



Golden Gazette

www.FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults

Alan Cole: The Joys of Being a Band Geek

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Alan Cole proudly calls himself a “band geek.” He’s someone who loves playing music, being part of a band, and sharing his passion with other musicians. While he never became a professional musician, Cole has played in bands for most of his life. For more than 50 years, he has been a member of the City of Fairfax Band, a community band composed of musicians of all skill levels dedicated to sharing the excitement and joy of live music with their community.

Alan Cole was born in Indianapolis, IN, in 1943. His family moved to Falls Church, VA, in 1949 when his father, the city editor of the *Indianapolis Star*, was reassigned to serve as the paper’s Washington correspondent.

As a boy, Cole was a member of Boy Scout Troop 140. The troop leaders wanted to put together a band



Alan Cole has played the French Horn in the City of Fairfax Band for over 50 years.

to play in the Memorial Day parade but had no instruments. Since the Boy Scouts of America is a federally chartered organization, the troop was eligible to receive surplus government equipment,

so they applied for band instruments. When the instruments arrived, Cole was given an E-flat Flugelhorn (which he describes as looking like an itty-bitty tuba) and learned to play it in his elementary school’s band program.

By the time he was in eighth grade, Cole’s family had moved from Falls Church to McLean. When he joined the McLean High School band, he had to switch instruments because they didn’t use the Flugelhorn. The school loaned him a French Horn instead. After regular lessons with a member of the U.S. Army Band, and practicing and performing with his high school band, Cole says he became “reasonably good for a high school kid” and was a “solid, hardcore band geek.”

After graduating high school in 1960, Cole went to the University of Virginia (UVA), where he joined the school’s concert band. Back then, UVA was still an all-boys school, so every year the UVA band joined the band from their sister school, the University of Mary Washington, to perform a joint concert. Cole

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GOLDEN GAZETTE

Adult and Aging Services
12011 Government Center Pkwy.
Suite 530
Fairfax, VA 22035
FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults
DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov
703-324-GOLD (4653)

Michael Becketts
Director, Department of Family Services

Trina Mayhan-Webb
Division Director, Adult and Aging
Trina.Mayhan-Webb@FairfaxCounty.gov

Gwen Jones
Editor, Golden Gazette
Gwendolyn.Jones@FairfaxCounty.gov

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READER SUGGESTIONS FOR CONTENT IN THE GOLDEN GAZETTE

We'd like your feedback! What topics would you like to see in future issues? How can we make this publication even better?

Do you know a centenarian living in Fairfax County or an older adult who has given back in a significant way? We are always looking for interesting older Fairfax County residents to feature.

Email your suggestions to DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov or call **703-324-GOLD**.

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enjoyed these concerts, especially because the two bands combined produced a more balanced sound. His explanation for this is that at that time, there were gender biases about instruments. Girls often chose flutes and oboes, which were considered more feminine, while boys played trumpets and tubas, which were considered more masculine.

After college, Cole married his high school sweetheart, Carol Davis, and began working as a public information officer for the U.S. Department of the Interior in Washington, D.C. "We got a nice apartment in Arlington, and I took the bus to work every day. I figured my horn playing days were over," he says.

But in the fall of 1965, Cole got a letter from the Selective Service saying he needed to report for a physical exam, meaning he could be drafted into the U.S. Army soon. Not wanting to leave his future up to chance, Cole talked to a recruiter. When the recruiter found out Cole played the French Horn, he reached out to the 75th Army Band at Fort Belvoir to see if they needed any French Horn players. It turned out the band had four slots but only one French Horn player, so Cole scored an audition. "I hadn't played since graduation, so I got out my horn and practiced," he says.

After a successful audition, Cole enlisted and underwent basic training. He spent one year playing with the 75th Army Band before being transferred to the 214th Army Band at Fort Richardson in Alaska. Not wanting to be apart from her husband, Carol moved to Alaska with him and got a job as a legal secretary in Anchorage. While they were there, their first child, Brian, was born.

In 1968, the family moved to Fairfax County. Two years later, their second son, Bruce, was born. Cole went back to work but didn't give up playing music. He joined the

City of Fairfax Band, which was just a few years old at the time. Over the decades, Cole watched the band grow and improve. "It's been my good fortune to be with it as it's grown into what it is today. Within the world of community music, it's recognized as one of the best. It's been a real privilege to be part of that," he says.

Cole credits one of the band's early leaders, Dr. Thomas Hill, for much of its success, saying, "His leadership brought the best out of all these community musicians. Not by cracking the whip, he just had a very adult and positive way and that attracted more good players."

People from all different backgrounds joined the band, including retired military band musicians, music teachers, and band geeks like Cole.

In the 1990s, Cole's son Brian, also a self-proclaimed band geek, joined the City of Fairfax Band. Like his dad, Brian had played in the McLean High School band. Now he plays Bass Clarinet in

the City of Fairfax Band and Tenor Saxophone with a smaller ensemble called the Fairfax Saxophone Quartet. The band's other ensembles include the Main Street Community Band, the Fairfax Swing Band, the Main Street Brass Quintet, and the Fairfax Alte Kameraden, a German band.

In 1994, Dr. Hill retired as band director, and Cole led the search for a new leader. After a long and difficult search, the band chose Robert Pouliot, who had served as the associate conductor of the U.S. Air Force Band in Washington, D.C. Cole believed Pouliot was the perfect choice, which turned out to be true. Under his guidance, the band continued to grow for nearly 30 years. Today, the band's director is Dr. Dereck Scott.

After more than 50 years with the band, Cole says it's hard to pick his favorite moments. Some highlights include playing music for Salvation Army fundraisers on

"It's been my good fortune to be with it (City of Fairfax Band) as it's grown into what it is today. Within the world of community music, it's recognized as one of the best. It's been a real privilege to be part of that."

-Alan Cole

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Christmas Eve at the Kennedy Center and performing difficult, unique concerts, like one dedicated to the music of composer Percy Grainger, whom Cole calls “an eccentric genius.” One of his fondest memories is when the City of Fairfax Band traveled to France in 2017. In Normandy, the band performed at the D-Day commemoration and wreath laying at the Normandy American Cemetery and Memorial, which overlooks Omaha Beach. Visiting the cemetery was an emotional experience for Cole. Having never visited France, he also enjoyed the band’s side trip to Paris.



Alan Cole (center) and his fellow French Horn players at a City Of Fairfax Band performance at Veterans Amphitheater at City Hall in the City of Fairfax. Photo courtesy Alan Cole.

Looking back, Cole has only good feelings about playing with the band. “I can’t imagine how my life would have been as an adult without it (City of Fairfax Band.) It’s been very enriching. It’s been demanding. I can’t think of any downsides to it. Maybe my wife can. It’s been all positive,” he says. Asked if he has any favorite music, Cole admits to having a few but equally enjoys learning new music. “Bob Pouliot said his favorite piece of music is the one I’m conducting right now,” he recalls.

Now 82 years old, Cole isn’t sure how many more years he’ll keep playing. “I’ve felt for a long time that it’s better to stop a year too early than a day too late,” he says. But for now, he’s enjoying the challenge, the friendships, and the joy that comes with being a band geek.

To learn more about the City of Fairfax Band and their upcoming performances, visit fairfaxband.org. ☀

Mature Living – Fairfax County Public Library Resources

The Fairfax County Public Library has something for people of all ages. Resources that are especially helpful to older adults and those with disabilities are large format documents, the Talking Book Program, and the Home Delivery Program. Jennifer Tchida, Branch Manager; and Ginger Hawkins, Library Outreach Manager, both with Library Access Services, discuss these and many other resources available through the library system. Suzanne Lapierre, Virginia Room Librarian, shares information about this special branch of the library system, and two county residents talk about their experience with the library’s Talking Book and Home Delivery Programs.

Mature Living can be seen on Channel 16 or 1016 (depending on your service provider) on the following days and times:

- ◆ Sunday at 9:30 a.m. and 8 p.m.
- ◆ Monday at 5 p.m.
- ◆ Tuesday at 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Wednesday at 11 a.m. and 9:30 p.m.
- ◆ Thursday at 8:30 a.m. and 11:30 p.m.
- ◆ Friday at 3:30 p.m. and 9 p.m.
- ◆ Saturday at 11 a.m., 4 p.m. and 11 p.m.

Mature Living replays on Channel 16 may be preempted by Board of Supervisors, Board of Zoning Appeals, or Planning Commission meetings.

Mature Living can also be seen On-Demand any time – visit: FairfaxCounty.gov/cableconsumer/channel-16/mature-living.

You can find information on services for older adults at FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults or call **703-324-7948, TTY 711**, Monday-Friday. ☀

Home Repair Programs Serving People in Need

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Older homeowners in Fairfax County who live on a fixed income may find it difficult to afford even minor home repairs. The good news is that there are programs to help these homeowners, ensuring that they are living in homes that are safe and healthy.

Home Repair for the Elderly Program



The Department of Housing and Community Development’s Home Repair for the Elderly Program provides minor home repairs to eligible low- and moderate-income elderly homeowners who live in the home. The program also provides accessibility modifications for

disabled homeowners. The program provides a crew for one week and up to \$1,000 in materials to complete necessary repairs and maintenance.

The crew does minor repairs, not major work. Some of the services they provide include minor electrical repair, window and door repair, minor plumbing repair, installation of grab bars, hand railings and other accessibility devices, and more.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify for the Home Repair for the Elderly Program, homeowners must meet these qualifications:

- ◆ Applicants must be residents of Fairfax County.
- ◆ Applicants must own and live in the home needing repair.
- ◆ Applicants must be 62 years of age or older, have a disability, or have a family member with a disability living in the home.
- ◆ Applicants must meet the program’s financial eligibility requirements. Visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/housing/home-repair-elderly-program](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/housing/home-repair-elderly-program) for details.

If you have any questions, please call the Home Repair for the Elderly Program at 703-246-5179, TTY 711, or email rha@fairfaxcounty.gov.



Rebuilding Together-AFF volunteers install grab bars in a shower. Photo courtesy Rebuilding Together-AFF.

Rebuilding Together Arlington/Fairfax/Falls Church

Rebuilding Together-AFF is a nonprofit organization that makes home repairs at no charge for low-income homeowners. They prioritize serving older adults, people living with disabilities, families with children and veterans. Nearly all the work is done by dedicated skilled volunteers. Last year, Rebuilding Together-AFF made repairs to 120 homes in our community.

Two-thirds of the work they perform is through Rebuilding Together Express (RT Express) – a program designed to deliver essential health and safety repairs and accessibility modifications for people with disabilities and older people who want to age in place in their homes. Most RT Express jobs require four to five skilled volunteers



Rebuilding Together-AFF has found that installing double stair rails is an effective way to prevent falls. Photo courtesy Rebuilding Together-AFF.

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and take half a day. Rebuilding Together-AFF spends approximately \$400-\$500 on materials for each home. The repairs made are based on a thorough assessment of the home, conducted by an RT Express Team Leader.

Fall prevention is a top priority of the RT Express program. Their most frequent repairs include the installation of grab bars, comfort height toilets, double stair rails, brighter lighting, and eliminating tripping hazards. After RT Express received the Commonwealth Council on Aging's top statewide Best Practices Award in 2018, Rebuilding Together-AFF expanded the program to include services such as installing stairlifts and building wheelchair ramps.

Other common repairs made by RT Express teams address fire safety. Volunteers install 10-year battery smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, make sure there is a fire extinguisher in the kitchen, and check clothing dryer vents. They have found hazardous ducts in a third of the homes they visit.

Rebuilding Together-AFF's work may include exterior repairs to the home, such as installing handrails and repairing fences, gates, and roofs. They also make sure gutters and downspouts are working properly and divert runoff around the home.

Who is Eligible?

To qualify for Rebuilding Together-AFF's services, homeowners must:

- ◆ Own and live in a home located in Arlington or Fairfax counties, the cities of Fairfax or Falls Church, or the towns of Herndon and Vienna.
- ◆ Plan to stay in their home for at least two more years.
- ◆ Meet the income guidelines on the application.
- ◆ Complete an application, provide proof of ownership and total household gross income.

To learn more, visit rebuildingtogether-aff.org. If you have questions or need help with the application, call RT staff at 703-528-1999. ☀

Lightning Safety

by Courtney Arroyo, Department of Emergency Management and Security

As storm season approaches, it's essential to be prepared for lightning, one of nature's most dangerous phenomena. Lightning can cause fatalities, injuries, and significant damage, but staying informed can help reduce risk.



- ◆ Cars: If outdoors, a car is a safe place due to its metal frame acting as a Faraday cage.
- ◆ Avoid Trees and Water: Stay away from tall objects, trees, and bodies of water during a storm.

When to Seek Shelter

Follow the **30-30 rule**:

- ◆ 30 Seconds: If you see lightning and hear thunder within 30 seconds, seek shelter immediately.
- ◆ 30 Minutes: Wait 30 minutes after the last clap of thunder before leaving shelter.

Where to Find Shelter

- ◆ Indoors: Stay inside and away from windows, doors, and plumbing.

What to Do if Struck by Lightning

If someone is struck, call 911 immediately and start CPR if needed. Lightning victims don't carry a charge, so it's safe to help.

Stay Informed

Keep up with weather updates by signing up for Fairfax Alerts bit.ly/FFXAlerts. Stay prepared and safe during storms to protect your family from lightning dangers. ☀

Burke-Springfield Center for Active Adults Opening in Summer 2025

by Karen Goff, Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services

Fairfax County Neighborhood and Community Services (NCS) is pleased to announce a new center with dedicated programming for older adults in the Burke-Springfield area of Fairfax County.



The Burke-Springfield Center for Active Adults will be opening its doors in late summer 2025. The new space at Huntsman Square in Springfield offers an exciting opportunity for the former Burke-Springfield Center Without Walls to transition to a brick-and-mortar facility.

The new space, located at 7541 Huntsman Blvd., Springfield, is more than 8,000 square feet located in a retail center. There are multipurpose rooms for recreational programming and community activities, including classroom and technology spaces.

From October 2023 to April 2025, NCS held several community engagement sessions to share programming

opportunities and gather feedback on programs and activities.

“We are very excited about the new space and opportunity to bring our engaging programming to older adults in a permanent space in Springfield,” said NCS Division Director Chris Scales. “We listened to the community and

gained valuable insight into the types of programming participants are seeking.”

Membership for the new center will be free for Fairfax County residents and \$150 for non-county residents. The program will continue to hold instructor led activities that will have a nominal fee of \$5-\$10 for a term of 8-10 weeks.

The activity calendar for BSCAA is still being finalized, but please visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/ncs](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/ncs) search “senior centers” to see the varied offerings typical of NCS community centers. 🌟

Grievances in Long-Term Care

by Camden Doran, Long-Term Care Ombudsman

A person who lives in a long-term care (LTC) facility maintains all the same rights as an individual living in the community. A person living in a LTC facility gains additional rights as a resident, one of which is the right to raise formal grievances. A resident can present their grievances at any time to facility staff or any other person without fear of discrimination or retaliation. The facility must act promptly to help resolve the grievance, and provide a written decision to the resident, if requested. The resident also has the right to file a complaint with their local state licensing agency or the Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program.

As a mandated program under the Older Americans Act, the Northern Virginia Long-Term Care Ombudsman Program (NVLTCOP) is often called on to assist residents and consumers advocate for their rights to protect dignity, choices, and self-determination. The NVLTCOP is a resident-directed program that is available to assist with concerns about quality of care, and to educate the community about long-term care services. For more information about residents’ rights or other nursing facility and assisted living concerns, please call the NVLTCOP at **703-324-5861**, or contact the Ombudsman Program by email at NVLTCOP@fairfaxcounty.gov. 🌟

Family Caregiver Support: Navigating In-Home Care Options

by Katherine Hall, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

As an option to support their loved ones' unique needs, family caregivers may opt for in-home care. In-home care can encompass a wide range of personalized services that help people remain in their homes such as bathing, meal preparation, grocery shopping, and housekeeping. The Department of Family Services (DFS) provides several potential opportunities for in-home care services. The Adult Services unit provides services that are available on the basis of eligibility after an assessment by a DFS social worker. Inova ElderLink, through the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, provides services that are available on a sliding scale basis depending on income. Call **703-324-7948**, TTY 711 for help in determining if these programs are right for your loved one. In addition, the Home Care Registry is a list of private providers that are not affiliated with an agency, and who have been screened by the DFS Adult and Aging Division. The screening includes interviews, reference checks, criminal history checks, and a tuberculosis test. The screening does not include observation of direct caregiving skills. The list is available for pick up or can be viewed online by visiting **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults**, then selecting "In-Home Care" under "Older Adults."

To learn more about available resources, call the Aging, Disability, and Caregiver Resources Line at **703-324-7948** or visit **FairfaxCounty.gov/OlderAdults**.

Family Caregiver Learning Opportunities

Virtual Dementia Friendly Information Session

Wednesday, August 13, Noon-1:15 p.m.

Join this virtual presentation and learn how to become a dementia friend. Turn your new understanding of dementia into practical action that can help someone living in your community. Presented by Allegra Joffe, Supervisor with Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, and Diane Watson, Dementia Friends Champion Volunteer. Register online at **bit.ly/DementiaFriendlyFairfax** or call **571-407-6961**.



Centering the Voices of African American Dementia Caregivers: Decision-Making, Well-Being, and Self-Care Friday, August 15, Noon-1 p.m.

In this virtual webinar presentation, hosted by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, Dr. Kalisha Bonds Johnson will open the presentation by exploring the lived experiences of African American adult daughters caring for a parent with cognitive decline or dementia. She will highlight key factors that shape both their well-being and their confidence in making healthcare decisions – for themselves and their loved ones. Dr. Shanae Rhodes will follow with powerful quotes from African American women caregivers, offering insight into their journeys. The presentation will conclude with practical self-care strategies and core takeaways designed to support African American care partners of all genders. Register online at **bit.ly/FFXDementiaSeries** or call **571-407-6961**.

Brain Health: What Caregivers Need to Know Wednesday, August 20, Noon-1 p.m.

In this virtual webinar presentation, hosted by the Fairfax Area Agency on Aging, George Worthington, Dementia Services Director for Virginia's Department for Aging and Rehabilitative Services (DARS) will present on brain health for the caregiver and their

loved one. Rapid developments in knowledge about brain health in recent years have helped focus efforts on slowing or preventing cognitive changes through lifestyle interventions. This webinar will focus on what caregivers can do to help maintain their own and their loved one's brain health. It will also review the foundations of brain health and talk about several specific risk factors for dementia such as heart health, sleep, stress, and social isolation. Trying to create new habits or make big changes can seem impossible, especially for caregivers. This presentation will discuss small changes that can add up to a larger impact. Register online at bit.ly/CAREWEB1 or call 571-407-6961. ✨



Fairfax Area Commission on Aging

by Linda Hernandez-Giblin, Fairfax Area Agency on Aging

The Fairfax Area Commission on Aging (COA) is an advisory board mandated by the Older Americans Act. Commissioners for the Fairfax Area Commission on Aging are appointed by the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and the City Councils of the City of Fairfax and the City of Falls Church.

At the July 16 COA meeting, the COA continued discussion of the implementation of the SHAPE the Future of Aging Plan and initiative development committees. SHAPE Initiative Development Committee meetings will be ongoing through the duration of the Plan. The COA also heard a presentation on Wise Cities. The COA will be on recess in August. ✨

Volunteers Needed for a Study to Help Advance Healthy Aging

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

The Virginia Fairfax Intrinsic Capacity for Older People (VFICOPE) Study is looking for volunteers living in Fairfax County to help us understand how aging affects physical and mental abilities. To participate, you must be:

- ◆ 65 years of age or older
- ◆ Live independently (no care assistance)
- ◆ Live in Fairfax County

Participants will take part in a one-hour health assessment. The study will also collect information about participants' diet, self-care abilities, and social interactions. Participation is voluntarily and participants can withdraw at any stage.

The results from this study may provide useful information to local and regional public health authorities regarding older adult's intrinsic capacity status (i.e. mental and physical ability) and related risk factors



so they can enhance long-term healthcare intervention and prevention planning in Virginia and the rest of the U.S. To learn more or volunteer for the study, please email Stefanos Tyrovolas, PhD, at styrovol@gmu.edu or Bri Schuh at bschuh@gmu.edu. ✨

Making a Difference: Volunteering with GrandInvolve in Title I Classrooms

by Hadyn Kihm, Neighborhood and Community Services

For over ten years, older adults in Fairfax County have been discovering a powerful way to give back to their communities – by stepping into classrooms through GrandInvolve, a county program that connects volunteers with Title I elementary schools in Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS). Title I schools receive grant funding from the Title 1 federal grant program because they have the highest number of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

GrandInvolve helps address educational and resource gaps in these schools by placing caring, committed older adults directly into classrooms where they can make a real impact.

For volunteer Rebecca Holderness, the experience has been life changing, not only for the students and teachers she supports, but for herself as well. “My favorite part of being a GrandInvolve volunteer is being able to make a difference to students who may need just a bit more attention or a little more encouragement,” she says.

Holderness and her fellow GrandInvolve volunteers assist with reading, math, social-emotional learning, and assistance in other languages. The presence of another adult in the classroom provides practical and emotional support to both students and teachers.

But the impact doesn't end there. GrandInvolve volunteers form strong bonds with the children they support, watching them grow and overcome challenges. “Volunteering with students in the classroom is incredibly rewarding,” Holderness continues. “It provides a unique opportunity to make a tangible difference in young lives, fostering their growth, learning, and confidence.”

For a child who might struggle with reading or math, or who may simply need a little extra encouragement, these relationships can be life changing. Teachers report that students respond enthusiastically to the volunteers,



GrandInvolve volunteers help children with reading, math, and social-emotional learning.

eagerly sharing their progress or seeking guidance on a tough assignment.

For volunteers, the rewards are just as rich. Holderness shares, “Being part of their educational journey allows me to witness firsthand their joy of discovery and the power of guidance.” That joy when a student sounds out a new word, solves a tricky math problem, or beams with pride after a small success, is what keeps volunteers coming back week after week.

One of the benefits of the GrandInvolve program is the support provided for volunteers across schools. Each school or region has a Team Lead, and regular meetings and social gatherings bring volunteers together. The program offers flexible opportunities, training, and ongoing support to ensure volunteers feel confident and prepared. No teaching experience is required—just a desire to help and the time to show up. GrandInvolve is looking to expand into all 41 Title I schools in the next few years.

GrandInvolve not only offers retirees a chance to stay physically and mentally engaged but also allows them to make a meaningful contribution to the educational development of the next generation. Through this program, Fairfax County fosters a stronger, more interconnected community, where the wisdom of older adults meets the curiosity of youth.

Interested volunteers should reach out to Jennifer Chuong with Neighborhood and Community Services at ncs-volunteers@fairfaxcounty.gov. Volunteers must undergo an FCPS background check and a volunteer orientation before they can be placed in a classroom. ☀

Have Fun While Helping a Good Cause at the Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia’s Fourth Annual Pickleball & Golf Festival

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

Join the Shepherd’s Center of Northern Virginia (SCNOVA) for their biggest annual fundraising event on Tuesday, September 16, at the Worldgate Health Club & Spa, located at 13037 Worldgate Drive, Herndon. The event will take place from 4-7 p.m. and offers ten indoor pickleball courts with on-site coaches and athletic professionals, a golf simulation lounge with famous golf courses to choose from, raffle prizes, a silent auction, tasty refreshments and a fun photo booth. Tickets cost \$65. Learn more and register at scnova.org/event/pickleball-golf-festival-2025.



Top, a group photo of the participants of the 2024 SCNOVA fundraiser. Right, participants enjoyed a fun evening of pickleball, golf and other activities, all to support a good cause. Photos courtesy SCNOVA.



Volunteer Nancy Appler shows off the raffle prizes that were available at the 2024 fundraiser. Photo courtesy SCNOVA.

Last year’s event raised \$73,000, with all proceeds funding SCNOVA’s programs, services, and free transportation for adults over 50 living in Vienna, Oakton, Great Falls, Dunn

Loring, Merrifield, Reston, and Herndon plus some areas of Fairfax.

SCNOVA is a nonprofit group that helps older adults live better lives through various support programs, classes, and volunteer activities. These services help people stay active and live independently in their homes by providing services such as a caregiver support group, friendly caller and visitor programs, health and wellness classes, minor home repair, medical and companion transportation, and social events.

In 2024, SCNOVA and its 250+ volunteers did the following:

- ◆ Drove participants to their appointments for a total of 4,367 hours.
- ◆ Covered 15,185 miles driving.
- ◆ Completed 9,357 hours of volunteer work.
- ◆ Finished 42 home repair jobs.
- ◆ Added 54 new volunteers.
- ◆ 97% of those surveyed said SCNOVA's services helped them stay independent at home.

To learn more about SCNOVA or to volunteer, visit their website at scnova.org. ☀

NVSO Volunteers Needed

Are you a fan of the Olympics? Come support the **2025 Northern Virginia Senior Olympics (NVSO)** as a volunteer from September 13-30! Volunteers are vital to the success of NVSO and are needed to support approximately 76 events at 27 venues. Go to NVSO.US for more information. ☀

Volunteers Needed for Area Shepherd's Centers

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

The non-profit Shepherd's Centers are sponsored by local area congregations, corporate partners, community groups, and individuals to serve adults 50 and older. The centers offer free transportation for medical appointments and non-medical needs (e.g. grocery shopping) for adults 50+ who live in their center's service area and are able to independently get in and out of a car.



The free rides provided by Shepherd Center volunteers help ensure that older adults don't miss their medical appointments.

Shepherd's Centers need volunteers!

Drivers are needed and can accept ride requests that work with their schedule. There are also other ways you can help. Contact

the Shepherd's Center near you to learn more about volunteer opportunities:

- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Annandale/Springfield** – call 703-941-1419; visit ShepherdsCenter-Annandale.org; or email shepherdscas@vacoxmail.com.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Fairfax-Burke & South County** – call 703-323-4788 (Fairfax-Burke) or 703-799-0505 (South County); visit scfbva.org; or email info@scfbva.org.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of McLean, Arlington and Falls Church** - call 703-506-2199 x2; visit scmaf.org/volunteer; or email contact@scmaf.org.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Northern Virginia** (serving Oakton, Vienna, Reston, Herndon, Great Falls, Dunn Loring and Merrifield) – call 703-281-0538; or visit scnova.org.
- ◆ **Shepherd's Center of Western Fairfax County** – call 703-246-5920; visit scwfc.org; or email scwfc.office@gmail.com. ☀

Mosquito and Tick Season: Here's What You Need to Know to Fight the Bite

by the Fairfax County Health Department

When summer returns each year, so do mosquitoes and ticks – and with them, the risk of several serious illnesses. The Fairfax County Health Department joins other public health agencies in urging the public to take extra precautions this summer to avoid bites and protect themselves and their families from illnesses spread by ticks, mosquitoes and other pests.

Staff members from the Health Department's Disease Carrying Insect program work year-round to educate the community about the precautions one can take to protect themselves from being bitten, and actions that can help reduce the insect populations. From exhibiting at community events to disseminating fun and informative educational materials, the central message is that it's important to actively reduce the chances of contracting an illness from insect bites.

Mosquitoes are known carriers of diseases like West Nile virus (WNV), Zika virus, dengue and Chikungunya, while ticks can transmit Lyme disease, ehrlichiosis and Rocky Mountain spotted fever. Experts warn that as climate patterns shift, these pests are appearing earlier in the season and in greater numbers.

To minimize the risk of bites, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recommend the following tips:

- ◆ Use insect repellent with DEET, picaridin, or oil of lemon eucalyptus.
- ◆ Wear long sleeves and pants when in wooded or grassy areas.
- ◆ Check yourself and pets for ticks after spending time outdoors.
- ◆ Eliminate standing water around your home, as it serves as a breeding ground for mosquitoes.
- ◆ Shower soon after being outdoors to wash off ticks and reduce the chance of tick-borne illnesses.

Staying vigilant and taking preventive measures can help ensure a safer and more enjoyable summer.



One way you can minimize the risk of mosquito bites is to eliminate standing water around your home.

How to Spot the Symptoms of West Nile Virus

WNV is most commonly transmitted to humans from the bite of an infected mosquito. Not all mosquitoes can carry WNV and not all mosquitoes are infected.

- ◆ About 1 in 150 people infected with WNV will develop severe illness. Symptoms can include high fever, headache, neck stiffness, stupor, disorientation, coma, tremors, convulsions, muscle weakness, vision loss, numbness and paralysis. These symptoms may last several weeks, and neurological effects may be permanent. About 1 of 10 people who develop severe WNV illness that affects the central nervous system die.
- ◆ Up to 20 percent of the people who become infected have symptoms such as fever, headache, and body aches, nausea, vomiting, and sometimes swollen lymph glands or a skin rash on the chest, stomach and back. Symptoms can last for as short as a few days, though even healthy people have become sick for several weeks.
- ◆ Approximately 80 percent of people (about 4 out of 5) who are infected with WNV will not show any symptoms at all.

See your health care provider if you have concerns about WNV. There is no vaccine or specific antiviral treatment for WNV infection. Medications can be used to reduce fever and relieve symptoms. In severe cases, people may be hospitalized to receive supportive care.

How to Spot the Symptoms of Lyme Disease

Lyme disease is the most commonly-reported tick-borne disease in our area. Lyme disease is a bacterial infection and if left untreated, can spread to joints, the heart and the nervous system. Symptoms of Lyme disease include:

- ◆ A bull's-eye rash (Only 70 to 80 percent of people with Lyme disease get this rash)
- ◆ Fever
- ◆ Headache
- ◆ Achy muscles and joints
- ◆ Fatigue

If you have symptoms of Lyme disease, see your doctor – even if you don't remember being bitten by a tick. Most cases of Lyme or other tick-borne diseases can be treated successfully with a few weeks of antibiotics.

Fairfax County Health Department offers a free tick identification service to provide you with information about the type of tick that bit you. This service does not test ticks for disease-causing agents and staff do not provide medical advice. This identification can be useful should you need to speak to your medical provider. Learn more at [FairfaxCounty.gov/health/fighthebite/tick-identification](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/fighthebite/tick-identification).

To learn more about the Health Department's Disease Carrying Insect program and how to protect yourself and your family, visit [FairfaxCounty.gov/health/fighthebite](https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/health/fighthebite). ☀



Always wear long sleeves and pants when walking in wooded or grassy areas and check yourself for ticks afterwards.

Resources for People with Hoarding Disorder and Their Families

by Gwen Jones, Department of Family Services

People with hoarding disorder have a hard time letting go of things, even if they don't need them or the items don't have much value. Over time, their belongings pile up, making their home difficult to use and even unsafe to live in. The first step to getting better is for the person to recognize the problem and ask for help. Here are some helpful resources and services to support them on their journey.

Mental Health Help, Education, and Support Groups

Hoarding disorder is a mental health issue, so it's important to get treatment to address what's causing it and learn ways to manage it. Joining a support group can also provide understanding and connection. Here are some resources:

- ◆ **International OCD Foundation (IOCDF):** This group supports people with obsessive compulsive disorder (OCD) and related disorders, including hoarding. Visit iocdf.org to find therapists, support groups, and educational resources.
- ◆ **Anxiety and Depression Association of America (ADAA):** You can find therapists, educational materials, and free mental health webinars at adaa.org.
- ◆ **Institute for Challenging Disorganization:** This group focuses on helping people who struggle with disorganization. Visit challengingdisorganization.org for education, strategies, and tools.
- ◆ **Clutterers Anonymous:** This is a supportive community for people who compulsively clutter. They follow a 12-step program. Check out clutterersanonymous.org for resources and meetings.
- ◆ **Children of Hoarders:** Adult children of hoarders can visit this online forum for information, support, and sharing experiences. Visit childrenofhoarders.com for details.

Home Decluttering

Clearing out a home affected by hoarding can take a lot of work. These programs and professionals can help:



A support group can provide understanding and healing to someone dealing with a hoarding disorder.

- ◆ **National Organization of Professional Organizers (NAPO):** Visit napo.net to search for organizers who can help sort and remove items.
- ◆ **Conquer the Clutter:** A company in the DMV area that specializes in helping people with hoarding disorder. Visit conquerthec clutterer.org for details.
- ◆ **Better Business Bureau Virginia:** Use bbb.org/us/va to find organizers, cleaners, contractors, and more.

Help with Basic Needs in Fairfax County

Learn about resources, eligibility requirements, and how you can access services:

- ◆ **Public Assistance and Employment Services:** Visit FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/public-assistance-employment-services to learn how to apply for food, medical, financial, and energy assistance programs. They also offer a wide range of employment services for people of all ages.
- ◆ **Coordinated Services Planning:** Call 703-222-0880 for a variety of assistance, including food, shelter, employment, financial assistance, healthcare and more.
- ◆ **The Human Services Resource Guide:** A searchable database with information on thousands of nonprofit and government services available to Fairfax County residents. Visit fairfacs.powerappsportals.us/resource-guide/ to search the HSRG.

- ◆ **Aging, Disability & Caregiver Resources Line:** Call 703-324-7948, TTY 711, to learn about programs and services for older adults, adults with disabilities and family caregivers. These include transportation, home delivered meals, in-home care, home repair, and more. You can also visit

FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults for more information.

To read previous articles from our series on hoarding disorder, visit FairfaxCounty.gov/familyservices/older-adults/golden-gazette/archive. ☀

Safe, Secure, and Responsible: Let's Talk About Firearm Safety

by Fairfax County Police Department Public Affairs Bureau

Whether you're new to firearms or a longtime owner, the way you store your firearm matters. Safe handling and secure storage, especially when you're on the go, are keys to responsible ownership.

In Fairfax County and across the region, firearms left in unattended vehicles can be stolen and misused. Taking steps to secure your firearm will help to keep our community safe.

Safe Storage Tips

- ◆ Don't leave firearms in vehicles overnight.
- ◆ Always store firearms unloaded in a locked container or safe.
- ◆ Store ammunition separately.
- ◆ Make sure firearms are never accessible to children, teens, or unauthorized adults.
- ◆ Immediately report any stolen firearm to police.

Think Twice Before You Leave a Firearm in Your Car

Even if it's just a quick stop, leaving a firearm unattended in your vehicle, especially in a glovebox or center console, dramatically increases the chance it will be stolen. If a gun is stolen from your car, it could later be used in robberies, assaults, or other violent acts.

Keep It Locked – Or Better Yet, Don't Leave It

If circumstances require you to leave your firearm in a vehicle, take every precaution:

- ◆ Unload it.
- ◆ Secure it in a locked container.
- ◆ Keep it completely out of sight.



Always store firearms unloaded and in a locked container or safe.

Center consoles and gloveboxes, even when closed, are not secure storage options. When possible, bring your firearm inside and store it properly in a home safe or lockbox.

Know the Law: Protecting Children and Others

Virginia takes firearm safety seriously. Under Virginia Code § 18.2-56.2, it is a Class 1 misdemeanor to recklessly leave a loaded, unsecured firearm in a way that endangers a child under 14.

While the law is specific to children, the principle applies to everyone: unauthorized access to firearms can be deadly, and responsible gun ownership means taking proactive steps to prevent it.

If You See Something, Say Something

Community safety is a shared responsibility. If you witness suspicious behavior, call the FCPD non-emergency line at 703-691-2131. For emergencies, call 911.

Let's work together to ensure firearms stay out of the wrong hands and keep Fairfax County safe. ☀

... *Community Calendar continued from back cover*

Stop the Bleed

Thursday, August 7, 9-10:30 a.m.

Reston Hospital Center, Pavilion II, 2nd Floor, Conf Rm A, 1850 Town Center Pkwy, Reston

This 90 minute in-person course teaches the lifesaving skills needed to prevent the number one cause of death after an injury: bleeding. A formal presentation is followed by hands-on practice of applying direct pressure, packing a wound, and using a tourniquet to stop bleeding. Park in Parking Garage B and follow the walkway towards the Pavilion II entrance. Sign up at tinyurl.com/4bvhy23h.

Dance for Brain Health

Thursdays, 11:15 a.m.-Noon

Wellness Center for Older Adults, 4027B Olley Lane, Fairfax

Research shows that exercise is good for the brain and dance has the added dimensions of rhythm, balance and music that enhance the benefits of simple movement – plus, it's fun! This free class is appropriate for people living with dementia, their caregivers and anyone interested in preventing cognitive decline. Call **703-970-3601** to reserve a spot.

Take A Break Concert Series Hosted by the Reston Community Center

Thursdays, 7-8:30 p.m.

Halley Rise, 2025 Fulton Place, Reston
Join us for unforgettable summer evenings filled with vibrant music from talented artists. **August 7**-Elikeh: AfroPop; **August 14**-Mystic Warriors: World Music; **August 21**-Pebble 2 Pearl: Funkified Rock; **August 28**-Sean Heely Band: Celtic. For more information, call **703-390-6159** or visit restoncommunitycenter.com/tag/take-a-break-concerts. For concert status during inclement weather, call **703-476-4500**.

Back to School Book Sale

Friday, Aug. 8, 1-5 p.m.; Saturday, Aug. 9, 10 a.m.-5 p.m.; Sunday, Aug. 10, 1-4 p.m.

Centreville Regional Library, 14200 St. Germain

Dr., Centreville

Shop fiction and nonfiction, DVDs, audiobooks, and more! Bag sale on Sunday – fill a grocery bag and pay \$10. No electronic scanners allowed.

Memory Screenings

Monday, August 18, 9 a.m.-2 p.m.

Wellness Center for Older Adults, 4027B Olley Lane, Fairfax

As a part of the Alzheimer's Foundation of America's National Memory Screening initiative, Insight Memory Care Center offers free, in-person, confidential memory screenings and educational materials to people with concerns about their memory or who want to check their memory now for future comparison. Call **703-970-3601** to reserve a 30-minute appointment.

LBGTQ+ Care Partner Support Group

Wednesday, August 20, 7-8 p.m.

This group is specifically designed for the unique needs, challenges and experiences of LBGTQ+ care partners for individuals living with dementia. Get to know others in a safe space, and share personal concerns and successes. This free group is led by Rev. Dawn Jefferson and meets virtually on Zoom. Registration required. Learn more at insightmcc.org/get-involved/events.

Trip to See StageCoach Bandits Improv

Friday, August 22, 6:30-10:30 p.m.

Bus pick-up at RA Headquarters, 12001 Sunrise Valley Drive, Reston

Join Reston Association for a laughter-filled evening in Ashburn, VA, as StageCoach Theatre Company's Improv Troupe – the StageCoach Bandits – brings the house down! Just like “Whose Line Is It Anyway?”, the Bandits perform short-form improv using suggestions from the audience. Fee is \$65.00/RA members, \$75.00/non-members includes your ticket, bus transportation, tolls and parking. All sales are final. Email questions to Events@reston.org or call **703-435-6571**.

Drop-In Support Group for People Experiencing the Loss of a Spouse or Partner

Saturday, August 23, 10:30 a.m.-Noon

4606 Ravensworth Road, Annandale
Free, in-person drop-in support group hosted by Haven of Northern Virginia, a nonprofit, nonsectarian community organization of trained volunteers offering emotional support to the bereaved, the seriously ill, the dying and their families and friends. Led by a trained volunteer, the group will focus on understanding spousal grief, how to cope, how to take care of yourself and how to remember a special life. The group meets on the fourth Saturday of each month. Call **703-941-7000** or email havenofnova@verizon.net for more information.

Senior Movie Day Featuring *Last Breath*

**Wednesday, August 27, Doors-9 a.m.,
Movie-10 a.m.**

LOOK Cinemas at Reston Town Center, 11940 Market Street, Reston
Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day, free for people 55+. Free coffee, donuts, OJ, and door prizes. Registration is not required. For more information, visit reston.org/Calendar.

LLI Forum: American Mythology and the History of Arlington House

Wednesday, September 3, 10-11 a.m.

Little River United Church of Christ, 8410 Little River Turnpike, Annandale
Free event hosted by the Lifetime Learning Institute of Northern Virginia, an educational group for adults over 50. Speaker Daniel Blier, Park Ranger with the National Park Service at Fort Hunt Park, will focus his talk on American Mythology and the History of Arlington House, the Robert E. Lee Memorial. For more information, visit llinova.org or email LLI admin@llinova.org.

Dates, prices, and times are correct at publishing. However, please confirm information using the phone numbers or websites provided.

Fairfax County Services for Older Adults

703-324-7948 |  **TTY 711**

**Monday–Friday
8 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.**

[www.fairfaxcounty.gov/
OlderAdults](http://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/OlderAdults)

- Information and Referrals
- Adult Protective Services
- Caregiver Support & Education
- Disability Resources
- Health & Wellness Programs
- Home Delivered Meals
- In-Home Care
- Long-Term Care Ombudsman
- Medicare Counseling (VICAP)
- Nutrition Education
- Respite
- Screenings & Assessments

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 Watch **Mature Living** on Ch. 16

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FAIRFAX COUNTY DEPARTMENT OF
FAMILY SERVICES



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August Community Calendar

To submit an event for the Community Calendar, email DFSGoldenGazette@FairfaxCounty.gov. All events must be received by the first day of the month prior to the issue month.

New Series of Social Events

WISE Cities is collaborating with local businesses to host free social events for older adults in the community. To learn more, email contact@wisecities.us or call 571-354-6626.

Register for the Northern Virginia Senior Olympics Until August 28

Register to compete in the 2025 NVSO! The games will take place September 13-30. Participants must be 50 years of age or older and live in one of the participating jurisdictions. More than 70 events will be offered this year. The registration fee is \$20 and athletes may enter as many events as they like. Volunteers are also needed for the games. Learn more and register at nvso.us.

Brain Gym

Friday, August 1, 2-3 p.m.

George Mason Regional Library, 7001 Little River Turnpike, Annandale
Improve your brain health with fun exercises like sudoku, word puzzles, memorization games and more. No registration required. For more information, call 703-256-3800 or visit tinyurl.com/2s3kn8mr.

Sunday Art in the Park Series Hosted by the Reston Community Center

Sundays, 7-8 p.m.

Reston Town Square Park, 11900 Market St, Reston Pack a picnic and join the renowned Shenandoah Conservatory on Sunday evenings this summer. **August 3**-Resonating Together: A Violin & Cello Duet: An Evening of Beautiful Music; **August 10**-Be Our Guest: A Disney Cabaret: Classic Disney Tunes for the Entire Family; **August 17**-Broadway Through the Ages: Your Favorite Broadway Tunes from the 1950s to Today; **August 24**-R2DUO: Saxophone and Piano Duets. For more information, call 703-390-6159 or visit restoncommunitycenter.com/tag/sunday-art-in-the-park-concerts. For concert status during inclement weather, call 703-476-4500.

Nova Scripts Central Presentation on "Lung Cancer Awareness"

Tuesday, August 5, 10:30-11:30 a.m.

Wellness Center for Older Adults, 4027B Olley Lane, Fairfax
This session will raise awareness about lung cancer prevention, early detection, and the importance of regular screenings to reduce risk. Call 703-970-3601 to reserve a seat.

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