Volume 2 Issue 7 FREE! July 2024

THERESTON



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-



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







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 community'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.

non-members 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, sum mer 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 BULLETIN



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

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

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 his father's acumen. "He rides the humidity from our lakes and big trees speeds up the rot."

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,"

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

same bike trails and carries a fishing pole just like I did when I was What these self-described "roof 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..."

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THE BULLETIN

Reston's First Free Little Gallery Brings Joy and Color to the Community

By Terri Wright, Staff Writer

Sue Johnston is the creator responsible for the first-ever Free Little Art Gallery (FLAG) at Lake Anne. Located on Waterview Cluster just past the North Shore pool and steps from the iconic Van Gogh bridge near Lake Anne Plaza, this neighborhood gem is "the smallest, free-est art gallery in the universe! Or at least on this street," according to its Instagram bio (@freelittlelibrary_lake.anne).

Johnston, a retired clinical social worker, has a studio in her home. The project began during the Covid pandemic. As someone interested in creating and connecting with others, she yearned for a community space that would bring people together. She had encountered free little libraries, and got the bug to create something similar but more like a gallery

After navigating the Waterview Cluster and Reston's own Design Review Board committee for approval, Johnston enlisted the help of her longtime partner, Rick Hodgdon, a hobbyist, to help with designing and building the structure.

On Dec. 5, 2021, two-and-a-half years

after the initial idea, The Free Little Gallery at Lake Anne opened. "It has brought me a great deal of joy. It has been really amazing," Johnston said.

There are few, if any, real rules. Signage on the structure reads simply: "Now that you're here, have a look around. And feel free to take a piece, or leave a piece, or both. Experimentation and imperfections are gladly accepted."

There are no "exhibitions" or any set time period for the art work. "Pieces come and go rather quickly," Johnston

She recently hosted a Girl Scout troop from Herndon, headed by troop leaders Carla Falconi and Jessica Younkman, for a community service project. The scouts worked in Johnston's home studio to create and craft original art that was donated for community enjoyment.

The gallery is truly for everyone and anyone in the community. "You don't have to trade or put anything into the gallery. You don't have to try out or be selected to participate," Johnston said.

When originally conceived, a lock was installed, but it has never been used. The only ask, which is detailed on the struc-



Girl Scouts (left to right) Lauma Alm, Alice Younkman, Giannina Aten, and Ziyadah Martin crafted original art for the Free Little Art Gallery as a community service. Photo by Sue Johnston

ture: "Please leave the gallery's easels, pedestals, and small plastic patrons they have families!"

Since Johnston lives near the gallery, she often sees people checking out the structure, stopping for photographs, or adding or acquiring art. As detailed on its Instagram account, there have been a few notes to the community about missing plastic figures and clips over the years. But those moments are few and far between. "People are very respectful. I think people just appreciate it," Johnston said.

In Loving Memory Gloria Sussman

Gloria Sussman, a longtime resident of Reston whose life centered on her love of classical music, passed away on June 6 at age 99. The "matriarch of Reston music" was an accomplished pianist, piano teacher, vocal coach, conductor, and a source of inspiration for hundreds of people.

Gloria was born in Philadelphia on Sept. 1, 1924 to Armenian immigrants George and Elizabeth Y Jerjisian. She began playing piano at age 5. After graduating from the Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1941, she attended the University of Pennsylvania, earning a bachelor's degree in education in 1944, and a master's in education, emphasizing music, in 1945. She also studied at the Philadelphia Conservatory of Music.

Gloria began her career in the public schools teaching children on the elementary and junior high levels. She also taught piano privately, became a church musician, and accompanied professional singers including Jan Gbur and Anita Darian.

Gloria said 1955 was a "banner year" during which she married fellow teacher Nathan Sussman, who taught mathematics and played the guitar. The couple moved to Connecticut so that Nate could get a degree in engineering.

The couple returned to the Philadelphia area in 1962, and Gloria continued to make music while raising their two sons. She taught piano, hosted chamber music get-togethers, was involved with the Jenkintown Music School, and accompanied singers including Lili Chookasian.

After moving to Reston in 1970, she continued an active role in local music making. This included teaching privately, becoming the Reston Chorale's accompanist and manager, and creating an amateur chamber music group. The Chorale dedicated a concert in her honor in 1982.

In the late 1970s, her declining vision forced her to cut back on musical activities, but she found new ways to continue a musical lifestyle. She coached the a cappella vocal group Musica Concordia, played piano four-hands from memory, and became a leader in low-vision activism, first founding the Reston VIP (Visually Impaired Persons) support group, as well as facilitating three support groups for the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington for more than 20 years.

After Nate passed away in 1988, Gloria increasingly relied on her sons and friends to remain in her Reston townhouse and continue her activities. Gloria created and taught "The Ongoing Pleasures of Music" course at George Mason University's Osher Lifelong Learning Institute (OLLI) from 2000 through 2018. In celebration of her 90th birthday, her sons commissioned "Sonata di Gloria" by Scott Solak, a piece for two violins and piano that the Chamasyan sisters performed at her birthday party.

After moving to the Ashby Ponds retirement community in Ashburn in 2017, Gloria was instrumental in establishing the community's low-vision awareness group.

She is survived by her sons Ted and Bob Sussman, sister Carol Churukian, daughter-in-law Lisa E. Freed, and grandchildren Sara and Rachel Freed

In lieu of flowers, gifts may be made to: Reston Chorale: https://www.restonchorale.org/support_the_chorale.html



or the Prevention of Blindness Society of Metropolitan Washington: https:// secure.givelively.org/donate/prevention-of-blindness-society-of-metropolitan-washington.







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BULLETIN

Top 10 Things for Students to Do This Summer in and Around Reston

By Aleyna Akyuz, Intern

Back home from school for the summer and wondering what to do? Summer break is the perfect time to participate in various activities and events, get active, and explore the beauty of Reston.

1. Go to a free concert

If you're worried about saving up to pay off those pesky loans, but still looking for things to do with friends, no problem! Reston Town Center [RTC], Lake Anne, and Reston Station all have free concerts and free parking throughout the summer.

RTC's Concerts on the Town are every Saturday at the pavilion. It's the perfect opportunity to enjoy a variety of different genres and artists, including MAG-IC! whose band name you may recognize from their hit song "Rude." So bring your dog, friends, and family and even stop by Ben and Jerry's to sit back, relax, and enjoy the show.

Reston Station concerts take place at the Reston Metro stop near the Google building, and are free at 7 p.m. Fridays through Aug. 24. Some vendors sell alcohol onsite

Sunset Concerts at Lake Anne Plaza take place from 7 to 8 p.m. on Wednesdays through Aug. 14, and Take a Break events are held from 7 to 8:30 at Halley Rise near Wegmans.

For more free concerts, check out Friday Night Live! in downtown Herndon, and enjoy a wide range of artists and bands from up and down the East Coast performing. For information on dates and times, visit https://www.herndonrocks.com/schedule/.

2. Visit one of Reston's five lakes



Lake Anne, Lake Audubon, Lake Thoreau, Lake Fairfax, and Lake Newport cover hundreds of acres of Reston and are the perfect places to fish, kayak, canoe, and boat. No boat? No problem! Rent a boat at Lake Anne or Lake Fairfax. Grab a blanket and some snacks for some lakeside picnicking. Any of these lakes could be the perfect spot to take in Reston's beauty, soak in the sun, and get some fresh air. If you want to make the visit last a little longer, consider camping or fishing at Lake Fairfax. For more information on what to do at this beautiful facility, visit https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/lakefairfax.

Keep in mind these lakes are man-made and designed for stormwater management. They are not maintained or monitored, and swimming is strictly prohibited (including Butler and Bright Ponds). Be aware of public access; some docks may not be public.

3. Go for a bike ride or hike

Admire some of Reston's nature on the Washington and Old Dominion trail, a 45-mile long trail that offers a great opportunity to bike, skate, or walk. Directly adjacent to W&OD is an equestrian trail that is perfect for horseback riding. Visit https://www.novaparks.com/parks/washington-and-old-dominion-railroad-regional-park for details. The W&OD trail also includes bars, restaurants, and breweries you can take a pit stop at on your way through the trail. Check out https://www.bikeablebrews.com/WOD/wodhome.html for a list of all bikeable breweries and brewpubs.

In Reston proper, 55 miles of trails connect neighborhoods to shopping centers, lakes and pools, tennis courts, and shops. Check out Reston Association's trails map and plan an adventure, or simply walk, run, or bike, to your favorite places rather than driving, and enjoy Reston from a different perspective. https://www.reston.org/reston-trails Lake Fairfax also has mountain bike trails if you're up for more of a challenge.

4. Visit SkateQuest indoor skating rink
Need to cool off, but don't want to get
your hair wet? Want to brush up on your
skating skills? SkateQuest is the perfect
opportunity. Available for all ages and
levels, SkateQuest is a premiere indoor ice
skating rink that provides public skating
as well as private group/individual lessons. So whether you're a pro on ice or
have never been on a pair of blades, it's a
great spot to avoid those sweltering hot



Herr Metal performed in the Reston Concerts on the Town series on June 15 to an exuberant crowd.

Photo by Benjamin Burgess

days while still staying active. Once you're done, check out SkateQuest's cafe for food and beverages.

5. Stroll through Lake Anne Plaza

Right on the lake, you'll find Lake Anne Plaza's unique architecture an ideal destination. There are restaurants, such as Kalypso's (mediterranean-style food) and Cafe Montmartre, as well as a coffee shop, wine bar, a CBD boutique, a brewery, an eclectic used bookstore, and the Reston Museum. You can even support small businesses, such as "Golden Bond" and get matching permanent jewelry with your friends and family. Visit https://thegoldenbond.com/ to find out more about their services and book an appointment. In addition, you can take a seat next to Reston's founder, Robert E. Simon; you'll find a statue of him, called "Bronze Bob," sitting on a bench right next to the lake and perfect for a photo opp. Each Saturday through October, Reston Farmers Market and Lake Anne Craft Market take over the parking lot and plaza, offering farm-fresh produce and hand-crafted wares.

Don't forget the Lake Anne Cardboard Boat Regatta, a community favorite. Teams construct and embellish their own life-size boats from cardboard to win the race. This event will take place rain or shine at noon on Aug. 10. To participate, register online at https://www.restonmuseum.org/events/2024-cardboard-boat-regatta#register.

6. Reston Pools

Get your Reston Association Recreation Pass, which is now free to RA members, and take advantage of Reston's 15 pools. Perfect for relaxation, family fun, or fitness, each pool offers something special, from lap lanes and hot tubs to water slides, spray parks, and picnic areas. Also, check out the tennis or pickleball courts. To activate your recreation pass, visit: www.restonwebtrac.org to log in or create an account.

7. Reston Community Center Events

Check out the Reston Community Center where the heart of the community comes to life. The Reston Community Center offers diverse activities, from cooking classes to learning to dance, there's something for everyone. Take advantage of the events at the center, and the concert series events sponsored by the community center. For more info visit the events lineup at https://restoncommunitycenter.com/

Want to venture beyond Reston, but not too far? Here are some nearby

ideas:

8. TopGolf

Enjoy this high-tech golf driving range game, including electronically tracked golf balls and a climate-controlled bay, featuring a full-service bar and restaurant. Plan your visit on the official Top-Golf website, or walk in to set up your tee time. Additionally, host a 3+ bay event on Mondays for half-price and 50 percent off Topgolf gameplay, available only on Tuesdays.

9. Escape Room Herndon

Ranked as the #1 Escape Room in Virginia by TripAdvisor, immerse yourself in one of the five interactive escape rooms where players challenge themselves while solving puzzles and clues and complete the mission in less than 60 minutes. Book your reservation online, to test your teamwork and problem-solving skills in a thrilling adventure.

10. iFly

iFly is an indoor skydiving experience located in Loudoun. Its self-described "state-of-the-art vertical wind tunnels" are safe and fun for people of all ages and sizes. It's the perfect opportunity for birthday parties, events, or any excuse for an adventure. iFly is available to people of all experience levels and abilities, providing all the proper equipment and accommodations to individuals with physical and/or cognitive challenges, as well as expert-level, highly-trained instructors to assist you.

Fourth Annual Backpack Drive Set for July 27

By Terri Wright, Staff Writer

Mark your calendars for Micki Moravitz's fourth annual community Backpack Drive on Saturday, July 27, 10 a.m. to noon, at Charterhouse Circle, between Duke of Bedford and Dunlop courts.

A new school year and the supplies that go with it don't seem to be paramount in the midst of summer, but longtime Restonian and residential real estate agent Micki Moravitz knows how quickly the days pass. "When we're raising kids and going through the school year, the days seem long, but suddenly your kids are gone, and I knew, for me, it was time to give back," she said.

Within Reston's boundaries are 8 Fairfax County Public elementary schools, and many families are in need. It was with this knowledge and a desire to contribute on a larger scale that Moravitz initiated the summer backpack drive.

"You never really know how many people are struggling so hard. There are just a lot of kids," she said. "It started with pop-ups around Reston, and was a small event. But each year, we have added little things." This year's event will also feature free doughnuts from the Kaye's Mini Doughnuts truck and on-site paper shredding.

Moravitz aims to collect 125+ back-packs. All donations will be delivered to Cornerstones and distributed to local students as the 2024-25 school year begins in late August.

Backpacks for donation must be new. They may not have wheels or corporate logos (manufacturers' or brand logos are acceptable). Please consider the following specifications when purchasing: high school: 19" H x 9.5" W (greatest need); middle school: 17" H x 9" W; elementary school: 15" H x 8" W.

For the free on-site shredding, gather all those items you've been meaning to dispose of properly. Each person may bring up to four boxes. Acceptable items include papers, folders, hanging folders, items with metal staples, paper clips, and elastics. Be sure to remove any heavy binder clips. Three-ring binders, cardboard, and other non-recyclable items are not acceptable.

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COMMUNITY CALENDAR

11 Tak
JULY Con

Take a Break Concert Series 12 Fab Fridays
JULY Concert Series

13 Family Fun
Entertainment Series

14
JULY Art in the Park

14JULY

Reston Youth Triathlon Orchestra Sight-Reading Sessions (Open Rehearsal)

17 Pups in the JULY Pavilion

17
JULY
Sunset Concerts

20 JULY

Reston's 60th 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 Entertain-

ment 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.

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.restontowncenter.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

Come and join our

BOOK CLUB!

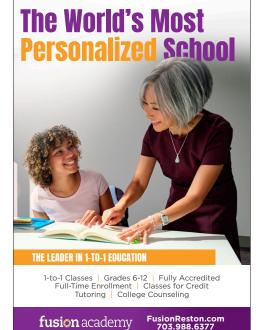
Next Book: In His Own
Words: Stories from the
Extraordinary Life of Robert
E. Simon by Kristina Alcorn
Join Us: August 1st, 6pm at
Veloce Deli

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



be more proud of his Herndon community. Photo contributed by HHS Theatre



EDUCATION

Making an Impact

Anne Aaron is Serving the Public

By Chuck Cascio, Author and Former **South Lakes Teacher**

Anne Aaron, a 1984 graduate of South Lakes High School, remembers the Turf Lane neighborhood in Hunters Woods where she lived for part of her childhood as a "a woodsy after-school playground" where "if someone needed an extra for kickball or soccer, they'd just go knock on doors." Living in that social environment seems to have had an impact on Anne's incredible career.

At Duke University, Anne faced a conundrum in selecting her major: "Political science? English? Sociology? Then I discovered that a public policy major required coursework in a minimum of four disciplines - political science, economics, statistics, and ethics. A little bit of everything! Perfect for someone who didn't want to commit."

Upon graduating from Duke, Anne moved to Boston where, after "a brief stint writing speeches for a former Boston mayor," she accepted a position as head of student programs at Harvard

University's Institute of Politics (IOP), which seeks to inspire students to embrace professions in politics and public service. Anne says she quickly learned, "There's no real handbook for students graduating from college who want to make an impact in the public realm. The IOP provides opportunities for them to meet practitioners outside the classroom and to build skills they can take into the

At the IOP, Anne helped create "a team of student-researchers who learned how to design, implement, and interpret a survey instrument. The experiment was a success and students at the IOP still conduct the Harvard Youth Poll twice annually. It has become the country's most comprehensive look at young Americans' political opinions and voting trends."

real world as public servants."

Anne's commitment to programs that make a meaningful public impact continued to grow. Since 2003, she has worked for the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, which sponsors programs that, she

says, have three major objectives: "to help people understand the major challenges facing democracy today; to inspire current and future generations to political participation and public service; and to promote debate and discussion of issues at the heart of contemporary democracy that relate to the legacy of President Kennedy."

The latest outgrowth of her work at the Kennedy Foundation is a new program called the Earthshot Innovation Challenge: Northeast U.S. Edition. It is an outgrowth of the foundation's partnership with the Earthshot Prize, founded by Prince William in 2020 and inspired by JFK's 1962 Moonshot speech. "It is an ambitious global environmental prize that aims to discover and help scale the world's most innovative climate and environmental solutions to protect and restore planet Earth," Anne says.

This program seeks to ignite Northeastern-based innovations that will make meaningful positive change in the areas of air quality, ocean health, conservation,



sustainability, and climate change. "We've fielded applications from a breathtaking array of bold, creative initiatives and technologies that hold promise, and we'll be honoring the winners of this challenge in September on the anniversary of the Moonshot speech," Anne says.

No doubt, those initiatives will, in part, help preserve Reston's "woodsy" Turf Lane playground she fondly remembers.

STEAM Team's 'Arboris' Installed on Lake Thoreau

Contributed by Public Art Reston

South Lakes High School's STEAM (Science Technology Engineering Art Math) Team's 2024 sculptural installation has grown its branches and is on display at the Lake Thoreau spillway. Team members and art teacher Marco Rando and Reston Association (RA) crew members worked together to install the sculpture 'Arboris' on June 18.

This year marks the tenth artwork created during the past 12 years by the student-run STEAM Team program. Each year, students collaborate with the engineering and art departments. They gain invaluable real-world experience in all aspects of designing, developing, and fabricating a piece of art through a professional public art process.

"This year's sculpture was the most difficult engineering challenge to date. In years past, there were concepts of a tree, but it always proved to be too challenging. This year, these students figured it out," Rando said. The sculpture is described as "a symbol of hope and renewal amidst our planet's pressing deforestation crisis."

Crafted from the remnants of previous sculptures, the design embodies the resilience and continuity of nature's cycle. Components of re- April 2025.

cycled lumber were repurposed, urging a sustainable future. The installation is a call to action, reminding the community of the importance of preserving our forests. The concept is so efficient in design that it had less than nine percent cutoff waste. The plan is to repurpose the materials for this sculpture and others to fabricate a one-of-akind greenhouse.

At the start of the year, students discussed ideas, then developed several small-scale models. Following presentations and feedback from Public Art Reston's Public Art Committee and other design professionals, they voted on the winning model. The team rose to the challenge of structural integrity by creating a trunk, which, like a tree, was more stable, with outward branches and roots.

The students presented their project to the Public Art Reston Art Committee and the RA Design Review Board for final approval. Following durability testing, the students constructed the final design.

The students first assembled 'Arboris' in the high school parking lot. The structure was then disassembled and professionally reinstalled on the spillway by RA staff. The installation also features colorful nighttime illumination. "Arboris" will be up on the Lake Thoreau spillway until



Crossword Corner

By Reston crossword constructor, Joe O'Neill

Joe O'Neill, a 40-year Reston resident, is a retired former English professor and IT executive who recently began writing and submitting crossword puzzles to major U.S. daily newspapers.

Joe's puzzles have appeared in the New York Times and Wall Street Journal. This is O'Neill's 12th crossword puzzle creation, made specifically for The Reston Letter readers!

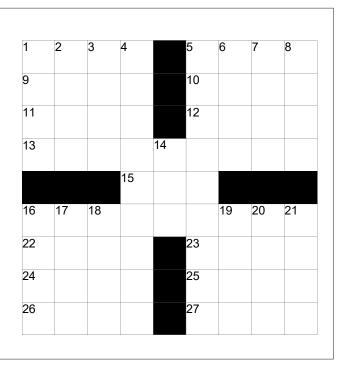
Look both ways at corners!

ACROSS

- 1. Cats and dogs
- 5. Support for a leaf or flower 9. "__, Brute?" (Caesar's last words)
- 10. No longer wild
- 11. Play "kissy face"
- 12. Fighting (again)
- 13. Small-plates-of-Spanishfood places
- 15. Steal
- 16. "Ripped" gym guy
- 22. Resound
- 23. __ of Windsor, e.g.
- 24. Alda or Arkin 25. Landed, like a bird on a
- limb 26. Like a bad excuse
- 27. Change for a fifty

DOWN

- 1. Annoying person
- 2. Sicilian erupter 3. 'Vette roof option
- 4. Ice cream parlor option 5. Tried to kill, like a vampire
- 6. "Toodle-loo!"
- 7. Dubai bigshot
- 8. Yankees crosstown rivals
- 14. Note between fa and la
- 16. Lunch or brunch
- 17. Bruins of the NCAA
- 18. Fraud 19. Stubborn animal
- 20. Like
- 21. Balls swish through them



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) show-cased 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.



July 2024 Volume 2 Issue 7

SPECIAL EDITION: PETS

We asked and you delivered! Meet some of The Reston Letter readers' pets!



Kai enjoys interrupting his mom by walking on her keyboard. He bites out of love and walks around like a gremlin.



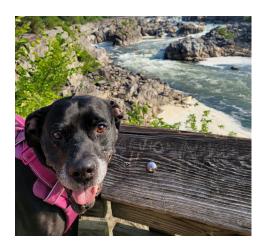
When he isn't stealing pillows, Rocky loves to



walk on Reston's shaded paths.



Sasha can do backflips!



Kenya loves to explore Walker Nature Center and steal her mom's blankets.



Charley is a Southern Belle who likes to think she's a dog. When she isn't playing fetch, she's sunbathing on her owner's desk.



Molly loves spending her Fridays at Happy Hour at RTC. She recommends Canine Carousel and buying food at PetSmart!



Alex can be found munching on carrots.



Honey is an exceptional traveler. She has lived in Virginia, Maryland, California, Massachusetts, and Wisconsin.



Cleo snores so loudly that her owners have to

wear earplugs when they sleep.



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Nico loves spending time at North Point Shopping Center but does not enjoy watching Jeopardy.



tournaments!

Grades 6-12

role play, public speaking and more!

• Grades 2-12

Take your Dog Exploring in Reston

By K Scarry, Staff Writer

One of the best things about summer is that the longer days mean that after my dogs have napped beside me for a full work-from-home day, there's still time to take them out for an adventure. Tyra, our spunky, sassy 5-pound pupon-wheels, accompanied me to check out some dog-friendly Reston spots you don't want to miss.

Reston Town Center: Shopping for humans, attention for dogs -what's not to love! We can spend a full afternoon going shop to shop; most are dog-friendly. Some stores (like Anthropologie) even keep treats behind the counter, and some restaurants have dog-friendly patios, and even sometimes hold dog-themed events or include a doggie dinner on the menu (like Maker's Union). Many restaurants either allow dogs on the patio or allow you to tie the leash to the outside of the patio with supervision. When in doubt, call ahead to check in.

Lake Anne: Whether you're starting your day with a coffee at Lake Anne Coffee shop, and enjoying getting some sun on the patio, or you're looking for a beverage at Lake Anne Brew House, we can lounge together on the patio for hours. The Brew House even has branded dog bowls that we find quite fun. Hungry for some Mediterranean? Enjoy a meal at Kalypso's, too! Plus, what better place to

walk than around the lake! If your dog is anything like Tyra, they'll enjoy scanning the water for any signs of fish or turtles.

Baron Cameron Dog Park: Looking to romp around with your favorite two- and four-legged neighbors? Anytime between 7 a.m. weekdays or 8 a.m. weekends until a half hour after sunset,, you can expect to find a host of other dogs and their humans in Reston's Baron Cameron Dog Park. There's a water supply to keep the pups hydrated, and a separate part of the park designated for

Home Depot: Whether you're looking for an adventure with air conditioning, or you want your dog's input on the paint color for that home project on your summer to-do list, Home Depot is always friendly and welcoming to dogs of all kinds.

Save the date(s)!: Who doesn't' love a dog event? Fairfax County Park Authority is hosting its annual Dog Daze event at the Water Mine on Saturday, Sept. 7, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. After you've spent the summer adventuring at all your favorite Reston pet-friendly spots, cool off and close the season with the chance to swim and play!

Tyra and I are always on the lookout for more places we can adventure together, and for friends we can meet along the way. We'd love to see you and your pup out and about in Reston this summer.

July 2024 Volume 2 Issue 7

SPECIAL EDITION: PETS



embracing the outside world. He can do many tricks, including paw fives!



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



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



and Mia.

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



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



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



Echo loves Lake Anne!



Salem is a homebody who likes to bird-watch.



Marshmallow and Churro protect their home from squirrels and cicadas.



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



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



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



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

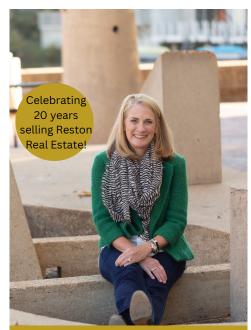


Indoor cats BJ and Salsa, love to watch squirrels and birds. BJ cannot meow, so he makes clicking noises to get attention.





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



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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 fourlegged 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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Volume 2 Issue 7 July 2024

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

- 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

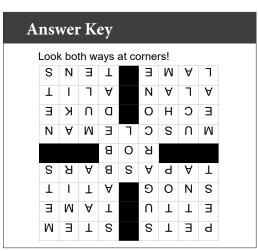
MESTOTING THE								
SEASON 3 (June 15 - August 11)	SATURDAY	SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	
Autumnwood Pool	11 a.m 9 p.m.	11 a.m 9 p.m.	Fitness 12 - 6 p.m.	11 a.m 7 p.m.	CLOSED	11 a.m 7 p.m.	11 a.m 7 p.m.	
Dogwood Pool	9 a.m 7 p.m.	9 a.m 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m 7 p.m.	CLOSED	9 a.m 7 p.m.	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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