

THE RESTON LETTER

New Reston-Based Business Aims to Restore Reston's Foundation

By Ellyn Wexler, Staff Writer

With this year's celebration of Reston's 60th anniversary, the community's foundation – its original homes – takes on a special focus. Native Restonian David Michaelson and George Railey, experts in restoration and construction of home exteriors, have intimate knowledge of what it takes to keep Reston standing.

One of their primary goals in starting Michaelson Railey Improvements in December was to restore homes in Reston and other Northern Virginia communities, replacing the original and often rotted wood with materials that look natural and organic, but will withstand time and weather.

Michaelson, an alumnus of Terraset Elementary and Herndon High schools, helped build the first new house in Ashburn in the 1980s as well as the houses behind Herndon High School. "From my office in the Hartke building in Reston, I can see the business where my mom worked when we moved here in 1981," he said.

Michaelson, still living in Reston, and Railey, who lives in Frederick, Maryland, worked together at a similar business for two years. "We were the top sales guys at that company," Michaelson said.

The duo proposed a partnership to that company, which would mean establishing a Virginia satellite office. Although that didn't materialize, over the course of the negotiations came the basis of their company. "We learned how we in-



Restonian David Michaelson's new company, Michaelson Railey Improvements, is restoring and replacing Reston's aging roofs, among other revitalization projects. Photo by Benjamin Burgess

teract as partners. As George said, 'It worked out 1000 percent,'" Michaelson said. "George hooks and lands them, and I cook and fry them."

On that basis, they decided to go off on their own. Coincidentally, both men had previously been in restaurant management, which gave them skills – inventory, materials, organization – to apply to their new company.

"Roofing is our bread and butter, what we do best, but we are also very knowledgeable about siding, gutters, windows, anything on exterior remodeling," Michaelson said, noting that handyman services will tie in with the maintenance plan they are developing.

Michaelson is proud of the synthetic shake shingle roof they recently put on a single family home on Lake Anne, and of recouping \$17,000 from the insurance company to replace the wind damaged

Continued on page 2

Reston Association Plans 60th Anniversary Party

By Dylan Murphy, Staff Writer

Reston Association [RA] will celebrate its 60th anniversary with a community pool party and cookout, free for all RA members and recreation passholders. Beginning at 4 p.m. on Saturday, July 20 at Lake Newport Pool, the celebration will feature activities for all ages, and provide an opportunity to share memories and stories of Reston from throughout the years.

RA Director of Communications Cara O'Donnell, described the celebration as a "good old-fashioned community cookout and pool party." Activities will include a DJ, pool games, a raffle with prizes, kids' games, and plenty of food and non-alcoholic drinks. There will also be a memory wall, where people can pin up photos and mementos that tell the stories and experiences of Reston residents.

RA, one of the country's largest community associations, strives to sustain and protect the com-

munity's quality of life by caring for Reston's natural environment and recreational facilities, and organizing and promoting community events. The association maintains and operates a vast array of recreational facilities – pools, tennis courts, paved paths, ballfields, playgrounds, courts, picnic areas, garden plots, and rental facilities for meetings and gatherings. The upcoming celebration is intended to honor 60 years of RA members' contributions to the Reston community.

"Restonians have often told us that our pools are some of the amenities they value the most, and so we thought it only fitting to mark this anniversary with a big community pool party," said RA CEO Mac Cummins in a press release. Lake Newport Pool was chosen for its large facility and additional outdoor space.

For non-members and non-passholders, admission is \$20 for children and \$30 for adults. Register online at www.reston.org/events.

the bulletin



Girl Scouts and the Little Art Gallery, meet our Lake Anne craft vendors, Reston summer ideas for students, annual backpack drive

pets



Special July 'Pets of Reston' edition with pictures and fun facts about our readers' pets, plus ideas on where in Reston to take your dog

education



Making an Impact, South Lakes STEAM team's public art installation, high school theatre arts students at the Cappies

lifestyle



Restaurant review: Gregorio's Trattoria, summer remodeling ideas, tips for dealing with snakes, Inside Art column

opinions

Psychological benefits of having pets, another angle on the golf course development ideas

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The annual Independence Day fireworks show drew a massive crown of spectators to Reston's Lake Fairfax on June 29. The party started at noon with live musical performances and food trucks.

Photos by Benjamin Burgess

MICKI'S 4TH ANNUAL BACKPACK DRIVE AND FREE SHREDDING EVENT

Date: Saturday, July 27
Time: 10am-12pm

Location: Charterhouse Circle between Duke of Bedford and Dunlop Courts, Reston

shredding and backpack specs

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THE BULLETIN

MEET OUR LAKE ANNE CRAFT VENDORS!



By Sarah Golden, Staff Writer

Some Restonians' favorite part of the year is walking through Reston's many trails as the spring flowers blossom, or watching the kayaking witches paddle into Lake Anne

each Halloween. Still, you'd be hard pressed to find a Restonian who doesn't look forward to the farmer's market and craft market that takes place on summer Saturdays at Lake Anne.

This Reston staple has seen many vendor iterations over the years, but this season stands to have some of the best yet. The Reston Letter had the opportunity to meet and interview a few of these vendors.

**Brennan Golightly
Native American Artifacts & Jewelry**



Reston local Brennan Golightly is a newcomer to the Lake Anne craft market scene, but he's certainly not new to Native American antiques. Golightly has been a collector of interesting and unique artifacts for two decades, and has spent the last decade showcasing his collection at antique shows and local markets across the country. His interest in Native American jewelry and artifacts started at a young age. His father was an archeologist and art dealer who taught him about Native American culture, and he also had a mentor who influenced his decision to focus on the same subject.

The result is an incredible collection of Native American jewelry that includes rings, cuffs, necklaces, and more, dating back as far as the 1800s. Some of his more impressive pieces are Squash Blossom necklaces, a traditional Native American necklace adorned with decorative flowers, sometimes crafted from turquoise, with an inverted crescent or horseshoe, called a Naja, at the center. Golightly's participation in the Lake Anne market makes him feel tied to his community. He spends a great deal of time curating and learning about each of his pieces, so he gets a lot of joy connecting with buyers and educating them on their story.

In addition to Lake Anne, you can also check out his stand every Sunday at the Georgetown Flea Market in D.C., and occasionally at the D.C. flea convention.

**Dania Abimourched
Dano's Granola**



If you're looking for a delicious treat that is not over-processed, check out Dano's Granola. Dania Abimourched started her company six years ago when her oldest child began having allergies. Dano's Granola is gluten-free, vegan, organic, and thoughtfully sourced.

Her most popular flavor is Original, which includes sunflower seeds, pumpkin seeds, almonds, coconut chips, maple syrup, and a host of other yummy ingredients.

Abimourched's goal is to source her ingredients from local businesses. For example, she sources the syrup for her granola from a small farmer in Pennsylvania that makes a special blend just for Dano's. Other products feature chocolate from River Sea Chocolates in Chantilly and espresso from Café Amora in Vienna, which is in this writer's favorite product, granola butter. Think Nutella, but better! Dano's got its start at Lake Anne market, but its huge success has allowed it to expand to three local Wegmans locations. Abimourched hopes that once she moves to a larger production facility in the near future, she can expand Dano's to all the Wegmans in Virginia.

Abimourched loves participating in the Lake Anne market because of the sense of community it brings her. Buy Dano's Granola at Lake Anne each Saturday at the Reston, Dulles, or Leesburg Wegmans, or by checking out the social media pages: @Donosgranola on Instagram, TikTok, and Facebook and the website, danosgranola.com.

**Eric Frolia
Earth Fire Candles**



Almost a decade ago, Eric Frolia came up with a new idea for a candle by attaching a lamp oil reservoir to slate. To create his candles, he first breaks large slate pallets into individual pieces. Because he's not sawing the slate, each piece is truly unique – no one has the same shape or size as the other.

Next, he drills three holes into the rock and places wicks in each hole. The wicks dip into the oil reservoir attached at the bottom of the rock. Once the oil reservoir is filled and the wicks are lit, you have a beautiful nature-inspired candle.

The first iteration of his candles was made of gray slate. However, after watching a documentary on the Grand Canyon, he decided to add a little color to his product. He now imports amber, orange, and brown slate for his candles.

When he's not participating at the market, Frolia works as a home inspector and medical interpreter. Although he enjoys these two important jobs, his Lake Anne stand is his happy place. He gleefully refers to it as his "man cave" – something just for him that's fun and brings him joy.

Frolia plans to expand his reach outside of Reston by participating in markets at Cameron Station, Fairfax City, and Alexandria. To find out where you can purchase his pieces, email earthfirecandle@gmail.com or call 703-283-7083.



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Restore, cont'd from page 1

roof. "I told the young couple their granddaughter will see that beautiful roof when she gets married in their backyard," he said.

"What separates us from other companies?" Michaelson asked. "Every company says quality and price, of course, but for us, it's the fact that we fix our own mistakes." Reputation is of supreme importance to both men. "I never have to turn the corner to avoid people. We explain ourselves right up front. We're doing the right thing for the right reason," he explained.

"When Reston started, they used a lot of wood to build the houses," Michaelson noted. "The problem is that wood rots – those cedar shake, wood shingles and siding that gave the houses their log cabin pure look. The builders didn't take into account what would

happen 30, 40, 50 years later. The humidity from our lakes and big trees speeds up the rot."

What these self-described "roof and code nerds" do is use materials that don't deteriorate according to the updated codes. "Natural organic products are great, but we need to keep the houses standing," he said.

Michaelson recommends yearly inspections of the home's exterior to evaluate and address any issues, especially areas that allow moisture in the home that need to be sealed. "We know what is acceptable and what isn't. The quality of every detail is important."

The plan is – eventually – to include the partners' families in their business. Michaelson's son Diego, 11, who will start sixth grade at Terraset in September, has already demonstrated some of

his father's acumen. "He rides the same bike trails and carries a fishing pole just like I did when I was a kid growing up in Reston. He gets up on the roof with me, and sets up my ladder. He knows how gutters and downspouts work," Michaelson said.

Diego is also the proprietor of Gogo's Lemonade stand that operates the week before school starts on the corner of Ridge Heights Road and South Lakes Drive.

Although less than a year old, Michaelson Railey Improvements is growing. "Now we do only light interior stuff like bathroom vanity and toilet, drywall. We want to build up to full interior remodeling," he said. And after that, the sky's the limit, he mused – "Michaelson Railey Inc., Investments, Insurance, Commercial, Apartment Buildings, Development..."

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

11 JULY	Take a Break Concert Series	12 JULY	Fab Fridays Concert Series	13 JULY	Family Fun Entertainment Series	14 JULY	Art in the Park
14 JULY	Reston Youth Triathlon	15 JULY	Orchestra Sight-Reading Sessions (Open Rehearsal)	17 JULY	Pups in the Pavilion	17 JULY	Sunset Concerts
20 JULY	Reston's 60 th Birthday Pool Party	27 JULY	Community Backpack Drive	2 AUGUST	Totally Trucks	7 AUGUST	Family Dive-In Movie

Thursdays, through August, 7-8:30 p.m.
Take a Break Concert Series
Halley Rise, 2025 Fulton Place
Free for all ages.

Fridays, through August, 7-8:30 p.m.
Fab Fridays Concert Series
Reston Station
Free for all ages.

Saturdays, beginning June 15, 10-10:45 a.m.
Family Fun Entertainment Series
Reston Town Center, Town Square Park
Free for all ages.

Sundays, through August, 7-8 p.m.
Art in the Park
Reston Town Center, Town Square Park
Free for all ages.

Sunday, July 14, 6:30 a.m.
Ridge Heights Pool, Reston Youth Triathlon
Athletes ages 6-17, including para and adaptive athletes swim, bike, and run. Participant registration is closed, but come cheer them on, become a sponsor, or volunteer at the event. www.racinginreston.org

Mondays in July, 7:30 p.m.
Orchestra Sight-Reading Sessions (Open Rehearsal)
Reston Community Center

Bring your instrument and sight-read some music for fun with the Reston Community Orchestra!
Adults: \$20/session. Youth (17 years and younger): \$10/session (\$50 for all 5 sessions).
Register here: <https://restoncommunityorchestra.org/2024-summer-reading-sessions/>

Wednesdays, beginning July 17, 5-7:30 p.m.
Pups in the Pavilion
Check out the details here: <https://www.restontown-center.com/event/3782/>

Wednesdays, through August, 7-8 p.m.
Sunset Concerts
Lake Anne Plaza

Free for all ages.

Saturday, July 20, 4-7:00 p.m.
Reston's 60th Birthday Pool Party
Lake Newport Pool

Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. -noon
Backpack Drive,
Charterhouse Circle, Reston

Friday, August 2, 8:30 a.m
Totally Trucks
RA's Central Services Facility (next to YMCA)

Thursday, August 7, 8-10:30 p.m.
Family Dive-In Movie
Kung Fu Panda 4
Lake Audubon Pool

Community Calendar

Scan the QR code to access The Reston Letter's "Upcoming Community Events" calendar submission form and share your event!



EDUCATION

South Lakes Theatre Arts Students Shine at Cappies Gala at Kennedy Center



Itsuko Scoville won Best Vocalist in a Female Role. She played the lead female, Sandra Bloom, in "Big Fish." Photo by SLHS Theatre

Contributed by South Lakes Theatre Boosters

Four South Lakes Theatre Arts students won prestigious awards for their May 1-4 production of "Big Fish" at the Cappies Gala held June 10 at The Kennedy Center. Itsuko Scoville won Best Vocalist in a Female Role for her performance as Sandra Bloom, and Noah Kennedy, Anna Leo, and August Rivers won for Best Choreography.

South Lakes Theatre Arts also was nominated for seven Cappies and two Brandon Victor Dixon awards for the production,

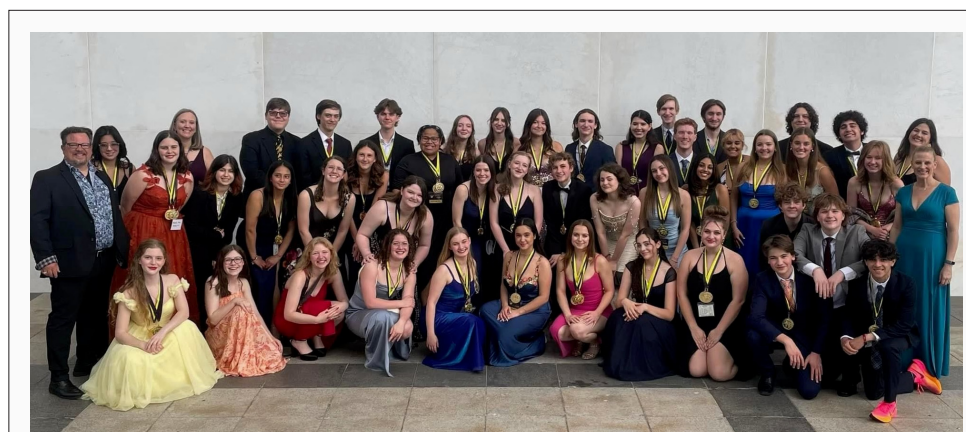
including nominations for Best Musical in both awards shows that celebrate high school theatre.

To be eligible for Cappies, students must take charge of different aspects of their stage production, from acting, singing, and dancing to technical aspects like stage management, set design, choreography, lighting design, sound effects, costume creation/selection, and marketing the show.

Student critics are selected each year to attend and review performances of each school that participates in Cappies. The

review process enhances critics' analytical, critical thinking, and writing skills.

This peer-driven review process culminates in the Cappies Gala, a festive event likened to the Tonys for high school theatre where students' efforts are celebrated on a grand scale. The gala not only recognizes standout performances, but also student involvement behind the scenes, celebrating the creativity, leadership, and dedication of young artists and critics alike.



Herndon HS Theatre entered the 2024 Annual Cappies Gala with 18 Nominations for their spring musical, 'Fiddler on the Roof.' HHS took home four awards including, Best Male Vocalist, Best Returning Critic, Best Stage Manager, and Best Stage Crew. Theatre Director Scott D Pafumi could not be more proud of his Herndon community. Photo contributed by HHS Theatre

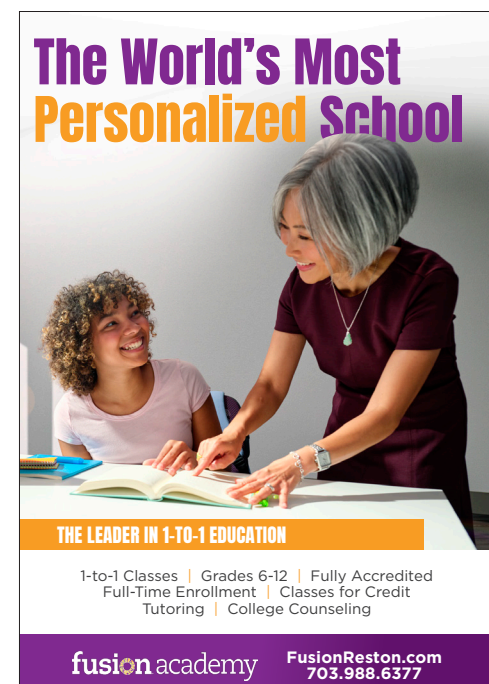
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SPORTS

Foley Academy of Irish Dance Steps onto Local and National Stages

By Megan Schmid, Staff Writer

Reston's Foley Academy of Irish Dance (FAID) showcased their talents at their 2024 Spring Recital, "A Celtic Journey" on June 8.

The main narrative performance took the audience on a whimsical trip from Dulles to Dublin, led by the mischievous Fairy King. Memorable dances included "King of the Fairies" by Reston/Herndon teen dancers Claire Guerber, Diana Foley, and Amelia Hamblett, and the intricate slip jig "Sail the Stars" by the Beginner I and Advanced Beginner levels. Younger New Beginner dancers charmed the audience with "Ships are Sailing" and "Rocking the Boat."

The recital concluded with a grand finale, bringing together all the dancers for a spectacular display of traditional Irish dance. The event was a celebration of cultural heritage and community spirit, leaving attendees eagerly anticipating the Fall Recital and Oireachtas (Regional Competition Team) Dress Rehearsal.

A portion of the recital also doubled as the FAID National Championship Team Dress Rehearsal. Seven soloists and two Ceili teams represented Reston at the North American Irish Dance Championships (NAIDC) in Grapevine, Texas. This major competition was held June 30 to July 4, with nearly 4,000 dancers competing from around the globe. Diana Foley, a rising Sophomore at South Lakes High School, recalled to the top half of the U15 Girls Solo Championship and placed 63rd. Diana's Ceili team, including another SLHS student, Sara Russell, recalled and placed 22nd in



Dancers from Reston's Foley Academy of Irish Dance performed in the national championships in Texas this summer. Photo by NOVA Portraits

the U16 Girls 4-Hand Ceili Competition. Emrys Williams, a rising sixth grader from Terraset Elementary School, and Julia Russell, a 7th grader from Langston Hughes Middle School, also had spectacular performances in their solo championship competitions. The

future is bright for the dancers at Foley Academy of Irish Dance!

For more information on local performances or to register for classes, visit foleyirishdance.com or email shannon@foleyirishdance.com.

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Sat, July 27th from 7:00 - 11:00 pm

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Join us for an evening of breathtaking entertainment and captivating performances at VIDA Reston. You'll enjoy complimentary craft cocktails and delicious appetizers as we awaken your senses in a truly unique setting full of unforgettable experiences. This is sure to be Reston's can't-miss event of the year.



RSVP is required.
Must be 21+ to attend.

SPECIAL EDITION: PETS



Tiger is an indoor cat, but he's working on embracing the outside world. He can do many tricks, including paw fives!



Hutch and Charlie introduced their parents to each other, three years ago.



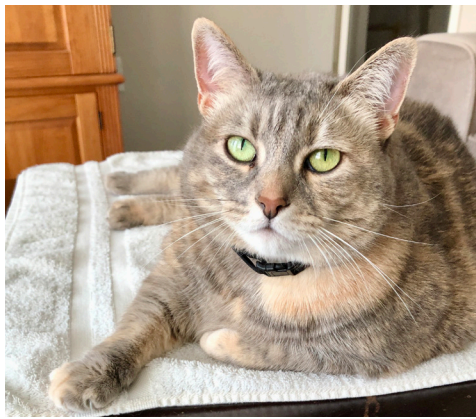
Scout loves to walk around the sprinklers in RTC and can understand words.



King is Turkish and loves to go on walks.



Peaches and Smokey love roaming around their house, and their screened-in porch when it isn't too hot.



Instead of people-watching, Boots loves animal-watching on the 'catio.'



Jupiter the bearded dragon loves to take bathe in his owners' kitchen sink.



Gus is only four months old. He loves North Hills Park and going to Lake Anne Plaza.



Lucky loves to go hiking, especially at Lake Fairfax, and was born on Christmas.



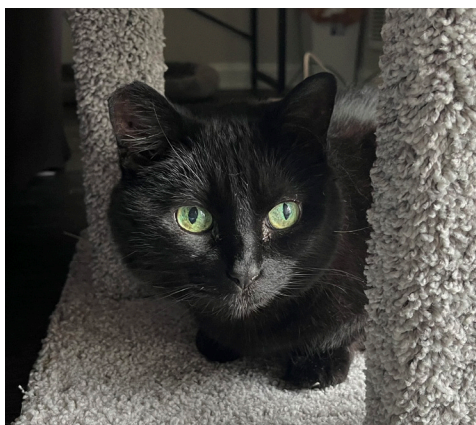
Echo loves Lake Anne!



Scooby Doodle is skilled at sniffing out lost baseballs at Reston North Park.



Tessa loves to hang out with her friends Lucy and Mia.



Salem is a homebody who likes to bird-watch.



Sonny is training to become a service dog, and is excited to explore Reston.



Indoor cats BJ and Salsa, love to watch squirrels and birds. BJ cannot meow, so he makes clicking noises to get attention.



Kona and Dylan love to explore anywhere they can sniff around.



Marshmallow and Churro protect their home from squirrels and cicadas.

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OPINIONS

Keeping Reston's Golf Courses Is Not the Best Solution

By Gavin, High School Senior

I am writing this letter in response to the opinion piece by Doug Britt from January 2023, titled "Why Reston Needs Its Two Golf Courses." I realize this was published more than a year ago but also understand that this remains a topic of ongoing debate in the community and would like to share my perspective.

While Mr. Britt makes some good points, I feel that time has come for us as a community to reimagine the green spaces the golf courses occupy.

First, Mr. Britt claims the golf courses are ecologically sound, and the alternative would likely be worse. However, he downplays the negative ecological impact that golf courses inherently have. For instance, golf courses use copious amounts of greenhouse gas-intensive fertilizers to maintain their appearance. They also consume a disproportionate volume of water and require large amounts of pesticides and chemicals that runoff into local waterways.

Second, Mr. Britt seems to think that the parks represent public

space. They are not. The golf courses have no trespassing warnings, making it clear that pedestrians are unwelcomed. Try having a picnic on a fairway. Any redevelopment of one or both of the golf courses would include public parkland as a significant component of the project, which is not addressed by Mr. Britt.

Third, though part of the land would be reserved for parks and communal spaces, some of the land would likely be redeveloped into housing. The two golf courses occupy valuable land close to both of Reston's Metro Stations. It is precisely this land that should be looked to for additional development. If we don't, virgin land will inevitably be forced to be developed further into the Northern Virginia countryside. The spiraling home prices and rent in Reston clearly indicate continued demand in our community.

By no means do I want to pave over Reston, but I simply seek to give my perspective on the controversial spaces. I want to preserve a balance between our natural beauty and our human habitats, and I don't think keeping both golf courses is the best solution.

Ask Doctor S.

Pets Are Good For Us

Our pets love us in ways that other humans cannot. No matter what kind of day we have had, how worried or upset we are about something, or how much we are anticipating a dreaded conversation or event, nothing feels quite as warm and welcoming as being greeted by a dog's smile, sweet gaze, and wagging tail or a cat's meow and high-held straight up tail. As our children age, they are less interested in greeting us at the door, but our four-legged family members keep showing up. Over the years, I have learned the therapeutic value of pets of all kinds, including snakes, birds, guinea pigs, reptiles, and hermit crabs.

Substantial research demonstrates the psychological and physiological benefits of pets throughout the lifespan, including: promoting empathy, prosocial behavior, and conversations about emotions in children, reducing anxiety, offering companionship to, and increasing responsibility in adolescents, fulfilling social needs in adults, and providing structure, safety, and social inclusion in the elderly.

I have recently begun to bring my dog Lila into work regularly, and, even in the therapy space, I experience first-hand how healing dogs are. Lila greets everyone with a big wag. She loves people and

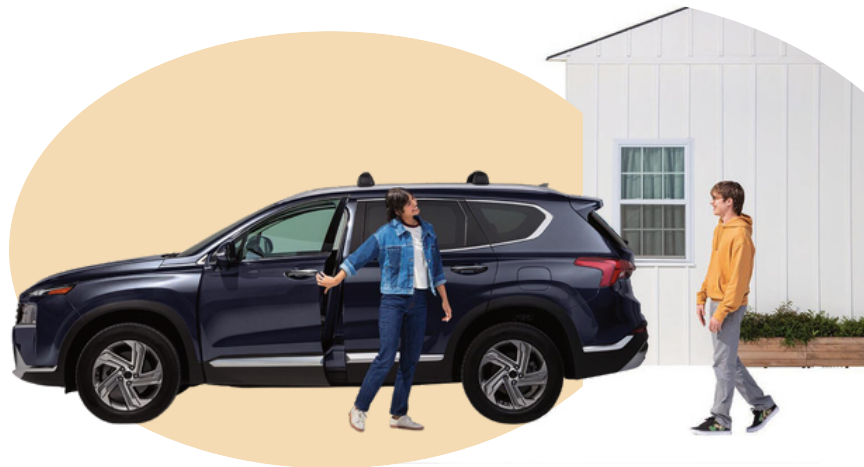
welcomes them to the office with lots of sniffs and tail-wagging, and, especially with teens, she often helps herself to their laps. She brings so much comfort to clients, who enjoy petting her and scratching her belly while we meet. Some have even commented that Lila is the "real" therapist.

It is eye-opening to witness the connections that people, dog owners, and even non owners, form with Lila during therapy. I love hearing clients use gentle, nurturing words and voices with her and observing them in ways that show sides of them that are not a part of our human-to-human conversations.

I have heard countless stories about the joy and meaning that pets bring to their owner's lives, as well as the grief and pain that accompanies losing pets. For families, I appreciate that the death of a pet is an opportunity to teach their children about death and loss.

Psych'd to see you next month! -- Dr. S.
Dr. Hayley B. Sherwood is a longtime Clinical Psychologist in Reston/Herndon. To learn more, please visit her website at www.oakhillpsychological.com. Please visit the About Us section on to learn more about her NEW THERAPISTS!

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LIFESTYLE

Inside Art

By Louise Seirmarco-Yale,
Reston Artist



Having promised myself to go to the Reston Farmers Market on Saturday, I was letting in all the excuses not to go. "It is so popular, it is hard to park!" "It is going to be 100 degrees out there today!" Keeping my promise to myself, I decided to go anyway, and I'm so glad I did.

Stepping onto the plaza, a fully-crocheted Red Dress waved to me. She said out loud, "Come over here and see my friends!" Red is like that.

The place was jammed with happy people exploring everything. My son once told me he tried to think of words that have no negative meaning. His choice? Farmers market. And he is right.

The next booth was just as much fun. I love handmade things, and the enthusiasm of those who make them. Colors and textures and creativity! What a combination for art – and fun! I also love vegetables.

A large national supermarket chain figured out that customers coming through the front door greeted by carefully stacked vegetables felt a jolt of joy. Contrasting with a skillfully built red vegetable mountain next to it, everything green becomes greener – and more inviting. That simple solution of fresh fruits and vegetables artfully arranged for eye appeal got more customers in the door. Happy customers buy! More supermarkets began doing the same. Vegetables as art. Go figure.

When I bought eggs in Japan, they wrapped five eggs in such an Origami-style piece of paper sculpture that I have kept all these years. Everything can be art.

Displaying anything artfully – whether it is Granny's Afghan on the couch – or your shoes in the bottom of a closet, matters to your inner ArtSelf.

Art communicates through emotion. We say "it touched me" or "spoke to me," which feels profound. Art is everywhere around us. And you know what you like. Those 'wow' moments make us happy, and we want to have more.

Seeking out art moments such as I had at the farmers market is not hard. When you go to lunch next time, look around. We tend to stop seeing...we have been there before, and may miss that the bushes outside are blooming now, or that the newly-painted parking lot looks a lot better. Your inner ArtSelf knows.

We think these experiences are very different from looking at paintings or other 'real' art. The truth is that seeing beauty is always good for us. More of that in your life makes daily routine more fun. Isn't there something you could artfully arrange to look better? Do it. See what makes you feel good.

Instead of just stopping to smell the roses, which I also recommend; try stopping to really see the roses. You will find you know more about art than you thought you did.

We will be exploring other ways to have more art in your life. It is not that hard – and so much fun.

See you at the Reston Farmers Market!

Restaurant Review: Gregorio's Trattoria

Contributed by Phantom Foodie

Nestled in the heart of North Point Village Center, Gregorio's Trattoria is a family-owned eatery that offers a casual dining experience and an authentic taste of Italy.

The menu offers traditional and contemporary dishes, coupled with extensive gluten-free options. It includes everything from classic antipasti and pasta, to pizza and sandwiches, to seafood and meat creations. Kids' menus are available along with catering, online ordering, and delivery options. For beverages, there's full-bar service with signature cocktails and a wine list with adequate descriptions but with few Italian selections. Wine-down Wednesdays, with half-priced bottles, is worth noting.

Patrons enter via a large bar area, and are guided to the rear dining area consisting of four-top tables and large semi-circular booths. Our smiling server arrived quickly, delivering complimentary buttery garlic knots and fresh marinara sauce for dipping. Resist the urge to finish the basket as you may want to save a few to accompany your leftovers.

Our party shared the Mussels Verdicchio, the chef's specialty, along with the Calamari Fritti appetizers. Both did not disappoint. The garlic knots were perfect for sopping up the remaining mussel sauce of white wine, lemon, and more garlic.

With our palates now awakened, the individual main courses came in short order: Seafood Asparagus, modified with gluten free pasta with shrimp and crab, paired with a Franciscan Chardonnay; Shrimp Scampi and a Citrus Basil Smash cocktail [orange and basil muddled topped with vodka served in a martini glass]. New York-style cheese pizza and Peroni beer.

Although gluten-free pasta is often difficult to get right, this was delicious and the portion was generous. The shrimp scampi also was well-portioned and balanced with large, succulent shrimp as the star, though the tails are not removed. The Americanized New York-style was foldable and crispy, and it was hard to choose between it and the classic Margherita. A creamy tiramisu, devoured quickly, capped off our meal.

Prices were higher than expected, given the mediocre service and overall ambiance. However, the food was filling and plentiful. Leftovers were boxed and bagged to indulge at a later time.

Service was polite and semi-attentive, but lacked execution on clearing of empty dishes and glasses in a timely manner. Another miss was failing to acknowledge the special occasion birthday



A local chain with three locations, Gregorio's in Reston is at North Point, and loved for its New York style pizza. Photo By Benjamin Burgess

request entered into the online reservation. The presents and wrapping didn't seem to be a clue either. Some light music could have enhanced the ambiance.

Consider requesting a table toward the back of the restaurant or in the comfortable booths that line the dining room to be further away from the kitchen and bar noise. And bring along a light jacket or sweater in the summer as the air conditioning can get quite chilly.

A private event space is located in the very rear, and gift cards are available for purchase.

Owner Greg Kahn strives to play an active role in the communities where his restaurants serve via his Food 4 Cause program. Non-profit groups can apply to participate in Gregorio's FUN-RAISER program.

Gregorio's Trattoria

1428 N. Point Village Center, Reston, VA

<https://gregoriostrattoria.com/>

Locations also in Bethesda, MD and Potomac, MD.
Hours M-Thurs 11am - 10pm; Fri & Sat 11am - 11pm; Sun Noon - 9pm

Summer Staycation Ideas: Transforming Your Home Into a Relaxing Oasis

Contributed by Synergy

Summer is upon us, and with it comes thoughts of vacation getaways, but sometimes getting away isn't in the cards so let's rethink this for a moment. Why not turn your own home into a haven of fun and relaxation?

You don't have to travel far to create lasting memories and enjoy a break from the everyday routine. A staycation can be just as fulfilling, and it's a smart way to save money and live a more sustainable lifestyle.

Let's dive into five tips on how to transform your home into a peaceful oasis.

DIY Spa Sanctuary

Treat yourself to a spa-like experience by revamping your bathroom with soft towels, cozy robes, and calming candles or essential oils that transport you to a world of tranquility.

Outdoor Escape

Make the most of your surroundings by designing a serene garden oasis complete with comfy seating, ambient lighting, outdoor plants, and flowers that will make any evening feel magical.

Creative Corner

Feeling artsy and wanting to tap into your creative side? Designate a staycation space for arts and crafts. Organize a paint-

and-sip night with friends, or enjoy solo projects like painting, drawing, or knitting.

Culinary Adventure

How about embarking on a culinary adventure without even leaving your own kitchen? Explore new recipes at home or host a themed dinner night featuring cuisines from around the world.

Wellness Retreat

Transform your home into a wellness haven by setting up your space for some yoga, meditation, or mindfulness exercises. Want to kick it up a notch? Try a virtual fitness class to really get your heart pumping!

Your Home, Your Haven

Keep in mind that a staycation can happen in any season. Any day can be a relaxing retreat when your home accommodates your favorite activities.

To take your space to the next level, consider improvements such as basement renovations, fresh paint, new windows to invite natural light, or updated flooring.

Ready to start designing your own oasis? Get in touch with Synergy Design and Construction for remodeling services that will transform your living space into the perfect staycation destination for you! <https://www.renovatehappy.com/contact/>

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LIFESTYLE

Keeping Reston Green

Snakes as Neighbors

By Kelly Geer, Guest Writer

Reston is a community founded on the preservation and appreciation of natural areas.

Consisting of more than 1,300 acres, Reston's natural areas support a diversity of wildlife including many species of reptiles and amphibians.

While many Restonians are thrilled to spot a turtle, frog, or even a lizard in the wild, a much smaller number are excited to see a snake. However, snakes are important for maintaining balance in our natural systems and are one of the most effective forms of pest control around. Many snakes prey on small pests, such as insects, slugs, mice, and rats, which can cause damage or spread disease if not kept in check. In turn, snakes are eaten by some birds and mammals, and even other snakes. By filling the role of both predator and prey, they help maintain the

balance of our natural areas.

Here are tips for peacefully coexisting with snakes; these simple steps can help you peacefully coexist with snakes and appreciate their important role in maintaining the balance of Reston's natural areas.

- If you encounter a snake in your garden, either wait for them to move on or gently spray them with a garden hose to encourage them to leave.

- When hiking, climbing, or working in wooded areas, do not put your hands or feet in places you can't see. Snakes don't want to be seen, so they often hide under rocks or in crevices waiting for unsuspecting prey and hiding from predators.

- If you spot a snake, keep your distance and leave it alone. Snakes don't want to interact with you, and you probably should not interact with them.

- Keep your cat indoors. Cats are the ultimate generalist predator. They will

kill birds, mammals, insects, amphibians, and reptiles, snakes included.


- Keep your dog on their leash, especially in areas where copperheads have been documented.

- Use ¼-inch or smaller mesh to protect your plants instead of netting. Birds, bats, lizards, and snakes often become trapped and injured or killed in netting. Mesh can be reused each year, lasts longer, and does not entangle wildlife.

Copperheads are the only venomous snakes found in Reston, so once you know how to identify them, you will know if a snake poses any danger. Check out the Virginia Herpetological Society's web page: Copperheads and Similar Looking Harmless Species (<https://www.virginiaherpetologicalsociety.com/venomous-look-a-likes/copperhead-look-a-likes/index.html>) to get familiar with the snake's characteristics and then take their copperhead identification test.



Snakes help balance our natural areas. Photo by Bill Crisp

 2024 Pool Schedule							
SEASON 3 (June 15 - August 11)	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY
Autumnwood Pool	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Dogwood Pool	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Glade Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Golf Course Island Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Hunters Woods Pool & Spa	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.
Lake Audubon Pool	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED
Lake Newport Pool	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	12 - 8 p.m.	CLOSED
Lake Thoreau Pool & Spa	Open 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 10 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 6-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 6-9 p.m.	Fitness 6-9 a.m. & Fitness 12-9 p.m.	Open 9 a.m. - 6 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 6-9 p.m.	Fitness 6-9 a.m. & Fitness 12-9 p.m.
Newbridge Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
North Hills Pool & Spa	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
North Shore Heated Pool & Spa	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 11 a.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.	Open 12 p.m. - 7 p.m. Fitness 6-9 a.m. & 7-9 p.m.
Ridge Heights Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Shadowood Heated Pool	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m. - 7 p.m.
Tall Oaks Pool	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	11 a.m. - 9 p.m.	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.	CLOSED	12 - 9 p.m.
Uplands Pool	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m. - 7 p.m.



*Fitness is time allotted for Recreation Pass holders ages 15+ to participate in lap swimming, water fitness exercise and aquatics programs.

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