

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Dog of the Week:
longtime shelter
resident Lurch is
large in love, needs
active family

COMMUNITY, A3



**UVA Health
cardiologist brings
heart wellness
program to Lake of
the Woods**

LOCAL, A2

Thursday, March 19, 2026

WHERE YOUR STORY LIVES

StarExponent.com • \$3.00

POTOMAC RIVER

Advisories lifted after sewage spill

**VDH: there's always
a health risk when
recreating in waters**

CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

The Virginia Department of Health on St. Patrick's Day lifted the remaining recreational water advisory for the Potomac River from the American Legion Memorial Bridge

on I-495 to the Virginia 120 Chain Bridge in Arlington County.

An initial advisory was issued on Feb. 13 due to a sewage spill in the Potomac River on Jan. 19, and subsequent reports of a sewage discharge in early February, according to a VDH release.

On March 14, DC Water successfully completed emergency repairs and returned the sewage flow to the Potomac Interceptor, the health

department said. Water quality sampling results collected by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality DEQ, Maryland, and Washington D.C. partners indicate bacteria concentrations in the Potomac River outside of the immediate spill site are at levels acceptable for all recreational water use, according to the release.

Montgomery County, Maryland, is maintaining an advisory for land

areas impacted by the sewage spill and portions of the river within 200 feet of the Maryland shoreline between Swainson Island and Lock 8. This area closest to the spill site is most likely to be affected by runoff, especially after storm events, until all remediation efforts are complete. The Virginia Department of Health will continue to monitor

Please see **SEWAGE**, Page A4

BEE LADY CLOSING SHOP



ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION PHOTOS, CULPEPER STAR-EXPONENT

Culpeper resident Felecia Chavez opened La Bee Da Loca in 2015 and is closing shop this Sunday.

Felecia Chavez and her hive is moving on. La Bee Da Loca shuts Sunday

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

A local shopkeeper and lifelong beekeeper who educated colonies of children on the origins of honey is making a bee-line for change following a decades-long run on East Davis Street. Culpeper resident Felecia Chavez, aka "the bee lady," is closing La Bee Da Loca on March 22.

Last call for local honey, honey products, bee gear, gifts, soap, candles and more, as well as a peek at the iconic observation hive upstairs, which Chavez calls the heart and soul of her operation.

"My goal was to do 10 years, see what happens, and I far exceeded that," she said in a March 10 interview at the shop. "I'm closing because it's time for me to go ahead and just look at something else," Chavez said.



La Bee Da Loca, a bee and honey themed shop at 236 E. Davis St. in downtown Culpeper, is closing March 22 after an 11-year run.

Please see **BEE5**, Page A4

**REDISTRICTING
OPPOSITION**

GOP, third party rallying against new maps

**Democrats say 10-1 maps
for their party will level the
playing field in mid-terms**

ALLISON BROPHY CHAMPION
Culpeper Star-Exponent

Local and state Republicans, along with members of a third party, are rallying against a change to Virginia congressional maps on which voters are now deciding.

Former Attorney General Jason Miyares started his first of eight "grass-roots events" around the state Monday and Tuesday in Culpeper, encouraging Virginians to vote no on the April 21 referendum.

Early voting is underway on the question that will alter the state's 11 congressional districts. Republicans say the proposed Virginia maps represent a power grab.

"I hope you will join me in this fight," Miyares said in a post prior to a March 16 morning visit to Culpeper County Republican Committee headquarters on Main Street. "As Co-Chair of Virginians for Fair Maps, I am all-in to stop this unfair and undemocratic attempt to redraw our Congressional maps and silence millions of people.

"In 2020, Virginians made it clear they didn't want career politicians drawing districts for their friends and allies. We must vote no to stop this partisan power grab."

Residents filled the small room at GOP headquarters to capacity for his visit. Miyares encouraged attendees to join the effort at VAFairMaps.com and to "remember you can go vote no today."

Del. Karen Hamilton, R-Orange, joined Del. Phillip Scott, R-Fredericksburg, in Culpeper, for the event with the former attorney general.

"This time—we're rallying the silent majority to save Virginia from a permanent blue takeover. Democrats promised affordability but delivered tax increases! We can't give them anymore power here in Virginia!" Hamilton said in a post.

**The Forward Party also
speaking against maps**

Former state senate candidate Elizabeth Melson of Rappahannock County is part of another effort representing a third party that opposes the constitutional amendment to redraw congressional maps.

Please see **MAP5**, Page A4

Check out Culpeper-area
community briefs **PAGE A3**

Weather
Rather cloudy
High 57 • Low 33
Forecast • A6

Inside	
360	INSIDE
CLASSIFIEDS	B4
COMMUNITY	A3
LIVELY	INSIDE
LOCAL	A2
OBITUARIES	A3
OPINION	A5
SPORTS	B1
WEATHER	A6

