

# THE RESTON LETTER

## LOOK Dine-in Cinemas Opens on Market Street

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

A brand-new 11-screen movie theater opened Nov. 2 on Reston Town Center's Market Street. LOOK Dine-in Cinemas' first Virginia location replaced Bow Tie Cinemas that closed in May 2022.

The auditoriums – four at street level and seven more up the escalator – all have laser projection on wall-to-wall screens, and enhanced surround sound systems. They accommodate audiences of 45 to 120 in luxurious fully reclining seats with swing-out tables. On view are not only current blockbuster movies, but also independent films, documentaries, event screenings, and music and concert footage.

Post-pandemic, said James Meredith, LOOK's Chief Marketing Officer, the company understood that people missed the "communal experience" of seeing movies, and set out to provide an "elevated full-service experience" that would motivate people to return to theaters, where we would "take care of them in unexpected ways."

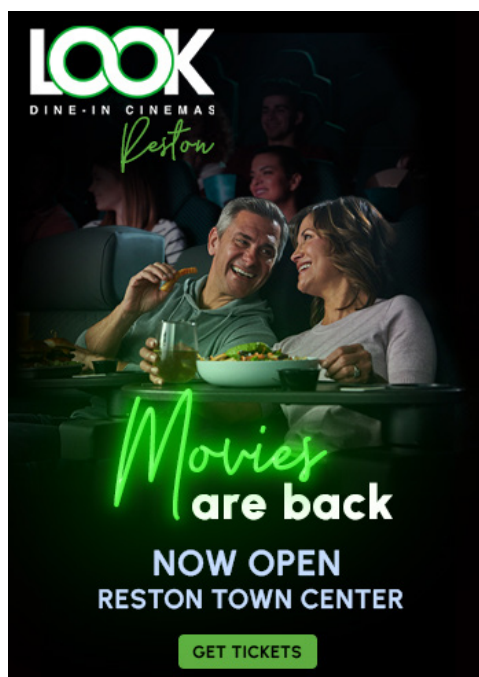
What sets LOOK apart, Meredith added, is threefold: a unique dine-in concept; state-of-the-art technology; and an allegiance to hospitality and community. In the words of LOOK's CEO Brain Schulz, "It's not just about movies; it's about creating memorable moments and a shared experience that unites us all."



LOOK Dine-In Cinema hosted its grand opening with Supervisor Walter Alcorn and representatives of the Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce on Nov. 2. Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

An open kitchen and a full bar are located on the upper level. Guests order food and beverages from their seats either from an in-theater host, or through an app by scanning or tapping the QR code on the swing-out table. Orders are delivered by "ninja servers," attired in all black and moving stealthily so as not to get in the way of anybody's experience, Meredith said. As people become more comfortable on repeated visits, they tend to use the code method, he added. He also pointed out that the app allows guests to order a second drink quietly during the movie. The technology and the ambiance combine to create "a seamless experience that allows everyone to get lost in the movie's story," Meredith said.

Continued on Page 2



## CORE Foundation Gala Honors Community Heroes

By Casey Menish, Staff Writer

On the evening of Nov. 4, Restonians gathered for CORE Foundation's annual Giving Gala and Community Hero Awards.

CORE Foundation is a charitable incubator, providing nonprofit infrastructure, administrative resources, and mentorship to the 28 (and counting) CORE Causes as they address societal needs, build community, and enable positive change. "Under the CORE Foundation umbrella, [the CORE Causes] can start their good work on day one" said Doug Bushée, CORE Foundation's Founder and Board Chair.

Reston's small business owners, philanthropists, public servants, neighbors, and friends gathered at the Giving Gala to celebrate the great work of the CORE Foundation in

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### sports



Field hockey coach of the year, SLHS fall sports

### education



Meet new Hughes Middle's principal, HHS homecoming festivities and theatre preview, SLHS chorus

### the bulletin



How to help others this Thanksgiving, a local girl author, preparing for Christmastime festivities

### lifestyle



Neighborhood spotlight on Stowe Road, Red's Table review, travel advice for spring

### opinions

What a casino would do to Reston, holiday tips from Dr. S

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# THE BULLETIN

## Laurel Learning Center's New L3 Studio Celebrates Late Reston Philanthropist

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

Cornerstones' Laurel Learning Center unveiled its sparkling new L3 Studio, created in memory of the late Lynn L. Lilienthal, on Oct. 20. The Reston philanthropist's husband Philip and their children Phil, Andy, and Cathy, as well as the anonymous donor of the funds that transformed the space, were among the 50 people that gathered to celebrate.

The second-floor studio features a wall of windows overlooking the center's playground, new flooring and ceiling tiles, a large mirror, ample storage space, and moveable furniture. Adorning its freshly painted pale blue walls are a colorful painting by local artist Dana Scheurer and a plaque honoring the PALS Early Learning Center, Virginia's first licensed infant day care center, that Lilienthal co-founded and directed. Jody Tompros, a friend of Lilienthal's whose social work practice uses mindfulness painting as a therapeutic modality, painted the studio's brightly hued entrance door.

Lilienthal sat on Cornerstones' board of directors in various capacities including chair, since the nonprofit's beginnings as Reston Interfaith. The 53-year-old nonprofit organization's mission is to "promote self-sufficiency [to most of northwestern Fairfax County] by pro-

viding support and advocacy for those in need of food, shelter, affordable housing, quality childcare, and other human services." Its Laurel Learning Center, established in 1977, offers safe, high-quality, affordable childcare for working families with young children, enabling parents to maintain steady employment.

Courtney Park-Jamborsky, Laurel's director for more than 21 years, is proud of having "created a center where children thrive and families, especially families with many needs, know they can count on Laurel. Their kids thrive, and we give families hope for the future." The director's own daughters attended Laurel from infancy through age 12, and subsequently became volunteers and employees. Most of the center's staff, she added, have been at the center for more than 15 years.

Park-Jamborsky credited Lilienthal as her "first mentor. She and Peggy Jansons hired me at PALS when I was 15," she recalled. By giving children "opportunities to create and learn," the L3 Studio "will continue Lynn's dedication to and love for the arts and children."

The center partnered with local companies to create the new space. Todd and Juliana Carter, owners of The Tai-



Guests enjoy the grand opening of the new L3 Studio at Laurel Learning Center  
Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

lored Closet of Greater Washington, DC, had a personal connection to Lilienthal, as both client and neighbor, explained Todd Carter who managed the project. After establishing the core concepts for a multifunctional space, where objects can be moved around to allow for various kinds of activities – from yoga and meditation to pottery and ballroom dancing, he enlisted J Design Consulting architectural designer Jennifer Banga and general contractor Cordova Painting founder Levi Cordova to join him in turning the vision into reality.

"The L3 Studio is a wonderful legacy for Lynn," Carter said. "It's great to know children will be using it for years and years to come."



Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

### Continued from Page 1

The upscale-for-a-movie-theater menu – served on dishes that make minimal noise – features main dishes like coconut shrimp, crispy wings, chicken tenders, and mac & cheese (\$16-\$19); bowls and salads (\$20-\$24), burgers and quesadillas (\$14-\$18), snacks and shareables like edamame, hummus, and fries (\$10-\$14); and concession snacks like popcorn, nachos and candy (\$5-\$9). Desserts include hazelnut chocolate beignets, fried Oreos and cream, chocolate brownie sundae (\$10-\$12), and shakes – old-fashioned or signature specialties (\$8-\$13). The children's menu offers chicken tenders, mac and cheese, and pizza (\$10).

Beverages include a variety of sodas, lemonade, tea, and coffee, as well as wine, beer, and 14 different cocktails, with names like Pineapple Express, Daisy Duke, and Sleepless in Seattle. Cocktails are often added to reflect a current movie like the Pink Dream martini for "Barbie." The mixologist guarantees that all cocktails are made with fresh ingredients – no high-fructose syrup added here!

The bar is not only a place for a pre- or post-movie cocktail, Meredith noted. "It is also a place for the community to gather – whether or not they are seeing a movie." The bar has seating and tables both inside and weather permitting, outside on the patio overlooking Market Street.

Movie tickets may be purchased – and seats reserved – online at <https://www.lookcinemas.com/reston> or at the box office. Parking is always free after 5 p.m. and on weekends at RTC; for all other times, LOOK will validate ticketholders' parking for four hours in all garages.

## Father and Daughter Share Art Exhibit at Community Center

Marshall and Laura Wickramaratne's first father-daughter art show is on view through Nov. 30 at Reston Community Center. With the theme of "dreams of nature," the exhibit explores how their upbringing influences their art. Marshall's landscapes of his home country, Sri-Lanka, provide a calming, atmospheric look into childhood memories and adventures. Since Laura grew up in the suburbs of the United States, her work provides dramatic contrast with her father's Sri-Lankan village. Each of their works is an experiment, with vivid, sharp imagery and abstract concepts. Marshall and Laura's shared passion for art shines through their differences. Each has allowed their own influences to guide their creativity, and have come to different conclusions.



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# THE BULLETIN

**Holiday Parade**  
Reston Town Center  
Nov. 24, 11 a.m. - 12 p.m.

**RCC Thanksgiving Food Drive**  
Drop-off around Reston  
ongoing through Nov. 30

**Christmas Festival 8 a.m. - 4 p.m.**  
**Santa and boat parade 12 p.m.**  
Dec. 2, Lake Anne

## restonSTRONG to Hold Annual Thanksgiving Food Drive

**Contributed by restonSTRONG**

The restonSTRONG Thanksgiving Food Drive has become a cherished annual tradition. It is a testament to the compassion of the Reston community, working together to raise money and provide support for food-insecure neighbors.

restonSTRONG has partnered with local businesses and nonprofit organizations to ensure that donations are maximized to provide the greatest impact. Last year, they assisted more than 100 families; they hope to do the same this year.

This Thanksgiving, restonSTRONG will offer families pre-cooked meals including a turkey, carrot souffle, stuffing, green bean casserole, mashed potatoes, gravy, cranberry relish and dessert.

A particular focus of the restonSTRONG Thanksgiving Food Drive is to support families within the local school

system who are experiencing food insecurity. This is often a hidden problem, with many families struggling to provide nutritious meals for their children while making ends meet. The organizers work closely with school administrators to identify families in need. The funds raised help ensure that these families have enough food to celebrate Thanksgiving and continue to receive support throughout the holiday season.

While Reston may be an affluent community, it is not without its homeless population, including individuals and families living in tents or temporary shelters. The restonSTRONG Thanksgiving Food Drive reaches out to these neighbors as well, aiming to provide warm meals, hygiene products, and winter essentials to help them through the challenging winter months.

The restonSTRONG Thanksgiving Food

Drive is more than just a charity event; it's a testament to the culture of giving that Reston residents hold dear. The event serves as a reminder of the importance of supporting each other and taking care of our neighbors, especially during the holiday season. It showcases the power of a community coming together for a common cause, transcending differences to make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.

If you are interested in contributing to restonSTRONG, visit: [https://www.gofundme.com/f/thanksgiving-meals-for-families-in-reston-schools?utm\\_campaign=p\\_cp+share-sheet&utm\\_medium=copy\\_link\\_all&utm\\_source=customer](https://www.gofundme.com/f/thanksgiving-meals-for-families-in-reston-schools?utm_campaign=p_cp+share-sheet&utm_medium=copy_link_all&utm_source=customer)

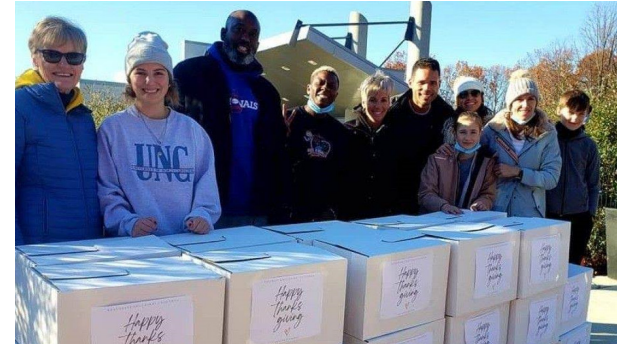


Photo provided by restonSTRONG



## Share the Joy of Thanksgiving with a Neighbor

**Contributed by Food for Neighbors**

A local grassroots nonprofit, Food For Neighbors (FFN), invites Reston community members to help create Thanksgiving memories for one or more school families who struggle with food security. Donations go to provide grocery gift cards so families may purchase the food they need most, like fresh fruits and vegetables.

More and more families are struggling to afford basic necessities, like rent and food. Your gift will help your neighbors put heartwarming, nutritious meals on their tables. The goal is to raise enough money to provide 1,100 \$50 grocery store gift cards to 31 partnering Fairfax County and Loudoun County schools, to distribute to their most vulnerable students during the holiday season.

By the close of 2023, FFN anticipates having donated \$140,000 in grocery gift cards and over



Photo contributed by Food for Neighbors

100,000 pounds of food and toiletries for students in need. Join more than 2,700 food and toiletry donors and over 2,700 registered volunteers in making a direct impact on students in local schools. Visit the website to donate and to learn more about other ways you may help meet needs during the Thanksgiving season. **Donate:** <https://www.foodforneighbors.org/home/holiday-meals/>

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2023. Attendees dined on “Tastes & Sips” from various Reston restaurants and local businesses. The event was emceed by Daniel Park, Pastor of Restoration Church Reston, and Ashley Williams, Miss Virginia USA 2023.

**Congratulations to the 2023 Community Hero Awards winners:**

**President’s Volunteer Service Awards: Bronze:** Audrey Nord-Murphy, Jennifer Heffner, Laura, Silipigni, and Megan Stout. **Silver:** Ally Chen, Amelia Anderson, Chris Matschat, Kevin Milks, and Suzanne Zurn. **Gold:** Emma Chen and August Rivers **Partner of the Year:** Greater Reston Chamber of Commerce **CORE Community Heroes:** Didi Gray & Todd

**Shea Volunteer of the Year:** Jennifer Heffner **CORE Cause Rookie of the Year:** Hats for Zoe **CORE Cause of the Year:** Smiles from Sarah

“These are great folks that aren’t in it for the glory, they’re out there to make change in the community. They recognize that no one person can help everybody, but everybody can help somebody”, said Bushée.

Reston is known for the founding principle for its residents to “Live, Work, Play” here and Bushée encourages Restonians to add to that mantra, “Serve.” “CORE Foundation is here to make it easy for you to serve”, said Bushée, whether that is through a donation or sponsorship, serving at the Board level, at an event, or volunteering with a CORE Cause.



Gala emcees, Daniel Park, Pastor at Restoration Church Reston, and Ashley Williams, Ms. Virginia, helped present the community awards on Nov 4. Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

### THE RESTON LETTER

<b>SOCIAL MEDIA</b> Emdad Swapan	<b>LAYOUT DESIGN</b> Samantha Baker Dylan Murphy
<b>GRAPHIC DESIGN</b> Sabine Soltys	<b>REGULAR CONTRIBUTORS</b> Laurie Dornak Chuck Cascio Restonian Hayley Sherwood
<b>STAFF WRITERS AND EDITORS</b> Holly Weatherwax E. Zirak Megan Schmid Christin Dougherty Debbie Anguizola Terri Wright Ellyn Wexler Scott L. Parkin Steph Drahozal Kat Salmon Sarah Golden Caroline Ayres Casey Menish	<b>AD SALES</b> Nicole Meade <b>DISTRIBUTION</b> Shaughnessy Pierce Brian Crosson Sue Crosson Lucas Menedez- Hassel
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# THE BULLETIN

## Girl to Boss: Tween Author Makes Her Debut

By Caroline Ayres, Staff Writer

Typical 11-year-old girls can be found playing in the woods, making friendship bracelets, or preparing themselves for sixth grade. Where their names are not frequently found is as author of a 256-page book discussing the trials and triumphs of women across the professional world.

Reston's Julia Taylor Brandus, age 11, released her first book, "Girl to Boss: Advice for Girls from 50 of America's Most Successful Women," on Sept. 5. To gather information, she interviewed 50 women in a variety of professions about their stories, and advice they have for the younger generation.

Among Julia's favorite interviewees were Cynthia Germanotta, mother of pop star Lady

Gaga, and Dr. Seema Yasmin, who became a doctor even after a teacher discouraged her based on her family's background.

Julia said she wrote the book both to inspire other young girls and to follow in the footsteps of her father, journalist Paul Brandus. She wants to write more books to inspire girls and help them identify possible careers. An avid debater, Julia herself aspires to be a lawyer or a judge.

"I want people to learn to never give up, and to keep on persevering for their goals," she added. "If [people] put their minds to it, they can do anything." She certainly has taken that sentiment to heart.



Julia Taylor Brandus, Reston 11-year-old, published a non-fiction book in September. Photo contributed by Julia Taylor Brandus

## Here's My Pumpkin Story

A letter from Roxanne Watts

What I have learned during the past 40-plus years — first as a pediatric nurse at Georgetown Hospital, then as a Reston resident and Realtor giving out 10 to 15 tons of free pumpkins each October since 1988 — is that pumpkins are great for relationships; they show you care.

With the help of children and other community members, we drive a pick-up truck filled with pumpkins to neighborhoods, and deliver these bright autumnal gifts one-by-one, door-to-door. We have delivered thousands of pumpkins throughout Reston and Herndon. Perhaps you've seen the colorful U-haul truck roving about town or in your neighborhood.

The pumpkin giveaway has elicited warm reactions from both givers and receivers — countless smiles, engaging conversations, an enhanced sense of community. It's a lot of fun and people wait for it to happen every year!

Kids are natural-born givers, so the fun and satisfaction they experience is heart-warming to see. They ride on the hay bales as the truck moves safely at a snail's pace through the neighborhoods

and, after we stop, they hop off and take a pumpkin to a door. And — I especially love this — children who helped in those early days are now grown and bringing their children to the Pumpkin Truck. It's life going full circle!

My interest in pumpkins began while working as a pediatric nurse, and I would bring them in to surprise and delight the kids. The shift to real estate gave me a wonderful reason to expand the endeavor; now the project goes all month and includes several events to which we donate.

All these years, the pumpkins have come mainly from the same farmer: Robert Lewis of Lewis Orchards in Dickerson, Maryland, a scenic, pristine, third-generation farm. Going there has been a joy, even more so when White's Ferry was open and I could ride the truck back and forth across the Potomac. See my website, [wattsfinehomes.com](http://wattsfinehomes.com), for photos of the farm, the pumpkin truck, and kids (and kids-at-heart) in action, and Life's Lessons from the Pumpkin Truck.

We have never missed a year on the Pumpkin Trail since moving to Reston



Reston kids get to ride in Roxanne's truck and help help her deliver pumpkins. Photo contributed by Roxanne Watts

we find more helpers and volunteers. If you would like to know more, and help organize pumpkin deliveries to your neighborhood, please contact me at 703-618-1799 or [roxannebwatts@gmail.com](mailto:roxannebwatts@gmail.com). Let's spread the cheer and take it to a new level!

Last, but not least — a huge thank you to my family and to all the helpers over the years. This couldn't happen without you!

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## Home Tour Showcases Reston's Finest

By E. Zirak, Staff Writer

Since 2002, the Reston Museum has hosted the annual Reston Home Tour. More than 700 locals attended this year's Oct. 21 event. With the purchase of a \$35 ticket, participants could enter seven unique but quintessentially Reston homes to admire the architecture, interior design, and beautiful views.

A contemporary North Reston home built by the Glick Group featured exotic bird and floral motifs, lush accent pieces, and beautiful wallpaper. Thoughtful touches, both modern and vintage, adorned every nook and cranny. The owners turned the below-deck area into a space with seating and hanging wicker swings, usable even on rainy days.

An impressively remodeled home overlooking Lake Newport featured art by the owner's mother and elegant Persian rugs. Multiple rooms offer breathtaking lake views, some featuring weeping willows and other flora, that stole visitors' hearts.

A lakefront home on Lake Anne featured navy blue, the owner's favorite color, throughout the creatively remodeled home. The third-level loft was turned into a



Photo by Bob Haukness

luxury master suite with a full bath, built-in closets, and a deck where the owner sips morning tea and watches the Fourth of July fireworks. The entryway features modern vertical paneling and a hidden closet.

Just off North Shore Drive sits a mid-century modern home with curb appeal and loads of charm. The house is decorated with exquisite artwork, and vintage and unique finds. A nook under the stairs features a cozy seating area and book-themed wallpaper. Gorgeous Loewen windows frame the lovely exterior landscape that looks curated and maintained while still natural

and wild.

In the Solaridge Drive community, off Twin Branches Road, a contemporary home features high, vaulted ceilings, and skylights. Custom cabinets, floating shelves, and a built-in desk were constructed by an Amish woodworker. An upstairs loft is the perfect spot for a piano, while a main level deck provides a picture-perfect space to host guests.

The owners of a contemporary on Purple Beech Drive chose their home because it reminded them of the Pacific Northwest, with its plentiful trees, modern wood siding, and cathedral ceilings with wooden beams. Renovations created an open kitchen with a 12-foot granite island, and a mudroom with a handy pantry and storage space. Decorations include new and vintage pieces as well as handmade quilts.

The Lake Anne Coffee House and Wine Bar offered "bubbles and bites" to tour participants and donated 5 percent of all meal purchases during tour hours to the Reston Museum.

# THE CALENDAR

## Jingle on the Lake and Christmas Festival Return to Lake Anne

By Megan Schmid, Staff Writer

Jingle all the way to Lake Anne Plaza on Saturday, Dec. 2 for the annual Christmas Festival. This family-friendly, admission-free event, hosted by the non-profit Lake Anne Merchant Association, opens at 8 a.m. and runs until 4 p.m.

With the scent of fresh greens from the Reston Garden Club's wreaths permeating the air, the craft market will feature local vendors showcasing unique goods, perfect for holiday gifting. The unique local shops and restaurants, decorated in the holiday spirit, also will be open.

The Vienna Singing Princesses, the Conservatory Ballet in Reston, Lake Anne Elementary students, and Ukrainian Christmas carolers will perform. And

Pat McIntyre, owner of the Lake Anne's Reston Art Gallery, will dress up as Mrs. Claus while hosting ornament decorating – as she has done since the first Christmas Market in 1971.

Jingle on the Lake will begin at noon, featuring Santa Claus arriving at the plaza by boat. Accompanied by his elves and a parade of Reston residents' decorated vessels, Santa will make his way to the dock and find his seat on the bench next to the bronze statue of Robert E. Simon, Reston's visionary founder, to meet children eager to share their holiday wishes.

"One of the most beautiful things about Lake Anne is its ability to create space for people to gather and spend

quality time together. We love finding ways to support and engage our local community, and the Christmas Festival is it," said Korrine Willis, a Lake Anne Merchant Association project manager. "I spent some of my childhood in Germany where Christmas markets are very big. I have always wanted to experience something like it here in the U.S., and while this event is slightly different, we are hoping to spread the same joy."

Interested in participating? Local boat owners and vendors can contact lakeanewashingtonplaza@gmail.com for information on joining the boat parade or craft market.



Christmas Festival  
 Christmas Craft and Food Market  
 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.  
 Jingle on the Lake and  
 Boat Parade: 12 p.m.  
 Vienna Singing Princesses  
 12:30 p.m.  
 Conservatory Ballet Dance  
 2 p.m.  
 Christmas carols with Reston  
 Elementary Schools  
 Ukrainian Christmas Songs  
 Christmas with Reston Elementary  
 Schools

Join Us! On December 2

Lake Anne  
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## Reston Association to Host First Annual Winterfest

By Sarah Golden, Staff Writer

Don't miss out on this occasion! The Reston Association is planning a new event that offers Restonians an opportunity to celebrate the most wonderful time of the year with friends, family, and neighbors. Winterfest will take place from Nov. 30 to Dec. 2, 5 to 9 p.m., at Brown's Chapel Park, 1686 Brown's Chapel Road.

The event will feature a "light up the park" walk, a photo op with Santa, and an enchanted holiday forest. The enchanted forest will be made up of 50 holiday trees that local businesses, families, and sponsors can purchase and decorate to their liking. At the end of the festival, the trees will be donated to local families in need of a tree of their own.

No festival would be complete without the ultimate wintertime snack – smores! Food, drink, and, of course, smores, will be available for purchase.

Admission is free for Reston Association members, \$18 for non-member adults, and \$8 for children. Information on parking, how to sign up for the Santa experience, and how to register for an enchanted forest tree can be found on the Winterfest website: [www.reston.org/winterfest-2023](http://www.reston.org/winterfest-2023).

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## Second Annual SLHS Winter Market Celebrates Local Crafters, Businesses

By Seahawk Boosters, Laurie Dornak

With the holiday season just around the corner, what better way to kickstart the festivities than by attending the second annual Winter Market on December 3rd, 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. in the SLHS cafeteria, where a winter wonderland of local vendors and holiday cheer awaits?

SLHS Dance Team Coach, Catherine McDermott, shared her excitement for the event. "Seeing the community come together to support local businesses and crafters makes for a special day. We hope that it brings some holiday cheer to the SLHS community."

This year's Winter Market includes an array of local vendors showcasing their unique and handcrafted treasures. From exquisite woodwork by SLHS parent Andrew Gallagher to indulgent beauty products, and school-themed wreaths, you'll find the perfect gifts for your loved ones while supporting local businesses and crafters.

Visitors can learn the stories behind the products and the heart and soul that goes into making each item. The dance team will serve hot chocolate and SLHS Jazz Hawks will perform live throughout the event. Door prizes for lucky attendees include vouchers for sports camps.

It's not just shopping; it's a celebration of our community's talent, creativity, and the joy of giving during the holiday season. It's a way to make holiday shopping memorable, meaningful, and uniquely local.

SLHS DANCE TEAM PRESENTS  
 THE 2ND ANNUAL  
**Winter Market**  
 VENDORS WANTED!  
 Dec. 3, 11:00-3:00

ARE YOU A LOCAL VENDOR INTERESTED IN MAKING SOME HOLIDAY SALES? REGISTER FOR THE WINTER MARKET USING THE LINK IN OUR BIO!

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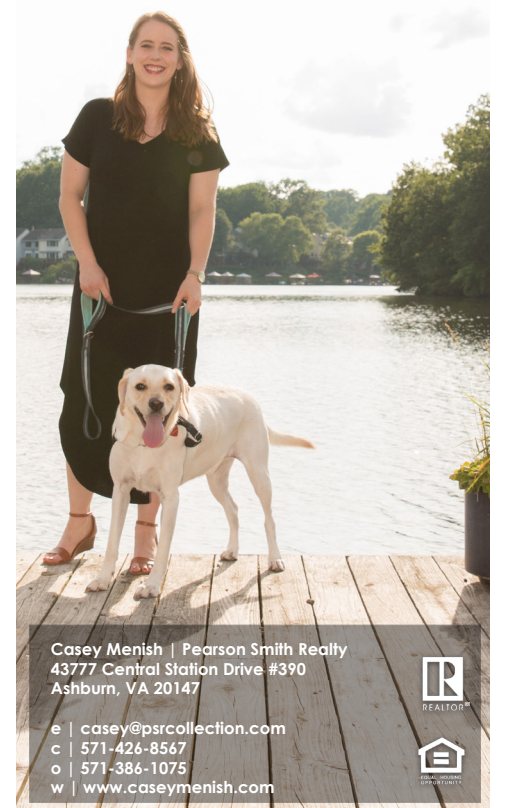
Second Annual SLHS Winter Market Dec. 3 by SLHS Dance Team



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# EDUCATION

## Herndon High's Homecoming Parade Features 50 Floats

Contributed from the Herndon Parks and Rec Department

Fifty floats and several hundred participants marched in Herndon's Homecoming parade in the cool, wet fall weather on Oct. 14. The homecoming spirit was evident as friends and residents lined Elden and Lynn Streets to cheer on the athletes, band, clubs, performers, scouts, politicians, businesses, and community groups in attendance. Costumes, banners, and props creatively illustrated this year's theme, "Through the Decades (70s-2000s)." Trophies were presented to the first and second place winners in the Civic, Performing Arts, School, Show, and Class Float categories.



The Pride of Herndon marches through Old Town Herndon in Herndon High School's homecoming parade. Photos by Patricia Kovacs

### Best in Parade winners.

Deserving award recipients included: **Civic Group First Place** – Herndon Girl Scouts, **Performing Arts Group First Place** – Herndon High School Marching Band, **Studio School Group First Place** – Dranesville Elementary PTA, **Show Group First Place** – Civil Air Patrol, **Class Floats First Place** – Class of 2025, **Richard F. Downer Theme Award** – Class of 2024 Major Robert C. Church Award – **Best in Parade** – Clearview Elementary School

## Langston Hughes Middle Welcomes New Principal

By Christin Randall Dougherty, Guest Writer

Langston Hughes, Reston's only public middle school, started the new school year with a new principal.

Dr. Herman Mizell, a Loudoun County resident who began his teaching career in Suffolk County, Virginia, and Montgomery County, Maryland, has served as both Assistant Principal and Principal in both suburban and urban school districts throughout Maryland and Virginia. He holds a bachelor's degree in English from Norfolk State University, a Master of Education in Educational Administration and Supervision from Virginia State University and a Doctor of Education in Educational Leadership and Curriculum and Instruction from Nova Southeastern University.

A strong interest in working with diverse populations is part of what attracted Mizell to Hughes. He believes in the importance of protecting and celebrating individual heritage, and is particularly drawn to the school's namesake, Langston Hughes, whose poetry portrays the challenges and triumphs of

working-class Black Americans from the Harlem Renaissance through the civil rights era.

With a strong commitment to improving students' academic lives by creating a positive learning environment, Mizell focuses on reducing distractions that prevent students from achieving their goals: giving students opportunities to become more engaged and involved in their school community, and placing greater emphasis on student individuality.

When Mizell takes over at a school struggling with student behavior, he determines what works and what doesn't, and makes changes accordingly. He refers to students who have been identified as challenging as "sunflowers in need of a little more water."

To motivate all students during these tough, identity-forming years, Mizell reminds them that "Life is coming. What you do now matters." He encourages independent thinking and autonomous learning, and sets clear, concise, and

consistent expectations, which he calls "norming the building."

Seeking to create a student-centered environment, Mizell has increased students' accessibility to school counselors, helping them feel comfortable in knowing that school is a safe space. He also has given students what he calls "more choice and voice." This year, for example, students planned their own school spirit week.

Mizell also has instituted open seating in the cafeteria, giving students the option to sit with their friends. To create a more relaxed experience, he increased the 15-minute-long lunch periods to 30 minutes. The new principal frequently monitors the cafeteria in an effort to get to know the students as well as address disciplinary concerns. Mizell is not tied to his desk, but instead spends a good deal of time with the students in the hallways, outdoors, in the cafeteria and the gym.

Stricter disciplinary policies are being enforced this year because Mizell be-



Dr. Herman Mizell

lieves that teaching and learning cannot take place until disciplinary problems are addressed. With student safety his priority, electronic passes now enable teachers and staff to know every student's whereabouts, and a staggered dismissal time was instituted so that not all 1,300 students leave the building at the same time.

The community looks forward to partnering with its new middle school principal. Welcome to Reston, Dr. Mizell!

## Crossword Corner

By Reston crossword constructor, Joe O'Neill

### Bird Appreciation

#### ACROSS

1. President pro \_\_\_\_
4. Indian honorific
7. Thurman of "Kill Bill"
8. Vietnam New Year holiday
9. Worst smelling
11. Seal the deal
12. Act almighty?
14. Patel of "Slumdog Millionaire"
15. Distinctive historical period
16. Citrus drink suffix
17. King, in Cadiz

#### DOWN

1. Telejournalist Katy (and, with 10- and 13-D, time to "stuff it")
2. Sent, as spam
3. Counterpart of the "she shed"
4. "In the Heat of the Night" Oscar winner Rod
5. Make like new
6. "Addams Family" cousin
10. Door opener
12. Streetcorner cuddle, e.g. (abbr.)
13. Sunrise follower?

1	2	3		4	5	6
7				8		
9			10			
	11					
12						13
14				15		
16				17		

© Redhand Assocs.

(Answers on back)

# EDUCATION



On Oct. 26, Langston Hughes Middle Leadership Council in partnership with the LHMS PTA put on a phenomenal Fall Festival which included a Trunk or Treat, hot dogs, popcorn made by our fabulous new principal, Dr. Herman Mizell, drinks, a costume contest, and a 2-Step Dance Off! It was a record-setting community event with hundreds of students and families, past and present attending! We are looking forward to next year already! Contributed by LHMS



Science 7 students engaged in an authentic environmental stewardship project in October. Langston Hughes Middle partnered with Fairfax County Ecologists from the Stormwater Management Division and Merrifield Garden Center to plan the project. Seventh-graders and parent volunteers planted 2,500 native plants in three different locations on the Hughes campus.



As a student at Milton Hershey School, Othniel Lightfoot-Taylor of Reston (fourth from the left) performed the National Anthem in front of more than 10,000 fans at the first game of the 2024 American Hockey League season for the Hershey Bears hockey team at the GIANT Center in Hershey, Pennsylvania. As part of the MHS performance choir, the students were invited by the Bears to help them kick off the season. This game also celebrated the team's 2023 Calder Cup win!  
Photo contributed by Milton Hershey School



Students and staff celebrated Culture and Heritage Day at Aldrin Elementary School in October. Photos contributed by AES

## MAKING AN IMPACT—Shari True

By Chuck Cascio Author and former South Lakes High School teacher

When Shari True, the Life Enrichment Coordinator at Kensington Senior Living in Reston, thinks about what is known as the Kensington Promise, “To love and care for your family as we do our own,” she is clearly influenced by her years of growing up in Reston.

True and her parents moved to Reston from a small town in Illinois in January 1975. She and her family lived in the Fairway Apartments, and she attended Lake Anne Elementary School before moving to Wheelwright Court in South Reston. The 1983 South Lakes High School graduate now lives with her husband, David, in the home on Brookshire Court near Lake Anne that his family purchased in 1967.

“My early memories of Reston include roaming the woods and bringing home buckets of tadpoles from the creeks, learning to play tennis at Hook Road courts, hanging out at the bowling alley and arcade off Sunset Hills Road, and spending summer days at the local pools, Lake Thoreau, and Lake Fairfax,” True recalled.

The active personal lifestyle she experienced as a Reston youth impacts her decisions as Life Enrichment Coordinator. “Reston and the surrounding area have so much to offer, so we take advantage of that by going on many outings with Kensington residents, from visits to Civil War battlefields and local museums, to nature walks, to cultural events at the Kennedy Center,” she said. “We also have a Global Dining Adventures group that dines out at a different restaurant each month, a Kensington Choir, art activities, lectures for lifelong learners, a pinocle group, an active book club, and a series of ‘Author Talks,’ among other activities.”

True’s commitment to the residents is evident in the energy she puts into



Shari True

her work and the enjoyment she takes from it. “We are proud of the great cultural diversity among our staff, and we recently held our second annual Multicultural Celebration, where team members showcased their countries of origin by dressing in their traditional attire and bringing in food to share,” she said. “This event has become a favorite among residents and staff alike.”

True intends to continue making an impact in every possible way. “Professionally, I plan to expand our program offerings to Kensington residents by developing more partnerships here in the Reston community, and by creating a stronger volunteer network. I strive to offer a wide array of programming to pique the interest of as many residents as possible, and to address all realms of wellness – spiritual, social, intellectual, physical, and more,” she said. “Hands down, the best part of working at Kensington is getting to know and spend time with our residents.”

In other words, True is truly committed to “The Kensington Promise” ... and to making an impact.

If you would like to volunteer at Kensington, go to [www.kensingtonreston.com](http://www.kensingtonreston.com) and click “Volunteer” under “Contact.”

## Terraset Principal Lindsay Trout Promoted to Executive Principal for Region 1

Contributed by Terraset PTO

Terraset Elementary School Principal Lindsay Trout was recently promoted to Executive Principal for FCPS Region 1. Trout was Principal at Terraset for 11 years and is herself a product of Reston schools, having attended Terraset, Hughes Middle, and South Lakes High Schools. During Trout's tenure at Terraset, she made inclusivity and equity a top priority with the creation of her "Terraset Together" initiative. Trout was recognized as the FCPS 2021 Outstanding Principal, as well as a Washington Post Top Principal Finalist in 2022 and 2023.

Trout's last day at Terraset was Friday, Oct. 20. Students, staff, and the com-



Photo by Jennifer LaFollette

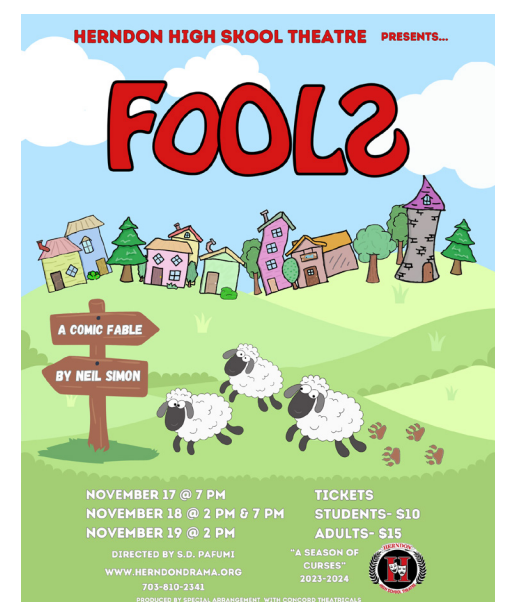
munity celebrated Principal Trout and wished her well with a thank you banner signed by students and staff, a box of notes from students and families, an assembly of performances by each grade level, a commemorative illustration of Terraset from the Terraset PTO, and a kiss and ride parade that stretched well down Soapstone Drive. Congratulations on this much-deserved accomplishment!

## Herndon Theatre to Perform 'Fools' in Late November

Contributed by HHS Theatre

Herndon High is preparing for its fall play, "FOOLS," by Neil Simon. Although it ran on Broadway for four weeks in 1981, it has been repeatedly produced in colleges, high schools, and community theatre for the last 40 years. The play is set in Ukraine in the early 20th century, in a seemingly common peasant farming town, except that everyone who lives there is cursed with stupidity. Since it is intended to be a farce, the audience must ask themselves whether the villagers are actually stupid, living under an ancient curse, or if they just believe they are stupid, because that is all they have ever known. To set the story in motion, a teacher from the outside is sent in to break the curse.

Theatre director Scott Pafumi has directed the play before. “My aim in re-creating this directorial vision, is to



bring comedy and laughter to our audiences, while teaching my student actors and techs another classic genre of theatre. This smaller than average ensemble-driven cast will work together to create humorous characters, physical schtick, and the best in comic timing for the stage. I plan for the creative process to be fun, light-hearted, and just as enjoyable to rehearse as it will be to perform,” said Pafumi. The play will run the third weekend of November.

# EDUCATION

## South Lakes Chorus and Chamber Orchestra Stun With Carl Orff's 'Carmina Burana'

By Caroline Ayres, Staff Writer

“Carmina Burana” may sound more like a spell from Harry Potter than a piece of music. But nearly everyone has heard the cantata – even if they don’t know it. And the music students at South Lakes High School will not forget it.

This fall concert season, the South Lakes chorus program, as well as the Chamber Orchestra, took on a daunting feat; performing Carl Orff’s 25-movement, hour-long masterwork just two months after the school year began. Although such a feat is enough to strike fear in the hearts of seasoned performers, the programs not only took it on, but pulled it off with flying colors.

The Reston Community Center partially sponsored the concert, using a portion of a \$22,000 sponsorship that covers several different arts programs within the school.

The performers matched the grandeur of the epic piece, including multiple professional percussionists, two pianos, a full string section, a full chorus – including three professional soloists as well as multiple professional tenor and bass guest choir singers, three woodwind players, and the choir



South Lakes Chorus performs at fall concert. Photo by Shannon Ayres

and orchestra teachers, who took turns conducting during the performance.

The quality of the concert impressed audience members. “I thought it was really good,” student Hunter Church said. “The different movements were extremely energetic and really cool, and the narrative made through the movements was really interesting.”

Student performers were also thrilled by the result of their hard work. “It was really fun singing with everyone,” said chorus program member Alex Hall.

South Lakes Principal Kimberly Retzer was pleased with the effort and initiative both programs showed. “I am so excited that Mr. Baldwin and Ms. Irish [orchestra and choir directors, respectively] are providing the opportunity for our students to perform this classic piece. It speaks to their confidence in our students to take on such a complex piece of work,” she said. “I also love to see our different performance programs working together to showcase the many talents here at South Lakes.”

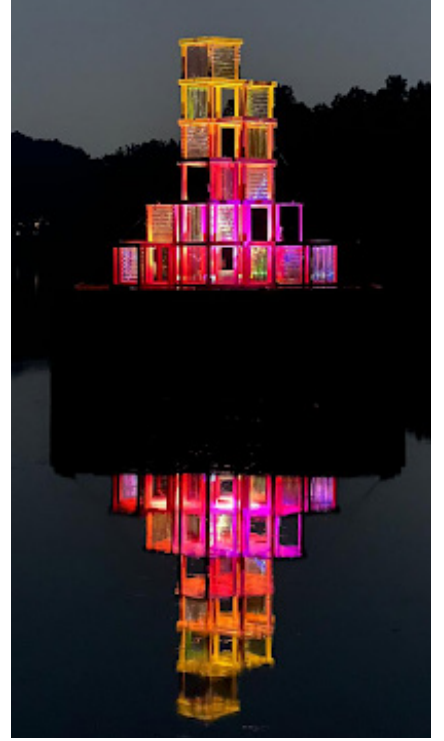
## School Club Creates Calendar to Raise Funds for Public Art

By Lucy Rosst, Guest Writer

STEAM Team, a club at the South Lakes High School that creates public art installations for display on Lake Thoreau each year, is taking fundraising to new heights with its 2024 calendar.

The 2024 STEAM Team calendar is now available for a \$20 donation, or three calendars for \$50. All profits will fund this school year’s public art projects.

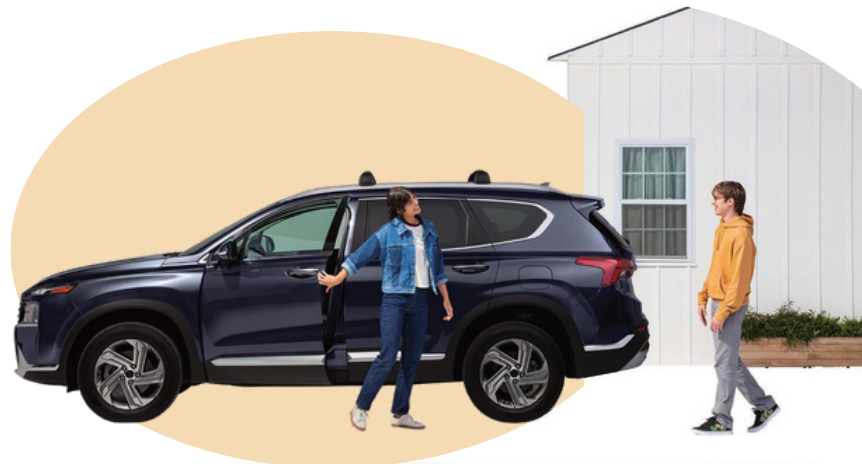
“It is a layering of collaboration, starting with patron Mary Prochnow, an amazing photographer who captures wildlife images around Lake Thoreau. Then we partner with Public Art Reston, a nonprofit organization dedicated to inspiring, engaging, and connecting the community through the public art experience,” explained Marco Rando, the team’s faculty sponsor. “[Mary and Public Art Reston] meet with students



STEAM Team's 2023 project is displayed on Lake Thoreau. Photo contributed by STEAM Team

Continued on Page 9

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# SPORTS

## Herndon High's Nicole Kimtis Voted Coach of the Year

By Erin Grogan, Guest Writer

In her first year teaching and coaching at Herndon High School, girls field hockey coach Nicole Kimtis was named Liberty District Coach of the Year. Despite a challenging year, Coach Kimtis was able to stay positive. "There were a lot of things that were out of our control this year, many unforeseen circumstances that could have brought the team down," Kimtis shared. However, despite the setbacks, Kimtis commented on how coaching as a first-year teacher was a great way for her to build relationships with the Herndon community, both in the school and out. Even though this is her first year, she was enthusiastic to get involved and immediately connect with a group of students. Kimtis graduated from James Madison University in the spring of 2023 with a degree in Special



Herndon's field hockey coach, Nicole Kimtis, is Liberty District Coach of the Year. Photo by Jeff Carr

Education. While there, she played club field hockey, and was excited to have the opportunity to coach at Herndon High School. "I like the opportunity to be a role model for young people," Kimtis re-

marked. "Coaching gives the chance to know students beyond their academics, and I've enjoyed getting to know all of the people involved. Without people like Lara Runz, my assistant coach, Tzeitel

Barcus, our DSA, and Dan Coghlan, our ADSA, the season would not have been so successful. On being named Liberty District Coach of the Year, Nicole stated, "It feels great! The recognition is nice but it was a shock, there's so many wonderful and talented coaches in our district and so many students are lucky to be coached by them." Despite Herndon's season not ending the way the team wanted, there's a lot of success to build on, and Kimtis was touched by the recognition from fellow coaches for her efforts. "It is my hope that the team continues to grow and develop. Field hockey is a great sport for character building, team building, and athletic development and I'm looking forward to what next season brings." Congratulations to Coach Kimtis, Liberty District Coach of the Year, on her first season.

## Seahawk Cross Country Team Runs Fast

By Seahawk Boosters,  
Laurie Dornak

It is often said that the Seahawks cross country track and field athletes run fast. But assistant cross country coach Chris Sloane observed, "Cross country is as much a team sport as it is an individual sport. You need all runners to do their part."

The boys team competed in a tough district, placing 4th overall, qualifying for the Northern Region race, where they finished 5th. Hoping for a better outcome, the team looks forward to most athletes returning next year, building back stronger, and qualifying for states next year.

The Seahawks boys team worked well as a pack, but not enough to get all the points they needed. Manny Aguirre (First Team All District) led the team to a 17th place finish, followed by Jason Raffel (First Team All District) in 20th, Kian Linam 22nd, George Hood 27th, and Cole Casey in 28th.

The girls had a strong showing. "The girls team is coming together in strong fashion at the Championship part of the season. It is awesome to see these girls push the team to new school records, too," said Coach Sloane. The girls won the Concorde District Championship which was the first district win for the girls team since 2017. Caroline Elliott won the individual title. At the Northern Region Championship, the girls were runners-up to a very strong Yorktown team which edged them out by just three points. This is the best finish in school history.

Elliott once again took the individual title in 17:42 (4th fastest time in school history) and Catalina Simon finished 10th in 18:24 (9th fastest time in school history). Aya Ryan finished 18th in 19:03, Bella Harsanyi 19th in 19:09, and Irene Ota 22nd in 19:14 to round out the top five Seahawk scorers. Each doing their part, they had strong momentum going into the VHSL State Championship. While they didn't get the results they wanted, the runners had a great season.

"I think we shocked some other teams. While we're a very successful track program, we are showing we can take the cross country programs to a higher level of success. That is one of my big goals for the boys and girls programs," said Coach Sloane.



Seahawk XC Teams Run Fast Girls Concorde Champs photo by team



South Lakes Seahawks won their first-ever Concorde District Championship and also completed their first ever perfect regular season 10-0 in school history. Their run in the state tournament fell short last weekend, but look for more about their historic season in the December issue. Media created by Misha Zarechnak of the 2023-24 South Lakes Athletics Leadership class

Continued from Page 8

at the beginning of the year to review a selection of Mary's images. [To choose the final images], the students consider each photo carefully, then hold a series of votes, discussing details of which ones they like."

The STEAM Team meets after school every Wednesday, working through the process of creating art installations. This year, not only are they working on a new sculpture for Lake Thoreau, but also have been offered the opportunity to create a new sculpture for display at Reston Town Center.

The club boasts many engaged members, providing them with experience in science, technology, engineering, art, and math. The club, said sophomore Connor Kehde, "has opened me up to the more artistic side of creating something. I've always been more into engineering, and STEAM Team has helped me open up to the idea that [engineering and art] have to work together to function."

This is the third year the club has created a calendar to fund-raise for the Lake Thoreau sculpture; this year's goal is to raise \$6,000. Scan the provided QR code to purchase a calendar for 2024, and support the STEAM Team's creation of public art for all to enjoy.



# OPINIONS

## Reston is No Place for a Casino

Community Action Needed to Ensure Plans for Reston Do Not Include a Casino

By Lorri Zell, Guest Writer

Fall in Reston is one of my favorite times of year. I love hearing the crowds cheer and band play at South Lakes football games, the leaves crunch under the feet of our neighbors and friends walking on the sidewalks and paths, and the laughter of children jumping in the leaves swept into piles. I am reminded of exactly why I moved to Reston.

I moved here for community. The sense of belonging to something bigger than myself, and the sense of commitment to our neighbors and our shared resources.

When Reston started in 1964, the vision was to create a community of opportunity where all residents could fully participate in the success of the community. The importance and dignity of each individual were the focal points of planning, with one of the primary goals to build the facilities and social organization needed to provide a full life centered around neighborhood living, working, educational and recreational opportunities.

**This fall we need to activate our community like we have never done before to ensure these goals are upheld.**

By now you have likely heard that the developer of the Wiehle-Reston East Metro Station, Comstock Corporation, is attempting to pass a bill in the Virginia General Assembly to bring a casino to Fairfax County and that Comstock's sights may be set on Reston for the casino location. As of last week, campaign finance reports indicate that in one month Comstock raised and spent at least \$270,000 in contributions to elected officials and political action committees.

A casino was not in the original plan for Reston written sixty years ago, and a casino is not in the plan for Reston approved and adopted by the Fairfax Board of Supervisors less than sixty days ago.

The Reston Comprehensive Plan calls for the Wiehle Metro Station neighborhood to be an urban neighborhood with encouragement for higher education, research & development, and tech uses. This vision is key

to achieving the original goals for Reston.

The Wiehle Metro Station is not an island surrounded by trees or abandoned industrial sites. Rather, families live just a few hundred feet from Comstock's property south of the toll road, and it is because of this close proximity to residential neighborhoods that the Reston Comprehensive Plan says that compatibility with the neighborhoods is a primary concern.

The casino sponsors and supporters claim a casino at a Silver Line Metro stop is necessary to diversify the county's tax base because commercial office space is failing. But Comstock's CEO, Christopher Clemente, sang a different tune about the Wiehle Metro station this winter. In an interview with Bisnow Washington, D.C., he stated, "I firmly believe the prevalence of the "work from anywhere" model is temporary. While the pandemic's impact on the way people work and the places people want to work may linger, it is unrealistic to think such drastic changes to the way society and the economy function are permanent. However, the oft-mentioned "flight to quality" is real, as many companies have rethought their office utilization plans and realized that they can operate with less square footage than pre-pandemic. Reston Station in the Dulles Corridor is a perfect example of this continuing trend."

Despite in-depth reporting on Comstock's efforts to pass a casino bill, some in the county, including Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey McKay, have attempted to temper concerns by saying that since a formal proposal for a casino has not yet been submitted, there is nothing to comment on, and nothing to do. Unfortunately this is a little more than a good old "nothing to see here."

**But there is a lot to see here.**

If this legislation is passed and signed into law, one of the next steps would be to issue a referendum to all Fairfax County voters to decide if a casino should be established at the Wiehle Metro Station. Not just Reston voters, the entire county.

A similar referendum campaign was waged in Richmond twice and failed to pass both times. Defeating it was not an easy task. The developers behind the casino spent more than \$10 million this year alone. A campaign in Fairfax County would be substantially more expensive.

Comstock knows this and they are still moving forward with their efforts.

When the latest Comprehensive Plan was passed, Chairman McKay stated, "... this updated Plan safeguards existing neighborhoods and improves transit. It also sets the stage for the future of Reston, that is both responsive to the core values of Reston's founder, Bob Simon, and to the valuable position that Reston plays as a major economic development location in the County."

We need the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors to stand up for the plan for Reston that they endorsed by opposing this bill in their legislative agenda. As you read this, bills are being drafted and negotiated, and deals are being made. Now is not the time for political complacency.

Nor is it the time for community complacency. The Reston Association and our local elected officials, Hunter Mill District Supervisor Walter Alcorn, Senator Jennifer Boysko, and Delegate Karen Keys-Gamarra, have all been firm in their opposition and commitment to stopping this legislation. They know our community. But legislators in Richmond need to know us too. We must activate as a community to stand up for the future of Reston. Go to <https://citizensopposedtorestoncasino.org> and join the fight for community.

*Lorri Zell is a Reston resident who served on the Reston Comprehensive Plan Community Task Force from May 2020 through September 2023. Mrs. Zell is the founder of the community group Save Our Sunrise, which joined with the Reston Citizens Association, Reston Strong, Rescue Reston, and Reston 2020 to start Citizens Opposed to Reston Casino (CORC).*

### Ask Doctor S.

## HO-HO-Holiday Time with Your Family

*The most wonderful time of the year is upon us, and it is a great time to prepare for the festivities. In addition to the sweet potatoes and apple pies, here are some mental health reminders to keep in mind during the holidays.*

1. If you are hosting or attending a family gathering this year, please take care of yourselves. Make sure you are getting adequate rest, nutrition and exercise, and limit alcohol consumption. Remember that perfect does not exist and it is okay if traditions change. Ask directly and often for help with preparing, shopping, wrapping and cleaning up. No one has to make all of the magic alone!
2. Set expectations ahead of time about conversations, and keep the news OFF during family time. Be sure that everyone knows that discussions about politics, world events, religion and gender need to be polite and respectful, or avoided all together if that is not possible!
3. You are not entitled to be waited on. Ask how you can help the host, and, if no help is needed, keep the host company or entertain younger family members.
4. Remember that when you ask someone for help, the person you are asking will do things, and NOT necessarily the way you do it. Only you do things the way you do them. Express gratitude.
5. Anyone can take a break at any time. Sometimes a few minutes in another room is all you need.
6. All family members are not required to spend every moment together. If an adult wants to take a walk or run an errand by themselves or with others, and not everyone is included, be understanding.
7. Stay in an Airbnb or hotel if you would be more comfortable. There are many reasons why adult children do not want to stay with their parents or other relatives. Be respectful of others' boundaries and needs (i.e., it is often not personal).
8. Be flexible and prepared for plans to change.
9. Communicate directly, respectfully, and kindly. Everyone who can needs to "use their words."
10. Parents, set expectations for family get-togethers with your children ahead of time. Allow your children to select their own clothing and food (unless there are health restrictions). Ask your teens and young adults before posting pictures of them on social media. If Grandma and Grandpa want to serve cookies and hot chocolate for breakfast, let your children enjoy it.



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**Wishing everyone a wonderful holiday season!  
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**Dr. S.**

Dr. Hayley B. Sherwood is a longtime Clinical Psychologist in Reston/Herndon. To learn more, please visit her website at [www.oakhillpsychological.com](http://www.oakhillpsychological.com).

# LIFESTYLE

## Lakeside Dining: Red's Table

By Steph Drahozal, Staff Writer

A hidden gem with waterfront views is tucked away in a corner of South Lakes Village Shopping Center. Red's Table opened in Reston in September 2015, replacing the former Lakeside Inn.

The Tracy family, South Reston locals, own the restaurant. Brothers Matthew, Patrick, and Ryan Tracy grew up right around the corner from the restaurant, even graduating from South Lakes High School. Opening the restaurant in their hometown was a dream years in the making.

The 181-seat eatery boasts floor-to-ceiling windows and an outdoor patio that seats 50. For year-round service, the outdoor space is equipped with gas heaters and an awning.

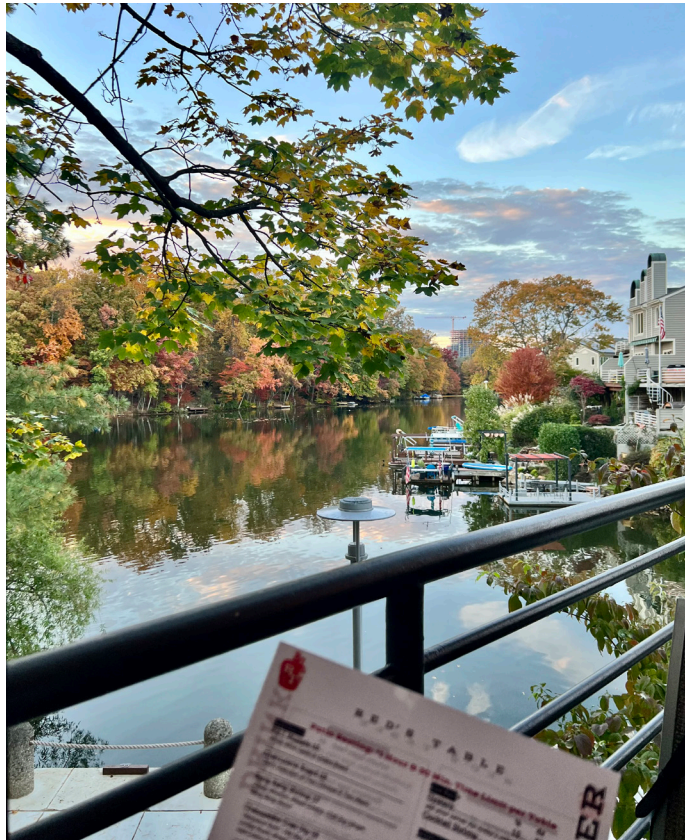
Suburban Northern Virginia does not have many waterfront restaurants, but Red's has a stunning view of Lake Thoreau.

Red's serves a plethora of delicious menu items. While the menu leans heavy on fish, shellfish and beef, there is a dish to please every palate from the dry-aged beef burger to the beet and goat cheese salad. For seafood lovers, raw bar specialties include oysters and cocktail shrimp, as well as a creamy crab dip appetizer, bang bang shrimp, and Chesapeake Bay crab bisque. The Vegan Cauliflower and a Mushroom and Rolled Oat "Burger" are unique options for vegetarians.

The kitchen bakes all the bread in-house, and uses local ingredients as much as possible, getting inspiration for seasonal dishes from the Reston Farmers' Market. The restaurant sources steaks from Virginia and Maryland, and offers a variety of Virginia craft beers.

While signature cocktails are always available, Red's also has a rotating menu of seasonal cocktails, like the current Autumn Apple Patch, as well as a couple of tasty non-alcoholic mocktails.

Wine lovers will be glad to know that Red's offers half-price on Mondays. Brunch is served from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. Saturdays and Sundays. To enjoy the views from the back patio, be aware that seating is first come, first-served, and is limited to 90 minutes.



Photos by Steph Drahozal



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### Keepin Reston Green

## Falling leaves? "Leave" them be

Contributed by Reston Environment Advisory Committee

It's November, and that means falling leaves and hours of raking, bagging, and transporting them. The National Audubon Society estimates that every year, eight million tons of leaves are sent to landfills, generating greenhouse gas emissions, and occupying valuable landfill space. Exporting fallen leaves to landfills deprives our yards of nutrients including nitrogen, potassium and phosphorus that are essential for healthy vegetation. Fallen leaves also create essential habitat for a diversity of overwintering wildlife. So instead of sending these bags of goodness off to the landfill, why not reap the rewards of your efforts and try these sustainable alternatives? Your lawn and garden will be happier for it.

Use a mower to shred leaves to create natural mulch. Rake up the shredded leaves and:

- Spread them as a thin layer across the lawn to put nutrients back into the soil, producing a healthy lawn come spring. Ensure not to layer the leaves so thick that they block the sunlight and generate moisture that may kill any grass growing underneath.
- Pile them in approximately three to six inch deep piles around trees and shrubs. The mulched leaves help protect the level of moisture that reaches the trees and helps regulate soil temperature. Mulching is an excellent way to manage weeds growing in the garden bed all year around.
- Add small amounts of mulched leaves to a compost bin and turn the compost to mix in all the decomposing material. The mulched leaves will decompose faster than whole leaves.



Photo by Doug Britt

If you have the space, consider storing the fallen leaves in bin bags or creating a leaf mold bin. Leaf molds are collected stockpiles of leaves that are broken down naturally by fungi (rather than by bacteria as with compost piles). Once bagged or piled up in a bin, they can be left alone until they're ready to use (which may take about two years to breakdown). Unlike compost, leaf mold does not contain a high level of nutrients but can be used to mulch garden beds.

These mulching techniques do not work well with pine needles because of their size, shape, and composition. These can, however, be easily added to a garden bed mulch pile. Whichever option you choose, make sure to dampen down the leaves to prevent them from blowing or washing away to a neighboring property or clogging stormwater drains.

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# LIFESTYLE

## Plan Your Spring Travel Now

By Tanya Mazarowski, Guest Writer

Reston travel advisor Mike Ball recommends autumn as the best time to put 2024 Spring Break plans in place. There are wonderful options to consider for family fun, and starting now allows you to take advantage of better pricing and availability. You'll also have plenty of time to book with a group of friends, so the kids have peers to pal around with while parents get a little vacation time, too, win-win!

Cruises are an easy way to get out of town, and are extra fun when a bunch of families plan the getaway together. Baltimore, New York, and New Jersey have bustling cruise ports with options for families who prefer to avoid the cost of air travel. Those ships often have week-long itineraries to the Caribbean. Florida is the most popular cruise origination

point in the U.S., and from there, you'll find a variety of itineraries and destinations.

Each cruise line has a different feel, so connect with Mike to find the right ship for you. For young kids, some lines have tremendously cool kids clubs on board. For families with a LEGO master, MSC Cruises kids' club is the coolest LEGO-themed hangout outside of LEGO Land itself.

If you're not into cruises, all-inclusive resorts are relaxing options. Mike Ball will package airfare, resort, and ground transportation for less than the price of paying for them separately. Jamaica, Dominican Republic, and Cancun are accessible by direct flights out of our area. All three have a wide variety of fun and safe resorts to choose from, so talk to

Mike to find one that fits your family and budget.

The Florida theme parks are perennial favorites. There are a lot of parks, and a lot of ways to enjoy them, so having a plan in place before you go is wise. Disney and Universal can be bibbidi-bobbidi-busy during spring break. Working with Mike, a Disney expert, will simplify the planning and give parents the opportunity to make the most of family time. And as always, there is no fee to book cruises, all-inclusive resorts, or Disney Vacations through Mike Ball.

Contact Reston's travel advisor, Mike Ball, at 703-828-TOUR (8687) or [mike.ball@cruiseplanners.com](mailto:mike.ball@cruiseplanners.com) a Cruise Planners advisor and esteemed "College of Disney Knowledge" graduate.



I can't wait to help you plan your next amazing adventure. I'm here to help you research, plan, and book cruises, all-inclusive resorts, small-group tours... for no fee! I am here to save you time and money, and make travel fun and stress free.

Mention this Reston Letter ad and get an additional \$100 off your next 7-night or longer cruise or all-inclusive resort vacation.

-Mike Ball

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Land & Cruise Specialist  
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t: 703-828-8687  
e. [mike.ball@cruiseplanners.com](mailto:mike.ball@cruiseplanners.com)  
w. [www.travelproconsulting.com](http://www.travelproconsulting.com)



## Stowe Road: New England Charm in the Heart of Reston

By Debbie Anguizola, Reston-based Realtor of Compass

Known for its picturesque charm, friendly front porches, and welcoming faces, it's hard to resist falling in love with the Stowe Road neighborhood. Built by Fairfield Homes in the 1980s, the roughly 150 single family homes along Stowe Road and its adjacent streets were designed to recreate the feel of a New England town.

Originally from New England, Betsy Coffey and her family were instantly delighted by the architecture. They bought their home in 1984 while it was under construction. "What we loved back then – and still do – are the friendships that exist between so many neighbors of all ages," she said. "We have loved watching the young people play in the cul-de-sac and then go off to college! It has always been a neighborhood where people look out for each other," she added.

With a mix of colonials, Cape Cods, and Victorian-style farmhouses with wrap-around front porches, this highly coveted neighborhood attracts many families seeking a close-knit community that has a traditional feel. The gently winding streets and cul-de-sacs, where houses are nestled into the naturally hilly landscape, further enhance the neighborhood's beauty.

An avid runner, triathlete, and coach, resident Sharon Adams enjoys being within walking distance of the Lake Newport pool and having easy access to the Reston paths and lakes. She fell in love with the peaceful neighborhood during her runs through the area. "We moved here in 2005 with a baby on the way, and it's been great for our two kids to grow up in this community-within-a-community," Adams said.



Stowe Road houses add to North Reston's charm. Photos contributed by Debbie Anguizola

Liz Kamp and her family moved to the neighborhood in 2014, enticed by its kid-friendly, cul-de-sac lifestyle. "There is always something social going on – from fire pits on a Friday night to our annual Hotdogs on Halloween event," she said. "But I especially love knowing that everyone helps keep an eye out for our kids." Walkability to local shops and restaurants was another draw for Kamp, owner of New Trail Cycling and Strength Studio at Lake Anne Plaza.

Those aspiring to make a move to this idyllic neighborhood might need to be patient. Only three homes have come on the market this year, ranging in price from \$782,000 to \$975,000.

**Schools:** Aldrin Elementary School, Herndon Middle School, Herndon High School



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### THE RESTON HOUSING ROUNDUP

**\$510,000**  
Median Sales Price  
in October 2023

**6 Days**  
Median Days on Market  
in October 2023

**100%** Median Sales Price / Original List Price  
in October 2023

**9**  
Coming Soon Listings

**52**  
Active Listings

**63**  
Pending Listings

Oct 2023 vs Oct 2022

**-8.3%**  
Median Sales Price  
\$555,990 in October 2022

**-3**  
Median Days on Market  
9 Days in October 2022

**+0%**  
Median Sales Price / Original List Price  
100% in October 2022

Data Source: Bright MLS

### Bird Appreciation

T	E	M	S	R	I
U	M	A	T	E	T
R	A	N	K	E	S
I	C	E	I	T	
P	L	A	Y	G	O
D	E	V	E	R	A
A	D	E	R	E	Y

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