

# THE RESTON LETTER

**OPENING SPRING 2024**  
1800 Reston Row Plaza

**VIDA**  
FITNESS

## VIDA Fitness Plans Spring Opening at Reston Row

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

VIDA Fitness is not a gym. Rather, explained company president Aaron Moore, “We are a social club and total wellness destination. We are a place where our members can gather to socialize, eat, drink, work, relax, recover...and yes, exercise.”

The 50,000-square-foot flagship location on Reston Parkway will open in April 2024, which will be the organization’s seventh location in the D.C. area. David von Storch, “a local entrepreneur with a passion for all things wellness,” started VIDA, Moore said. “[He] wanted to create something that got him out of bed every morning energized and excited.” Von Storch, who speaks Portuguese fluently, chose the name because ‘vida’ means life in Portuguese as well as Spanish.

There’s much more to VIDA than physical exercise. “Food and beverage are a massive part of our operation, which is why we have two restaurant concepts with delicious healthy food, comfort food, beer/wine/spirits, and a full coffee/espresso program,” Moore said. “Food service is available both indoors and outdoors, including on the rooftop.

“VIDA is all about relaxation and recovery as well, with three separate as-

pects,” Moore said, citing the Aura spa that offers massage, facials, waxing services, and wellness treatments: the Bang Salon for haircuts and color services, “and a Recovery Center with IV therapy, Cryotherapy, Hyperbaric Oxygen, and Lymphatic Drainage. We also have ice baths, cold plunges, sauna, and steam room.”

VIDA may not be a gym, but it certainly offers every aspect of fitness training, including “all the top-of-the-line strength and cardio equipment ... along with tons of free space and large turf areas to stretch and do your own bodyweight workouts,” Moore said.

The group fitness schedule will feature more than 100 classes a week— yoga, Pilates, barre, HIIT [High Intensity Interval Training], Body Pump, Zumba, dance, resistance/strength training, core strength, breathing and meditation – in four studios. In addition, there will be “a full archive of virtual classes available online and on demand.”

Unique to VIDA is its “state-of-the-art Hot Yoga Studio, which will host Heated Barre and Pilates classes,” Moore said, as well as a separate Pilates apparatus studio led by a third-generation certified Joseph

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**WELCOME**

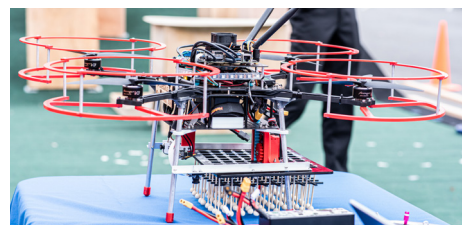
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### the bulletin



Gabriel Homes Hall of Fame awards, Reston mystery novelist, new Town Center mural, Foley Dance Academy’s big win

### education



Vertical robotics winners, Common Ground Childcare and Fusion Academy features

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South Lakes wrestling program, fall sports recap, HHS Sports Boosters campaign

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Restaurant review of Pisco y Nazca, neighborhood spotlight, where to dine for Valentine’s day

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Restonian’s Hot/Not List, and Ask Dr. S

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## Community Mourns the Passing of Mr. Reston

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

Reston lost one of its own on Dec. 26. A car hit and killed Peter Lee McCandless, 87, while he was crossing Reston Parkway during his daily walk for exercise. Many knew him as Mr. Reston.

Born in St. Louis, Mo., in 1936, McCandless moved his family to Northern Virginia in 1964, and embarked on a long and prosperous career in public relations. As public relations manager for Reston founder Robert E. Simon’s Palindrome Corporation for three years, he played a major role in shaping the new town. He kept Reston as a client while working for various local public relations firms – among them William Rolle Inc., Siddall Inc., The Washington Agency, and Griffin & Company Inc., as well as his own one-man, Reston-based The McCandless Company.

McCandless graduated from Principia College in Illinois with a bachelor’s degree in dramatic arts and English literature in 1958. He joined the U.S. Army, taught English in Turkey, and spent a year at Yale Drama School -- where he trained alongside soon-to-be stars Joan Van Ark and Robert Duvall. Upon returning to Principia in 1962, he met, then married, Nancy Muehl. Their only child, Kristopher, was born in the same hospital as his father.



Peter McCandless was the public relations manager to Reston’s founder  
Photo by Kris McCandless

After losing Nancy to cancer in 2010, and 16 years in Lovettsville, McCandless moved to Reston in 2014. “He was excited to be starting a new chapter in life, no longer having to pull weeds and mow three acres of grass,” his son recalled. He married Susan Ehart in 2017.

McCandless loved traveling, including family camping trips to the American Southwest, visits to his sister in Hawaii, and ocean cruises with Susan to explore Europe, the Mediterranean, Asia, South America, and Australia, Kristopher McCandless said. Both men documented

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# THE BULLETIN

## In Loving Memory *Marita L. Rawski*



Marita L. Rawski, 82, of Clinton, Ill., formerly of Reston, Virginia, passed away at 1:35 a.m. on Dec. 2, 2023 at Manor Court in Clinton.

Services will be 10 a.m. on Jan. 5 at Christ Lutheran Church, Clinton, with Rev. David Dunlop officiating. The family has entrusted Calvert Funeral Home, Clinton, with arrangements.

Marita was born June 30, 1941 in Chicago, Ill., the daughter of Frederick and Lucille (Stemm) Lange.

She is survived by her sister, Katherine, her daughters, Katherine and Carol, and her grandchildren, Ryan, Will, and Anna. She was predeceased by her parents, brothers Martin and Donald, sister Betty, son Joseph, and ex-husband Henry (with whom she maintained an amicable friendship over the years).

Marita grew up in Illinois as a Lutheran Pastor's daughter. As an adult, she moved to Los Angeles, Cal., where she met and married Henry Rawski in 1965. Henry's job took them from California to Ohio and on to her beloved Reston, Virginia in 1978.

Marita was a successful real estate agent selling in the Reston area from the 1980s well into the 2000s. For 40 years, she was a devout and active church member of Good Shepherd Lutheran Church, where she could usually be found altar serving, volunteering, and singing in the church choir. She delighted in cooking, gardening, traveling, spending time with family and friends, and taking long walks with her many dogs over the years. She was passionate in her love of all animals, especially dogs.

Marita's caring, fun-loving and adventurous spirit will be missed by all who knew her.

Memorials may be directed to  
Second Chance for Pets  
in Clinton, Ill.  
Online condolences  
may be made at  
[www.calvertmemorial.com](http://www.calvertmemorial.com)

## Gabriel Homes Supports Adults with Developmental and Intellectual Disabilities

By Holly Weatherwax, Staff Writer

In the early 1980s, Fran Campbell, mother of a child with developmental and intellectual disabilities, saw a need for residential settings for adults in that community. She approached Father Gerry Creedon, who was director of Catholic Charities, and they began discussing how they could support these adults that wanted to live independently.

At the time, it was difficult to find housing for non-traditional owners and renters, who often faced discrimination. Getting this project off the ground required changing laws about home ownership, which in turn, necessitated time, lobbying, and perseverance. The late Virginia State Senator Joseph V. Gartlan Jr. (D) crafted legislation that helped remove barriers associated with introducing group homes into communities.

With the help of the Reston community, Catholic Charities, and Fairfax County, Gabriel Homes opened in Reston in the late 1980s. The private nonprofit organization promotes independence through residential placement, training, and community integration for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities. Currently, 23 residents live in its six homes, five in Reston and one in Herndon.

According to the organization's mission statement, "Gabriel Homes exists to enable the adults we serve to open their doors to independence. Our residential placement puts a roof over their heads and, more importantly, a solid foundation under their feet. We offer the support and encouragement they need to develop their full potential. We distinguish ourselves from other live-in facilities by emphasizing independent living within a strong community context."

"We stress abilities, not disabilities," adds Father Bob Cilinski, who served for 33 years as the organization's president and board member.

Gabriel Homes also provides social structure for its residents. Weekends include a variety of activities and outings, sports, social club, individual hobbies, and time with family, friends, and neighbors. Residents are



Gabriel Homes Four 2023 Hall of Fame Inductees  
Photo courtesy of Gabriel Homes

active in the Special Olympics and often attend state and national competitions as well as annual camps and planned vacations.

As Gabriel Homes matures, so do the residents. A future challenge for the organization will be planning to address the needs of the residents as they age.

On Dec. 4, Gabriel Homes celebrated its founders – Fran Campbell, Father Gerry Creedon, Thomas Freaney Jr., Patrick Kane, and Aaron Palmer. It also created the first class in its Hall of Fame for long-time residents who have had a significant impact on Gabriel Homes: John Burkarth, Fr. Bob Cilinski, Mike Holupka, and Christopher Yorke. A plaque recognizing both the founders and the Hall of Fame members will hang at Saint John Neumann Catholic Church off Lawyers Road.

Volunteers are always welcome to assist with small projects, such as painting and gardening, crafts with residents, or sponsoring tickets for events. The annual Gabriel Homes Golf Tournament in September at Evergreen Country Club in Haymarket, Va., is the organization's largest fundraiser.

Interested in helping or know someone who could benefit from learning more about Gabriel Homes? General inquiries may be directed to [lynn@gabrielhomes.org](mailto:lynn@gabrielhomes.org) and more information is available at [gabrielhomes.org](http://gabrielhomes.org).

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Pilates instructor, and SweatBox, VIDA's "award-winning HIIT studio."

Most classes – which accommodate from 25 to 40 people depending on studio capacity – are first come, first served, but members must make reservations on the mobile app for SweatBox and VIDA Pilates.

Trainers – "the top talent in the area" – "have multiple certifications and a relentless passion for continuing education," Moore said. "Many have master's degrees in exercise science or a closely related field. We partner with NASM [National Academy of Sports Medicine] for our base personal trainer certification, the very best certifying body in our industry."

Why did VIDA choose to open in Reston? "We love the community. It's a very wellness minded and tech savvy combination of demographics. These are people that live life to its fullest, love to travel, love to socialize, and love to take care of themselves. Reston and the surrounding areas are also the perfect intersection of commercial and residential hubs where people live, work, and play," Moore explained.

VIDA, he added, is intended for "the wellness-minded, tech savvy individual that lives and/or works in Reston or the surrounding areas. People that need/want a third place – outside of home and their office – to work, socialize, and network. People that want and expect the best in each of our respective industries... food and beverage, events, spa, salon, fitness, wellness, and recovery."

"We have a full calendar of events for our members to engage, network, and socialize as part of the VIDA community and broader Reston/Northern Virginia communi-



View from just above VIDA's rooftop pool Photo by Benjamin Burgess

ty," he said.

As such, Moore said, "We've created a space where people can work all day long if they wish, complete with high-speed mesh Wi-Fi and a wide variety of both comfortable and functional seating. We also have private and semi-private meeting spaces, including a fully equipped conference room." There's also the 14th-floor Penthouse Pool and Lounge, "our one-of-a-kind rooftop pool club."

Membership is \$249 a month, but a Founding Member rate of \$119 month is being offered for people who join now, Moore said. The membership includes everything except spa and salon services, food and beverage, and personal training. People may join online now at <https://vidafitness.com/membership/options/>. An on-site parking garage will provide ample free parking. Hard hat tours are available by submitting the form at [vidafitness.com/reston](https://vidafitness.com/reston).

# THE BULLETIN

## Foley Academy of Irish Dance Wins Big at Regionals

By Megan Schmid, Staff Writer

Every year, the five American regions in An Coimisiún Le Rincí Gaelacha – the oldest and largest governing body for competitive Irish dancing – host major regional championships competitions called Oireachtas. Dancers journey from across the regions to compete in traditional Ceili (team) events, as well as solo step-dancing competitions.

In December, approximately 2,000 dancers, including 35 talented dancers from Reston's Foley Academy of Irish Dance, attended the 2023 Southern Region Oireachtas in Dallas, Texas. Ranging from ages 6 to 15, Foley Academy's Oireachtas team members began preparing for the big stage in April, practicing three or four times a week. Not only did their dancing improve immensely, but



2023 Foley Academy Oireachtas Team by NOVA Portraits

they also gained memories and created friendships that will last a lifetime.

Three Foley Academy Ceili teams – the U15 Girls 4-Hand, U10 Girls 4-Hand, and U15 Girls 8-Hand – won first place in their competitive events, and Foley had 11 additional teams rank in the top

placements for the Southern Region. Further, Foley Academy had seven solo championship dancers receive top rankings; four of those dancers qualified for the 2024 North American Irish Dance Championships (Nationals) - including a student from Langston Hughes Middle

School; and a fourth-grader from Terra-set Elementary School qualified for the 2024 World Irish Dancing Championships to be held in Glasgow, Scotland.

“The road to Oireachtas has its ups and downs, unexpected turns and bumps along the way, but through all of it, our dancers persevere so that they can continue to learn and improve,” said Shannon Foley, Reston resident and owner of Foley Academy of Irish Dance. “Their commitment to their team, to helping one another be successful, and their dedication to their dancing is proof that they are all champions.”

While Oireachtas may be over, the dancing never stops! Throughout March, Foley Academy dancers will be performing around the community to celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

## Reston Novelist Takes the Mystery Out of Being a Mystery Writer in Podcast Episode

By Elyn Wexler, Staff Writer

When Dan Heath wanted to chat with a mystery writer for his “What It's Like To Be ...” podcast, the bestselling nonfiction author had to look no further than Reston. That's where Donna Andrews has chosen to live and work for the past 22 years.

Andrews' prolific output, multiple awards, sincerity, and sense of humor make her an excellent choice. She is working on her 38th mystery novel, the 34th in her current series, which, she told Heath, “features ornamental blacksmith [Meg Langslow] who usually gets involved in a crime when one of her friends or family is in trouble.”

Her books – that fit into crime fiction's cozy sub-genre where the detective is an amateur sleuth, and the crime and detection take place in a small, socially-intimate community -- have garnered Agatha, Anthony, and Barry Awards; an RT Book Reviews Award for best first novel, as well as four Lefty and two Toby Bromberg Awards for funniest mystery. Her titles, she says, contain bad puns involving birds – for example, “Die Like an Eagle,” “The Falcon Always Wings Twice,” and “Between a Flock and a Hard Place.”

While Heath's podcast covers many interesting aspects of the mystery writer's craft, it says little about Andrews' personal life. Born in Yorktown, Virginia, she studied English and drama at the University of Virginia, then worked for Sallie Mae for 20 years. When the con-

sumer banking corporation relocated from Georgetown to Reston, living close to the city was no longer a priority.

Instead of her urban Arlington apartment, Andrews craved more space, and more nature. She asked friends and colleagues who lived in Reston to keep an eye out for a house on the market. “I wanted to plant things, and have deer eat them,” she recalls.

Not long after, she found the “perfect house” on a mostly wooded acre of land in South Reston. “It reminded me of my neighborhood in Yorktown -- in the middle of the woods, but conveniently close to everything.”

Most of the Meg Langslow books are set in the fictitious town of Caerphilly, a “nice place,” not unlike Yorktown or Reston, Andrews says. “The capital area deals with a lot of tourists as does my fictitious place, so it's not unrealistic.” And her characters are based on “people I've encountered. I avoid basing the bad guys on recognizable people. But when it comes to someone who does you wrong,” she cautions, “the author's motto is ‘kill them early in the book.’”

Andrews likes living in Reston, while not being enthusiastic about its infinite regulations, or neighbors who report perceived infractions. Still, she fully supports its characteristic “certain amount of pushback against unregulated growth.”

When not “immersed in deadlines,” Andrews gardens, listens to audio books (especially the British versions of P.D. James' mysteries), and true crime pod-



Reston Novelist Donna Andrews

casts, a habit initiated during the pandemic. She also acts as a “third parent” to her two local nephews.

As for literary Reston, Andrews participates in the annual Sisters in Crime Mystery Author Extravaganza which takes place the first Saturday in December at the Reston Regional Library. Twenty chapter authors talk about their new books and short stories. Andrews' books may be borrowed from the library, and signed copies are available for purchase at Scrawl Books in Reston Town Center.

Heath's bimonthly podcast series “What It's Like To Be...” launched Oct. 17, and reached the top 50 of Apple Charts in its first week. Guests have included a stadium beer vendor, a couples therapist, a criminal defense attorney, and a TV meteorologist. The conversation with Andrews, aired Nov 28. Listen online at <https://podcasts.apple.com/us/podcast/what-its-like-to-be/id1707204412>.



**Foley Academy**

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### Continued from Page 1

their family travels through photography.

McCandless was an art enthusiast, frequently visiting New York City's major museums and art galleries, his son said. “He would travel anywhere to see a Caravaggio,” Susan added. Music was another passion. “He helped start the

Reston Chorale in 1967 and would rejoin it in 2011, but not before soloing at his church [First Church of Christ, Scientist, Reston] and singing along with Pandora on his riding mower,” Kristopher said.

Along with his wife, McCandless explored and nixed the idea of opening a Great Harvest Bread Company bakery in Florida, his son said. Instead, his

father took a job at the Great Harvest store in Herndon. “He was a true ‘people-person,’ and absolutely loved working there,” Kristopher said. “The regular customers loved seeing him, too.”

A Celebration of Life in honor of Peter Lee McCandless will take place on Saturday, Jan.13, from 10 a.m. to noon, at the Reston Community Center Lake Anne, 1609-A Washington Plaza.

**THE RESTON LETTER**

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# THE BULLETIN

## Zimbro's New Mural Complements Mercury Fountain at Reston Town Center

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

Artist Nicholas Zimbro says the figure atop Saint Clair Cemin's white Carrara marble and bronze Mercury Fountain in the heart of Reston Town Center "stood as the central point of inspiration" for his new mural.

"Within the stories of Roman mythology, Mercury is the messenger god. The mural I painted is an imagined scene of Mercury traveling through the various realms," Zimbro explains. "It's a glimpse of midflight, at the special place that exists between separate realms."

"I wanted to create something that could serve as a moment of imagination for all of us, something that could exist as a backdrop for new memories and experiences. At the real root of it, I hope to work in ser-

vice of creating a better world," the artist adds.

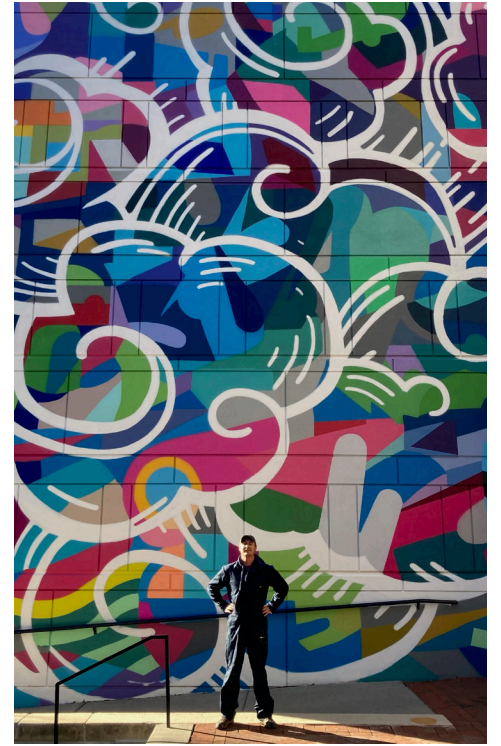
Zimbro used high-quality pigments encapsulated in resin to create "The Messenger." He spent about two weeks painting the 40-foot tall by 35-foot wide mural on-site, "at the very end of Fountain Drive."

Studying at the Pennsylvania Academy of the Fine Arts in Philadelphia influenced Zimbro beyond its classes and professors. The City of Brotherly Love is also known as the world's mural capital, home to more than 4,400 murals as well as Mural Arts Philadelphia, the nation's largest public art program.

"I view myself as a 'place maker' as much as an 'artist' or a 'muralist,'" and I have a deep reverence for the shared spaces we inhabit," he says. "I'm both humbled and honored to be able to live out my life's pur-

pose by being able to create these impactful works of art."

Many of the D.C.-based artist's works are located in Northern Virginia. Zimbro has partnered with Fairfax County, George Mason University, and ARTSFairfax, and produced much of the artwork at Capital One Center in Tysons Corner. BXP [Boston Properties], Reston Town's Center's property manager, reached out to him after seeing his work at Capital One. "My first large mural is inside 2000 Opportunity Way, the tall glass tower that says 'Fannie Mae' on top," Zimbro says. "BXP has been wonderful, trusting me with numerous spaces to activate within their campus [at the Green, Orange, and Blue Garages]. We have some even larger projects planned for next year!"



Nicholas Zimbro in front of his mural

## THE CALENDAR

### Polar Dip Returns to Lake Anne

Contributed by Lake Anne Merchants Association

This year's Polar Ice Dip fundraiser will benefit Food for Neighbors, Camp Sunshine, Friends of Reston, and a variety of Kiwanis Youth Programs in the area. Individuals and teams will be jumping in a freezing cold Lake Anne on Feb. 10. Check-in opens at 12 p.m. and jumping begins at 2 p.m. Winter market craft vendors will be set up and plaza merchants will provide food at the festivities. Sign up to jump or create a team today! Email [kiwanispolarip@gmail.com](mailto:kiwanispolarip@gmail.com)



### Pianist Robin Spielberg to play 'Moonlight & Love Songs' at RCC



Robin Spielberg

#### Romance is in the air!

Robin Spielberg, renowned for her emotive and masterful piano artistry, will take audience members on a journey through time and emotion at 8 p.m. Saturday, Feb. 10, in the Reston Community Center. The Steinway Artist will perform her original compositions as well as timeless classics.

Attendees can expect to be captivated by the delicate notes that evoke nostalgia and moved by the powerful crescendos that stir the soul. With engaging storytelling between pieces, Spielberg creates an intimate connection with her audience, making each concert a unique and unforgettable experience. Both long-time fans and newcomers to Spielberg's enchanting repertoire should brace themselves for an evening filled with elegance, emotion, and the timeless beauty of piano music.

Tickets are \$20 for non-residents; \$15 for Reston residents (patrons who reside in a property or work at a business within Small Tax District #5 should be sure to select the RESTON Price in the drop down after selecting your seating location). Tickets are available at <https://Restoncommunitycenter.com>.

### Café Montmartre to Host Moonlight Cabaret Singers

Dinner theater returns to Reston on February 3 at 8 p.m. at Café Montmartre in Lake Anne with the show, "Where or When: The Music of Rogers and Hart."

Following the 70-minute show will be an hour of singing and dancing to the music of the Moonlight Cabaret Singers. There is no fee or coverage charge. Just have dinner or drinks. Reservations are a must; email [Jerry@moonlightcabaret.com](mailto:Jerry@moonlightcabaret.com).

Richard Rogers and Lorenz Hart are one of Broadway's most successful musical teams. During the 1920s and 30s, they composed the music and lyrics for over 500 songs from 26 Broadway musicals and six films.

Chris Ryan and Jerry Katz, duet partners for the past 14 years, will perform 21 classics, half of them duets. Songs



Chris Ryan and Jerry Katz will perform at Moonlight Cabaret

such as "Manhattan", "Lady is a Tramp", "Bewitched", "Blue Moon", "Isn't it Romantic", and "My Funny Valentine."

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<https://www.reston.org/reston-camps>

# EDUCATION

## Pride of Herndon Marching Band Performs in Hawaii

By S. Worrell, Guest Writer

Congratulations to the Herndon High marching band and color guard for a successful showing at the Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade in December. The students had the honor to represent Virginia at the historic commemoration to pay respect to the Pearl Harbor survivors, veterans, and active duty military.

Marching bands from a number of states throughout the nation were invited to participate. Dignitaries, veterans and branches of the Armed Forces were also in attendance. Since the parade runs at night, the event is a spectacle of choirs, cars, balloons, floats, and bands marching under the starry sky down avenues of fairy-lit palm trees. The event was well-attended, with crowds five-people deep lining the mile-long parade route. It was a busy trip for the students. Time was scheduled for touring the island and learning about the Pacific at the Polynesian Cultural Center. In addition to marching in the parade, the band performed a tribute on the USS Missouri, attended a mass band performance at Fort DeRussy Park, met with veterans and toured the USS Arizona National Memorial. What began as excitement for

Hawaiian tourism and tropical beaches pivoted to a moving, dutiful, life-changing experience for many students. History was brought to life.

"We especially want to thank key organizers Angela McCafferty, Trip Coordinator/Finance Tech, and Marie Coleman, Pearl Harbor Chaperone Coordinator; without these two individuals managing logistics the trip simply would not have happened," HHS Band Parent Association President Lynn Reda said. "Hundreds of emails, phone calls, and texts were exchanged between Angela, Marie, and director Kathleen Jacoby starting in March of this year to make sure every detail was captured. All of this hard work was evident as the trip went off without a hitch. The band and parents are also extremely grateful to Lynne DeRoche, who became HHSBPA Treasurer in June. In addition to learning the BPA role, Lynne also took on managing the financial aspects of this complex trip, all in her first six months on the job."

Many thanks to all of the chaperones, parent volunteers, and the Herndon community who gave their time and funds to help our students experience this once-in-a-lifetime event.



HHS band marching in the 2023 Pearl Harbor Memorial Parade as unit 84 out of 106. Copyright Wm. Craig Dubishar

## South Lakes STEAM Team Chooses 2024 Public Art Design

Contributed by SLHS STEAM Team

Now in its 12th year, the South Lakes High School STEAM Team presented 10 prospective models to a committee of Public Art Reston members as well as professionals in art, photography, and architecture. Some concepts were nature-themed, others encouraged individuality, and a few pushed the laws of physics. After the committee narrowed it down to three finalists, the STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art Math) Team voted and chose "One, Two, Tree" as their design for the 2024 installation on Lake Thoreau.

The new sculptural installation will stand 10 feet tall and embrace the nature of Reston with a modern twist; viewers will see one tree from one perspective and a forest from another. For lighting, the students

plan to illuminate flowers fastened to the trees' branches. Realizing the flowers will be an interactive task for the whole team. In addition, each student will have a chance to work in a group to execute the overall design.

To fund the project, the STEAM Team is selling 2024 calendars featuring nature and wildlife photography by Reston resident Mary Prochnow. Calendars may be purchased online or in person at the Reston Museum. Donations are also welcome. Purchase or donate at <https://public-art-reston.square.site/product/SLHS-calendar/18>.

The SLHS STEAM Team Public Art Club has been creating temporary public art installations for the Lake Thoreau spillway (a utilitarian drainage platform) in Reston since 2014. Guiding the team as its advi-



Aldrin Elementary winter concert



Aldrin students' winter party



Aldrin winter concert Photos contributed by AES

## Finding Common Ground



Common Ground children and staff delivering Thanksgiving boxes, 2022. Courtesy of Common Ground Childcare

By Holly Weatherwax, Staff Writer

The planned community of Reston was designed to allow residents to 'live, work, and play' here, and be supported by the community in each of those endeavors. Providing accessible day care was an important part of achieving these lofty goals.

Restonian and community activist Reverend Embry Rucker started Common Ground Childcare in the early 1970s. Initially called The Childcare of the Common Ground Foundation, it opened at Lake Anne Plaza, where it remained until moving to its current location at St. Anne's Episcopal Church in 1988.

Liz Badley started at Common Ground in July 2018; she became Executive Director in mid-March 2020. She is a fierce advocate for the children who attend Common Ground and for their teachers.

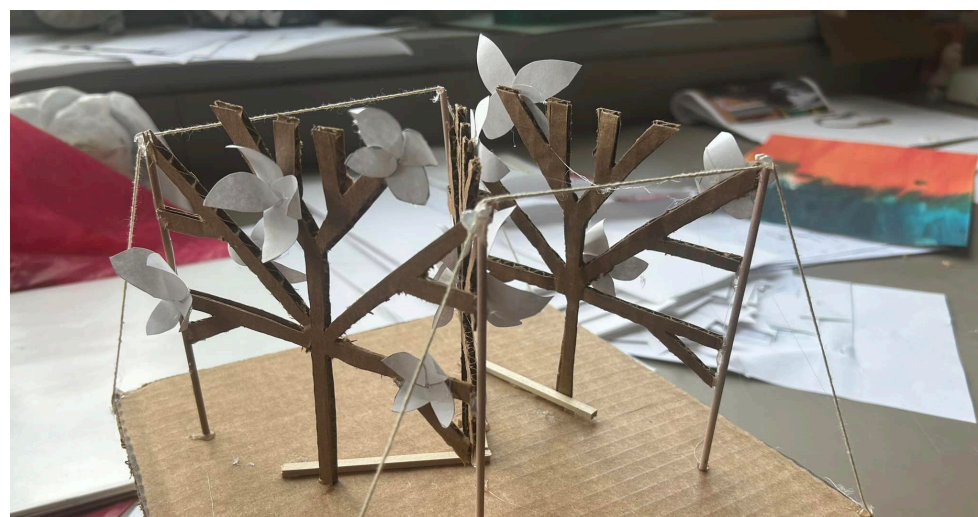
The staff sets this nonprofit day care center apart. There are currently about 21 full-time teachers as well as paid high school students. Many of the teachers

have been there for a long time – Miss Gitti, since 1972; Miss Susie and Miss Hui Hui, since 1989; and Miss Adelea, since 1997.

While the parent-run board of directors helps guide the school, Badley likes to think of the children as her clients. Among the objectives for children in this 'play-based' center are learning how to have safe and secure relationships with adults, and focusing on a growth mindset rather than rote skills.

As inclusivity is important at Common Ground, the staff works hard to ensure meeting the needs of all the children. When a parent approaches the center about enrolling a child whose needs may be slightly different from those of other students, the school will determine if they can staff appropriately to ensure that no child is set up for failure.

There is a waiting list for most of the age groups/classes. Parents interested in learning more about the program should visit [www.commonground-childcare.org](http://www.commonground-childcare.org). After a 30-minute Zoom tour, offered between 10 and 11 a.m., a late-afternoon site visit can be arranged.



The STEAM Team's "One, Two, Tree" model

sor is SLHS Art Teacher and working artist Marco Rando. STEAM Team students gain real-world experience by following the same process required for a professional artist to realize a public artwork in Reston; they use all the elements of STEAM to realize the sculptures.

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# EDUCATION

## Reston Students Win Vertical Robotics Competition in Dallas

Contributed by Ideaventions Academy

The Ideaventions Academy team Daedalus from Reston won first place overall in the Bell Advanced Vertical Robotics competition (Bell AVR) on Dec. 2 in Dallas. They also brought home first place for best presentation.

"I'm really proud of our collaboration as a team," said Arya Lohia, Daedalus' team lead. "Whenever you go to a competition, there are always things that go wrong, especially at this scale. But I think we did a really good job at finding simple solutions to our problems."

Teams from all over the country built a large main drone, and programmed a smaller drone, a ground vehicle, and three Sphero Minis (small robotic balls) to complete tasks for points in a simulated fire-fighting challenge. The main drone had to gather and dispense "water" (25 mm plastic balls) into burning buildings, while the other vehicles completed recon paths. Teams were also scored on their detailed

engineering notebook and an in-person presentation of their designs and game strategy to a panel of industry expert judges.

This is the second year Daedalus has participated in Bell AVR, and the second year they made it to finals; last year, they brought home second place.

The team put in long hours and hard work to reach this point. They started planning for in the summer. Nearing the competition date, they met all day on weekends and worked late after school.

As a result of their remarkable showing, Daedalus Robotics, along with the other seven top teams, has been invited to participate in an exhibition match at XPO-NENTIAL 2024, the global conference and exhibition for autonomy, in San Diego.

Unanet served as a Diamond-level sponsor for Team Daedalus. DEV Technology, Arjun Malavia, and Reliance Electronics Inc. were Gold-level sponsors and FPT Software, Manu & Prabha Malavia, 3G Federal Solutions LLC, and The Transport Group, Silver-level sponsors.



Ideaventions Academy's Drone Team "Daedalus" in front of Bell Helicopter, where the national competition was hosted. From Left to Right: Caroline Crowder, Vishista Indukuri, Logan Bendza, Head of School Ryan Heitz, Arya Lohia, Brogan Mutarelli, Kevin Keuny, Rishabh Yadava, Hunter Baker, Shivam Patel, and Matthew Halliday

### Reston's Fusion Academy: 1 to 1 Learning

By Casey Menish, Staff Writer

The words "safe space" might not be the first that come to mind when asked to describe a high school, but Fusion Academy in Reston has accomplished just that. The private middle and high school serves students in grades six through 12, with a one-to-one student to teacher ratio, enabling students to go at their own pace and get the most out of their education.

The Reston campus in Plaza America, one of more than 80 campuses nationwide, opened in fall 2021. It currently serves about 60 families in 22 classrooms.

Visitors get a warm greeting at the front desk. Behind the desk is a mosaic surfboard that references the roots of the organization, which started in California in 1989; students would bring their boards to school so they could surf at lunchtime.

"Students come here for a variety of reasons; some have ADHD, anxiety, depression, are in recovery, or they just are not learning as much in a big-

Continued on Page 7

### Making an Impact

By Chuck Cascio, Author and Former South Lakes teacher

As a teenager living in Reston in the late 1980s and early '90s, Jessica Arons remembers with a chuckle the "unofficial motto" that she and her friends thought was hilarious: "We're not dead; we're just Reston."

"That was before the Town Center existed," she explains, "so we spent time at each others' houses, or hung out on the golf course, playgrounds, or bike path tunnels. Or we'd go to Anita's in Herndon for breakfast burritos or to the Amphora diner in Vienna where we'd get coffee and fries and stay up all night talking."

Those all-night chats may not have seemed energizing at the time, but in some way they may have contributed to Jessica's passion for helping others. After graduating from South Lakes High School in 1990, she received her bachelors' degree from Brown University and then her law degree from William and Mary. She

## Jessica Arons' Road from Reston



Jessica Arons credits her passion for helping others in part to growing up in Reston.

is now the Senior Policy Counsel for the American Civil Liberties Union, a position she has held for nearly six years. Jessica's belief in the goals of the ACLU are a core motivator both in her strong work ethic and her commitment to help secure individual freedom. Jessica notes with

pride that she is surrounded by people at the ACLU who share her passion: "I love the people who work here. They are some of the smartest and most compassionate, creative, and dedicated people you'll ever meet."

Working with those people has created the energy behind the ACLU's commitment to pursue vital issues and achieve positive results. Reflecting on those achievements, Jessica says, "During my time at the ACLU, I'm probably most proud of my work to help pass amendments in Michigan and Ohio to enshrine the right to reproductive freedom, including abortion, in their state constitutions."

Perhaps while growing up, Jessica and her friends could only imagine a day would come when Reston youths would not have to travel to Vienna or Herndon or underneath tunnels or bike trails to enjoy the freedom of youth. Now, for Jessica, her vision has grown well beyond those youthful thoughts.

## Broadway Night is Back Again!

By Caroline Ayres, Staff Writer

Set your calendars, Restonians: "Broadway Night" is back! South Lakes High School will open its curtains for the 2024 edition of "Broadway Night: Heroes vs. Villains" on Friday, Jan. 26, and Saturday, Jan. 27.

The annual show has grown from a small performance to a musical theater extravaganza large enough to rival professional productions. Featuring classic Broadway hits, as well as lesser known bangers, "Broadway Night" has become a town tradition, something to which both students and other Restonians alike look forward.

This year's theme centers around the divide and contrast between heroes and villains, putting emphasis on being a hero in one's own story. Performances feature solo acts as well as large ensemble groups, and numbers such as "Ya Got Trouble" from "The Music Man," "Giants in The Sky" from "Into The Woods," and

"I Just Can't Wait to Be King" from "The Lion King," as well as performances by three choir classes.

The large student cast and behind-the-scenes crew – including light, sound, and stage technicians, set builders, and choreographers – are as big as the performance; participants range from high school seniors to elementary schoolers. The performance serves not only as a wonderful experience for community members, but also as a source of connection for performing arts students across the South Lakes pyramid. Elementary students and middle schoolers alike that will one day attend South Lakes have the opportunity not only to perform with older peers, but also to get to know music and theater arts teachers they might have in the future.

Students of all ages find many things to enjoy not only live on stage, but also before and after. "My favorite thing about the performance is the entirety of show



Broadway Night 2024 Logo, illustrated by Alex Hall

weekend," said Clara Neag, a dance captain and a vocal director. "I love being on the stage as well as hanging out with friends in between shows."

Shows start at 7 p.m. Jan. 26 and 2 p.m. Jan. 27. Tickets are \$15 for students and seniors, \$20 for general admission and can be purchased at the box office or online at <https://www.southlakeschorus.org/tickets/>

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# EDUCATION

## Google Announces Robotics and AI Education Grant for Virginia Middle Schools

Contributed by Google

In December, Google announced a \$520,000 grant to expand access to robotics and artificial intelligence education programs across Virginia middle schools through nonprofit partners For InSpiration and Recognition of Science and Technology (FIRST) and the Robotics Education & Competition Foundation (RECF).

The grant will fund programs to support existing robotics clubs or create new ones for these middle school students. The funding is part of a \$10M initiative launched by Google.org to give back to the communities Google calls home.

"[The] grant from Google will help middle school students across Northern Virginia discover the growing importance of robotics and artificial intelligence," said U.S. Representative Gerry Connolly. "There's nothing like using fun activities like robotics to unlock the curiosity of young minds and help

them learn skills and prepare for jobs of the future."

The announcement came during an event with Rep. Connolly at Herndon Middle School, one of the schools receiving support to create a new robotics club. During the event, local Google volunteers introduced students to fun and interactive STEM activities, including a CrunchLabs laser catapult kit.

"I am delighted that Herndon Middle School will soon host an after-school robotics club and am grateful to Google and FIRST Robotics for their help in making this happen," said Fairfax County Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid. "When we increase access to after-school STEM activities like this program, we're preparing students to lead us into futures yet to be imagined and careers that don't yet exist. Our young people will create the technologies of tomorrow. We appreciate Google and FIRST Robotics for helping our students expand their horizons during after-school hours – it makes a difference!"



Virginia Congressman Gerry Connolly talks to Herndon Middle School students to celebrate their new robotics club grant. Photo contributed by Google



Dominion Christian's Upper School students enjoy Inspiro week before Christmas break. Trips to D.C. sites like Mount Vernon, sketching at the National Gallery, tours of NOVA Labs or the Cyber Crime Center in Fairfax, and Life Skills sessions on how to frame a house or make a pizza were just a few of the opportunities available to students. It's a wonderful chance to enjoy experiences that blend a variety of disciplines. Photo contributed by Dominion Christian School

Continued from Page 6

ger classroom," Campus Director Nicole Fitzgerald said. The school is also an option for students who may have had educational setbacks during the pandemic, and could use a boost to get them back on track. What makes the school special, Fitzgerald said, is "the most amazing teachers, and the most amazing families. Culture is very important, and everyone feels welcome and excited to be here."

The schedules are similar to that of a college student, where each class is held a couple of times a week. Students set their own schedules, so they are learning at times they are best able to focus and participate in the coursework. Some students attend Fusion Academy full-time, while others take one or two classes at a time, or come for tutoring.

Gretel French, Director of Student Development, assists students with their college applications. Fusion Academy offers ACT and SAT prep, post-secondary counseling, and work experience courses; a focus on socialization helps with college readiness. A recent graduate's parent told Fitzgerald that the student was much more comfortable going to their college professor's office for help because they were used to the one-to-one teaching style.

Many students say they prefer Fusion Academy because it is safe, both physically because of the secure building, and emotionally and socially. The school does not have gender-specific bathrooms, and they have a number of LGBTQ+ students who attend. "It is nicer, less people, safer," an 8th grader said. "It's less embarrassing to ask questions; you get made fun of and you get more out of your classes when it is one-to-one," another student noted. "The teachers and students are nicer, it is very inclusive, more social, and you can go at your own pace." A senior who has been at the school for a few months, said he "likes the teachers, envi-



Fusion Academy's staff provide a quiet, comfortable space for students to learn. Photos by Isadora Guerreiro

ronment, and not as many distractions." He found the school for himself online, wanting a self-paced program, then pitched the idea to his parents.

Students also take part in various clubs, like the Dungeons & Dragons Club or the Plant Club, and can take a "Making the Band" class in the music studio. In the cozy Homework Cafe, students complete their homework within an hour after class, so assignments don't go home with them.

It is not too late in the school year to get students into Fusion Academy. Fitzgerald said that there is typically an influx of enrollment this time of the year, after first semester grades come out.

## Crossword Corner

By Reston crossword constructor, Joe O'Neill

Joe O'Neill, a 40-year Reston resident, is a retired former English professor and IT executive who recently began writing and submitting crossword puzzles to major U.S. daily newspapers. Several have appeared in the Wall Street Journal and one is upcoming in the New York Times. This is O'Neill's sixth crossword puzzle creation, made specifically for The Reston Letter readers!

### New Beginnings

	1	2	3	
4				5
6				
7				
	8			

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#### ACROSS

- PBS across the pond
- How comedian Tig Notaro delivers her one-liners
- Roman god of all beginnings, including 2024's (belated Happy New Year to all!)
- Jason \_\_\_\_, who played the dad on "How I met your mother"
- Brief cry for help

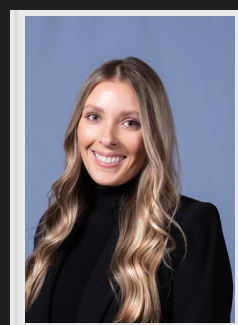
#### DOWN

- Hillsides, in the Scottish Highlands
- "You got that right!"
- This and the ones above and below
- Dance club spinners?
- Big initials in fashion



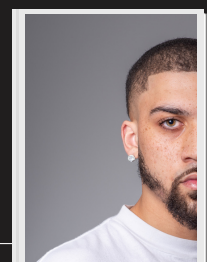
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# SPORTS

## South Lakes Wrestlers Take On the ‘Toughest Sport’

By Laurie Dornak, Seahawk Boosters via Athletics

When you wander down to the first floor full of athletics offices and work out space at South Lakes High School, you will be underneath the gymnasium. But, you will also run into an expansive room with a blue wrestling mat and find 35 tough athletes preparing for their upcoming season full of matches in a variety of tournaments, duals, tris, and quad competitions.

Led by Head Coach Danny Corum and his team of assistant coaches, the Seahawks are adding to a rich history of South Lakes Wrestling. Coach Corum is South Lakes' very first District Champion, Northern Region Medalist and State place winner 1981. On staff, he has South Lakes Assistant Coaches Ray Pete, Chuck Kettenacker, and Matt Sanders, South Lakes District Champion, Regional finalist, State place winner 1996 and 1997.

Wrestling is termed the toughest sport because it uses all parts of wrestlers' bodies and minds in rigorous workouts and matches. Seahawk wrestlers will challenge many of their fellow Seahawks to join them in a workout; but few join in. When the season started, the program opened with 50 athletes. No cuts are ever made. The challenges to "make" (and maintain) weight for the season November through February coupled with the grueling preparations quickly whittled down that roster to 35.

Seahawks rostered a young team this season with two state-qualified returning



South Lakes Junior Aiden Sanders (right) has competed through the state level both years of his high school career. Photo by Nellie Scrapper

athletes: Senior Jayden Loveranes (144#) and Junior Aiden Sanders (138#). Both have competed through the state level each year of their high school careers to date and have had a terrific start to their 2023-24 season. Joining them are strong freshman, Nate Scrapper (113#), Topher Scrapper (126#); with Sophomore Levi Suzuki (106#) and standout Junior, Max Guilloteau (165#), rounding out the core varsity squad.

Many more Seahawk team members chal-

lenge each other weekly for the opportunity to wrestle at each weight class. They are producing pins and points contributing to some strong team performances and putting Seahawks on the podium. Before the holiday break, the Seahawks competed in the King of the Rock tournament at Rock Ridge High School. Thirty-two teams were on the mats; the majority of them had 10-plus wrestlers each. Freedom, South Lakes, and Herndon had 9, 6, and 8 wrestlers finishing 10th, 12th and 13th, respectively.

Individually, Seahawks were represented by Loveranes, Sanders, and Suzuki who stood on the podium winning medals.

Wrestling is an artform for these athletes. No one wrestles the same although they may be taught the same techniques and coached by the same coaches for years. At the end of the day, in a match, they stand alone competing to win, lose, or draw. It can be a lonely place on the mat but a terrific way to cross-train for the multi-sport high school athlete.

Seahawk traditions and give-back run deep. Many alumni return during their collegiate breaks to visit and share their experiences with the current team and former coaches. Ethan Myers from the class of 2023, Kevin Martin, class of 2020, and Naveed Javid, class of 2019, recently visited the program. Javid and Martin were 2018 and 2019 District champs, Region place winners and State qualifiers, respectively. Javid also wrestled at Washington and Lee. Greg Copeland, South Lakes' District Champion in 1982 and 1983 and Northern Region Medalist 1983 also recently visited with the team.

Interested in learning more or getting involved? Reach out to Coach Corum. For the steadfast Seahawk fan, check out the team's social media (@slakeswrestling on Instagram) and the schedule on the Seahawk Athletic website. The wrestling team would love to see you in the stands cheering on these hard-working Seahawks at their next tournament.

## Herndon High School Aims to Update Stadium

### Sports Boosters' 'Elevate the Nest' Campaign in Full Swing

By Brian Crosson, Guest Writer

At first glance, Amy Emmatty, her husband Anil, and their children Nathan and Lyla look like an ordinary Herndon High School sports family. Anil is an assistant track coach at HHS. Nathan, now a sophomore at Christopher Newport University, played football and ran track back when he was a Fighting Hornet. Lyla, a junior at HHS, followed in her big brother's track shoes; she also gets the crowd on its feet as a member of the dance team.

But the Emmattys' enthusiasm for HHS sports runs a little deeper. While Lyla and her teammates leave it all on the track, Amy hustles in her own way, serving for the last six years as president of the HHS

Sports Booster Club. The club's primary mission is fundraising, providing the critical financial support that HHS sports programs need to operate.

"People do not realize how important our fundraising is to our sports programs," Emmatty explained. "FCPS cannot provide everything we need for a team to play. For example, FCPS only provides our teams with funding for coaches, referees, and transportation. Everything else must be provided by the Booster Club and ticket sales. The teams could not play without the generosity of our sponsors and the community. And I cannot say enough about the tireless contributions of our board members. The HHS sports programs would not be the same without their efforts."

Tzeitel Barcus, HHS Director of Student Activities, echoed Emmatty's sentiments. "I really can't say enough about the appreciation we have for our boosters. These parents volunteer so much time, energy, and heart to give our student athletes so much. Our goal in the Activities Office is to give all students an opportunity to find their passion through extracurricular activities, and the HHS Boosters help us to do that."

The Booster Club raised at least \$100,000 each of the last three years. With these funds, they purchased a state-of-the-art weight room, track equipment, and a scorer's table for volleyball and basketball; in addition, they upgraded the baseball and softball fields, and repainted both press boxes.

This year, the Booster Club wants to tackle a greater challenge: the stadium. While

the school itself underwent extraordinary renovations in recent years, the stadium remained unchanged. According to Emmatty, a targeted upgrade to the stadium's facilities will bring a boost to community morale, as well as to the revenue streams the program can bring in.

"The students see the facilities at other schools, and they can tell that ours are really far behind. For example, our scoreboard is really out-of-date, and FCPS doesn't intend to replace it until 2032. A new digital scoreboard would really improve the look of our most visible sports facility, and it would allow the school to take advantage of sponsorship opportunities that right now are underutilized."

This year's "Elevate The Nest" fundraising campaign seeks to raise \$307,000 for stadium-related renovations. In addition to replacing the scoreboard, the Booster Club plans to replace the stadium fencing, reposition the entry/exit gates, upgrade the team benches, and replace the stadium's aging sound system.

"We need every dollar we can get in order to complete this project, so we are counting on a lot of help from individual donors," Emmatty said. "But what will really put us over the top is corporate sponsorship. We will have so many ways to work with corporate sponsors and help get their names out into the community. We will work with you to find a sponsorship arrangement that fits your goals."

Emmatty stressed that the HHS Sports Booster Club is a registered 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization; 100 percent of donations go directly to the project being



The Emmatty family

funded.

"Every board member is a volunteer. Our only motivation is to support HHS sports. We know the community will step up if they are aware of the need," Emmatty said.

To contribute to the Elevate The Nest campaign, please visit [https://bit.ly/elevate\\_the\\_nest](https://bit.ly/elevate_the_nest), or scan the QR code. Amy Emmatty can be reached directly at [HHSsportsbooster.president@gmail.com](mailto:HHSsportsbooster.president@gmail.com).



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# SPORTS

## South Lakes 2023 Fall Athletic Teams Fly High

By Laurie Dornak, Seahawk Boosters via Athletics

The 2023 fall sports season was an exciting time for Seahawk fans and South Lakes athletics teams. Getting it done in the classroom and regular season competition, 275 Seahawks competed deep into the 2023 post-season with great success. In the classroom, 205 student athletes were recognized for carrying a 3.5 or higher GPA.

**Competitive Cheer** finished the postseason #4 in the Concorde District and #5 in the Northern Region tourney. Sophia Randall and Taryn Dougherty were recognized 1st Team All District and All Region. Audrey Flynn, Sydney Howell, and Amalia Wyatt recognized 1st Team All District and 2nd Team All Region; Virginia Banton and Carmen Bezdek Hughes were recognized 2nd Team All District.

**Cross Country Girls** team finished as the District Champions, taking second place at the Northern Region meet. Individual All District results included, Caroline Elliot 1st, Catalina Simon 5th, Bella Harsanyi 8th, Aya Ryan 10th; Individual Region accolade included Caroline Elliot 1st, Catalina Simon 10th, Aya Ryan 18th, Bella Harsanyi 19th, Irene Ha 22nd, Lea Soderholm 48th, and Juliana Aguirre-Martinez 54th.

**Cross Country Boys** team finished fourth at the District meet and fifth at the Northern Region meet. All District individual accolades went to Jason Raffel 8th, Noa Gibson 13th, Manuel Aguirre-Martinez 15th, Kian Beumer 17th, Cole Casey 18th, George Hood 19th, Charlie Wilkins 23rd, Ryan Quinn 31st, Nicolas Hernandez 42nd, Santiago Dew 46th. Individual All Region was awarded to Manuel Aguirre-Martinez 17th, Kian Beumer 22nd, George Hood

27th, Cole Casey 28th, Noa Gibson 37th, Charlie Wilkins 41st.

**Field Hockey** were the Concorde District runners-up and Northern Region quarterfinalist. First team All District and All Region went to Mackenzie Kingswell and Rachel O'ner; Anna Harris was named 1st team All District and 2nd team All Region, and Ella Boyce named 2nd team All District.

**Co-Ed Golf** team finished as Concorde District champion for the first time and took third in the Northern Region tournament. Individual finishers on the All District team included Felicity Chen, Alexander McClain, and Nathan Spurrier, who was also a Northern Region and 6A State Qualifier. Felicity was a Northern Region Qualifier for the girls tournament and finished fourth at the 6A State Tournament.

**Girls Volleyball** District and Regional accolades were earned by Harlan Wyche, 1st Team All District and All Region; Carmen Quinn-Irons and Tori Wedge were 2nd Team All District and Honorable mention went to Sena Elston and Eva Collingham.

**Football** – with 30 seniors, the team delivered a first ever 10-0 regular season winning the Baron Cameron Bowl and Concorde District Championship. Coach Jason Hescok was named Concorde Coach of the Year and quarterback Nick Harris was named All District Player of the Year. First team District awards went to Harris, Xvavier Swain – OL, James Zschunke – WR, Colin Rutland – TE, Kevin Velez – DL, Savion Grante – DE, Jacob Kyger – LB, Cameron Theis – LB, Jack Schnabel – DB, Dillon Benyo – K, Brian Kennedy – All Purpose. 2nd team District awards to Jacob Kyger – LB, Issac Copeland – RB, Brian Kennedy – WR, Mohamed Ali – OL, Finn Wilkins – OL, Aiden Billings – DL, Misha Zarechnak – DB, Brian Kennedy – DB, Zavier Legler – All Purpose, Dillon Benyo – P, Brian Kennedy – KR. Honorable Mention All District awardees are Cody Wood – RB, JP Neaves – WR, Brian Kennedy – PR, Walker Morris – C, Diego Alfaro – OL, Joey Falls – OL, Nathan Deglel – DL, Amare Thaxton – DE, Joe Redican – DB, Xavier Legler – DB, Aarmann Choudhry – DB, Tyler Andre – DB. Lastly, All Northern Region 1st team honors were awarded to Nick Harris – QB, Xvavier Swain – OL, James Zschunke – WR, Brian Kennedy – All Purpose, Kevin Velez – DL, Savion Grante – DE, Jacob Kyger – LB, Cameron Theis – LB, Jack Schnabel – DB, Dillon Benyo – PK, and Colin Rutland – TE received 2nd team All Region.



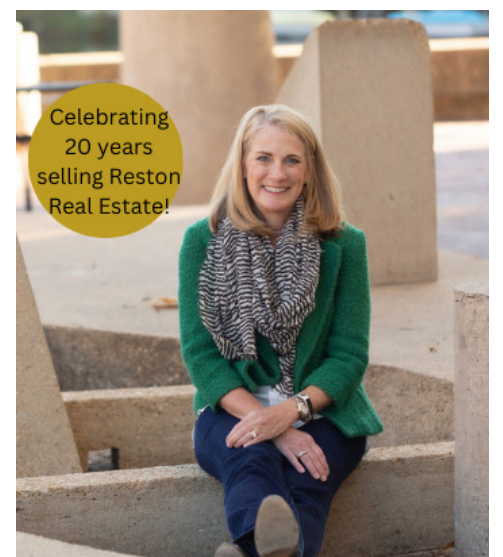
South Lakes Fall 2023 Athletes Excel compilation by SLHS Athletics



Nathan Spurrier was a state qualifier. Photo courtesy of SL Athletics



Coach Anderson with Felicity Chen, who finished fourth at the state tournament. Photo courtesy of SL Athletics



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# OPINIONS

Restonian

## Another Year, Yet Another Reston Hot/Not List

By Restonian, Reston Blogger

Well, 2023 has departed not with a bang, but the quiet whisper of a jet-age air conditioning system possibly shutting down (or even more dramatically, going co-op). But somehow, this columnist is still cranking along on little more than tepid lake water and dreams, so it's time yet again for the Official Restonian On Your Side News You Can Use I-Team List of What's In and What's Out for 2024 (tm). Accept no substitutes!

**OUT:** 99-story condos on golf courses, or so we hope // **IN:** 99-story casinos • **OUT:** Lake-cooled air, courtesy of RELAC // **IN:** Seizing the means of production (of tepid lake water), or crossing fingers for an unseasonably cool spring, summer, fall, Indian summer, and that one week in late January where everyone wears shorts • **OUT:** Algae blooms in lakes // **IN:** Algae blooms in creeks, streams, and our bathtubs • **OUT:** WMATA's 'Spicy Fun House,' as seen on Google Maps // **IN:** Memories of functional mass transit • **OUT:** Nextdoor posts about horses running wild // **IN:** Nextdoor posts about Nextdoor posters • **OUT:** Waiting for the long-overdue W&OD trail bridge over Wiehle // **IN:** Waiting for the long-overdue W&OD trail bridge over Wiehle • **OUT:** Canceling Lake Audubon // **IN:** Canceling bloggers who use the word "mauvetacular" • **OUT:** "Local" newspapers dropped vaguely near people's homes, at least if you're in a "good" zip code // **IN:** The Reston Letter, produced by volunteers and delivered by uniformed federal agents • **OUT:** Waiting for Wegmans to open // **IN:** Waiting for everything else to close

Ask Doctor S.

## Ideas for Seasonal Depression

**Q:** How do I deal with my college-aged child who struggles with seasonal depression while he is home for winter break?

**A:** At this point, college-aged children have likely been home for their several week-long breaks, and parents are typically filled with a range of emotions – from excitement about having their child home, to sadness about a child who is growing up and knowing the time at home is limited, and to fear, frustration and joy about how a child has evolved since being away. Students themselves also experience many mixed feelings about being home for extended periods, as they have begun to transition into adulthood and are experiencing independence often for the first time in their lives. Parenting a child who struggles with a mental health condition, including Seasonal Affective Disorder, or SAD, requires communication about needs, expectations, and boundaries. If anyone related to you or in your close circle has suffered from migraines, diabetes, thyroid disease, or a myriad of other physical illnesses or limitations, it is likely that you have adjusted and planned for what that person needs. Having a loved one who struggles with his mental health requires similar care and accommodations.

For most people who struggle with SAD, symptoms appear during the fall and winter as daylight decreases. Lower levels of serotonin and vitamin D (some of which comes from sunlight) in the colder and darker times of the year also may have a negative affect on mood. According to the Mayo Clinic, signs of SAD include feeling sad, listless or down most of the day, every day; oversleeping and lethargy; overeating, especially carbohydrates and sugar, and weight gain; feeling

guilty, hopeless and worthless; and having thoughts of not wanting to live. For a variety of reasons, women, young adults and people with bipolar disorder tend to be at higher risk for SAD.

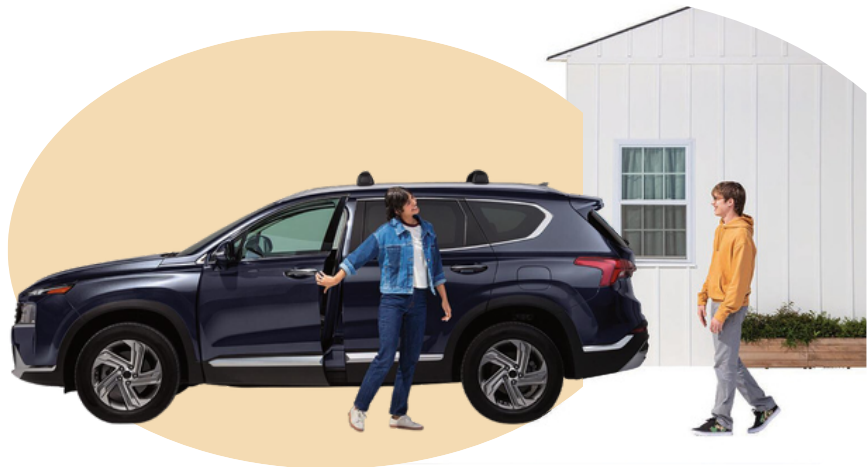
Psychotherapy and medication can help with SAD. Most people with depressive symptoms, however, really need someone to consistently show up and just listen, while not offering unsolicited feedback or bombarding them with questions or solutions. Pay attention. Does your child need to opt out of some family time or leave early from a meal or outing? Does he need encouragement to limit screen time or maintain a sleep schedule? Have you stocked up with his favorite healthful foods? Would a lightbox help (check online for many great reasonably priced options that provide an exposure to 10,000 lux of light and produce only a little UV light)? Giving your child the space to ask for what he needs shows that you are trying to understand, whether or not you have experienced something similar. If your child tends to avoid conversation, hang in there and keep trying to be an emotionally safe parent. Ask your child to go for a drive somewhere or, if your child allows it, go into his room late at night when it is dark and stare up at the ceiling together. Some of the best conversations can happen when eye contact is not required. Keep showing up. Be present. Stay quiet and tuned in.

**Thank you for your question.**

**Psych'd for another one in February! -- Dr. S.**

*Dr. Hayley B. Sherwood is a longtime Clinical Psychologist in Reston/Herndon. To learn more, please visit [www.oakhillpsychological.com](http://www.oakhillpsychological.com). Please check out our website for information about our NEW PRESCRIBER!*

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# LIFESTYLE

## Navigating the Reston Association Review Process for Your Home Remodel

Contributed by Synergy Design and Construction

Remodeling in Reston comes with the unique challenge of seeking approval from the Reston Association Design Review Board (DRB) whenever exterior work is involved. While this can seem daunting to homeowners, it doesn't have to be! Here are five tips gleaned from navigating countless successful submissions over the past 15 years.

**1. Make the DRB Submittal Requirement Checklist your friend**

Choose the appropriate exterior modification and pay close attention to the pieces on the design review checklist found on RA's website. Gather information for each line item and note the items that ask for multipart descriptions (e.g. "manufacturer, series, and style"); don't skip anything and check each one off. Sounds simple, but leaving out even a small piece of information leads to delays in processing your application, so take your time with this.

**2. Provide too much, rather than too little, information.**

Think about photo angles a reviewer will care about (and include wide angles). What do neighbors see when they look at your home? Is there a public space or path behind your home? If so, what is the view? Reference your cluster's design guidelines in your notes (i.e., describe your new front door color as "Duron

'Pottery Blue' per cluster-approved options for exterior trim" and your reviewer will know you've already done your homework.

Label all parts of your submission – photos, plans, new product specification pages. Ensure the front and back sides of the home are obvious and photos are marked with arrows, circles, etc. calling out locations of proposed work as well as descriptions of what's shown (both existing and new).

**3. Plan to get hold of your neighbors**

All applications require signatures from three of your neighbors so plan ahead! You need at least one immediately-adjacent property owner and two other nearby owners (not renters). If you live in a cluster or condo, at least one signature must be a cluster board officer. Signatures do not serve as their approval of your project (this is a separate process that only happens if someone has concerns about your work); they are just acknowledging your request for DRB approval. Note: Some clusters require a preliminary review of your submission by your own cluster board but this step only makes your application move through the RA process faster.

**4. Questions? Ask your Covenants Advisor!**

Find your Covenants Advisors at the link below (also "Find my Advisor" under the Property Owners Resources tab on the RA website). Advisors are RA em-

ployees and are here to help, so send an email with questions or schedule a quick online meeting to share your package before you submit. They're the ones you email your completed application to anyway, so why delay?

**5. Have a realistic timeline in mind.**

After your application is submitted to your advisor, the DRB will add your project to their review agenda (often added to the upcoming virtual DRB meeting) which is most Tuesdays of the month. You'll wait 7-14 days for your confirmed meeting time (which may be two or more weeks away). If your submission is thoroughly prepared, the approval process will be a breeze and the meeting is often over in minutes!

While the approval process can feel cumbersome, rest assured that reviewers are eager to help Reston residents and ensure that all voices are heard. Like you, we are thankful to live and work in a community dedicated to preserving and promoting continuity and beauty, both historical and modern. To that end, our team is always happy to shepherd homeowners through the review and approval process.

More information on the RA Design Review process: [www.reston.org/covenants-design-review-board-faqs](http://www.reston.org/covenants-design-review-board-faqs)


The DRB application found at this site includes a link to the design requirements for specific Reston clusters and single-family homes.




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## How To Fix Storage Mistakes in Your Home

Contributed by The Tailored Closet

When life gets busy, it's easy to throw items in boxes or shove them on shelves. We've all been there! Check out these organizational solutions from The Tailored Closet.

**Tip # 1: Use Narrow Spaces**

A narrow space doesn't need to be ignored. In fact, it can be used creatively to allow for storage of items that normally get put someplace they really don't belong. Think of your broom, put in the back of the hallway reach-in closet!.

**Tip # 2: Think Vertically**

Having items all over the floor not only creates a mess, but also can be a safety hazard. We love our mudroom storage options, for example, by a front door or coming in from a home's garage for storing

items vertically.

**Tip # 3: Utilize Different Sizes of Storage Containers**


Our experts would recommend a variety of sizes for storage containers as well as a variety of custom shelves and drawers in any closet or built-in in your home.

**Tip # 4: Consider Accessibility**


Toys and games for kids should be stored at their eye level, while adult books and décor can and should be stored at a higher level.

**Tip # 5: Rotate Seasonally**

Rotate your clothes, shoes, and outerwear seasonally. Not only will this help you stay organized all season long, but you can take the opportunity to weed out the clothing that you haven't worn in a while, and donate or toss.





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## Where to Dine in Reston on Valentine's Day

By: Caroline Ayres

Reston's restaurants have you covered for a night out on the town with your partner or your family on Valentine's Day. Here are some of Reston's local hotspots for a lovely dinner:

**Red's Table:**

Located at South Lakes Village Center, Red's Table is a perfect spot for romantic dinners in Reston. The lovely view of Lake Thoreau and lighting from string lights on the patio create a charming ambiance. The Reston staple offers dinners with indoor and protected out-

door seating. Favorites include: Steak Frites, Dry Aged Beef Burgers, and for dessert, house-made ice cream sandwiches. *11150 South Lakes Dr, Reston, VA 20191*

**Jackson's:**

There are few places better for a night at Reston Town Center than Jackson's. Part of Northern Virginia's Great American Restaurants, Jackson's serves dinners with a melting pot of American cuisine, featuring classic American dishes like Bacon Cheeseburgers and Drunken Rib Eye, as well as dishes from other cultures and countries, such as its Spicy Tuna Roll. *11927 Democracy Dr,*

*Reston, VA 20190*

**Gregorio's Trattoria:**

Gregorio's Trattoria, located in North Point Village Center, offers patrons the experience of Italian Cuisine as well as a lovely atmosphere inside the restaurant. Decorated in the style of Italian restaurants and cafes, Gregorio's offers excellent ambiance and food for couples and families alike (or anyone who has a fix for chicken alfredo). *1428 North Point Village Center, Reston, VA 20194*

**Kalypso's Sports Tavern:**

Kalypso's, found on the plaza of Lake Anne, has long been a staple of Reston food culture. The restaurant, which

touts Mediterranean cuisine, is situated just a few yards from the docks of Lake Anne, making it a great spot not only for dinner but also to socialize with others out for the night. *1617 Washington Plaza N, Reston, VA 20190*

**Cafesano:**

Found just across the patio of Lake Thoreau from Red's Table, Cafesano has long been a Reston favorite. Cafesano presents its patrons with a lovely friendly experience for families and all who come through its doors, featuring Mediterranean dishes and desserts alike. *11130 M South Lakes Drive, Reston, VA*

# LIFESTYLE

## Neighborhood: Lake Newport Road (West)

By Debbie Anguizola, Reston-based Realtor with Compass

At its westernmost end, Lake Newport Road forms a horseshoe-shaped enclave of timeless colonial-style single family homes built around 1986. Indicative of the neighborhood's friendly personality, Stuart Road Park lies near the entrance of the community, greeting residents and enticing them to gather with their families for a friendly basketball game or romp on the playground.

Welcoming families, among the friendliest in Reston, live in the 39 homes that form the horseshoe off Stuart Road. Claudia McKnight moved to Lake Newport Road in 2004, for what was supposed to be a two-year tour in the Coast Guard. "Of all the places we have lived during 24 years in the military, it has

been the friendliest and most close-knit neighborhood we have ever lived in," she said. With its monthly Bunco group, progressive dinner parties, and annual cookie exchange, McKnight feels grateful her family landed in such a special place. "People are friendly and always willing to help, especially when there's lots of snow to shovel or power has gone out," she said.

Lauren McCormick, along with her newborn and 2- and 4-year-olds, moved to Lake Newport Road from another Reston neighborhood in early 2016. In addition to the many wonderful friends they have made, a big highlight for McCormick and her family is the easy trail access. The neighborhood is connected

to Sugarland Run Trail, a roughly four-mile shady, paved trail with lovely stream views and shallow crossings. "It was an absolute lifesaver for my active family during the pandemic," said McCormick. "We filled our days riding bikes, playing in the creek, and exploring the woods."

With quick commuting access to Fairfax County Parkway and major highways combined with a nature preserve in its backyard, the Lake Newport Road (West) neighborhood is a hidden gem in Reston. The last sale was in July 2022, a five-bedroom brick-front colonial, which sold for \$931,000.

Schools: Armstrong Elementary, Herndon Middle School, Herndon High School



Photo contributed by Lauren McCormick

## Reston Restaurant Review

### Pisco y Nazca

By Sarah Golden, Staff Writer

If you're tuned into the Reston foodie scene, no doubt you've heard of Pisco y Nazca. The ceviche gastrobar is one of the Reston Town Center's newest additions, and it's been a community favorite since day one. You can easily expect to wait for at least one or two hours on the weekend to grab a seat at this spot, so we felt lucky to have snagged a weekday reservation during peak dining time.

The first thing you notice when walking into Pisco y Nazca is that it is decorated very on-trend – unique tile, luscious green plants, and anthropologie-esque rattan chandeliers. This is an Instagram-worthy spot, so it was no surprise that their cocktail menu was equally as "insta-worthy." We started off with our helpful waiter's recommendation of two Pisco Sours – one traditional and one passion fruit. A Pisco Sour is a traditional Peruvian cocktail made with Pisco, a grape-distilled alcohol, lime juice, and egg white. For cocktail novices, a drink that includes something you typically eat for breakfast with bacon may sound intimidating. Trust me, the egg white creates a delectable, velvety texture that complements the sharp lime juice exceptionally well.

For appetizers, we first opted for the Tradicional Ceviche, which includes fish, sweet potato, two types of corn, and leche de tigre, or "tiger's milk." This citrus marinade is high in acid, allowing the fish to "cook," creating ceviche. Pisco y Nazca's traditional take on this dish was wonderful – tangy, bright, and sharp. The roasted sweet potato was a perfect addition, mellowing out the otherwise tart dish. Our second appetizer was the Causas de Pollo.



Pisco y Nazca specializes in traditional Peruvian dishes with a modern flair. Dishes like the Pollo Saldato (top left), Ceviche, and Pollo Causas (far right), pair great with a Passionfruit Pisco Sour (bottom left) Photos by Sarah Golden

Think of Causas as a potato trifle, layered with peppers, avocado, and meat. Pisco y Nazca's take included a delicious, creamy chicken salad.

When it came time to order the entrees, we knew we absolutely had to get Lomo Saltado. This quintessential Peruvian dish is typically made of sliced beef, onions, peppers, tomatoes, rice, fries, and a flavorful brown sauce. Pisco y Nazca's version of this traditional dish is good, and they have the option to switch out the beef for chicken or shrimp. However, don't make the mistake this writer made by opting for chicken instead of beef. Although the origins of this dish don't go back that far, likely around the 19th century influx of Chinese immigrants to Peru, there's a reason steak is the traditional protein in this dish; it's simply better. We also opted for the Tacu Seco de

Cordero, braised lamb shank on a bed of yummy rice and beans.

Pisco y Nazca's serving sizes are large, so we were stuffed after two entrees. However, we managed to squeeze in two Alfajores, shortbread-like cookies filled with dulce de leche. These were sweet, but not overly so, a great way to end the meal when you can't commit to a full dessert. We knew we had to get a fuller picture of the menu, so we took home the Tres Leches cake. Perhaps it was because we did not eat it freshly served at the restaurant, but it was nothing to write home about.

All in all, Pisco y Nazca is more than just a great spot for a selfie. It has great takes on staple Peruvian dishes, immensely delicious traditional cocktails, and great service to boot. If you're able to snag a reservation, be sure to check it out.

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