerk's Office (703-248-5014, [cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov](mailto:cyclerk@fallschurchva.gov), or [www.fallschurchva.gov/BC](http://www.fallschurchva.gov/BC)) for an application form or more information. Positions advertised for more than one month may be filled during each subsequent month.

Architectural Advisory Board  
Arts and Humanities Council of Falls Church  
Citizens' Advisory Committee on Transportation  
City Employee Review Board  
Environmental Sustainability Council  
Board of Equalization  
Historic Architectural Review Board  
Human Services Advisory Council  
Public Utilities Commission  
Towing Advisory Board  
Urban Forestry Commission

## Regional Boards/Commissions

Coordinating Council for the Aging and Adults with Disabilities  
Fairfax Area Disability Services Board  
Health Systems Agency of Northern Virginia  
Virginia Career Works Northern Region

## ABC NOTICE

Peking Gourmet Inn Inc. trading as Peking Gourmet Inn, 6029 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church, VA 22041 is applying to the Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control (ABC) Authority for a Beer and Wine On and Off Premises, Mixed Beverages Restaurant to sell alcoholic beverages. Vicky Tsui, President/Owner. NOTE: Objections to the issuance of this license must be submitted to ABC no later than 30 days from the publishing date of the first of 2 required newspaper legal notice. Objections should be registered at [www.abc.virginia.gov](http://www.abc.virginia.gov) or 800-552-3200.

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DIVORCE-Uncontested, \$525.00 + \$86.00 court cost. WILLS-\$295.00. No court appearance. Estimated completion time twenty-one days. Hilton Oliver, Attorney (Facebook). 757-490-0126. Se Habla Espanol. BBB Member. <https://hiltonoliverattorneyva.com>

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# This Week Around Falls Church

## THURSDAY, JAN 22

### Falls Church Fiber Artists

10:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 — Main Level Conference Room  
 Informal weekly knit and crochet group. Share projects, get advice, or just chat while you work.

### Winter Storytime

10:30–11:00 a.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 — Lower Level Conference Room  
 Songs, stories, and rhymes for preschool children. Tickets available at the children's desk.

### Playtime with Early Literacy Center

11:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 Playtime program for preschool-aged children.

### Historic Architectural Review Board Meeting

7:00–9:00 p.m.  
*Falls Church City Hall* — Dogwood Room A & B  
 Public meeting.

### Historical Commission Meeting

7:00–9:00 p.m.  
*Falls Church City Hall* — Dogwood Room A & B  
 Public meeting.

### Thursday Night District Trivia

7:00–9:00 p.m.  
*Clare & Don's Beach Shack*  
 Weekly trivia night.

### Acoustic Aubrey

9:30 p.m.  
*Dogwood Tavern*  
 Live music.

## FRIDAY, JAN 23

### Falls Church Restaurant Week

Begins Friday, January 23  
 Enjoy special menus and promotions at participating Falls Church restaurants as Restaurant Week returns.

A variety of local eateries will offer prix-fixe meals and featured specials throughout the week. Reservations are recommended; participating restaurants and details available through the City of Falls Church.

### The Dave Matthews Tribute Band

8:30 p.m.  
*The State Theatre*  
 Live music.

## SATURDAY, JAN 24

### Falls Church Farmers Market

8:00 a.m.–12:00 p.m.  
*Falls Church City Hall*  
 Parking Lot  
 Weekly farmers market.

### Sing Books with Emily

11:00–11:30 a.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 — Lower Level Conference Room  
 Singing storytime with picture books for children.

### Wellness Talk: Alternative Healing Basics

2:00–3:30 p.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 Adults 18+. Registration required.

### The Todd & Claire Show

5:30 p.m.  
*Clare & Don's Beach Shack*  
 Live music.

### The Legwarmers ('80s Dance Party)

9:30 p.m.  
*The State Theatre*  
 '80s-themed dance party.

## MONDAY, JAN 26

### Family Movie Night: Toy Story

6:00–7:30 p.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 — Lower Level Conference Room  
 Family movie night. Registration required (event full). Rated G/P.G.

### City Council Meeting

7:30–11:00 p.m.  
*Falls Church City Hall* — Council Chambers/Court Room  
 Public comment available. Meeting streamed live and archived.

## TUESDAY, JAN 27

### Family Coloring Club

3:45–4:45 p.m.  
*Mary Riley Styles Public Library*  
 — Lower Level Conference Room  
 Arts & crafts program for preschoolers through teens.

## WEDNESDAY, JAN 28

### Public Utilities Commission

7:00–9:00 p.m.  
*Falls Church City Hall*  
 Laurel Room  
 Public meeting.

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|               |   |
|---------------|---|
| <b>JAN 23</b> | <b>DAVE MATTHEWS TRIBUTE BAND</b>         |
| <b>JAN 24</b> | <b>THE LEGWARMERS 80S RETRO PARTY</b>     |
| <b>JAN 31</b> | <b>THURSTON HOWELL YACHT ROCK PARTY</b>   |
| <b>FEB 06</b> | <b>ZOSO LED ZEPPELIN EXPERIENCE</b>       |
| <b>FEB 07</b> | <b>CAPTAIN MIKE JIMMY BUFFETT PARTY</b>   |
| <b>FEB 14</b> | <b>NASHVILLE NIGHTS 90S COUNTRY NIGHT</b> |
| <b>MAR 06</b> | <b>NIGHTTRAIN GUNS N ROSES TRIBUTE</b>    |
| <b>MAR 20</b> | <b>FOLSOM 4 JOHNNY CASH TRIBUTE</b>       |
| <b>MAR 21</b> | <b>THE STRANGER BILLY JOEL TRIBUTE</b>    |
| <b>APR 03</b> | <b>CHRISTOPHER TITUS</b>                  |

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SEIZE THE AWKWARD 

## Meridian Girls Bounce Back, Beat Warren County On Senior Night

RYAN McCAFFERTY

The Meridian High School girls' basketball team had three players score in double figures and three more honored on Senior Night, as they beat visiting Warren County 47-31 on Tuesday.

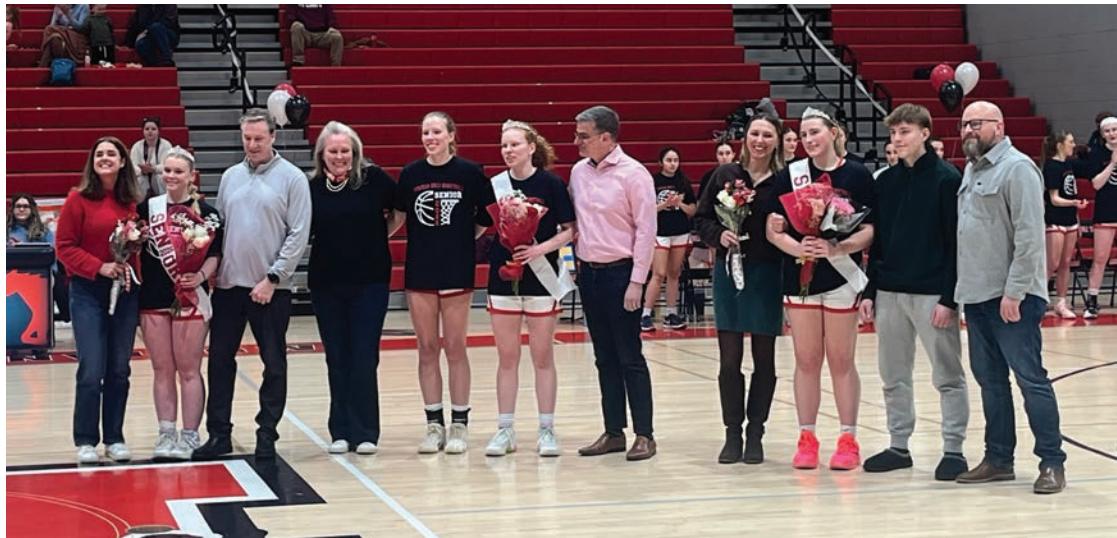
After a tough loss at Skyline last Friday ended their undefeated streak at 11, the Meridian Mustangs were hungry to get back in the win column. They'd have some extra motivation as seniors Anisa Frey, Claire Weatherly, and Zoe Gale were recognized pregame along with their families. But the Wildcats could not be overlooked.

Meridian trailed early, but led 12-8 after a frame and extended the advantage to 29-16 at the break as the off-

fense came to life in the second quarter. Then, after leading by 15 early in the third, a 12-2 Warren County run made things interesting, and head coach Chris Carrico had to give the girls some tough love between frames. It paid off as the Mustangs knocked down a couple threes early in the period to regain some distance, ultimately winning by 16.

"I thought we came out a bit flat-footed," Carrico said. "We were missing shots and feeling sorry for ourselves. But we got it together, we let them get within two possessions but not one."

Frey led all scorers with 13, while Rose Weatherly had 12 and Bridget Creed added 11. Now sitting at 12-1 on the year, the girls will have a few days off for visiting Fauquier on Friday.



## 2 Massive Wrestling Events at Meridian High School

The Meridian Mustangs wrestling team will be hosting the Mustang Girl's Grappler's Gauntlet on Saturday January 24th. This is an all-day all girls wrestling tournament. There are currently 31 teams and 250 girls registered to compete on 6 mats in both the main and auxiliary gyms at MHS. Falls Church City Public Schools was integral in helping girl's wrestling become a sanctioned sport in Virginia.

The Falls Church Force Wrestling Club (FCFWC) was established in 2012 by two Marine Veterans in the City of Falls Church. They wanted their children and FCCPS children to have access to a quality youth wrestling program. The FCFWC has practiced and continues to practice at Mary Ellen Henderson MS or Meridian High School for the past 13 years. The FCFWC will be hosting a

youth all girls and a coed wrestling event on Sunday, January 25th. There are approximately 600 youth wrestlers registered to compete at Meridian HS in both the main and auxiliary gyms on 7 wrestling mats, Sunday, January 25th. The FCFWC has roughly 30 FCCPS children on its roster including 10 girls.

The first competitive sport that you ever participated in? think hard if you said wrestling, that's likely the most accurate answer for most humans. Wrestling is commonly cited as the world's oldest sport and the first activity most children engage in. Wrestling requires you to eat well, to drink plenty of water to stay hydrated so you can train hard to face an opponent in a strategic, mentally, and physically demanding battle of wills. The objective in wrestling is to defeat your opponent by points or by pin. It's a martial art that

requires flexibility, stamina, strength, timing, technique, intensity and toughness. These are many of the ingredients necessary to build better humans. The Falls Church Force wrestling Club has been offering our community the benefits of wrestling since 2012. The Falls Church Force wrestling club has supplied wrestlers to local high school programs including Yorktown High school, Washington Liberty High School, Marshall High school, Wakefield High school, Meridian High school, and Alexandria City High school. Wrestling is the toughest sport in the world that teaches the most valuable life lessons to our youth. The Falls Church Force Wrestling Club was founded in 2012 by two former Marines Aaron Martinez and Brian Sulk to expose the youth in our community to those valuable lessons.

## CRITTER CORNER



**THIS IS LADY.** A 3 year old Golden Doodle who was the flower girl at the wedding in October.

Just because you're not famous doesn't mean your pet can't be! Please send in your Critter Corner submissions to [crittercorner@fcnp.com](mailto:crittercorner@fcnp.com).



## FALLS CHURCH BUSINESS NEWS & NOTES

### Chamber Installs New Board

The Falls Church Chamber of Commerce held the installation of its new board members and officers at Italian Café last Tuesday, January 20. Marybeth Connelly conducted the ceremony. Dokmai Webster, owner of Pitotal Point, LLC was installed as Chair of the board. The Vice Chair, Cara Griffith, CEO of Tax Analysts, was unable to attend. Six new board members were also installed: Lisa Bourven, owner of The Toy Nest; Maureen Carr with Bean Kinney & Korman; Paulo Mendes of Virginia Dream FC; Dylan Rosser of Burke & Herbert Bank; Dale York owner of Cardinal Home Care LLC; and Jing Zheng owner of Neat Financial Planning. The chamber recognized Dave Crance of Clarion Hotel for two years of service as Chair.

### Nothing Bundt Cakes Birthday Celebration

The local Falls Church Nothing Bundt Cakes invites the public to celebrate its birthday all weekend long. Friday, January 23, First Responders and Military can enjoy a BOGO Free between 9:00 a.m. and 7:00 p.m. On Saturday, the first 50 guest in line for the 9:00 a.m. opening, will receive a free bundtlet per month for a year. And on Sunday, they open at 11:00 a.m. and everyone gets a free confetti bundtlet until they run out. Brightside Blend will offer coffee drinks from their truck.

### Casual Pint Celebrates a Birthday

Casual Pint is Turning 6! The local spot is celebrating with live music, prizes and more on Saturday, January 24, 5:00 – 9:00 p.m. Be sure to extend congratulations to owner Darren McClure and his team.

### One More Year at One More Page

One More Page is celebrating its 15th anniversary today, Thursday, January 22, 6:30 – 8:30 p.m. Eileen McGervey left the tech industry to open this independent bookstore in 2011. Over the years, she faced a surprise hike in her rent and the pandemic, yet the community she built and served around a love of books stepped up to keep the business open. McGervey counts among her achievements organizing a Teen Book Festival and hosting President Obama with his daughters. Customers are invited to enjoy cookies, snacks, bubbly beverages and memories with Eileen McGervey. Congratulations!

### The Mane Edit Salon Celebrates

A new salon, The Mane Edit Salon, is celebrating its first brick and mortar salon for owners Alli Hood and Moriah Hymn on January 27. They previously worked independently in Vienna and are thrilled to find space at 444 West Broad Street, Suite G next door to Solace Outpost. They specialize in balayage, custom color, haircutting and hand tied extensions. The chamber hosts the ribbon cutting on Tuesday, January 27 at 4:00 p.m. The public is invited to join in the festive occasion. A reception follows and guest may tour the salon and inquire about the services.

### Webinar on Registering Your Business in Virginia

The Geller Law Group leads a webinar on Wednesday, January 28, 6:00 – 7:30 p.m. for Registering Your Business in Virginia, walking you through steps and processes of becoming a legal business entity. This covers legal entity forms, federal, state and local registrations and how to actually start a business while also addressing intellectual property matters, legal questions relating to contracts and legal business matters. They also explain the benefits and drawbacks of choosing from the various entity structures. The webinar link and details will be provided upon registration.

<https://wbcnova.centrerdynamics.com/workshop.aspx?ekey=10460006>

### PeachTree Sold

PeachTree of McLean, a Falls Church apartment complex of 340 units was acquired by MLG Capital for \$100 million last week. Erkiletian Cos. developed and owned the property since the 1970s. The sales price exceeds the assessed value of \$81.7 million. Bozzuto has announced that it now manages the property. PeachTree is located on Leesburg Pike between Trader Joe's and Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library.

### McLean Café Expands to Falls Church

Sweet Leaf Café plans to open in the former location of Smoothie King on west Broad Street this summer. This is the first location to open in the last five years and the first to have a drive-thru window. They offer sandwiches, salads and smoothies as well as grain bowls. They use local, sustainable vegetables from farms in Virginia, Maryland and Pennsylvania and are known for using ingredients without additives. Locations are across Northern Virginia with a couple in Washington, DC.

### 10 International Markets with Specialty Goods in NOVA

*Northern Virginia Magazine* ran an article on 10 local international markets that offer specialty goods, three of which are located in the Falls Church area. Marhaba Market in the Build America Plaza strip carries spice mixes, bread and fresh injera, all from East African. The Great Wall Supermarket on Gallows Road offers fruits and vegetables, meats, and even Numb and Spicy Hot Pot flavored Lau's chips. And those favoring Thueringers, Weisswursts, or Stuttgarters can find their favorite sausages as well as cheeses, sweets, beer and wine from the German Gourmet on Columbia Pike.

► *Business News & Notes* is compiled by Elise Neil Bengtson, Executive Director of the Greater Falls Church Chamber of Commerce. She may be emailed at [elise@fallschurchchamber.org](mailto:elise@fallschurchchamber.org).

## Our Man In Arlington

### BILL FOGARTY

Front-Page News from January 1947: The front-page news from the first week of January 1947 covered an array of topics: public health; charitable giving; rezonings; school issues. The public health stories reminded me of the continual need to pay attention to infectious diseases. In 2026, the concern might include measles and the flu. (There was a disturbing headline in the news lately: "First Toddler Dies of the Flu.") In January of 1947, Arlington was dealing with different infectious diseases, including "one of the worst outbreaks of polio," with 33 cases reported in the newspaper *The Sun*. A Polio Foundation Drive was initiated in January, with a request to help pay for the "two weekly clinics for crippled children each week." At the same time, the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis started its own fund-raising campaign, known as the March of Dimes. (In 1938 President Roosevelt had established this charity by asking Americans to send in their dimes.) The Arlington campaign started with a radio broadcast from Arlington Hospital, interviewing a woman who had given birth while confined to an iron lung (a large metal tank ventilator used to help people breathe when their respiratory muscles failed).

And there were worries about tuberculosis. The Christmas Seal Drive for the Arlington Tuberculosis Association had just ended, to finance their plans for 1947. It was reported that this infectious disease (also known as consumption) "kills more young people between the ages of 15 and 35 than any other illness." When not raising money for diseases, Arlingtonians were also sending clothing and food packages overseas. A church drive made this plea: "Everyone is asked once more to go through closets and give whatever can possibly be spared to help those individuals who lost practically everything to the ravages of war."

Meanwhile, in the political world, post-war Arlington was beginning to respond to the amazing growth that had occurred in the 1940s (the population expanded from

57,000 people in 1940 to 135,000 people by 1950). One headline proclaimed there were "Eleven Rezonings On Board Docket." Rezonings were taking up so much time on the Board's docket that one board member suggested scheduling an extra meeting each month to handle all the zoning matters. Some things never change – if you look at today's agendas for Board meetings, most of the docket items are land use matters.

Dissatisfaction with overcrowded schools and dilapidated school facilities resulted in a strong push by parents for change, with two referendums being championed by the Citizens Committee for School Improvements: (i) the right to elect a school board, and (ii) a school bond issue of over \$6 million (an unheard of sum back in those Byrd Machine days). There was some controversy as to whether the poll tax had to be paid by voters as a condition for voting in the referendums that spring. By law, a poll tax had to be paid six months before a vote, which would have disenfranchised many voters who paid their poll tax each spring. The Attorney General ended up issuing an opinion that a referendum was a "special election;" the six-month waiting period was waived. The bonds were approved, and Arlington did achieve the right for a school board election, held in November. Arlington was the first jurisdiction in Virginia to have the right to an elected school board. Ironically, the old school board sued the new school board, alleging that their election was illegal. The elected school board survived that attack, though it was disbanded by the state in 1956, as the Byrd Machine was afraid that Arlington would integrate their schools after the *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Finally, the editorial page had a remarkable recommendation – suggesting that Arlington County and the City of Alexandria should merge into one large city. Now that would have solved our governance structure debates! My favorite sentence in the editorial stated that Arlington would "...inevitably become a city." Attempts to convert to city status have been debated for over a century, but I suspect we will always be a "county."

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