

# THE RESTON LETTER

## Barnes and Noble is Back in Reston!



Photo by Benjamin Burgess

By E. Zarak, Staff Writer/Editor

The Reston Barnes and Noble had its grand opening on June 15, to the delight of bibliophiles across Reston and beyond.

The former Barnes and Noble store in Reston closed its doors a decade ago at the end of their lease, but it's back at The Spectrum at Reston Town Center with the first Barnes and Noble to open in Fairfax County since 2019; at 28,000 square feet, it is one of the company's largest stores in the area, almost twice the size of the Barnes and Noble in One Loudoun.

Apparently folks are done with "all screens, all the time," and ready to browse the aisles and flip through books in real life. Who would have thought? While ebook sales have continued to increase and now make up 21% of total book sales, print books still hold a significantly larger portion of the market.

Reston mourned the loss of its previous Barnes and Noble. When the company started looking at various locations to reestablish stores, Reston was at the top of the

list. According to Store Manager Elizabeth Swift, "Reston is a very literate community that has always embraced books and what bookstores mean for a community."

The new space is expansive and inviting, with subject rooms that speak to the genre—fiction religion, manga, food, to name a few.

A large cafe with a seating area invites visitors to linger over coffee or mac and cheese. Readers can find one of the largest selections of magazines available in the region.

And an impressive vinyl section lures music lovers who appreciate the superior quality of the vintage technology.

Barnes and Noble has changed its strategy in recent years, focusing more on catering to local sensibilities.

According to the Director of Store Planning Janine Flanigan, "before the company was sold in 2019, it was very corporate driven; now, everything depends on the community; even the wallpaper and furniture selection are unique to each store."

Elizabeth Swift also emphasized this shift:

"Barnes and Noble has undergone a huge transformation in the way the company works and how we run our business.

"Each Barnes and Noble is unique in that we now tailor what our stores carry to the community we reside in. Books are purchased specifically based on what Restonians have told us they want to read."

Shoppers can expect to find a large array of books that reflect the community, among them, history, international travel, science, government, and an expanded gift section.

What is found on the shelves is curated for the immediate area. Four local authors were featured during opening week, and local authors were featured every weekend throughout the opening month.

There's something for everyone at the new Barnes and Noble and it opened not a minute too soon.

The hot, humid, and sometimes stormy summer will be the perfect time to break into the new space, find inspiration, connect with community, and read, read, read!

## Therapy Dogs: Sharing Smiles and Joy

By Megan Schmid, Staff Writer

Sometimes all it takes is an unexpected smile or a comforting paw to spark a little joy, and Alliance of Therapy Dogs has been doing just that for over 30 years.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs (ATD) is an international registry of certified therapy dog teams that provides testing, certification, registration, support, and insurance for members who volunteer with their dogs in animal-assisted activities.

Their teams provide free therapy in settings such as schools, airports, assisted living facilities, hospitals, college campuses, and sometimes even in patients' homes.

Five therapy dog teams from Reston visited the Reston Hospital, and I got to experience firsthand the powerful impact they have on staff and patients alike. Butch, Nike, Max, Thor, and Fenway first visited the Emergency Room, where a flock

of nurses squealed with delight and spent a few minutes out of their busy 12-hour shifts petting my new canine friends.

Working in a hospital is incredibly stressful and definitely not for the faint of heart, but the therapy dogs gave them the ability to take deep breaths and stay centered, a brief reprieve from the chaos and tragedies that surround them.

After the ER, we visited the Surgical Waiting Area. Anxious friends and family of surgery patients were elated by the unexpected and adorable distractions. "You made my day!" was repeated more times than I could even count. After a few selfies, we continued our puppy parade to the newly renovated Inpatient Rehabilitation Center.

"Patients spend a minimum of a week here, but their stay can end up being months," explained Jess Norman, the hos-



Photo by Megan Schmid

pital's Marketing & Communications Director. Being able to just pet a dog, while separated from their own pets, meant the world to the grateful patients.

Continued on Page 2

### pets



Your pets take center stage!

### sports



SLHS All-Met Athletes, Little League All-Stars, Life Champ Martial Arts

### the bulletin



Walker Nature Center, Lil Geneva, Message from Reston Association CEO

### lifestyle



Rising Rental Prices, Cafesano Review, Reston Concerts on the Town

### opinions



Reston Summer Activities, Ask Dr. S, Retirement, Message from Owner

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## Lil' Geneva: Lake Anne's Newest Market Addition



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SIGN UP TO BE A VENDOR FOR \$50 ALL MONEY RAISED WILL BE DONATED TO POSTPARTUM SUPPORT VIRGINIA

By Carmen Danies, Guest Writer

Photos by Carmen Danies

Lake Anne is sporting a new feature. It is located down by Washington Plaza on the right side of the lake front, just past the Art Gallery.

Now every Saturday, visitors can enjoy a bite to eat and a sip as you sit, overlooking Lake Anne's relaxing fountain.

The fountain and Lake Anne's shape were built to emulate Europe's larger Lake Geneva, hence the name Lil' Geneva. Measuring 119 acres, Lake Anne, the

concrete Sun boat, and Lookout Tower are accompanied by geometric shapes punctuating Lake Anne's mid-20th century style, a reflection of when Lake Anne opened in 1965.

Under two tents are Great Harvest Bread Company. Its parent bakery is found locally in Herndon and has been there for the past 35 years.

One of two family owners of Great Harvest Bread, Seth Edmond greets customers with a proud and warm smile. Fresh

plain, peach and strawberry French Toast is served as a complete breakfast meal with a fruit bowl and steaming coffee.

Also available are wholesome signature breads, cookies, scones, and a variety of delectable treats. The Sweetbreads are created specifically for Lake Anne's community, because Seth has been carefully listening to his customer's preferences.

His attention to detail is only surpassed by his next epicurean flavor creation involving dough.

In addition to the American fare at Great Harvest, other tents offer international foods to tempt the breakfast palate. In other words, good ideas continue to develop.

So let the sound of the water fountain, children laughing, and the bustle of Reston's Farmers and Craft Market surround your Saturday morning this summer!

## Alliance of Therapy Dogs: Sharing Smiles and Joy

Continued from Page 1

The handlers shared inspiring stories. Linda Grant and Nike, her 3-year old Havanpoo, have been visiting Buzz Aldrin Elementary School twice a week for a few years.

The students especially appreciate his visits during the more stressful times like SOL testing and the change that accompanies a beginning or ending school year.

Gail Heidt, who has been teaching kindergarten in Fairfax County for more than 30 years, explained that being part of a therapy dog team is sometimes just as therapeutic for her as it is for the patients.

Heidt's 172-pound English Mastiff, Thor, turned heads every step of our visit. Thor is the great-great grandson of "The Beast" from the classic 1993 movie "The Sandlot" and it is almost impossible not to smile at this gentle giant.

Stephanie Dagata and her 10-year old retriever Butch have been a team for eight years. While they spend most of their time at Reston Hospital, they have also visited schools in Fairfax County and the Reston Fire Station. "I am a tester observer as well as a team with Butch, so I am quite busy. As a tester observer, I evaluate the potential teams in my area, and have tested and observed over 60 teams since 2019," Dagata said.

After almost a decade, she has yet to have a bad visit, but still finds it very tough to decline visit requests. "So many places ask for therapy dog visits, and it is difficult to

get to everyone. But we have to remember we are volunteers and we do what we can for others."

To combat this growing problem, ATD is always seeking new members. It is easy to become a handler, junior handler (for ages 12-17), a tester observer, or a supporting member, and registration is only \$30 per year.

Handlers are only required one therapy visit per quarter, but this one visit can make all the difference.

Check out [www.therapydogs.com](http://www.therapydogs.com) to start the process of becoming a certified therapy dog team, submit a request for a therapy visit or even how to start a therapy dog program at your facility or school.

And mark your calendars for Dog-Fest! This dog friendly event will be held on October 14, 2023, at Reston Town Center. Activities include inspiring speakers, dog demonstrations and the annual costume contest. ATD will also be there with a booth.

Alliance of Therapy Dogs is a true testament to the compassion and generosity of members within our community. Volunteering does not have to be painful, time intensive, or demanding.

It can simply be spreading joy with your four-legged friend.



ATD handlers, nurses, and a patient at Reston Hospital Center, Photos by Megan Schmid





# THE BULLETIN

LAKE ANNE BOAT REGATTA  
LAKE ANNE PLAZA  
AUGUST 19, 1 P.M.

WHERE'S WALDO  
CULMINATING PARTY AT  
SCRAWL BOOKS  
JULY 31, 7 P.M.

TOTALLY TRUCKS FOR KIDS  
RA @ 12250 SUNSET HILLS RD.  
AUGUST 4, 8:30 A.M.

## Explore Reston's Walker Nature Center

By Caroline Ayres, South Lakes High School Intern

The Walker Nature Center, located off Glade Drive, is not only the heart of Reston's thriving natural environment, but also a place for learning and fun. The Nature Center (named in honor of Vernon J. Walker, Reston's first Open Space and Nature Center Director) covers 72 acres of forest in South Reston, including parts of the Snakeden Branch creek system, a pond, pavilion, fire ring, a mile of walkable trails, and much more to explore. Areas like the pavilion and the fire ring are available to rent for large groups, and the trails and outdoor space is available for public use.

The Walker Nature Center is devoted to public education about the wildlife in our area. The Nature House features many educational exhibits, as well as live animals who are unable to return to their natural habitats. Kids love Dozer the box turtle, who can often be seen saying hello to visitors, as well as the red corn snake most often referred to as "Snakey," and two new bluegill fish.

The Nature Center's team is responsible for many of the most recognizable festivals and events in Reston. These events range from the academically centered animal counts (a census for birds, dragonflies, and butterflies in the natural habitats of Reston) to the annual Spring and Halloween festivals, which provide fun family activities for the public.

During the summer, the Nature Center runs three camps, one for each chapter of a kid's childhood, (Nature Tots, Walkers Rangers, and the Young Naturalists.

They often can be heard out on the trails making animal noises and singing songs.

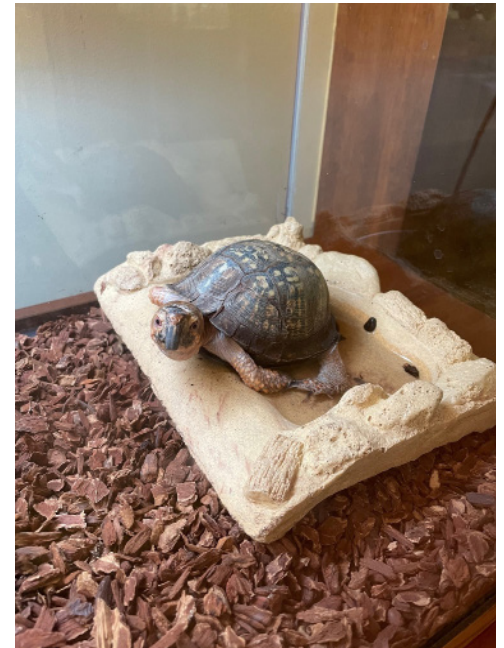
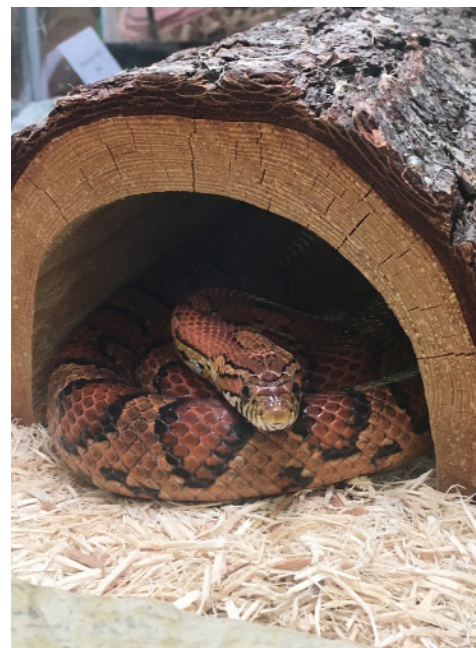
The Halloween Trail in particular has become a beloved tradition in the community, said Abby Stocking, who has worked as a naturalist at the Nature Center for 16 years. Children and adults alike join the Nature Center team and volunteers for a night time walk through the trails. They meet characters along the way, who give them treats and share fun facts about our environment. On July 15, the Nature Center will host a Fairy Festival, which includes a fairy house building competition. As for the older kids in Reston, these events offer a fantastic opportunity to gain volunteer hours in the community.

The Walker Nature Center has become a staple of the Reston community. So if you have a chance, stop by to enjoy the trails while learning about the Reston environment.

*Thank you to the Walker Nature Center for allowing me to create some of my favorite childhood memories, creeking with the Walkers Rangers. I've spent every Halloween on the trails and every summer galavanting through the woods making dinosaur noises and eating mud and dirt (don't worry, the dirt was Oreos and the mud was pudding). It was an honor to show how wonderful the Nature Center and all of its staff are. Lastly, thank you to Abby Stocking for her interview, I really enjoyed talking to her.*



(Above-) Reston's Walker Nature Center; Photo by Caroline Ayres  
(Bottom. Left) "Snakey" the snake; Photo Courtesy of Abby Stocking  
(Bottom. Right) "Dozer" the box turtle, taking a bath; Photo Courtesy of Abby Stocking



## SPARC Honors Senator Howell and Delegate Plum at Pancake Breakfast for Support of "Forgotten" Event Raised \$18K for Programs for People with Severe Disabilities

By Shawn Flaherty, SPARC

SPARC, a non-profit that provides day programs for adults with disabilities, raised nearly \$18,000 at its second annual pancake breakfast held on June 10.

During the event, State Senator Janet Howell was recognized with SPARC's Hero Award for her significant and ongoing support of SPARC and the people it serves.

Delegate Ken Plum received a distinguished service award for his many years of service to Fairfax County and those in need.

"Bringing people together for a great cause and a stack of pancakes symbolizes community. Both Senator Howell and Delegate Plum embody that spirit. Their actions and years of service have lifted our SPARC participants and their families in ways that are immeasurable. Being able to recognize both at our breakfast was a small token of our appreciation," explained Debi Alexander, Executive Director, SPARC.

Senator Howell received the SPARC

Hero Award for her work in Richmond to fund SPARC as a pilot for all adults with disabilities who require an alternative to the Medicaid model.

Delegate Plum has been an extraordinary friend to SPARC since the opening of its first club in Reston 17 years ago. For his decades of leadership to ensure human rights, environmental protection, education, mental health, and sensible gun reform, he received the SPARC Distinguished Service Award.

The well-attended pancake breakfast brought together several hundred hungry supporters, including SPARC clients, Supervisor Walter Alcorn, sponsors, and board members.

Funds raised will support SPARC's cost-effective, unique program serving young adults who have aged out of the special education support provided by the K-12 system and are not eligible for other community-based programs that serve individuals with severe disabilities.

SPARC's annual cost per participant is \$9,000.



SPARC 2023 Pancake Breakfast, Photo Courtesy of SPARC

If the SPARC participant instead attended a Medicaid provider, the taxpayer cost would average \$39,000 per year.

Funds raised at the June 10 breakfast

help defray the costs of running these centers. Learn more about SPARC at <https://sparcsolutions.org/>.



# THE BULLETIN

## Have Some Fun In The Sun

By Mac Cummins, Reston Association CEO



Mac Cummins, CEO of Reston Association

Happy Summer, Reston! Welcome to the best part of the year, and the time that family memories are made, community is built, and we all enjoy nature and the amenities that the Reston Association has to offer.

As the new Chief Executive Officer, this is my first summer in Reston, and I look forward to seeing you all out and about on one of our trails, at our facilities, or enjoying our open space.

Thank you for welcoming my family to the broader Reston family! We feel incredibly blessed to be a part of this community.

This summer, we have incredible opportunities to recreate, enjoy programs, and get outside.

The Reston Association has substantially more things than I can mention in this article, so please visit our website at [www.reston.org](http://www.reston.org) for information on the many offerings your Association puts together for your family's enjoyment.

Coming toward the end of July and early August, we put on free events such as the Family Picnic Days with lawn games, blow bubbles, music, and a face painter and caricature artist (Saturdays in August 4-6 p.m. in different locations).

We also are focusing on fitness with events like Yoga in the Park at Brown's Chapel on Wednesdays (5-6 p.m.) or Saturdays (9-10 a.m.) or our Aquatic Passport Challenge to encourage swimming and aquatic exercise – if you visit every pool during the challenge, you get a prize.

We are having events such as Dive In pool movie watch events (August 9 – “Turning Red” at Lake Audubon Pool) and Summer Pool Parties complete with cookout hamburgers, hot dogs, a DJ, and the chance to win great prizes (Lake Newport Pool Aug 18, 4-7 p.m.).

At the end of our season, as we close down our swimming facilities for the season, bring your four-legged furry friends to swim in one of our Doggie Paddle events before we drain the pools for the season (Aug 29, 20, and 26).

As summer heats up, so does the fun with the Reston Association. We have lots going on; please visit one of our lakes (access information on the website or rent a paddle board or boat at Lake Anne), take advantage of our nature center, or just take a walk in the beauty that is our community.

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## Business Spotlight: Travel Pro Consulting

By Terri Wright, Staff Writer

Whether you are planning a week-end getaway, heading to a new part of the country, or looking to explore parts unseen abroad, consider Travel Pro Consulting, a Cruise Planner franchise, owned and operated by Reston resident Mike Ball, as your first step.

Mike Ball began traveling as a young child, and continued to travel and explore the world over a 24 career in the military before leaning full time into travel consulting. “Experiences are better than things,” Ball claims. This core belief grounds him in all client work and decision-making. Ball delights in helping clients make memories and make discoveries in travel.

Ball's travel work began in 2019 and collided directly with the Covid pandemic. “My wife teased me about my travel cancellation business, instead of my travel consulting business,” he fondly recalled. His faith in the importance of travel and the belief that things would bounce back kept him grounded in such an uncertain time. This bet was a good one. “2022-2023 has seen an exceedingly high number of people who want to travel,” said Ball.

While Travel Pro Consulting specializes

in cruise and river tour planning, the expertise available extends beyond. Small group (12-16 people) biking, walking, and hiking tours are very popular. Ball noted, “Disney can have quite a few moving parts and the role of an agent is to streamline logistics so that families show up and simply enjoy.”

Those who are not wedded to the school calendar such as holiday and spring breaks can find great deals and opportunities during the shoulder season. Though it does depend and vary by location and region, crowds and weather are altered greatly for those with such flexibility.

In addition to the ‘logistics’ of vacation travel Ball enjoys planning excursions for his clients, be it from a half-day guided food and wine tour in Lyon France, to ziplining in Costa Rica, to finish line seats at the Kentucky Derby.

Ball's biggest advice has always been to ask questions and plan ahead. The lasting change from the Covid pandemic on travel is a shrinking of inventory, be it lodging, cruising, or transportation on all ends.

Renew your passport, open up the Pinterest wanderlust board, and call or email Mike Ball to begin planning a trip for yourself and your family!

**Contact Mike Ball,  
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• BUSINESSES

## Obituary

Edward John Nechazel (96)

Edward John Nachazel, 96, of Southern Shores, North Carolina, (formerly of Reston, Virginia) passed away on May 14, 2023, due to natural causes.

Ed was born on March 2, 1927 to Edward and Jennie Nachazel in Muskegon Heights, Michigan.

After graduating from high school in East Jordan, Michigan, Ed went on to study Electrical Engineering at the University of Michigan, Ann Arbor, and then earned an M.B.A. from Wayne State University.

Ed began his career as an engineer in Detroit, Michigan, later relocating to Atlanta, Georgia.

He transitioned to a successful career in commercial real estate in Reston, Virginia, establishing his own real estate investment firm in 1974.

Ed was fortunate to meet Shirley Babel in East Jordan, Michigan,



whom he wed, going on to have four children (Tim, Tom, Teri, and Tina). Yes, all T's.

After retiring in the Outer Banks of North Carolina, Ed spent his time on his favorite hobbies including golf, playing and recording music on his guitar, wine tasting, and reading.

Ed is survived by his son Tim (Sara); daughters Teri and Tina, grandchildren Emily (Colin) and Mark (Arielle) and great grandchildren Flynn and Ava.



# SPECIAL EDITION: PETS

## If You Take Your Dog To Dinner...

By Steph Drahozal, Staff Writer

Feeling guilty about leaving your dog at home while you go out and have fun? I've got you covered. Here are eight places you can go in Reston and bring your furry buddy along for a good time!

**Maker's Union Pub for the People**  
Maker's Union in Reston Town Center has a dog-friendly outdoor patio. Your pup can sit with you, enjoy the sunshine, and get lots of pets by the patrons walking the busy RTC streets. You can read more about Maker's Union in my restaurant review in the March issue.

### Kalypso's

Kalypso's is a sports bar and restaurant right on Lake Anne in Reston. They have 25 outdoor tables with dog-friendly seating and waterfront views.

**Mon Ami Gabi** in Reston Town Center has a small outdoor section that is dog-friendly. They have six tables ready for you and your pups, and are ready to serve you some classic French Bistro food.

### JINYA Ramen Bar

JINYA Ramen Bar in Reston Town Center has an entire outdoor space ready to welcome you and your dog. Grab a bowl of ramen and a rice bowl while hanging

outside.

### Cafe Montmartre

Here's another restaurant in Lake Anne Village Center that welcomes your pups! Cafe Montmartre has an adorable outdoor patio that welcomes your pups. The patio is covered with umbrellas for shade and also provides waterfront views of Lake Anne. Cafe Montmartre serves classic French cuisine including Escargots, Sandwich Pâté Maiso, and Salade Niçoise.

### North Italia

Serving some of the best Italian food in Reston, North Italia at Town Center has a dog-friendly patio as well. Enjoy a glass of

wine and a bowl of fresh pasta (I recommend the tagliatelle bolognese) with your furry friend.

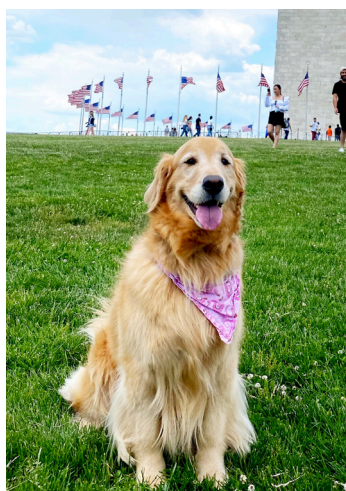
**Lake Anne Coffee House & Wine Bar**  
This place serves two of my favorite beverages - coffee and wine! Depending on the time of day, enjoy one of the two with your dog on its spacious outdoor patio.

### Taste of Istanbul

If your dog wouldn't do as well on one of the main streets of Reston Town Center, they may enjoy this small patio on a slightly quieter street. Enjoy some authentic Turkish food (think doner and beef kofte wraps) and enjoy! This restaurant was the restaurant of the month in our April issue.



Hugo enjoys Reston's Saturday Night Concerts on the Town.



Vivi greets guests at her door by stealing their shoes.

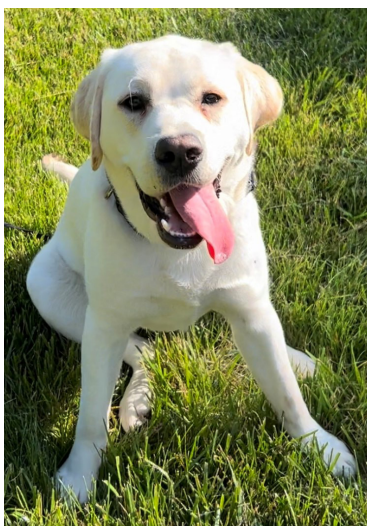


Bob loves to stand on his hind legs and hug people. He loves the Lake Thoreau Loops.

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Bosco enjoys walking at the Sallie Mae Gardens and at Lake Fairfax Park.



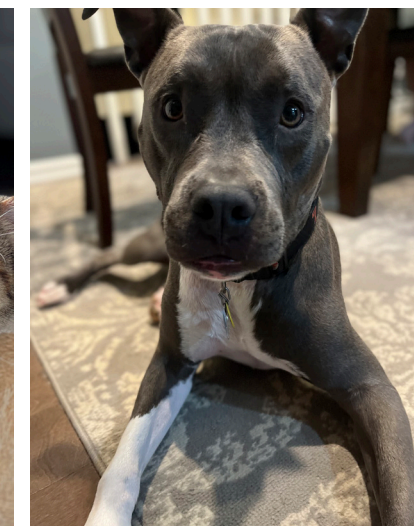
Tooshka loves snuggling on the porch swing.



Honey loves herding people, especially children, and enjoys Lake Fairfax Park.



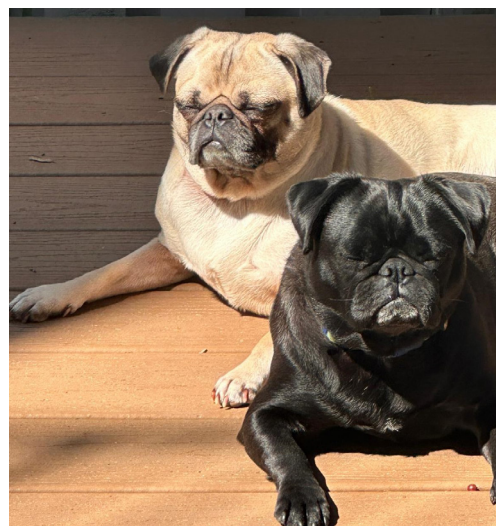
Charley was rescued from Mississippi as a kitten, and likes playing fetch.



Opal loves exploring the South Reston trails and eating baby carrots..



Ted loves to eat "water cookies" (ice) and explore Town Center.



Miso and Sushi are cool pugs who enjoy chilling on their porch.



Hank and George enjoy long walks with their brother Sam to Autumnwood Pool.



Named for a pork dumpling, Shumai enjoys watching Dateline.



Roxy Rose and Sakura enjoy North Point Starbucks pup cups and sweet potato treats.



Agent Scully Wully loves helping her mom with grad school.



Zuko, former shoe eater, enjoys spending time with his human baby brother.



Scooby loves dipping his paws in the water at Lake Newport and relaxing on the patio at Ted's Bulletin at Town Center.



Goldie Hawn enjoys riding in her stroller with her brother Ted to the park at Reston Town Center.



Mikey was rescued from Kuwait and loves the greenery in Reston, away from the hot sand. He especially loves Lake Fairfax.

Thank you to everyone for sending pictures of your pets! It was fun to see and learn about these furry Restonians. We regret that we could not publish all of your pets' pictures. We chose the ones we thought would print the best, but we looked at them all. Between the paper and our social media, we tried to feature all the pictures of Reston pets sent in.



# EDUCATION

## The Benefits of Starting College at NOVA

By Holly Weatherwax, Staff Writer

College is expensive. For those lucky enough to live in Virginia, there are fantastic public four-year universities. But in addition to the 15 public universities, Northern Virginia is home to the country's second largest community college, Northern Virginia Community College (NOVA). With six campuses located throughout Northern Virginia, this premier community college is uniquely positioned to help students and their families navigate college, while also saving them money.

A student may choose to attend a two-year community college instead of a four-year university for a variety of reasons. Some students are interested in obtaining an associate's degree in a field that does not require a four-year degree.

Some students are unprepared for a four-year university, either academically or socially, and a community college can help them prepare.

Attending a university might be beyond their financial ability and completing four semesters of college at the community college rate makes their four-year degree more affordable. Some universities are deferring admissions to students with the requirement that they complete a year of community college.

All of these scenarios, along with others, are among the reasons for the popularity

of community colleges and NOVA specifically.

As a stand-alone school, NOVA offers two-year associate's degrees in many subjects. A two-year program is a great option for a student who is not necessarily interested in a four-year degree, but wants to get started sooner with their career. NOVA's Nursing & Health Sciences tracks are especially popular.

For students who have their minds set on a Virginia university, or even an out-of-state school, completing their first two years at NOVA and then transferring in as a junior can significantly reduce the out-of-pocket costs. At \$185.50 per credit hour (2023), this option makes the bachelor's degree far more affordable. The final diploma is, of course, awarded by the university issuing the degree. Assisting this type of student is one of the specialties at NOVA. NOVA has Guaranteed Admissions agreements with more than 40 schools in and out of Virginia.

Lexi Mack is a 2016 graduate of South Lakes High School. As a student at South Lakes, the idea of going to college was overwhelming. Her parents had not attended, and she had no idea how to begin the process— or how she would pay for college if she was admitted. She was a good student, however, and her counselor encouraged her to give NOVA a try. She completed the Free Application for Fed-

eral Student Aid (FAFSA) and received scholarship money to attend NOVA. While there, she felt supported by the counselors, including the one who encouraged her to put together a list of schools that she might be interested in attending.

Despite the fact that she was not sure she wanted to continue her education, Mack put together the list, and with her counselor's encouragement she applied to George Mason, Virginia Tech, JMU, Florida State and UNC Chapel Hill.

She was thrilled when she was admitted to her dream school, UNC Chapel Hill, and even more excited when she received a full-ride scholarship. She received her Associate's Degree in General Studies from NOVA in 2018.

In 2020, Mack graduated from University of North Carolina,

Chapel Hill with a Bachelor of Arts from the UNC Hussman School of Journalism & Media with a degree in Public Relations & Advertising. She can't say enough about her decision to begin at NOVA. "The best thing NOVA did for me was offer flexibility with class schedules so that I could continue working full-time. Since I was able to work so much, I felt more prepared for post-grad than I probably would've if



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I had only worked a summer internship or just part-time during the school year."

A community college is a good fit for a variety of students. Whether the goal is to transfer to a specific school, to save money in earning a four-year degree, or to gain knowledge necessary to jumpstart a career or academic study, NOVA is a wonderful local resource for our students and families.

## If You're Not Having Fun, You're Doing It Wrong: Summer Reading

By Eileen C. Evon, Volunteer with Friends of the Reston Regional Library

Summer is here, and so is the Library's Summer Reading program. Literacy science is clear – reading helps make you happier and more successful in life, and what better time to enjoy a good book than over the summer? Here's some information to help readers get started on their summer adventures.

### What is summer reading?

To paraphrase LeVar Burton, the creator of the 30-year, award-winning Reading Rainbow program, summer reading can "take a child who 'knows how to read' and turn them into a reader for life."

The Fairfax County Public Library (FCPL) Summer Reading program encourages and facilitates reading for all ages and all abilities during the summer months.

Participants read books and track their progress against simple program goals, such as "read for 20 minutes" or completing reading-related activities. The Library also conducts system-wide activities, and the local branches put on their own community events.

### Who's it for?

The program is open to everyone. From newborns to nonagenarians, the summer reading program at the library welcomes participants of all ages and all reading levels. (While a library card is not required, library staff want to remind everyone that library cards are free to all Fairfax County residents and come with numerous bene-

fits.)

### What's the point?

Summer Reading encourages and challenges readers to develop or keep up the habit of reading during the summer months and throughout the year, and to introduce them to (or remind them of) the library as a welcoming place for everyone in the community.

With a variety of activities and ways to participate, the program hopes to draw in readers of all sorts.

Some readers like making lists and earning prizes. Some would rather just read, and not feel as if they have to do 'homework' even when on vacation.

The main goals of Summer Reading are for participants to spend time reading, and to be glad they did.

### How can someone participate?

Readers can begin at any time, reading books of their choosing in the format and at the times that work for them. They can read books they have read before, or check out new books from the library.

Young readers can have someone read aloud to them at home or attend a story time at the library.

Commuters can catch up on the latest novel on the bus or train. Families can listen together in the car on road trips.

Readers who want to track their reading and earn prizes can do so online, or with a written log. They can sign up in person at the library, or go online to sign up using Beanstack – an app that lets readers track

the books they read, the time spent reading, or a combination of both.

Once they meet the reading goals, participants visit their local library branch to receive prizes for finishing the program. Prizes include coupons from the County Park System, free items donated by community businesses, and free books from Library Friends book sales.

Summer Reading runs through August 18th.

Along the way, readers can also enjoy many County-wide summer reading events and activities – including a short story contest for adults and a "Chopped" cooking challenge for teens.

### What else does the Reston Regional Library have for summer programming this year?

According to Dorota Rodgers, Reston Regional's Youth Services Librarian, our branch will host numerous in-person programs this summer, including story time with local kids' author Mike Puterbaugh, a songwriting workshop for teens, Japanese paper folding crafts, and a Pokemon card trade for middle graders.

### Wrap up Summer Reading with a "Neighborhood Block Book Party"

On Saturday, August 19, the Reston Regional Library will host a family-friendly end of summer event.

The "Neighborhood Block Book Party" will feature free food, entertainment, and activities for all ages.

The Friends of the Reston Regional Li-

brary, who is sponsoring the event, will also hold its Kids Back to School book sale that weekend, including on Saturday during the party.

Summer readers will be able to use their free book coupons at the sale.

However you read, the library staff invites everyone to celebrate the summer and reading at Reston Regional Library.

For more information about programs at Reston Regional Library, visit the Library website:

<https://tinyurl.com/RestonLibrary>

For more information about Friends of the Library book sales, please visit the FRRL website:

[www.RestonLibraryFriends.com](http://www.RestonLibraryFriends.com)



# EDUCATION

## Bright Star Wins 10 Cappie Awards



In an extraordinary testament to their effort, determination, and talent, the cast and crew of South Lakes High School's Theatre Arts program and their recent production of Bright Star won an impressive 12 awards —highlighting the magnitude of their tremendous achievement. The students won over audiences and critics alike when they brought this captivating story to life. These awards, which span a wide range of categories, celebrate their exceptional teamwork, and outstanding performances.

They won 10 Cappie awards on June 12 at the Kennedy Center: for group awards, they won Best Musical, Best Choreography, Best Orchestra, Best Sets, Best Stage Management, and Best Stage Crew.

Individual awards were: Best Actress: Abigail Jamison, Best Actor: Henry Carter, Best Featured Actress: Alexa Norris, and Best Male Dancer: August Rivers.

They won two Brandon Victor Dixon awards on June 3 at the National Theatre, for Best Musical and Outstanding Techni-

cal Achievement in Choreography South Lakes High School's Theatre Arts program is a powerhouse of talent, ambition, and heart.

The show and awards are a launchpad for each cast and crew's future pursuits, and they're an inspiration to other budding talents within our community.

Let's unite in celebrating these extraordinary students, who captivate us not only on stage and backstage, but also as invaluable members of our community. Bravo, South Lakes Theatre Arts!

## Micki's Backpack Drive & Document-Shredding Event

By Micki Moravitz, Realtor, Century 21 New Millennium

On Saturday, July 29 from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. I am holding my annual free community event. We will collect backpacks, shred your documents, and give you Kaye's mini doughnut treats and lemonade. The event will be held at Charterhouse Circle in front of St. Johnsbury Ct. (across from Dunlop Ct.) in Reston.

I'm a long-time Restonian (since 1984) and have supported Cornerstones, a Reston non-profit organization operating for nearly 50 years helping neighbors in need overcome tough economic times. I'm a big believer in helping kids get the best start in life, so supporting them in their school efforts makes sense. This year my goal is to collect 100 backpacks. Last year Cornerstones collected 2,000+ backpacks for kids in 16 area schools. As Cornerstones says, "Each of us can become a cornerstone and continue our history of helping people build more stable lives by connecting them to vital resources that solve their needs for housing, childcare, food, or financial assistance." At the event, there will also be free shredding by Pro Shred.

I'm highly sensitive to private infor-



mation getting in the wrong hands, and shredding those private documents is one way to protect ourselves.

I look forward to seeing you on July 29. Please share this information with those you know to help make this event more successful.

## Summer Reading Ideas

How about some personalized suggestions for reading from our own local teachers? Here are some ideas from Reston and Herndon teachers. *\*Parents, please read about these books before you have your children read them if you're hesitant for any reason.*

### Lower Elementary

#### Favorites by Catie Shivers, Kindergarten teacher in Reston

1. What If Everybody Did That? By Ellen Javernick (*What if everyone broke the rules, then the world would be a mess? This book was written to show the effect your actions have on others.*)
2. Stephanie's Ponytail by Robert Munsch (*This is a funny story teaching kids to think for themselves! I use this book to talk about predictions and also how to stand up for yourself when someone gives you their opinion. Make sure you examine the details in the illustrations!*)
3. Don't Let the Pigeon Drive the Bus by Mo Willems (*A silly book that can also be used to teach about the power of persuasion.*)
4. The Book With No Pictures by BJ Novak (*This is a hilarious book to read aloud, because the reader has to say whatever words are on the page no matter how ridiculous they are.*)
5. Press Here by Herve Tullet (*An interactive book that starts with a yellow dot. When you press the dot the picture changes on the next page.*)
6. The Kissing Hand by Audrey Penn (*This is a sweet story about a raccoon who goes to school for the first time and how his mother's kiss makes him feel safe and secure.*)

4. Keeper of the Lost Cities series by Shannon Messenger

5. North Wind by Gary Paulson
6. The Fourteenth Goldfish by Jennifer L Holm
7. One Crazy Summer by Rita Williams-Garcia
8. The One and Only Ivan by Katherine Applegate
9. The Charmed Children of Rookskill Castle by Janet Fox

### Rising 9th graders:

#### Favorites by Erin Grogan and Kacey Rigsby, Herndon High School teachers

1. Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury
2. Divergent series by Veronica Roth
3. Life of Pi by Yann Martel
4. All American Boys by Jason Reynolds and Brendan Kiely
5. Monster (original or graphic novel!) by Walter Dean Myers
6. The Book Thief by Marcus Zusak
7. Night by Elie Wiesel
8. American Street by Ibi Zoboi

### Rising 10th graders:

#### Recommended by Kate Hutton, Herndon High teacher

1. The Anthropocene Reviewed by John Greene (*A thoughtful, interesting, and often funny collection of short essays about things from air conditioning to geese to Halley's Comet.*)

### Rising 11th graders:

#### Recommended by 11th grade team at Herndon High

1. Gtrapes of Wrath or Of Mice and Men by John Steinbeck
2. Call of the Wild by Jack London
3. I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings by Maya Angelou
4. Huckleberry Finn or Adventures of Tom Sawyer by Mark Twain

#### Rising 12th graders: Recommended by Kate Hutton, HHS teacher

1. A Walk in the Woods: Rediscovering America on the Appalachian Trail by Bill Bryson

### Upper Elementary, Middle School: Favorites by Elise de Clerck, 6th grade teacher in Reston

1. Masterminds by Gordon Korman
2. Percy Jackson and the Lightning Thief by Rick Riordan
3. Wild Robot series by Peter Brown



## Scrawl books

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Above: Volunteers from Brightspot helped all year as mentors in Ms.Schehl's 5th grade math class at Aldrin Elementary. They loved seeing their mentors every Wednesday, assisting with math enrichment and remediation activities. Thank you to the mentors for a great year at Aldrin! Photo contributed by AES

## Herndon Student Wins Awards



Alyssa Morrison, a junior at Herndon High School, was selected to attend the VDOE's Summer Residential Governor's School this summer 2023. Morrison will be attending the Governor's School for Mathematics, Science, and Technology representing HHS at the University of Lynchburg in July.

She was one of 80 students chosen for this school from public, private, and homeschooled high schoolers. Morrison was also selected to attend the Virginia Girls State of the American Legion Auxiliary this summer at Longwood University.



# SPORTS

## South Lakes High School All-Met Athletes Announced

Contributed by SLHS Sports Boosters

South Lake Athletics is honored and proud to share the news of its student-athletes selected for this spring's edition of the Washington Post High School All-Met teams in which top student athletes from the DMV are recognized within their sport.

South Lakes Outdoor Track and Field 4x800m Relay team were named to the First Team Relays.

The 4x800 squad includes Aya Ryan (FR), Catalina Simon (FR), Caroline Elliott (SO), Bella Harsanyi (JR).

Their winning VHSL State Championship time was cited for the recognition this spring season which was announced as the NON meet had just finished where the squad laid down a faster 8:58.74 time, the current Virginia #1 time.

Seahawks receiving Honorable Mention All Met selection include:

South Lakes Softball's Riley Frickleton who will matriculate to the University of Rhode Island this Fall 2023 where she will play softball.

South Lake Boys Soccer's Alvaro Acosta Lovo (SO) and Elliot Berg. Elliott will matriculate to Mary Washington University this Fall 2023 where he will play soccer.

Individually, South Lakes Outdoor Track and Field 800m runners Caroline Elliott and Bella Harsanyi.



(Above) SL All Met HM Alvaro Acosta Lovo  
(Below) SL All Met HM Elliott Berg

Photos shared by Matthew Mittrani, Kelly Harsanyi, Alena Rinaldi, Runnerspace



## Reston Herndon Little League All-Stars Compete at Districts

By M. Vito, Junior Sports Writer



Parker Galus, 8-10 RHLL American League catcher, tags a runner out at home.  
Photo by Lauren Lasseigne

At the end of every spring season, Reston Herndon Little League (RHLL) fields All Star teams to compete in district-wide tournaments.

RHLL teams are split into two leagues, the American League and the National League. Each league competes in three age groups, 8-10-year-olds, 9-11-year-olds, and 10-12-year-olds.

All teams compete in a series of district pool games, with the top teams advancing to cross-over play.

RHLL competes in District 4 with teams from across our area, including local rivals Vienna Little League, Great Falls Little League, and Arlington Little League.

The teams that advance out of the district tournament meet 15 other district champions in state tournaments in July.

For the 12-year-old tournament, regional champions continue to the Little League World Series. For RHLL President, Tim Jones, it is a major draw for baseball players and their families. "The Little League World Series is the largest baseball tournament in the world, at any level. It's the reason that people want to play Little League...even for teams that don't make it that far, it's still a great experience."

The All Stars season is an intense commitment from players and families, with a lot of hard work on the field.

Most teams practice or play games every day for three to four weeks for the younger teams and even longer for the 10-12-year-old teams.

The long practice hours are important for player development, according to Na-

tional League 8-10 Coach John Burns. "Everyone really puts out the effort to do their best in practice and it shows in the way we perform in games."

Player Andrew Scardamalia from the 9-11 National League team agrees. "Practices help you prepare for the teams that you'll be seeing in the games and it prepares you to play your best."

With all the time on the diamond, arm health is very important. Both coaches and players take steps to keep kids safe and injury-free.

Coach Burns manages pitchers closely with pitch counts and notes that "We always watch when players are pitching and make a schedule that gives players rest."

Player Sully Thompson, from the 8-10 National League team, ices his arm after outings and is careful not to throw too much, especially if his arm feels sore.

But All Stars isn't just hard work. It's a special time for teams to bond through

activities and events on and off the field.

Thompson loves the ice cream and treats after long practices and hard-fought games and enjoys the opportunity to play tough games with other competitive teams. "You're out there with your friends playing against the best of the best, showing off what you have."

Scardamalia agrees. "Every kid out there is playing to represent their league, their coaches, and themselves."

Parents and volunteers bring their A-game too, decorating our home field and stands with signs, banners, balloons, and chalk decorations.

Families from across the league come out to cheer on the All Stars.

RHLL always has high hopes for its All Stars, but all teams work to uphold the Little League pledge: "Win or lose, I will always do my best." Good luck to our All Stars!



Michael Vito, 8-10 RHLL National League pitcher, winds up during a complete game pitching outing against rival American League All Stars.  
Photo by Lauren Lasseigne



## SPORTS

## Nike Outdoor Nationals Crown Seahawks Champs

By Laurie Dornak, SLHS Boosters

As AthleticNet reported, “It was a season to remember for the girls in the [Distance Medley Relay] DMR (4000m)! The girls threw down the hammer this season in the 4x800m relay!” It was all about the Seahawks this spring in these two events. A South Lakes squad of champion distance runners qualified for the NIKE Outdoor Nationals (NON) who traveled to Eugene, OR for the meet. Hosted by Tracktown USA at the University of Oregon, the team competed at Hayward Field June 15-17. Not only did they win, place, and PR, they caused multiple SLHS records to fall during these three days of competition.

The team is made up of two freshmen Aya Ryan and Caroline Elliott, sophomore Catalina Simon, and junior Bella Harsanyi. These Seahawks are members of the 2023 Concorde District Championship team, the 2023 Northern Region Championship team, and are the current VHSL 4x800m Relay State Champions.

The DMR scheduled for Thursday was followed by the 4x800m Relay on Friday; and the girls finished the event with their individual entries in the 800m (Emerging Elite and Championship categories). The Seahawks had a big battle in the DMR against strong teams, in particular, a strong team from California.

Elliott led off the 4000m relay by running 1200m in 3:35 (her first PR of the meet). She handed off to Ryan running 59 for the 400m who handed off to Harsanyi running 2:12 for the 800m. Anchor Simon sealed the win by splitting 4:58 (her first sub 5) in the 1600m. Elliott made a big push the last 100m and claimed the title for the team.

The Seahawk Girls DMR Team are National Champions with a total time of 11:46:12, the third fastest high school time in the nation this year. Winning a golden baton, they also brought home the NON coveted National Champion gold medal necklaces. This team estab-



Photos By Kelly Harsanyi and Runnerspace



lished a new South Lakes school record and currently holds the Virginia #1 time.

Coming off their DMR championship, the 2023 VHSL State 4x800m Relay champs competed in the 4x800m Relay breaking their own school record for the second time this season. Ryan ran the first leg at 2:18; Simon completed the second leg at 2:15. Elliott covered the third leg in 2:11 and anchor Harsanyi finished in 2:14 for a total time of 8:58.74. Their

time of 8:58.74 placed them third in the nation, on the NON podium again, and is currently the Virginia #1 time.

On the final day, the girls competed well individually in the 800m; Ryan and Simon in the Emerging Elite category and Elliott and Harsanyi in the Championship category. Elliott finished her first year of running strong improving her individual 800m school record time at 2:11 again and she currently holds the Virgin-

ia #1 time.

The hard-earned and thrilling opportunity to compete at a national level is an honor. It presents new challenges which were met head on and overcome, creating memories for a lifetime. The excitement that propelled these Seahawks forward in the moment of national competition will help to define new goals for their upcoming seasons.

## Be Your Best at Life Champ Martial Arts

By Casey Menish, Staff Writer

Tucked away in South Lakes Village Center, you'll find Life Champ Martial Arts studio. If you have ever taken a stroll past Life Champ you may have seen their head instructor, Madison Cosgrove, or Ms. Madison as her students call her, teaching a class. At only 20-years-old, Cosgrove is breaking all sorts of precedents as the head instructor, and she is one of few women in leadership in the sport locally.

Life Champ Martial Arts' Reston location opened approximately 14 years ago, and Cosgrove was one of its first students to enroll; she was 7-years-old at the time. She took a break from martial arts for a few years, but came back with an invigorated passion for the sport about seven years ago and interviewed for her first job at Life Champ.

Cosgrove started as an after-school teacher and learned how to work with kids from Master Chris. Within Life Champ Martial Arts is a Certified Instructor Training program (CIT), and Cosgrove said that it “provides enrichment for teenagers and allows them to



Madison Cosgrove (right) works with a student. Photo by Isadora Guerreiro

learn the job. It also serves as a confidence building course.”

Through programs like CIT, they're able to do mostly inside hiring, as their students rise up the ranks to eventually teach. Cosgrove noted that she was able to “learn quickly on the job and [was] surrounded by a great team.” When she

was 18, most of her “generation of instructors” went off to college, but she was put in charge of the Reston location, which was a responsibility that she “did not take lightly.” At such a young age, Cosgrove has clearly accomplished a lot and plays a big role in the success of the company.

Cosgrove said the best example of how Life Champ stands out from similar studios is that parents of students regularly comment on how family oriented they are. “I know all the students by first and last name,” she said. While not a competition-driven martial arts company, they do have a 9-year-old student Diego Valle, who competed in the Kukkiwon competition in June 2023 and placed second in Forms and first in Sparring for his age bracket.

In general, Life Champ is not a competition oriented company; instead, the focus is on character and physical development. Their message to their students is to “be their personal best,” said Cosgrove.

For interested students, they have year-round open enrollment, and still have open slots for summer camps. When asked how young their students can be Cosgrove said “as long as they're potty trained!” Anecdotally, students have been as young as 2; her oldest student is close to 70. Life Champ strives to stay involved in the Reston community, they have an eight week after school program at Terraset Elementary. They're hoping to open an additional after-school program at another local Reston elementary school soon.



# OPINIONS

**Restonian**

Blogger, Staff Writer



## Made In The Shade

### Summer Fun in Reston

It is a truth universally acknowledged among planned community aficionados that Reston is great in the summer. Pools! Camps for the kids! Live music and what-not in various plazas and third spaces!

Well, sure. You could do all those things, or you could get out of your shell, or your sunken living room, and enjoy summer like a true Restonian. Here are some ideas:

**Picnics!** Grab some prepared foods from the fancypants Wegmans and head across the street to luxuriate in the shadow of a massive concrete parking garage, or head further afield if you want to get back to nature. Just watch out for invasive plants, bears, and potentially dangerous Reston mascots.

**Fireworks!** Far be it from us to condone illegal (and potentially digit-reducing) activities, but if you choose to do so, be safe... and bring your phone so you can check Nextdoor for the "URGENT: GUNSHOTS OMG I DEFINITELY HEARD GUNSHOTS THERE GOES THE NEIGHBORHOOD AND WHERE IS THE HELICOPTER" messages that will invariably pop up before the last ember fades.

**Pickleball!** Everyone loves the distinctive pop the ball makes when it's hit. Just

watch out for NPIMBYS—the no pickle ball in my back yarders. You can spot them with their angry looks, earplugs, and freakishly sized rackets.

**Bike!** Go find one of the bikeshare stations buried deep in Reston's more out-of-the-way cul-de-sacs, borrow a neighbor's (laundered) spandex, and hit the W&OD trail. Or, if you prefer more courteous and less reckless fellow travelers, head straight for the Beltway.

**Boating!** Grab your kayak, canoe, or other floating conveyance and hit one of Reston's lakes! Just watch for the RA U-Boats patrolling the waterways to ensure every last floatie has an official decal. They're clever—they're often disguised as ducks and geese, but we all know birds aren't real.

**Metro!** Most of us have used it to head eastward, but it's summer! Instead of trucking in to some dreary cubicle in (shudder) Tysons or "Foggy Bottom," as if that's a real place, it's time to throw caution to the wind and head the other direction. That's right, take the Silver Line past the airport and into Darkest Loudoun County, where we hear tell the particleboard McMansions wave gently in the breeze like so many amber waves of substandardly constructed grain. As an added bonus, your very presence will spark a wide range of "URGENT: SUSPICIOUS PERSON" on the Nextdoor for "Brambleton," as if that's a real place.

**Golf.** Might want to get in a game sooner rather than later, the end.

## Ask Doctor S.

"My tween expects to be able to "have fun" all summer and be on her screens and see friends. How can I help her create a "fun" AND productive next few months?"



Dear Tween Mom, Tweens are in a challenging space—often too old for local summer camps and too young for summer employment. At the same time, they are determined to have a voice (and developmentally that is exactly what they need), but still require the adults in their lives to guide them and set expectations. Tweens need structure and routine, especially during the summer and other long school breaks. Although tweens do not often have an open mind when it comes to their parents, this is a good time to teach her to tackle what she needs to do in addition to what she wants to do.

I suggest that you provide parameters for the summer with three important goals in mind: caring for herself, caring for the space around her, and caring for her relationships (including with you, parents). Let her know that you are completely on board with "fun" times with friends, outdoors, and online, but not 24/7. Let her know that, every day, you expect her to devote 30-60 minutes to:

- 1. Self-care** (e.g., a new exercise or skin care routine, learning a new skill, reading, devoting time to a hobby IRL);
- 2. Care of her space** (e.g., cleaning out old clothing, sports equipment and other belongings and donating them, caring for the family pet, helping with household chores—and it is okay for this to be a conversation/negotiation with a tweenager);
- 3. Care of her relationships** (e.g., play-

ing Uno or catch with a younger sibling, helping prepare a family meal once a week, spending one-on-one time with a parent at the pool or taking a walk).

In addition, many families with young children would love some assistance from tweens during the summer. Babysitting is a great way to help a neighbor and for your tween to earn some money to spend on outings with friends and/or save (I generally recommend 50% to spend and 50% to save at this age). Some neighbors might also need pet-care assistance; tweens can feed cats and walk dogs. Having an age-appropriate job provides structure and a sense of accomplishment. Word-of-mouth, social media (to known adults), or flyers at the local pool can be a great way to advertise.

"Psych-ed" about your questions and best of luck,

Dr. S.

*Hayley B. Sherwood, Ph.D., is a longtime Clinical Psychologist in Reston/Herndon, specializing in tweens, teens, adults and families. Please visit her website at <https://www.oakhillpsychological.com> for more information.*

**Please submit your questions for Dr. Sherwood to [info@therestonletter.com](mailto:info@therestonletter.com) Include "Dr. S" in the subject line.**

## That's My Point

Scott L. Parkin, Staff Writer



## To Stay or To Go?

Some years back after we both retired, my wife and I considered moving elsewhere. We researched online and talked a lot about what might be an ideal place to retire. I created an online survey to measure what we would most want in terms of a new community and made up a spreadsheet comparing results. Major decision points included livability such as the ability to walk to places, a pleasant climate that is not risky (fires, tornadoes, earthquakes, floods and brutal winters were deal breakers). Access to health care was another. We visited a retirement expo at Tysons Corner and saw booths for new developments springing up in North and South Carolina, Florida or Tennessee. The best exhibit was from Asheville and included a slick film. But moving farther south for two people from the Northeast just wasn't in the cards. In our search, we visited several places loosely based on our survey preferences. These included Ithaca, Santa Fe, Northern California, Colorado and Maine. We were drawn to Healdsburg, a magical California town in wine country not far from San Francisco, the Pacific and the mountains. We made several visits to Boulder, Colorado where I have close family; it met several of my criteria, but, all things considered, we decided to retire right here.

things that reinforced the decision. The Virginia climate is predictable. The access to excellent healthcare is a given. Our son and daughter now live nearby. We found a home where we can walk to places such as Lake Anne and Reston Town Center or even grocery shopping. We have a wide circle of friends, remain civically engaged and are members of a vibrant church community. In other words, we both find Reston livable and so do others. AARP's Livability Index ranks our zip codes higher than the national average across most categories. For example, Reston ranked high in access to parks, opportunities for civic engagement, social involvement and above average in access to exercise opportunities and health care.

Of course, sometimes there are second thoughts. I am writing this at a bed and breakfast in Olema, California near the Point Reyes National Seashore. The area is usually cool, quiet and the terrain is striking. There are several beaches to choose from, endless hikes and unusual wildlife abounds. San Francisco and Healdsburg are both about an hour away by car. However, I imagine Olema's livability index for retirees does not compare with Reston's. This year, the Wallet Hub website, using a complex methodology, said Virginia was the best state in which to retire. I guess we'll stay put.

Since that time, there have been several

*Scott L. Parkin worked in the aging field for nearly 30 years and is vice president of the nonprofit Reston for a Lifetime. A Reston resident since 1986, he began his career in communications as a journalist in Maine.*

## Your Neighbors Rock

By Dawn Crosson, Owner/Publisher/ Editor

When I Googled "how to start a community newspaper" last fall, I never imagined that less than a year later, I would be a business owner with seven months of publishing under my belt. But here I am. One of the things I hear from people is that my story should be in each issue. Pretty decent advice. So here it is. I'm a high school English teacher. I have lived in Reston for 16 years. When I taught journalism, I saw that writing and publishing a physical newspaper brought the students and staff together in a special way, and I thought it would be nice to do that on the community level here in Reston. I haven't made a cent of revenue on this newspaper hobby, but I also haven't lost a cent, and from what I understand about start-up businesses, that's an accomplishment.

Each month it has been a stretch to sell advertising space to barely cover costs, but we've done it— and it's hard when we all have full-time jobs in real life. What keeps me going is that I hear wonderful encouragement from readers. I hear how much they love getting the copy of the paper and its ink on their hands and finding out more about their town.

I'm astounded by the generosity of my staff. They are amazing volunteers. Be proud of them; they are your neighbors, and they rock. They're writing articles,

doing social media work, helping me sell advertising opportunities, helping me distribute to schools and businesses; they're even buying ad space, because they believe in the value of a newspaper like this.

Please don't think I'm in this for the money (there isn't any) or the prestige (still have dry erase markers on my fingers every day, guys). I'm in it because I love Reston and I love building community, and it turns out I love the stories that surround us. We truly live with some amazing people and in an amazing place.

Please consider monetary donations to keep this paper going, consider placing an ad for your business or event, but also consider getting involved in the actual writing, planning, publication, and distribution process. We need and love all the help we can get. Besides, you'll like us—we're pretty cool. Reach out any time:

**Email:**  
[info@therestonletter.com](mailto:info@therestonletter.com)





# LIFESTYLE

## Reston Rental Prices Are Skyrocketing Why it May Be the Perfect Time to Become a Landlord

By Mike Lefevere, Reston Realtor/ Guest Writer

We've all felt the pain of inflation lately in our wallets. Your quick trip to the grocery store to get the essentials leaves you in shock when you look at the receipt. Gas prices have come down, but are still much higher than they were a couple years ago. The place where most Restonians are feeling the pain is in rent prices. Currently the median rent price for a two-bedroom in Reston is \$2,450 (Source: BrightMLS July 3, 2023 active listings). Landlords in Reston have seen the rental prices for their properties increase an average of 19% over the past two years. The flip side is – this is great news if you are a homeowner. Chances are that you refinanced when interest rates were at historic lows. You could be locked into a mortgage payment that is less than what your property would rent for. A great example is a landlord in the Southgate condominium development.

He refinanced at 2.75% and locked in a mortgage payment of \$1,031 per month. When you factor in monthly condo fees



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and Reston Association annual dues, his total payment comes out to roughly \$1,500 per month. The property currently rents for \$2,000 per month, and with high demand for rentals in the area, rent prices are projected to continue rising in the near future. That's an extra \$500 per month in passive income, and \$6,000 per year. Would paying your monthly expenses be a little easier with an extra \$500 coming in each month? If you said "Yes!" then now may be the perfect time to consider becoming a landlord. Let someone else pay down your mortgage while you get the benefit of the increasing equity. If you are concerned with dealing with maintenance, there are great property management companies that can handle that aspect for you. Rental prices are at an all time high. Now is the time to set yourself up for financial freedom. Mike Lefevere is a Reston Realtor with Weichert. Find him at LTeamHomes.com.



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## Reston Summer for Little Ones

By Valeriya Chunikhin, Guest Writer

Reston offers a plethora of engaging and enriching experiences for families with kids—above and beyond our wonderful pools. Here are five fantastic places right in Reston where you can take your little one for a memorable day.  
**NOVA Wild (Formerly Reston Zoo)**  
For animal-loving kids, a visit to the zoo is a must. This newly-revived, family-owned zoo showcases a diverse range of animals, from exotic species to domestic farm animals. They offer interactive experiences such as feeding the animals, and going on safari rides. With picnic areas and a playground on-site, you can

make a full day of exploring the zoo and enjoying the beautiful surroundings.

### Lake Fairfax Park

Lake Fairfax Park is an idyllic oasis spanning 476 acres, providing a variety of activities that are sure to captivate your kid's imagination. The park features a large playground area for younger children. Take a leisurely stroll around the lake, rent a pedal boat, or enjoy a picnic in a shaded area. Don't miss the opportunity to introduce your child to nature at the park's nature center, where they can learn about local wildlife.

### Various playgrounds

In Reston, the playgrounds epitomize the community's commitment to fostering

a healthy, active lifestyle for its youngest residents. The playgrounds in Reston feature exciting equipment, including towering slides, intricate climbing structures, swings, and sandbox areas. The ones that our family loves the most are in Baron Cameron Park, South Lakes Drive Park, and Hunters Woods Park.

### Reston Town Center

The Town Square in RTC is a delightful open space with a splash fountain for the kids to cool off on our hot summer days and then indulge in delicious treats at the cafes and ice cream parlors. Town Center also hosts family-friendly events throughout the year, including festivals, children's entertainers, and Art in the Park.

### Reston Regional Library or Bookstores

On rainy or hot days, enjoy the children's section at the library, or any of our three bookstores: Barnes and Noble, Scrawl Books, and Reston Used Book Store. With treasure troves of books and comfy reading space, they often host special events like author signings, craft activities, and story hours, providing an opportunity for your child to interact with other young book enthusiasts. You can take home a bag of new books to read in the comfort of your own home, or simply sit there and read while enjoying being out of the house. Reston is a haven for families with little kids, offering a range of engaging and enriching experiences. We hope your summer is filled with fun and memorable events.

## Restaurant Review: Cafesano: A Taste of the Mediterranean

By Emdad Swapan, Social Media Manager & Sabine Soltys, Social Media/Marketing Intern

Cafesano is located in South Reston, near Lake Thoreau, which makes the dining view picture perfect. On the restaurant's website, it claims, "Since 2005, Cafesano has been offering fresh, wholesome Italian and Mediterranean food in a comfortable and welcoming environment. We know you'll love our menu full of bold flavor profiles from Italy and the Mediterranean." And it's true.

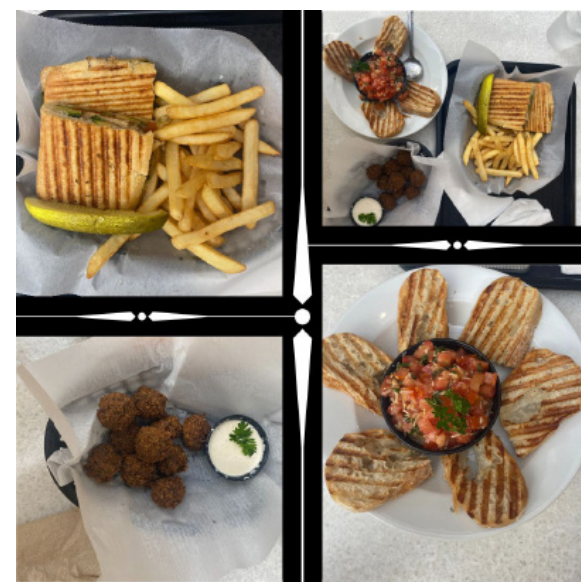
"I have been coming to Cafesano ever since I was a kid and I remember the Bruschetta as being one of the best appetizers on their menu and that has not changed," said Sabine Soltys, a college student. It is made

with a tasty mix of tomato, basil, garlic, shaved parmesan, EVOO on grilled ciabatta bread. This dish melts in your mouth. The bread has the right amount of crunch and pairs perfectly with the blend of tomato cheese and cilantro, and we highly recommend it.

The Falafel is also another perfect appetizer. Created with ground chickpeas with onion, garlic, parsley and spices, it is lightly fried and served with romaine, tomato, scallions, radish, tahini sauce in a grilled pita. We love how it is crunchy on the outside and soft on the inside.

The Grilled Chicken Pesto Panini is marinated chicken breast, roasted peppers and grilled zucchini in basil pesto. The flavor from the pesto is noticeable and adds a delightful taste into a panini that is toasted to perfection.

"This restaurant is a hidden gem!" Marianna Said and Anthony Gerb remarked, when visiting Cafesano for the first time



earlier this month. "The food is incredible— My taste buds went on a Mediterranean adventure. from delicious chicken souvlaki to mouthwatering Prochello pizza— you must try it all! With outdoor seating and views overlooking the water, the vibes are perfect for summer."

Consider a picture perfect, delicious lunch on the lake at Cafesano this summer.

**Cafesano: 11130 M South Lakes Drive  
Open 11 a.m. - 9 p.m.**

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# LIFESTYLE

## Concerts on the Town

By Sarah Golden, Staff Writer

Each summer, the DC area provides residents with plenty of live music experiences to choose from. Whether it's a rock concert at The Anthem in DC, or the National Symphony Orchestra at Vienna's Wolf Trap, Restonians have lots of choices when it comes to summer concerts. Those wishing to stay closer to home need look no further than the Reston Town Center. This summer marks the 30th year the Reston Town Center has hosted its Reston Concert on the Town series. Each Saturday from now until the end of August, the Town Center will host a musical act to play at its pavilion. From Latin, to Bluegrass, to Funk, this summer's line-up is sure to please all kinds of music lovers.

Attendees are free to bring their own chairs, blankets, and snacks to sit and enjoy the show. Children of all ages (furry or human) are welcome. Spectators should be sure to bring their dancing shoes because the shows encourage Restonians to get up and get moving!

For those interested in partaking in more adult activities, alcoholic drinks will be available in and around the pavilion from 6:30 p.m. – 9:30 p.m. Alcohol can be

purchased at Capital Burger, North Italia, True Food Kitchen, and Ted's Bulletin.

The Reston Concert on the Town is a staple in the community and is a great way to spend a summer Saturday night. Be sure to share videos and pictures of you, your family, and your pets at the next show by tagging @TheRestonLetter on Instagram.

**July 15** - Unity Reggae Band (roots reggae)

**July 22** - Big Bad Voodoo Daddy (contemporary swing revival)

**July 29** - Incendio (fiery blend of Latin rhythms, world fusion)

**August 5** - Deanna Bogart Band with special guest Magic Dick, harmonica player of the J. Geils Band (boogie-woogie/jump blues and swing)

**August 12** - Bumper Jacksons (a swingin' take on bluegrass, folk, country)

**August 19** - Baaba Seth (worldbeat jam)

**August 26** - Dwayne Dopsie & the Zydeco Hellraisers (zydeco dance party, blues, funk)

Reston Concerts on the Town - RTCA ([restontc.org](http://restontc.org))



Photo by Sarah Golden

### THE RESTON HOUSING ROUNDUP

**5 Days**  
Median Days on Market  
in June 2023

**101.4%** Median Sales Price / Original List Price  
in June 2023

Compiled by Casey Menish, Realtor with Pearson Smith Realty  
Data Accessed on July 2, 2023

**10**  
Coming Soon Listings

**31**  
Active Listings

**77**  
Pending Listings

June 2023  
vs  
June 2022

**+5.9%**  
Median Sales Price  
\$536,495 in June 2022

**+0**  
Median Days on Market  
5 Days in June 2022

**+1%**  
Median Sales Price / Original List Price  
100.4% in June 2022

Data Source: Bright MLS

## Get 30,000+ Restonians' Eyes on Your Business!

"When I read the first issue of The Reston Letter I found it refreshing that Dawn was putting her time and energy into covering Reston people and events. Since then I have become a contributor and advertiser. Not a day goes by without a patient or friend saying they saw me in The Reston Letter. It's helped me promote my practice, giving me local exposure I hadn't had before. The Reston Letter has become a great contribution to the Reston community and all we stand for!"

-Neil McLaughlin  
Certified Chiropractic Sports Physician (CCSP)

**Advertising Opportunities**

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### Warm Words From Our Fans

"I've lived in RTC for over 4 years, and I learned more about Reston in a 20-minute read, than I had in those 4 years combined."  
-Danno

"Thanks to you, I am discovering all the treasures that are in Reston."  
-Isabel

"I love knowing what's going on in the community and I love feeling more connected to the people around me."  
-Jessie

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- Casey Menish, REALTOR®  
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