

THE CONNECTION

CENTRE VIEW ♦ Chantilly ♦ Great Falls ♦ Herndon ♦ McLean ♦ Oak Hill ♦ Oakton ♦ Reston ♦ Vienna

Members of Fairfax County Fire and Rescue leadership during the national anthem at the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Public Safety Headquarters.



2 18-Year-Olds;
2 Guns; 1 Death;
6 Years

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Remembering,
Still Counting
Losses

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SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE

Police Are Investigating Suspected Murder-Suicide

Fairfax County police have identified the couple found dead last week inside their Centreville home as Brandon and Lavinia Brown, both 31. They lived in the Centre Ridge community and were the parents of three young children.

Detectives from the Police Department's Major Crimes Bureau

said they're investigating this tragedy as a domestic-related murder-suicide. They haven't commented on any possible motive. Police say their children were inside the home at the time of the incident but were not physically injured.

Officers responded last Wednesday, Sept. 9, around 5:30 p.m., to a home in the 6300 block of Sharps

Drive after receiving a report of a shooting there. Upon entering it, they discovered the husband and wife suffering from apparent gunshot wounds. Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel pronounced both people dead at the scene.

According to police, detectives "preliminarily believe Brandon shot Lavinia before shooting him-

self. Cartridge casings and a firearm were recovered at the scene." Afterward, the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner was expected to conduct autopsies on their bodies to confirm their specific cause and manner of death.

Specialists from the Victim Services Division are ensuring the surviving family members are receiv-

ing the appropriate resources and assistance. Meanwhile, anyone with information regarding this incident is asked to call the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 2. Or submit a tip anonymously via Crime Solvers at www.crimesolversfairfax.org, or call the tip line at 866-411-8477.

- BONNIE HOBBS

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar.

Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event. Or via email calendar@connectionnewspapers.com.

FAIRFAX COUNTY OFFERS FREE TREES

Community-based organizations in Fairfax County can apply to receive free trees for planting on private properties, through a program by Fairfax County's Urban and Community Forestry Division (UCFD) of the Department of Public Works and Environmental Services.

The program, offered in partnership with Casey Trees, is designed to help community organizations in Fairfax County – such as volunteer groups, civic associations and faith-based organizations – obtain high-quality, professionally grown trees suitable for

planting. Purchasing top-quality trees can be a challenge for these organizations.

This opportunity focuses on increasing tree cover in economically disadvantaged communities, which typically do not benefit from moderate to high tree cover.

How to Apply: Fairfax County Tree Distribution to Community Organizations | Public Works and Environmental Services

UCFD will prioritize applications for tree-planting sites within or adjacent to Fairfax County-designated highly vulnerable communities, as defined by the county's One Fairfax policy and its associated Vulnerability Index. While planting in highly vulnerable communities will be

prioritized, all community organizations are encouraged to apply for tree delivery, regardless of where tree planting is proposed.

The costs of the trees and delivery are covered by the county's Tree Preservation and Planting Fund and will be offered at no cost to participating organizations.

VOLUNTEER DRIVERS NEEDED

Have some extra time to drive a neighbor to a doctor's appointment? You pick the days, times, and places that are convenient for you. There is no minimum driving requirement. Not only do you help older adults in need, you also get to meet wonderful folks, often with very interesting backgrounds and stories to tell. The

Shepherd's Center of McLean-Arlington-Falls Church (SCMAFC), is an all-volunteer, non-sectarian, non-profit organization. Its mission is providing free transportation to seniors for medical and dental appointments or run errands to grocery stores and pharmacies. Visit the website at <https://scmafc.org/volunteer>, or email contact@scmafc.org.

for volunteer social visitors and grocery shoppers. If you can give the gift of your time, consider providing invaluable support to someone in your community. Learn more about Volunteer Solutions at bit.ly/FXVSVOL or email VolunteerSolutions@FairfaxCounty.gov or call 703-324-5406.

SUPPORT GROUPS

Virginia Chronic Pain Support Group Meets from 1:30-3 p.m. the 2nd Wednesday of each month at Kaplan Center for Integrative Medicine, 6829 Elm St., Suite 300, McLean. Group leader, Jodi Brayton, LCSW. 703-532-4892.

VOLUNTEER YOUR TIME

Would you like to help a neighbor feel less lonely? Will you help someone get much-needed groceries? Form new connections and make a meaningful difference. Older adults in the Annandale, Falls Church, and Alexandria regions are waiting

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Six Years in Prison for Centreville Shooting

Kanu, 18, killed teen while out on bond for carjacking arrest.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

On May 15, 2024, two 18-year-olds met in a Centreville business park to conduct a drug deal. Centreville's Hassan Kanu was to purchase 3 ounces of marijuana from Michael Alcantara of Manassas. But when something went wrong, a shootout ensued, with Kanu fatally killing Alcantara.

Kanu then quickly ditched his gun before returning to the scene and lying to responding police officers that he'd gotten shot as he walked by and needed medical attention. But videotape of the parking lot showed otherwise, and Kanu was arrested and charged with murder.

He stood trial two years later, this past March 9-18, in Fairfax County Circuit Court, with the jury ultimately convicting him of the lesser felony charge of manslaughter. He returned Sept. 3 to learn his punishment and was sentenced to six years in prison.

"Mr. Kanu came to do a drug deal that day, with no money, and shot Michael in the back as Michael was running away," said Assistant Commonwealth's Attorney Kennedy Nyhoff. "Kanu then left, hid his gun in a storm drain, returned to the scene and pretended to be an innocent bystander – without acknowledging his role in [this offense], as Michael lay dying/dead [on the ground]."

The crime occurred in the parking lot of the Centre Lee Business Park along Route 29. There, Kanu had entered Alcantara's car, ostensibly to buy marijuana. Both had brought guns and, at some point, Alcantara jumped out of his vehicle and Kanu followed.

During the trial, police homicide Det. Michael Hengemuhle testified that – according to Kanu's Cash App records – his attempt to pay Alcantara for the marijuana that morning via that digital wallet was declined due to lack of funds. The price was \$340, but Kanu only had \$5 in the bank account he'd linked to it.

The jury saw video of the incident and Kanu fleeing, and witnesses testified about what they saw and did that day. Alcantara's mother, Diamond Bierlein, said she'd known about the drug deal because the money her son made helped support their family.

"When he didn't come home, I checked with his girlfriend for his location," said Bierlein. "And when I got there, he was dead." She said



Kanu

he took a gun with him anytime he went to sell "weed," except to friends, because "he'd been robbed and beaten at gunpoint before."

Before Kanu was sentenced, she and Alcantara's girlfriend, plus others, testified about the impact his death has had upon them. Taking the witness stand first was girlfriend. "Michael was my boyfriend of four years but we knew each other for six years," she said. "We worked together at [concert venue] Jiffy Lube Live, [where he was a sous chef], and he supported my plans to become a nurse. We were inseparable."

But he was killed two weeks before her high-school graduation, she said, ending her dreams of them eventually getting married and having children. She'd gone with Bierlein to the scene that day and, she said, "I'll never forget what I saw. No girlfriend should ever have to see their significant other like that, lifeless, with blood [around them]."

"I'll never hear his voice again or be the same person. My trusting is different. Michael was the most protective, kind, caring person I'd ever met. He made me feel loved. Michael deserved more than just 18 years of life."

Her mother, Layla Truax, called him "honest, hardworking, loyal and compassionate. He took pride in his job and loved working with kids with special needs. He'd take the ones in wheelchairs to the park and made sure they had someone to talk to. How many high-school kids do that?"

"He'll never experience all the milestones of life – birthdays, a family, etc. We're not just left with grief, but trauma. Seeing his lifeless body is something we'll never unsee. The images come back, as well as the phone call from the detective saying he'd been shot. At my daughter's graduation, we were grieving for the person who



The victim, Michael Alcantara

should have been there beside her."

"Michael was also a son, brother, grandson, nephew and friend – and every one of them lost their own version of him that day," continued Truax. "He wasn't a violent person looking for a confrontation. His life was taken over \$340 worth of marijuana, and Michael's life was worth infinitely more. We don't get to move on from this; we just learn to adjust to live around the places where he should be."

Testifying next was Alcantara's grandmother, Terrie Bierlein. "My daughter and family are broken because Michael was taken from us, and this was no accident," she said. "Kanu didn't just take Michael's life but changed the lives of all those who loved him." Crying, she said, "Kanu murdered my grandson. He gets to see his family – I don't get to see Michael. I want Kanu to receive a long sentence. If not, I think someone else could be harmed."

Sobbing, as well, Diamond Bierlein said she was 15 when she became pregnant with her son. And although life was often tough for them, she said Michael always helped others, fed the homeless and worked hard. "He was a good kid and supported our whole family with his job. He had a heart of gold and so much empathy.

"My other two kids and I are suffering every day, and it's nonstop. It hurts so bad, and I never want another mother to feel the way I do. I'm broken for the rest of my life. I'm questioning whether God is real. Michael would have contributed something good to this life. My children and I always said, 'I love you,' but now it's in fear that one of us will walk out that door and not come back."

Defense attorney Farheena Siddiqui said Kanu, too, was raised by a single mom and, at age 12, was sent to Sierra Leone – a country he didn't know – to live with family he also didn't know. "This led to even more instability and chaos," she said. "When he moved back, he couldn't adjust and felt isolated from his peers. But he could also be kind and show up for others, and letters written on his behalf show he's not malicious."

Siddiqui said Kanu was "distraught" when he learned Alcantara had died and even wrote a letter apologizing to his family. Saying how remorseful Kanu is, she asked Judge Dontae Bugg to sentence him to the lower end of the state sentencing guidelines, two years, four months. But Nyhoff asked for 10 years and gave Bugg information the jury wasn't allowed to know.

She said Kanu is set to plead

guilty in Prince William County to carjacking and brandishing a firearm. "That sentence was deliberately delayed so it wouldn't affect his sentencing guidelines here," said Nyhoff. "Otherwise, the recommended maximum for his offense here would have been 14 years, 11 months. He's only 20 now; he still has his whole life ahead of him. Michael does not."

"Kanu committed the carjacking on March 14, 2024, was arrested for it March 31 and was released on bond in April. He then killed Michael [the next month] while out on bond for armed carjacking," Nyhoff said more convictions and light sentences for other offenses followed for Kanu in August 2024 and in April and October 2025.

"He continued to show a pattern of violence, unconcerned and unphased by the consequences of his actions," she said. "He's already served two years, two months for this offense; if he received the low end of the guidelines, he'd be released today. He still did serious crimes after being initially charged with murder for this case, and he's seen friends killed, and none of that made him stop. Sometimes, people need to feel the consequences of their actions, and a lesson needs to be taught."

Kanu then stood, apologized to Alcantara's family and said he regrets ever going to the business park that day. "Every day, I ask God for forgiveness," he said. "I've been going to classes and trying to better myself in jail."

Before pronouncing sentence, Bugg told the victim's family, "Nothing this court can do can erase what happened. I hope that, as time passes, you're better able to deal with your loss." He also said he believes Kanu is remorseful, but told him, "I'm worried that, if you continue down this path, you might end up in jail again or worse."

He then sentenced Kanu to 10 years in prison, with four suspended, and placed him on five years supervised probation. Bugg also ordered him to undergo a mental-health evaluation and follow any recommended treatment, plus complete a cognitive decision-making course.

Afterward, outside the courtroom, Diamond Bierlein said she was "disappointed and disgusted" with the legal system. "Kanu was out on bond, and less than a month later, he murdered my son," she said. "If he was held accountable the first time, we wouldn't be here."

Fairfax County Honors the Fallen at 25th Anniversary 9/11 Ceremony

Observance recognizes 2001 victims and those lost decades later to 9/11-related illnesses.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

For many in public safety, 9/11 did not end in 2001; it continues to claim lives through fatal cancers and chronic diseases contracted during post-attack operations.

The 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at the Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters began at 10:10 a.m. on Friday—marking the moment the Pentagon’s fire-damaged wall collapsed after hijacked American Airlines Flight 77 struck the building. The program centered on personal 9/11 recollections shared by elected officials and public safety leadership under a brilliant blue sky reminiscent of the morning terror struck 25 years ago. The ceremony brought together first responders and residents to remember the 2,977 people killed in the four attacks, including at the Pentagon, while officially recognizing, for the first time, local public safety personnel who later succumbed to 9/11-related illnesses.

For Fairfax County crews who responded directly to Flight 77’s impact, the burning Pentagon was a local disaster scene, and the ceremony served as a solemn promise to pass that memory down to new generations.

“The horrific acts of violence and terrorism happened here on our soil at the Pentagon in Arlington,” said Virginia Lt. Gov. Ghazala Hashmi. “At 9:37 that morning, American Airlines Flight 77 struck the Pentagon, taking 184 precious lives and forever changing Virginia and our nation.”

In Fairfax County, the impact was immediate. County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay recalled sitting in a meeting with then-Supervisor Jerry Hyland at Sherwood Hall Library when news shattered normalcy. “Quickly we realized how those little things weren’t that important,” McKay said.

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Chief John S. Butler tied that sudden shift to the enduring demands of public service, invoking the 343 FDNY firefighters and paramedics who died at the World Trade Center. “They kept climbing... they were tired. They kept going up,” Butler said. “Service to others—that’s our fuel, that’s our wealth, that’s what we



Deputy Fire Chief Bill Betz speaks at the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Fairfax County Public Safety Headquarters on Friday, September 11, 2026.



Fairfax County Firefighter Kevin Huheey performs the national anthem.

embrace.”

For local responders, the call to duty was abrupt. Sheriff Stacey A. Kincaid recalled resting at home after a midnight shift. “I was awakened by a call from a supervisor. The words on the other end of the phone were unthinkable,” Kincaid said. “A plane had struck the Pentagon, and staff needed to report back immediately to work.”

In Chantilly that morning, then-firefighter Bill Betz, now Deputy Fire Chief, prepared for a routine simulated plane-crash drill. Instead, crews watched the crisis unfold on television before being ordered back to their station as the county entered lockdown and air traffic at Dulles International Airport ground to a halt. When Betz deployed to the scene, the scale proved overwhelming.

Speaking shortly after 10:15

a.m., Betz recounted the transition from observer to responder. “We got down there, and I think the first thing I recognized was the sheer magnitude of the incident,” Betz recalled, contrasting TV images with reality. For Betz, sharing those memories with newer personnel remains an essential duty.

The attacks also altered municipal law enforcement. Police Chief Kevin Davis emphasized how 9/11 expanded department responsibilities. “Before 9/11, the military and federal law enforcement fought terrorism. After 9/11, and still true today, we all fight terrorism,” Davis said. “Let us now strengthen that resolve.”

In the chaotic days that followed, Fairfax County responders answered without hesitation. Kincaid noted that while deputies deployed to the Pentagon, oth-



From left, Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay and Fire and Rescue Chief John S. Butler pause for a moment of silence.



Members of the Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department leadership render a salute during the national anthem at the 25th Anniversary 9/11 Remembrance Ceremony at Public Safety Headquarters.

ers traveled to New York to support law enforcement colleagues. Across Northern Virginia, residents lined up to donate blood and hung flags from overpasses, transforming highways into corridors of solidarity. “This country came together,” Kincaid said, “refusing to allow our differences to divide us.”

Yet 9/11 has not ended. Betz recalled asking Fairfax County Firefighter Kevin Huheey, who would be singing the national anthem, where he had been on 9/11, only to hear, “Well, I wasn’t born yet”—a reminder of the duty to pass that day’s story on to a new generation.

“Before we conclude today’s ceremony, we would like a moment to honor the members of our own public safety family who have passed away from illnesses related to their service following Sept. 11, 2001,” Betz said.

Department leadership read the names of those lost: Fairfax County Police Department Master Police Officer Donald “Donnie” A. Lillard Jr., March 1, 2023, and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Department Battalion Chief Michael “Mike” Tameyer, Dec. 28, 2023.

Recognition of their deaths framed the closing observance at Public Safety Headquarters, serving as a reminder that honoring the fallen means remembering both those lost in 2001 and those who succumb decades later.

Following the ceremony, Betz invited attendees inside to view museum artifacts: “On behalf of Fairfax County and the Fairfax County public safety community, thank you for being here and for helping us to ensure the lives and sacrifices we remember today are never forgotten.”

PHOTOS SCREEN GRAB VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE 16

Suicide Prevention and the Workplace

September is suicide prevention and awareness month.

BY JOSEPH GETCH,
CEO HOPELINK
SPECIAL TO THE CONNECTION

Stress, burnout, financial pressures, caregiving responsibilities and mental health challenges do not disappear when people arrive at work. This September, HopeLink Behavioral Health, a nonprofit behavioral health and crisis services provider in Virginia, is asking employers, coworkers, families and community members to become more comfortable recognizing when someone may be struggling and understanding what to do next.



Joseph Getch is the CEO of HopeLink Behavioral Health.

As part of Suicide Prevention and Awareness Month, HopeLink has launched its 12th annual #CallTextLive Campaign, a month-long effort focused on making conversations about suicide and mental health more open, practical and connected to help. A centerpiece of this year's campaign is a free Mental Health in the Workplace Lunch



Campaign Sign

& Learn on September 15 from noon–1 p.m. HopeLink's Crisis Services professionals will share practical strategies for managing workplace stress and burnout; recognizing signs that someone may need support; starting conversations and connecting people to appropriate resources. The webinar is free and open to the public. Employers, supervisors, HR professionals and employees are encouraged to participate. Registration

is available at HopeLinkBH.org/calltextlive.

HopeLink operates 988 Suicide & Crisis Lifeline services across Virginia and nationally, giving its crisis professionals a first-hand view of the challenges bringing people to crisis and the difference that early support, human connection and access to the right resources can make.

Suicide remains a significant public health concern in the United States. More than 47,000 people died by suicide in 2024, and an estimated 1.6 million adults attempted suicide.

Behind those numbers are individuals, families, workplaces and communities.

HopeLink's #CallTextLive Campaign is designed to move beyond awareness alone by helping people understand how to recognize distress, talk openly about suicide and emotional pain, and connect someone to support before a crisis escalates.

Throughout September, HopeLink will share suicide prevention

information, practical resources, community activities and opportunities to learn more about mental health and crisis support. Campaign information, activities and resources are available at HopeLinkBH.org/calltextlive and through HopeLink's social media channels.

Suicide prevention is not something that belongs only to mental health professionals. Most of us will encounter someone who is struggling—in our workplace, our family or our community. We want people to feel more confident recognizing those moments, having the conversation and helping someone connect to support. Anyone experiencing emotional distress, suicidal thoughts or a mental health or substance use crisis can call or text 988 or chat through 988lifeline.org. HopeLink's trained crisis workers li

sten, assess safety, help de-escalate crises when possible and connect people with local services and resources based on their individual needs.



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‘Heartache of This Devastating Loss’

Fairfax community grieves middle-schooler’s death.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Out of respect for his family’s privacy, City of Fairfax police haven’t released the name of the Frost Middle School student struck and killed by a truck last week while he was bicycling along Pickett Road. But even without knowing the name of the 13-year-old, area residents are in mourning for a young student whose life was taken too soon.

The tragedy occurred last Wednesday, Sept. 9, shortly after Frost had dismissed its students for the day. City of Fairfax police responded at 2:32 p.m. to the 3900 Block of Pickett Road for a motor-vehicle crash involving the teen and a vehicle. It’s a busy, high-traffic area, with both Fair City Mall and the Turnpike Shopping Center across the street from both Frost and Woodson High. And it’s not been revealed for certain if the truck driver even saw the boy before colliding with him.

According to police, “The juvenile sustained life-threatening injuries and was pronounced deceased at the scene. Preliminary information is [that a] large truck was observed to be leaving the shopping center when it struck the juvenile riding on a bicycle. A vehicle of interest and driver were located nearby.”

In addition, in an online, “Incident Alert,” police immediately let the community know that there was a “heavy police presence” on Pickett Road, which leads from Main Street in front of Frost to the shopping areas. They wrote, “Officers are on scene for a fatal, pedestrian-related motor vehicle crash. Southbound Pickett Road is shut down in the area.”

As news of the accident spread, a heartfelt outpouring of stunned grief, sadness and condolences followed. Several Frost employees and parents said they and their children were in shock. Other people wrote on the police department’s Facebook page how horrific and devastating it was to learn what had happened. And others, like Diana Gibson, simply wrote, “Oh no no no no no. This is just awful.”

Epitomizing the community’s feelings, Karen Dowler-Ponciano wrote, “My heart breaks for all involved,” and Katherine Boush Morgan added, “God bless that child and the family. This is tragic.”

Fairfax County School Board



A memorial to the boy killed while bike riding has sprung up between Peet’s Coffee and Pickett Road.



Friday-afternoon traffic on busy Pickett Road passes by the makeshift memorial.

member Melanie Meren also posted online, saying, “May we pause to reflect on the life of a child who, on Wednesday, died in a crash while bike riding home from school. I am sending my deepest condolences to all who knew and loved this child. For those of us who did not, we feel the heartache of this devastating loss, too. I hope all involved in or witnessing this tragedy can find peace. May we as a community do more to keep our children safe.”

Frost is a Fairfax County public school, and the shopping centers are in Fairfax City, so both City police officers and the county police

Crash Reconstruction Unit are jointly investigating the circumstances surrounding the crash. (They also noted that state law prohibits Virginia law-enforcement agencies from directly or indirectly identifying deceased juvenile victims.)

In light of the fatality, Frost was closed the next day. This incident remains an active investigation, and police say additional details will be released “as appropriate.” Anyone with information about this crash is asked to contact Det. Thornton at 703-385-7924.

SADLY, the teen – a Frost eighth-grader who was wearing a

helmet – was one of three students involved in accidents with vehicles that day while riding a bike or scooter. Afterward, FCPS Superintendent Michelle Reid issued a letter about these incidents – especially the fatality – and the need for drivers to be particularly vigilant and mindful about students traveling to and from their schools.

“I’m reaching out to our entire division today with a heavy heart and an important reminder about ... keeping our students safe as they travel to and from school,” she wrote. “My heart is with the student’s family, friends, classmates, teachers, and the entire

school community as we confront this heartbreaking loss.

“I’m asking our entire community to pause this evening and think about the ways we can each help keep our students – and each other – safe every day. Whether we’re behind the wheel, walking, biking, riding a scooter, waiting for a bus, or simply moving through a busy school parking lot, each of us has an important role to play in keeping our community safe.”

Reid then asked drivers to slow down, not speed, stay alert for students at crosswalks, sidewalks and bus stops, and put away phones and other distractions. She urged students walking to school to use sidewalks and designated crosswalks whenever possible, look carefully before crossing and make sure drivers see them before entering the roadway.

For those biking or riding scooters, Reid told them to wear properly fitted helmets, follow traffic signs and signals, use bike lanes or designated paths when available, and stay alert for vehicles, pedestrians and other riders. She then beseeched everyone to be especially attentive around schools, intersections, crosswalks, bus stops and parking lots, where different forms of transportation come together.

“I encourage families to take time tonight to talk with your children about how they travel to and from school and review these important safety practices together,” added Reid. “And tomorrow, please slow down, stay alert and look out for one another. A few extra moments of care can make an enormous difference.”

The next day, another student was struck by a vehicle. Added to the boy whose foot was injured by a car on the first day of the school year, that brought the total number of students hit by vehicles to five since school began Aug. 24.

Meanwhile, a memorial to the Frost student who died has sprung up at the edge of the Turnpike Shopping Center between Peet’s Coffee and Pickett Road. There’s a wooden cross and a growing mound of colorful flowers, a star-shaped white balloon and a message telling him, “Fly high. Forever loved.”

Friday afternoon, two female school-bus drivers came and added their own bouquets of flowers to the pile. Declining to give their names, they said they didn’t know the boy who’d been killed, but they felt sad and wanted to pay their respects.

PHOTOS BY BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

OPINION

9/11 at the Connection, as I Remember it

BY MIKE SALMON, REPORTER
THE CONNECTION

The morning of Tuesday, September 11, 2001 started out to be a warm late summer day and as a reporter for the Connection Newspapers, it was a deadline day.

The newspaper had a full staff and we put out weekly newspapers for several communities across Fairfax County as well as Alexandria, Arlington and Potomac, MD. Our office was out in Tysons Corner, which it was known as back then, in a one-story building on land that is now Tysons II. As always, I had to hit Starbucks before jumping on I-495 to head out to the office.

I was in line behind three or four people when I heard about an airplane hitting the World Trade Center in New York City, so in my mind I pictured that famous shot of a B-25 hitting the Empire State Building back in the 1940's or 1950's, a picture I remembered seeing in a book somewhere before. An airplane hitting the World Trade Center? That's a little weird, I thought.

I got my coffee, and there seemed to be a lot of chatter in the café, so I headed out to my car and off to work. I turned on the radio to my show, the Howard Stern Show, 106.7 FM. Now Howard Stern and his sidekick Robin Quivers broadcast from downtown New York City and when I pulled out of my parking spot in front of Starbucks, everyone at the station was watching the plane crashes unfold, and they reported on it to some extent, while the show producer Gary Dell'Abate freaked out and ran out of the studio. Stern would later give him a hard time for that.

I got to the newsroom and all was buzzing, particularly one woman that was barking out commands.

By that time, the Pentagon had been hit too, so my orders were to go back to the Springfield Metro Station and see what I could find. Surely people

would be panicking, heading home to their loved ones and I had to get the story. Once back on I-495, there seemed to be less traffic so getting to the Metro station was easy. I parked in a temporary spot and immediately saw this woman panicking in the parking garage. "Where's my car? Where's my car?" she said deliriously as she wandered around in confusion.

I went down to the bus lanes and heard people saying the buses were cancelled, or the buses were only going away from the city, or something else, but I could tell they didn't know anything for fact.

I talked to whoever I could, including this one hippie woman who was sitting on the curb, holding some sign, possibly her destination sign so I started asking her questions and she started saying something to the affect that the United States deserved it, and had a few half-cocked reasons they asked for it.

After noting my observations and interviewing anyone I could, I headed back to the office only to be met by another reporter who was compiling all the information for our lead story.

He hated my first version of the Springfield story, so I rewrote it and somehow got out of there while still contributing what I could.

As a newsroom, we were happy to get out the local version of 9/11 in time for the printers, and all was turned down to a low simmer.

For the next few weeks we wrote about the impacts on a local level, but after doing this for about 10 stories, I was sick of it. I said to my direct editor, Stephen Mauren, "can we just go back to our regular stories of community events, school football teams, Boy Scout achievements, bla bla bla." He laughed at the ridiculousness of my request, with a feeling like nothing was ever going to be the same in this country.

Maybe not, I thought, but sure enough, when the Springfield Days festival went on the next spring, I was right there interviewing Miss Springfield like I had before, and life went on.



SCREENSHOT VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE 16

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue personnel operating hose lines and ground monitors amidst heavy smoke and debris on the grounds of the Pentagon on 9/11.



Public Meetings Fall Transportation Meetings

You are invited to participate in public meetings held by the Commonwealth Transportation Board. The public will have an opportunity to learn and share feedback regarding the top transportation priorities and the vision for transportation in the commonwealth along with information related to various other initiatives. Representatives from the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, Virginia Department of Transportation, and Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation will be in attendance to highlight their transportation programs and to discuss your ideas and concerns on Virginia's transportation network. The meetings will consist of remarks from key officials followed by a town hall session where the public may engage in discussion and ask questions about the various initiatives. Meeting materials will be available at <https://ctb.virginia.gov/planning-funding/2026-fall-transportation-meetings/>

Public meetings begin at 2 p.m. in each of the locations:

Friday, September 25 Lynchburg District Lynchburg Business Alliance 300 Lucado Place Lynchburg, VA 24504	Wednesday, September 30 Richmond District VDOT Richmond District Hawthorne Auditorium 2430 Pine Forest Drive Colonial Heights, VA 23834	Thursday, October 8 Northern Virginia District VDOT Northern Virginia District Potomac Conference Room 4975 Alliance Drive Fairfax, VA 22030
Tuesday, October 20 Salem District Salem Civic Center 1001 Roanoke Boulevard Salem, VA 24153	Thursday, October 22 Staunton District Blue Ridge Community College Plecker Center for Continuing Education One College Lane Weyers Cave, VA 24486	Tuesday, October 27 Hampton Roads District VDOT Hampton Roads District Auditorium 7511 Burbage Drive Suffolk, VA 23435
Thursday, November 5 Bristol District Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Room 240 One Partnership Circle Abingdon, VA 24210	Tuesday, November 10 Culpeper District VDOT Culpeper District Auditorium 1601 Orange Road Culpeper, VA 22701	Thursday, November 12 Fredericksburg District VDOT Fredericksburg District Auditorium 86 Deacon Road Fredericksburg, VA 22405

You can also submit your comments via email or mail by November 30, 2026.

- For roads and highways: Six-YearProgram@vdot.virginia.gov or Infrastructure Investment Director, Virginia Department of Transportation, 1221 East Broad Street, Richmond, VA 23219.
- For transit and rail: drptpr@drpt.virginia.gov or Public Information Office, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, 600 East Main Street, Suite 2102, Richmond, VA 23219.

The commonwealth is committed to ensuring that no person is excluded from participation in, or denied the benefits of its services on the basis of race, color or national origin, as protected by Title VI of the Civil Rights Act of 1964. If you need further information on these policies or special assistance for persons with disabilities or limited English proficiency, please contact the Virginia Department of Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-2730 or the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation's Title VI Compliance Officer at 804-786-4440 (TTY users call 711).

Crossing Guards Are on Everyone's Radar

Chairman McKay announces restored funding for crossing guards in wake of multiple incidents.

By Mike Salmon
Connection Newspapers

With all the budget commotion involving crossing guards at high schools in Fairfax County and then a teen fatality in the City of Fairfax, some parents took matters into their own hands and got crossing flags for some pedestrian crossing paths in the name of safety.

The flags are posted near some crosswalks for students to carry as they cross the road. "It enhances the safety," said Tamara O'Neil, a parent that has two children in the county school system - one at West Springfield High School and



The crossing flags at a Springfield crossing.

PHOTOS BY TAMARA O'NEIL

the other at Sangster Elementary School.

The Student Government Association assisted with setting up and using the flags recently at Centreville High School which can help draw attention whether there is a

crossing guard or not.

The crossing guard issue is a concern of the Fairfax County Police Department and the public school system, but it's not off the FCPS radar. They issued a statement:

"Fairfax County Public Schools (FCPS) appreciates that the County temporarily returned crossing guards to our historically staffed high schools last week. Despite FCPS concerns, as part of last year's County budgeting process,

high school crossing guards were eliminated starting this school year.

"We appreciate the vital role crossing guards play in ensuring our students arrive and depart school safely each day. We remain optimistic that this important safety measure will become permanent once again following next week's Board of Supervisors' meeting. We encourage students, families and drivers to use extra caution when traveling to and from school, follow all traffic laws, and remain alert for pedestrians and other vehicles. The welfare of our students, staff, and community remains a top priority," FCPS said in a statement.

At the Board of Supervisors meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 15, the board heard from parents and students; they found funding for the crossing guards. Chairman Jeff McKay wasted no time to get the new information out in his newsletter

"Today, the Board of Supervisors approved \$707,908 as part of the FY2026 Carryover Budget Package to restore crossing guards at Annandale, Centreville, Chantilly, Edison, McLean, Oakton, South County, South Lakes, West Springfield, and West Potomac high schools for the remainder of the school year. Coverage will be provided through a combination of contracted crossing guards and uniformed police officers," McKay said.



Flags are an option with the crossing guard issue.



ENTERTAINMENT

Fairfax County Farmers Markets Return

Operated by the Fairfax County Park Authority, these popular markets connect residents with local farmers and food producers at 10 convenient locations. Shop seasonal fruits and vegetables, meats, dairy, baked goods and artisanal products, while enjoying a vibrant, open-air market experience.

WEDNESDAYS

McCutcheon/Mount Vernon: April 22-Nov. 25, 8 a.m. - noon. Sherwood Library, 2501 Sherwood Hall Lane

Oakmont: May 6-Oct. 28, 8 a.m.-noon. Oakmont Recreation Center, 3200 Jermantown Road

Wakefield: May 6-Oct. 28, 2-6 p.m. Wakefield Park, 8100 Braddock Road

THURSDAYS

Annandale: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Mason District Park, 6621 Columbia Pike

Herndon: May 7-Oct. 29, 8 a.m. - noon. Old Town Herndon, 700 Block of Lynn Street by the Red Caboose

FRIDAYS

McLean: May 1-Oct. 30, 8 a.m.-noon. Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road

Kingstowne: May 1-Oct. 23, 3-7 p.m. In the Giant parking lot, 5870 Kingstowne Towne Center

SATURDAYS

Burke: Apr. 18-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking Lot, 5671 Roberts Parkway

Reston: Apr. 25-Nov. 21, 8 a.m.-noon. Lake Anne Village Center, 1609-A Washington Plaza

SUNDAYS

Lorton: May 3-Nov. 22, 8 a.m.-noon. VRE parking lot, 8990 Lorton Station Blvd.

SUMMER CONCERT & ENTERTAINMENT SERIES

In its third year, Take a Break Concert Series spotlights fresh talent in one of Reston's newest neighborhoods. This laid-back, open space offers plenty of room to dance or play and a new 7:30 p.m. start time lets the heat ease off a bit.

Summerbration Fab Fridays | Schedule

Reston Station

Fridays, May 29 – Sep 25, 2026

WEDNESDAYS NIGHTS

Open Game Nights. 6:30-9 p.m. At Old Firehouse Center, 1440 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. Come enjoy table tennis, bridge, mah-jongg, arcade games, a sensory lab and more at the Old Firehouse. Children under the age of 18 must be accompanied by an adult.

DANCING ON THE SQUARE

Thursday evenings in Fairfax City, Old Town Square – 10415 North Street, Fairfax. 6:30 p.m. Dance Workshop; 7:30 p.m. Free Dance Join in every Thursday in September at Old Town Square for free Dance Workshops led by local artists and studios. Each evening begins with a guided workshop at 6:30 p.m., followed by an hour of open dancing at 7:30 p.m.—perfect for all ages and skill levels. No registration required. Make a night of it: stop by Commonwealth Brewing before or after the event to enjoy their special themed drink, the Whiskey Tango!

SENIOR MOVIE DAY

Reston Association presents Senior Movie Day, sponsored by Friends of Reston. Join them on the fourth Wednesday of each month. Coffee, donuts and OJ are provided, and door prizes are distributed prior to the movie.

Location: LOOK Movie theater at Reston Town



Take a tour of the Silas Burke House on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 in Burke.



Fall Fest returns to Reston Farm Garden Market from Sept. 26 to Oct. 31, 2026.

Center
Free. Ages 55+
Sept. 23: Reminders of Him

NOW THRU SEPT. 27

Natural Wonders by Rosemarie Forsythe.

At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, Reston. Reception to meet the artist on September 13 from 2-4 p.m. The exhibition features elements of the natural world Rosemarie saw in her backyard in Virginia and in the far-flung places of her life living and working around the world. Leaping horses, bright parrots, leopards, and even an alligator roam through her paintings. Colorful, highly patterned fish swim through a magical, deep blue sea. Forests of lilies, ferns, and wildflowers reveal glimpses of owls, monkeys, deer, and foxes. Palm leaves sway elegantly in a Pacific breeze by moonlight. Rich landscapes range from southern sand dunes to crisp, northern winter scenes of graceful birch trees rising to the distant sun.

NOW THRU OCT. 25

Bat Boy: The Musical. At Workhouse Arts Center, Building W3, Lorton. If you remember the Weekly World News tabloid sensation about a half-bat, half-boy creature found in a West Virginia cave, they already know the vibe. This rock musical is campy, hilarious, surprisingly heartfelt, and features a killer score that will have audiences tapping their feet between laughs. Performances run Fridays/Saturdays at 8 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. in September; Saturdays at 5 p.m. and Sundays at 2 p.m. in October at the Workhouse Arts Center's Theater in Building W3.

SEPT. 12 TO NOV. 7

Transformations: Documenting the Pilot Substance Abuse Program at Lorton Reformatory, 1989-1991. At Workhouse Arts Center, Lorton. More than 35 years after photographer Lloyd Wolf was given rare behind-the-scenes access inside Lorton Reformatory, his powerful photographs documenting incarcerated men participating in a groundbreaking sub-

stance abuse treatment program are returning to the very grounds where they were taken. A reception will be held Saturday, Oct. 3 from 3-5 p.m.

SEPT. 15-17

UTP Open Auditions. 7 – 9 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. An opportunity for teens to get paid to perform! (the) Unruly Theatre Project, The Alden's award-winning professional teen improv company, is holding open auditions for students in grades 9-12 on Tuesday-Wednesday, Sept. 15-16, from 7-9 p.m. Members are paid for performances and community programs, with opportunities to perform throughout the area; no prepared monologue is required, and the company has won first place at Northern Virginia's Improvicon in 2022, 2023 and 2025! Register at <https://mc-leancenter.org/the-unruly-theatre-project/>.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

McLean Project for the Arts Fall Solo Exhibitions. 7 p.m. Opening Reception. At Berlage Center for Arts & Education, 6910 Fleetwood Road, McLean. The three featured exhibits include FOREST, featuring work by Freya Grand; Afterlight, featuring work by Ian Hustling, and Hubris and the Sublime, featuring work by Sally Veach. The fall exhibitions run through November 14, 2026. In addition, a Tea & Talk presented by The Mather and lead by MPA Artistic Director Nancy Sausser is scheduled for September 30, 2026, at 11 a.m. Additionally, an Artist Talk is scheduled for October 29, 2026, at 7 p.m.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

19th Annual Erin Peterson Fund Golf Tournament. Join in a day of golf and fun. At Westfields Golf Club, 13940 Balmoral Greens Avenue, Clifton. Registration is now open. To register, visit www.erinpetersonfund.org.

AARP: MAKING THE MOST OF YOUR RETIREMENT RESOURCES

At Tysons-Pimmit Regional Library, 7584 Leesburg Pike, Falls Church.

Gain practical retirement planning knowledge through a four-part AARP educational series. Explore income and expenses, debt and assets, financial planning, Social Security, and fraud prevention. Attend individual sessions or complete all four for the full learning experience. Register separately for each session. Attend all four and receive a \$25 gift card.

Dates:

Thursday, September 17 at 1:00 p.m.

Tuesday, September 22 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 1 at 1:00 p.m.

Thursday, October 8 at 1:00 p.m.

Learn more and RSVP: www.aarp.org/retirementVA

FRIDAY/SEPT. 18

VolunteerFest 2026. At Northern Virginia Community College – Annandale Campus, 8333 Little River Turnpike, Annandale. Volunteer Fairfax will host VolunteerFest 2026, bringing hundreds of volunteers, businesses, nonprofit partners, and community leaders together for a high-energy day of service focused on addressing food insecurity. Participants will work side by side to pack 100,000 nutritious meals for neighbors facing hunger. Capital Area Food Bank will help distribute the meals to food pantries in greatest need throughout Northern Virginia and the Greater Washington region. Community members can support VolunteerFest in three ways: volunteer, donate, or fundraise.

First Shift

Check-In & Community Fair: 8:30–9:15 a.m.

Meal Packing Instructions: 9:15 a.m.

Meal Packing: 9:30–10:30 a.m.

Second Shift

Check-In & Community Fair: 11:00–11:45 a.m.

Meal Packing Instructions: 11:45 a.m.

Meal Packing: 12:00–1:00 p.m.

SEE CALENDAR, PAGE 11

Legals

Legals

Notice is hereby given that Waliyanemt LLC, 13700 Shrewsbury Ct, Apt 302, Herndon, Virginia 20171, has filed an application for a certificate of public convenience and necessity that would authorize: 1. Passenger transportation as a Common Carrier over Irregular Routes, providing service in the Cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, and Manassas Park, Virginia, and the Counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William, Virginia and; 2. The transportation of Medicaid recipients throughout the Commonwealth of Virginia as a Non-Emergency Medical Transportation Carrier as defined in Section 46.2-2000 et seq. of the Code of Virginia.

Any person who desires to protest the application and be a party to the matter must submit a signed and dated written request setting forth (1) a precise statement of the party's interest and how the party could be aggrieved if the application was granted; (2) a full and clear statement of the facts that the person is prepared to provide by competent evidence; (3) a statement of the specific relief sought; (4) the name of the applicant and case number assigned to the application; and (5) a certification that a copy of the protest was sent to the applicant. The case number assigned to this application is MC2600637BW.

Written protests must be mailed to DMV Motor Carrier Services, Attn: Operating Authority, P. O. Box 27412, Richmond, VA 23269-0001 and must be postmarked on or before October 2, 2026.

Any protest filed with competent evidence will be carefully considered by DMV, however, DMV will have full discretion as to whether a hearing is warranted based on the merits of the protest filed.

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News



SCREENSHOT TOWN OF HERNDON VIDEO

Members of the Herndon Town Council and staff meet for a work session in Herndon, Va., on Tuesday, Sept. 8. Town Attorney Lesa Yeatts, far left, provides an update on trial status in the Herndon v. Comstock lawsuit.

Judge Removes Trial Date in Herndon v. Comstock Lawsuit

Court to issue ruling on town's motion for summary judgment instead.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

A Fairfax County Circuit Court judge removed the Sept. 14 trial date in the Town of Herndon's lawsuit against developer Comstock Herndon Venture, LC, signaling that a ruling is imminent in the dispute over 4.675 acres of downtown real estate.

Town Attorney Lesa Yeatts briefed the Herndon Town Council on the procedural shift toward the end of the council's Sept. 8 work session.

Yeatts said the attorneys were contacted by the judge, who advised that she would enter an order removing the trial date because she planned to issue her decision on the town's motion for summary judgment very shortly, which "would alleviate the need for a trial in the matter."

"So there is no trial pending for Sept. 14," Yeatts said. "We're expecting [a] decision from the judge very imminently. Any deci-

sion from the judge, however, will be subject to appeal, and we will certainly let everyone know when that decision comes forward."

Mayor Keven LeBlanc and council members did not comment on the matter.

The lawsuit stems from a failed public-private partnership signed in November 2017 to transform the parcel into a \$100 million-plus mixed-use development featuring apartments, retail space, and an arts center. After years of market delays and five contract extensions, Comstock sent the town its "Notice Not To Proceed with Herndon Downtown Redevelopment Project" on Dec. 6, 2024. In January 2025, the town notified Comstock it was exercising its contractual right to have the property returned.

When the developer failed to deed the land back to Herndon, the town filed suit in Fairfax County Circuit Court to reclaim the property deed. Currently, a large portion of the property located in the northeast quadrant of the Elden and Center streets intersection remains a fenced and overgrown parcel where the former Subaru dealership at 770 Elden St. stood, along with parking lots and an occupied commercial building: Arts Herndon, a gallery and event space with additional outdoor gathering space directly beside the W&OD Trail.



SCREENSHOT/FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

The Fairfax County School Board meets September 10 to consider programmatic options for underutilized high schools.

FCPS Board Votes to Boost Enrollment at Five High Schools

Special programs, not boundary changes.

MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Facing declining enrollment and uneven capacity across the division, the Fairfax County School Board voted 11-0 on Thursday, with one abstention, to direct Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid to develop targeted academic programming to increase enrollment at underutilized high schools. The motion targets traditional high schools with capacity utilization below 85% and fewer than 1,800 students, and sets a Nov. 12 deadline for Dr. Reid to present her recommendations to the board.

Rather than resorting to contentious boundary realignments or school closures, the board is focusing on programmatic options at high schools. The strategy aims to attract students voluntarily by introducing or expanding specialized tracks—such as Advanced Academic Programs (AAP), Career

and Technical Education (CTE) pathways, academy offerings, or magnet and language programs—said Marcia St. John-Cunning (Franconia District), who introduced the motion.

St. John-Cunning emphasized that the directive stems from a commitment to educational equity across the county. “This motion reflects our dedication to ensure that every high school provides rich and inspiring course offerings for all students,” she said.

School Board Vice Chair Kyle McDaniel (Member-at-Large) voiced strong support for balancing enrollment through programming rather than physical redistricting alone.

“I think this is a great way to solve the second part of the enrollment concerns,” McDaniel said. “We fixed the first problem, which is the physical boundaries, and this motion takes a very large step forward fixing the second half of the problem, which is program distribution.”

During board discussion, St. John-Cunning clarified that five high schools that meet the motion’s criteria are Mount Vernon,

Lewis, Herndon, Annandale, and Justice, as they fall into the underutilized category in the division’s broader dataset.

Superintendent Dr. Michelle Reid addressed the feasibility of the proposed timeline, which some school board members questioned. Dr. Reid confirmed that she would assign Chief Academic Officer Dr. Sloan Presidio and regional leadership to work on the high school programs, while acknowledging that staff would be “juggling a lot” as they simultaneously manage the “hotspot work that we’re trying to do.” To meet the accelerated deadline, “people are just going to work longer hours.”

With the Nov. 12 deadline set, school division staff will evaluate potential program additions while balancing ongoing initiatives, including boundary hotspot reviews. The district also plans to incorporate community feedback from affected school communities as the proposed programmatic changes are finalized.

The full board discussion and vote are available to view on the official Fairfax County School Board Meeting Video.

Don’t “Boss” Me



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

We buy a lot of fast/medium-food take out, and not just Chinese either. In fact, since Covid, the food business has become very accommodating to take out/pick up requests. Moreover, as many of you regular eaters know, there are also services that will deliver to you all sorts of food. And in so receiving, recipients can minimize their interactions with the food serving/delivering public. Moreover, there’s no parking and walking to the establishment, no standing and waiting in line once you’re inside, and no mixing with the hoi polloi; just sitting and waiting from the comfort and convenience of your home. But for those of us who are resistant to the advantages of food delivery, interactions with the general public and the fast/medium-food staff await - or shall I say: persists.

I’ve written recently of my feelings about being called “sir” by the same general public I’m referring to here: the restaurant/fast/medium-food establishments. And as you regular readers know, yours truly (as opposed to my wife) will almost exclusively be the one going to pick up and pay for the food, thereby interacting with a store employee. Hardly an awkward/unfamiliar exchange, especially given the post-Covid world where food delivery/pick up is almost di regur. As a result, people’s eating routines have changed where now fewer meals are prepared at home and more are brought in ready to eat. It’s become more acceptable, preferred almost, as a work-around to the miscellaneous toxins in the air that we all breathe, and of course the time and effort it takes to buy, prepare, cook and serve that food at home. But people’s habits have changed. Covid has had repercussions that we’re still feeling/experiencing. In fact, all these years later, I still see people wearing masks, sometimes even in their cars.

Now that I’ve established the context, let me finally address the particular situation that has led to this column being written: the employees greeting and thanking me after I order, receive and then pay. “Sir” in this interaction, I can tolerate. However, when an employee calls me “Boss;” that I don’t tolerate nearly as well. “Sir” connotes respect, sort of. I don’t like it, but it doesn’t feel as if the employee is subliminally seething with contempt of our generational divide. It’s not merely disrespectful, it’s downright rude and snarky almost. I’m not the employees’ boss so don’t pretend to treat me as one. I’m your customer, not your supervisor. I place the order. You deliver the order. Though I’m not on the same side of the register as you, we are, in effect, two sides of the same request. We’re practically equal. I’m happy being your customer. Let’s not conflate your providing me a service with your working for me. If anything, we’re working together. Calling me “Boss” raises my stature and presumes a relationship we’ve never actually consummated.

I don’t want - or quite frankly deserve, any special dispensation, either in how my meal is prepared and/or how said meal is handed to me and what is said to me during that handoff. All I require is courtesy and gratitude. Anything more is unnecessary and likely not in your job description.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

ENTERTAINMENT

FROM PAGE 9

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Historic House Tours. 10:30 a.m. to 12:15 p.m. At Sunrise at Silas Burke House, 9619 Burke Lake Road, Burke. Ever wonder about the 1854 house you pass on Burke Lake Road? Burke Historical Society members will be leading tours of the historic house at Sunrise at Silas Burke House.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival. 1:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. At Solace Outpost, 444 West Broad Street, Falls Church. The Animal Welfare League of Arlington (AWLA) is thrilled to have been selected as the benefiting organization of the 4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival. Reason to Rock Music Festival was founded in 2023 by four local dad band members, Scott Schreiber, Dru Fearing, Gregg Shively and Greg Hamilton. Now in its fourth year, Reason to Rock has hosted more than 1,000 people and raised nearly \$40,000 for charity. Each year, attendees enjoy a selection of local bands, brews, and the opportunity to learn about the organization their presence is supporting. Tickets for the 4th Annual Reason to Rock Music Festival are

on-sale now for just \$20 per ticket, with children under 18 allowed to enter for free and of course, dogs welcome. Tickets are available for purchase through www.awla.org/event/reason-to-rock-music-festival/.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Fall Plant Sale. 8 a.m. to 12 p.m. At Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street, SE, Vienna. The sale offers a variety of native plants including flowering perennials, shrubs, and small trees available for purchase. During the sale, attendees are invited to enter a free drawing to win a native tree and to take advantage of the Vienna Farmers Market, located in the Vienna Community Center parking lot. The CSC plant sale is held each spring and fall and features seasonal plants that are native to the region. All plants are raised and sold by Hill House Farm and Nursery.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Kinship Wine & Wares Grand Opening. 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. At 1635-B Washington Plaza North on Lake Anne Plaza, Reston. Featuring wine tastings, music, snacks, children’s crafts and plenty of opportunities to explore the shop’s collection of wines, retro housewares

and vintage finds.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

OFC Block Party, 1-4 p.m. At the Old Firehouse Center, McLean. Celebrate the end of the season with the OFC Block Party! This outdoor community celebration brings classic block party energy to downtown McLean with live music, games, activities, food, giveaways and fun for all ages. Gather with friends and neighbors for an afternoon filled with entertainment, laughter and the welcoming spirit that makes McLean such a special community.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Reston Multicultural Festival. 11:00 a.m. – 6:00 p.m. At Reston Town Center, 11900 Market Street, Reston. The Reston Multicultural Festival celebrates the richness of global communities, creating an authentic space where traditions are honored, heritage is lived and stories are shared. Each year, thousands gather for world class artistry, powerful storytelling and vibrant community connection. Performances span three stages with immersive street programming and artists of national significance including National Heritage Fellows, recipients of the nation’s highest honor in traditional arts.

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