

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

SEPTEMBER 17, 2026

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.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

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 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."



PHOTO FAIRFAX COUNTY FD STATION 11

Alexandria first responder Lt. Jim Morris, far bottom right, and fellow firefighters from Alexandria and Fairfax County Fire and Rescue Station 11 join soldiers atop the Pentagon to unfurl an American flag during rescue and recovery efforts Sept. 12, 2001.

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

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY HONORS, PAGE 4

SCREENSHOT VIA
FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE 16

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.



corcoran

MCENEARNEY



McLean
1312 Merchant Lane

\$7,200,000 | Striking, reimagined residence on 3.6 acres of parklike grounds. 9 bedrooms, 6 full & 2 half baths, workshop building, separate 1-bedroom apartment, infinity pool, cold plunge, a pond, and rolling lawn.

Ann Duff : 703.965.8700
AnnDuff.com



Old Town
515 N Saint Asaph Street

\$4,395,000 | Exceptional design thoughtfully executed throughout this 4-level residence with elevator, 5 bedrooms, 5 full and 3 half baths, a private garden, rooftop terrace, and a private guest suite over the 2-car garage.

Lauren Bishop : 202.361.5079
LaurenBishopHomes.com



OPEN 9/19 & 9/20, 12-2PM

Old Town
207 Cameron Street

\$1,595,000 | Beautifully updated circa 1870 Victorian. With three exposures, soaring 10-foot ceilings and original hardwood floors, this historic home is filled with natural light and timeless character.

Nancy Smith : 703-517-9204
ThePeeleGroup.biz



OPEN SAT 9/19, 2-4PM

Springfield
7223 Oriole Avenue

\$999,000 | Beautiful 5-bedroom, 3.5-bath home, with more than 3780-SF of exceptional living space on an amazing 36,000-SF lot, featuring a private backyard retreat with pool, hot tub, and playground.

Kim Peele : 703-244-5852
ThePeeleGroup.biz



OPEN SUN 9/20, 2-4PM

Mount Vernon Manor
8634 Gateshead Road

\$975,000 | Beautifully renovated home with chef's kitchen and family room with vaulted ceilings. 4 bedrms, 2 full & 2 half baths. Outside, a private paradise awaits with custom-designed pool and lush grounds.

Melissa Rosario : 919.518.7288
EnjoyLivingHere.com



North Old Town
1405 Argall Place

\$949,900 | Updated 4-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with renovated kitchen and baths, fireplace, deck, mudroom, and 1-car garage. Exceptional access to shops, parks, waterfront, and DC.

Wendy Santantonio : 703.625.8802
WendySantantonio.com



Hollin Hills
2313 Glasgow Road

\$895,000 | One-level 3-bedroom, 1.5-bath mid-century modern on an almost half-acre wooded lot. Renovated kitchen, flexible spaces, wood-burning fireplace, and vintage details, with room to make it your own.

Jodie Burns : 571.228.5790
JodieBurns.com



OPEN SUN 9/20, 2-4PM

Carlyle Towers
2181 Jamieson Avenue #805

\$885,000 | Rare 3-bedoom, 2.5-bath condo with a fabulous sunroom, sunrise Masonic Memorial views, stylish updated kitchen & baths, resort-style amenities, & Old Town at your doorstep.

Lisa Groover : 703.919.4426
LisaGroover.com



OPEN SAT 9/19, 12-2PM

Old Town
910 Powhatan Street #206S

\$755,000 | Exquisite 2-bedroom, 2-bath residence offers a harmonious blend of luxury and comfort. Inviting open floor plan that seamlessly connects the living, dining, and kitchen areas. 2 dedicated parking spaces.

Julian Burke : 703.867.4219
JulianBurke.com



COMING SOON

The Arlington
2621 S Walter Reed Road #A

\$369,000 | Charming two-bedroom, one-bath end unit condo. Beautifully updated condo with glass paneled French doors that lead to your own private patio! Fantastic location near Shirlington Village.

Heidi Burkhardt : 703.217.6009
RealtorHeidiB.com



OPEN SUN 9/20, 1-4PM

South Meadows
7522-J Snowpea Court

\$359,990 | Freshly painted and updated penthouse level 2-bedroom, 2-bath condo with great roommate layout. New lighting throughout. Low fees. Assigned parking. Easy commute. Excellent location.

Brian Hong : 703.929.5764
Jery Beamer : 703.929.5763



Parkfairfax
1617 Fitzgerald Lane

\$300,000 | Light & bright one-bedroom, one-bath end unit condo. Gorgeous kitchen renovation, hardwood floors, newer windows, updated bathroom, freshly painted, and superb location with easy parking.

Heidi Burkhardt : 703.217.6009
RealtorHeidiB.com

live who you are

Proudly Serving Virginia, Washington, DC, Maryland, and West Virginia

Corcoran McEneaney | 109 S. Pitt Street | Alexandria, VA 22314 | 703.549.9292 | corcoranmce.com

©2026 Corcoran Group LLC. All rights reserved. Corcoran® and the Corcoran Logo are registered service marks owned by Corcoran Group LLC. Corcoran Group LLC fully supports the principles of the Fair Housing Act and the Equal Opportunity Act. Each office is independently owned and operated.

Remembering the Victims

16 local lives lost
in terrorist attacks.

By JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

It has been 25 years since an unimaginable act of terrorism took the lives of 2,977 Americans, including 16 Alexandria residents on Sept. 11, 2001. Events across the nation marked the anniversary of what remains the worst terrorist attack in U.S. history with local ceremonies remembering those who were killed and honoring the first responders who answered the call.

The coordinated attacks at the Pentagon, World Trade Center and outside Shanksville, Pa., resulted in 2,977 casualties. The remains of more than 1,700 of those who perished have never been recovered.

Alexandria's victims of 9-11

Spc. Craig Amundson

Spec. Craig S. Amundson, 28, was assigned to the Army's Office of the Deputy Chief of Staff for Personnel as a graphic artist and was at work at the Pentagon the morning of Sept. 11, 2001. He was posthumously awarded the Purple Heart and Meritorious Service Award. He left behind his wife, Amber, and children Elliot and Charlotte.



Spc. Craig Amundson

Eddie A. Dillard

Eddie A. Dillard, 54, was a passenger aboard American Airlines flight 77. He left behind a wife of 15 years, Rosemary, and one son, Edrick L. Dillard.



Eddie A. Dillard

Capt. Robert Edward Dolan

Captain Robert Dolan, 43, was working on the first floor of the Pentagon as head of the U.S. Navy's Strategy and Concepts Branch when American Airlines Flight 77 struck the building. He was a 1981 graduate of the U.S. Naval Academy and commander of the USS John Hancock. His class ring was found in the remains of the Pentagon. Dolan was survived by his wife Lisa and children Rebecca and Beau.



Capt. Robert Edward Dolan

Cmdr. William H. Donovan

Commander William Howard Donovan, 37, was commissioned at the Naval Academy with the Class of 1986. He had been



PHOTO BY JANET BARNETT/GAZETTE PACKET

The Alexandria Honor Guard opens the ceremony at Police Headquarters of the 25th anniversary of the 9/11 terrorist attacks of 2001.

on the Chief of Naval Operations staff for a little over a year when Flight 77 struck the Pentagon. Known as "the Waynewood Dad," Donovan left behind his wife Elaine and three young children. His remains were never recovered.



Cmdr. William H. Donovan

Diane M. Hale-McKinzy

Diane Hale-McKinzy, 38, was a civilian employee for the U.S. Army at the Pentagon. Born in Lithonia, Ga., she served in the Army for four years before beginning a career in civil service.



Diane M. Hale-McKinzy

Maj. Wallace Cole Hogan Jr.

Maj. Wallace Cole Hogan Jr., 40, served with the Green Berets, the Special Forces and, ultimately, as a general's aide at the Pentagon. The 21-year



Maj. Wallace Cole Hogan Jr.

Army veteran was an avid cyclist and regularly commuted by bike from his Alexandria home to the Pentagon. He was survived by his wife Pat, an Air Force doctor that he met when he fell ill at the Jungle Warfare School in Panama. Other survivors included his parents Wallace and Jane Hogan and sisters Meg Campbell and Kris Leggett.

Bryan C. Jack

Bryan C. Jack, 48, was on American Airlines Flight 77 when the plane struck the Pentagon, where he worked as the head of the Defense Department's programming and fiscal economics division. Jack and his longtime companion, artist Barbara Rachko, were married on June 16, 2001, just 87 days before his death.



Bryan C. Jack

Steven D. Jacoby

Steven "Jake" Jacoby, 43, was the chief operating officer of Metrocall and a passenger on American Airlines Flight 77. A community leader, Jacoby sat on the board of Men Against



Steven D. Jacoby

Breast Cancer and was actively involved with the Camp Fantastic Special Love charity golf tournament as well as Catholic Charities. The weekend before his death, Jacoby had celebrated the birthdays of his wife Kim and son Nicholas.

Terence M. Lynch

Terence Michael Lynch, 49, was one of three consultants from Booz, Allen and Hamilton who perished during a meeting at the Pentagon. On the day of his death, he was attending a meeting to extend survivor benefits to military families. He was survived by his wife Jacqueline and daughters Tiffany Marie and Ashley Nicole.



Terence M. Lynch

Lt. Col. Dean Mattson

Army Lt. Col. Dean Mattson, 57, was less than three months away from retiring when he was killed while working in the Office of the Administrative Assistant to the Secretary of the Army at the Pentagon. A 35-



Lt. Col. Dean E. Mattson

FCPS Board Seeks to Boost Enrollment at 5 High Schools

Mount Vernon High School among 5 schools considered underutilized.

BY 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 below 85% and fewer than 1,800 students, and sets a Nov. 12 deadline for Dr. Reid to present her recommendations to the board.

Five high schools meet the motion's criteria: Mount Vernon, Lewis, Herndon, Annandale and Justice

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 spe-



SCREENSHOT/FAIRFAX COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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

cialized tracks such as Advanced Academic Programs, Career and Technical Education pathways, academy offerings, or magnet and language programs said Marcia St. John-Cunning (Franconia District), who introduced the motion.

"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."

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.



SCREENSHOTS VIA FAIRFAX COUNTY CABLE

Fairfax County Firefighter Kevin Huheey performs the national anthem.



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.



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.

Fairfax County Honors the Fallen at 25th Anniversary

FROM PAGE 1

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, others 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" Tamer, 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."

NEWS

Fairfax County Pauses New Flock Installations Arlington votes to discontinue use of Flock Technology.

At this week's Fairfax County Board of Supervisors meeting, Chairman Jeff McKay introduced a Board Matter directing FCPD to pause the installation of any new stationary Flock Safety ALPRs until the Board can further discuss the issue at the Dec. 15 Safety and Security Committee meeting. The Board approved this action and also directed FCPD to evaluate other options and report back to us.

The Board also approved sending a letter to Flock Safety Chief Executive Officer Garrett Langley seeking detailed answers about who can access Fairfax County data, inter-jurisdictional and federal access, data retention and sharing, artificial intelligence and advanced search capabilities, auditing, and safeguards designed to prevent misuse.

The use of Flock Safety Automated License Plate Readers (ALPRs) has raised questions in Fairfax County about privacy, data security, who can access information, and reports of misuse of this technology in other jurisdictions, McKay reported in his recent email

newsletter.

"While the Fairfax County Police Department (FCPD) has safeguards governing its use of FLOCK Safety ALPRs, and there have been no identified instances of misuse by FCPD, I believe the broader concerns surrounding this technology warrant additional review and greater assurances from Flock Safety. Residents who would like to learn more about FCPD's current safeguards, policies and oversight of license plate reader technology can visit the department's Real Time Crime Center Transparency page.

Meanwhile, the Arlington County Board voted this week to discontinue the use of Flock technology. At the open session portion of its meeting on Sept. 15, 2026, the Arlington County Board directed the County Manager to discontinue the use of county-leased Flock Safety technology and to begin the removal of all related equipment.

This technology totals 41 Flock Safety cameras; 26 Falcon (License Plate Reader) models and 15 Conдор (Point-Tilt-Zoom) models. A public update will be provided at

the Board's upcoming recessed meeting on Tuesday, Sept. 22.

"This decision reflects concerns raised by Arlington residents regarding the use of Flock technology," said Chair Matt de Ferranti. "While Arlington has maintained strong safeguards to prevent the abuse of this technology throughout its use by the County, and there has been no report of misuse to date, the County Board takes seriously our obligation to maintain our community's trust. The Board, the manager, and our Public Safety staff will continue to evaluate the tools and technologies we use to ensure they align with the values and expectations of Arlington's residents."

Arlington County will request the removal of all Flock Safety cameras installed on public property within 14 business days, though the process may extend beyond that timeframe as logistics require.

Arlington County has directed that all data not required for active criminal investigations be deleted in accordance with applicable contractual, legal and operational

SEE FAIRFAX COUNTY, PAGE 7

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that there will be a 10-minute firework display taking place as part of a private evening event at George Washington's Mount Vernon on

**Friday, October 2,
between 8:45-9:15.**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption.

To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via email, please write to events@mountvernon.org

**GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT ★ VERNON**



**YOUR COMMUNITY.
YOUR VOICE.
YOUR VOTE.**

**Big changes start right down the street.
Don't let others decide the future of your
schools, parks, and local roads.**

Local elections impact your daily life more than any national race. When you vote local, you choose the leaders who manage your immediate taxes, safety, and community growth. Your ballot is your direct say in the place you call home.

Vote Local.

Find your polling place via your state's official election website.

Where Comfort & Family Values Meet!

\$74 (Reg \$84)

**Don't Forget Your
Safety & Maintenance
INSPECTION**
Per System

0%

**APR FOR
60 MONTHS***

with equal payments.
Minimum purchase of \$7,500.

CARRIER REBATES

UP TO \$2,200.00†

BRENNAN'S
HEATING & AIR CONDITIONING

SALES | SERVICE | INSTALLATION

- 24 Hour Emergency Service
- Free Estimate on System Replacement
- Senior & Military Discounts
- 100% Satisfaction Guarantee
- Planned Maintenance Agreements
- FREE Second Opinion on System Failure
- We Service All Brands
- Up Front Pricing

Call Today! 703-491-2771 | www.brennansHVAC.com | info@brennanshvac.com



SCAN CODE
FOR MORE INFO



†System rebates ranging from \$0 to \$2,200.00 depending on equipment purchased. Rebates subject to change. Expires 11/20/2026. *With approved credit on qualified equipment. Call Brennan's for complete details.

Coyotes Are Secretive, but They Are Around

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE GAZETTE

Looney Tunes' Wile E. Coyote, a devious, wacky and always hungry cartoon character, may be many people's image of a coyote, but these animals are "smart and secretive," says Katherine Edwards, Fairfax County's Wildlife Management Specialist.

Coyotes are "super-fascinating," University of Maryland master's degree candidate Lavender Harris told attendees at an Aug. 28 natural resources symposium, in describing her wildlife camera survey of coyotes in the Washington region. The study area stretches from College Park, Maryland, to Fairfax County's Mason and Mount Vernon magisterial districts.

In the project's six years, the cameras have captured over 100 coyotes in Huntley Meadows Park, for example. She has documented over 100 in Rock Creek Park in Washington, D.C., also. Unrelated to her work, a Friends of Dyke Marsh camera photographed a coyote in the preserve in 2021.

State and Fairfax County officials do not have population estimates for coyotes, but they are well-established and sightings have been increasing in recent years in Fairfax County, says Edwards.

Coyotes are "very new to the D.C. area," Harris said, with the first one spotted in 2003 in Rock Creek Park. They've been observed in Virginia since the 1980s. They have spread to the eastern U.S. because of the elimination of other large carnivores, like wolves and



KOERNER, TOM/USFWS

Coyote in the cattails.

mountain lions, experts say.

Detections are higher in the spring and winter, Harris said. Coyotes breed from November to February and have pups in late April and May. While they usually are most active at night, in the spring they may be seen more often during the day when adults are searching for food for their young.

A Few Facts

Coyotes can be grayish tan to reddish and have pointed and erect ears, a slender snout and bushy tail pointed down when running.

"The eastern coyote is a variant of the western coyote and is larger, averaging 48-60 inches in length and 30-40 pounds in weight," reports the Chesapeake Bay Foundation.

Coyotes produce one litter a year of five to seven pups. Their den sites include banks, thickets and brush covered slopes. They will also den under decks and porches.

"Coyotes play an important role as natural predators in the environment that help to control rodents and other wildlife," says Edwards.

"Coyotes are omnivorous, opportunistic foragers with diverse diets that commonly prey on small animals such as rabbits, rodents (mice, rats and voles), squirrels and groundhogs, but will also readily eat amphibians, reptiles, insects, fruits, and plants," says Fairfax County's website. They may also eat turkeys and white-tailed deer (primarily fawns) and scavenge on carrion and urban food sources such as garbage, pet food, compost and gardens.

They pose very little harm to humans unless threatened, but coyotes may see small pets like cats and dogs as prey, competition or threats.

Harris said, "People think it's a large hairy predator, but people



CONNECTION FILE PHOTO

A pair of coyotes photographed near the Potomac River.

should not worry. They do their best to avoid people. They are here to stay so it's worth learning how to coexist with them."

Why Care?

Why does Harris study coyotes? "I really want to continue in a career of urban wildlife and human wildlife conflict and coexistence

and coyotes are a good focal species for teaching people how to live with them.

"It's exciting to have a carnivore do so well in an urban area and assimilate in tight spaces," she said. "People love them and hate them."

On how to live with coyotes, visit <https://www.fairfaxcounty.gov/wildlife/coyote>

The Colonel at the Cornerstone

Historic Alexandria.

BY DAVID HEIBY
SPECIAL TO THE GAZETTE

On September 18, 1793, a parade wound its way to a hilltop overlooking the Potomac, where President George Washington, in full Masonic regalia, laid the cornerstone of the United States Capitol. The ceremony was followed by celebration and feasting, and among the distinguished guests that day were two Alexandrians whose stories still rest beneath our

feet: Colonel George Gilpin and the Reverend James Muir of the Presbyterian Meeting House.

This September marks the 233rd anniversary of that ceremony — a fitting moment to remember Gilpin, a Revolutionary War officer and one of early Alexandria's most consequential citizens, whose grave was lost for generations and may finally have been found. George Gilpin (1740-1813) committed himself to the American cause before the first shots were fired. In July 1774, he was one of 25 signers of the Fairfax Resolves, the bold statement of colonial rights drafted largely by George Mason with input from Washington — and the Resolves themselves appointed him to the county com-

mittee charged with carrying the cause forward, in company that speaks to his standing: "George Washington Esqr.," as the resolve styles him, along with George Mason, William Ramsay, and other leading men of Fairfax County. When war came, Gilpin rose to colonel of the Fairfax County Militia. Revolutionary War pension records place his regiment in service by September 1777 — veterans applying for their pensions decades later still remembered serving under "Colo. George Gilpin" — and a visitor to his brother in January 1778 noted that Gilpin had been in the public service since the war began.

Peace brought no rest. As surveyor, Gilpin oversaw one of the

most dramatic transformations in Alexandria's history: the "banking out" of the waterfront. Property owners leveled the 15- to 20-foot bluffs along the town's shallow crescent bay and used the earth to build wharves reaching the Potomac's deep channel. By 1798, the project was complete, and Gilpin's meticulous map of Alexandria from that year — an original of which survives at the Library of Congress — captures the port city his work made possible.

His vision reached beyond the town limits. As a director of the Potomac Company, founded in 1785 to open the river to navigation, Gilpin worked closely with its first president — his old commander, George Washington.

The company's Great Falls skirting canal, built to carry boats around the falls' 76-foot drop, can still be walked today at Great Falls Park. When Washington died in December 1799, Alexandria mourned one of its own. Gilpin served as an honorary pallbearer at the funeral, alongside Dr. James Craik, Dennis Ramsay, and Charles Simms. Reverend Muir — his fellow guest at the cornerstone ceremony six years earlier — took part in the service. Muir now lies beneath the north aisle of the Old Presbyterian Meeting House; a plaque at 206 King Street marks the site of Gilpin's home.

SEE HELPING, PAGE 8



PHOTOS BY ALLY KIRKPATRICK

Ally Kirkpatrick on her custom bike.

Homemade Ice Cream Sales from a Hometown Bike

Fabled ice cream has a special bike to wheel around local venues selling pints.

BY MIKE SALMON
CREATIVITY RUNS IN ALLY

Kirkpatrick's blood, flowing into her ice cream business "Fabled Ice Cream," and into an ice cream bicycle she rides around events selling pints out of the ice box contraption that's part of the bike.

Ally's bike is an "Icicle Tricycle," model they make in Portland, OR but she managed to find a used one at a good price and put some work into it. "I thought it would be cool, I found one for \$800 on Facebook Marketplace," she said. Her particular bike had some mileage on it so she had a mechanic come over and work some magic, and now it's a part of the whole show at Fabled. "It's like a promotion for the brick and mortar," she said.

The brick and mortar she's talking about for Fabled Ice Cream is a store space she's working on at 7940 Fort Hunt Road in the Hollin Hall Shopping Center. She is currently gutting it and setting up the inside to have

ready for their opening in 2027. The bike will be part of it.

Fabled ice cream is small batch ice cream Kirkpatrick makes at St. Aiden's, a nearby church where she rents the kitchen a few times a month.

The ice cream bike gets noticed though, mostly from her presence at the local Sherwood Hall Farmer's Market. She is scheduled to be there on September 23, October 21 and November 18.

"This is the cutest little ice cream bicycle I have ever seen" said one customer on social media. At the bike manufacturer in Portland, a brand new "Icicle Tricycle," starts at \$3,400. Their selling points include a reinforced folding frame, gloss white cargo box designed to keep the products frozen, chilled, or warm, seven speeds with an external Shimano Derailleur, and front and rear lights. Ice cream bikes are not their only type, they also sell custom vending bikes; coffee bikes, cold brew bikes, advertising bikes, and custom hand-built cargo bikes.

Fairfax County Pauses New Flock Installations

FROM PAGE 5
requirements.

Flock cameras installed on private property are not subject to County oversight and are unaffected by this decision, Arlington reported in its announcement.

But Fairfax County Chairman McKay said, "This technology has demonstrated public safety benefits in Fairfax County, including helping law enforcement locate missing persons, recover stolen ve-

hicles and firearms, and solve criminal cases. At the same time, public safety and the protection of residents' privacy must go hand in hand.

"We have a responsibility to make sure the safeguards surrounding this technology are not only promised but can be verified and enforced. We will continue evaluating this issue as we receive additional information and prepare for the December committee discussion."

THE BIG ONE

24th Annual

ALEXANDRIA ART FESTIVAL

THE ONE ART FAIR YOU CAN'T MISS!

SEPTEMBER 26-27

Sat / Sun 10am-5pm

SCAN ME
TO LEARN
MORE



JOHN CARLYLE SQUARE
Alexandria, VA



- FREE ADMISSION -



Alexandria Times

THE CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS

DOORDASH

HOME GENIUS
EXTERIORS
A DIFFERENT EXPERIENCE

RENEWAL
by ANDERSEN
100% LOCAL WOOD & HAND CRAFTED

The Colonel at the Cornerstone

FROM PAGE 6

When Gilpin died in December 1813, the Alexandria Gazette reported that a “train of weeping friends” attended his remains, and that he was interred with Masonic and military honors in the parish’s burial ground on Wilkes Street — today’s Christ Church Episcopal Cemetery, part of the Wilkes Street Cemetery Complex, not the churchyard beside the church itself. And then, for two centuries, he was lost. His gravestone — if he ever had one — did not survive the years.

Only the weathered, broken stone of his daughter Mary, who died in 1860 at 92, marked the family’s ground — ground that, in a poignant twist, lies along streets Gilpin himself surveyed in 1796 for a planned subdivision called Spring Garden.

The search for the colonel began in the archives. An early plat of the cemetery, paired with the proprietors’ register, identified Plot 76 as Gilpin’s family burial plot — the same plot where Mary’s stone stands. On September 14, 2024, ground-penetrating radar scans of the plot revealed a grave-like anomaly directly beside Mary’s grave: the presumptive resting place of Colonel George Gilpin, lost for two hundred years. Efforts are now underway to secure proper recognition for this Revolutionary War officer, city builder, and pallbearer to Washington. When the Capitol cornerstone anniversary comes around each September, Alexandria can remember that one of the men standing



PHOTO/ARCHITECT OF THE CAPITOL

Detail from Allyn Cox’s mural of the U.S. Capitol cornerstone ceremony, September 18, 1793. George Washington, left, lays the cornerstone in a Masonic ceremony; at far right stands Rev. James Muir of Alexandria’s Presbyterian Meeting House, identified by the artist himself. Col. George Gilpin of Alexandria was among the attendees.

beside the first president that day is still here — resting in ground he once measured with his own hands.

David Heiby is a public historian and the creator of Gravestone Stories (gravestonestories.com), which tells the stories of Alexandri-

ans buried in the city’s historic cemeteries. He serves as Superintendent of the Presbyterian Cemetery & Columbarium, Treasurer of the Alexandria Historical Society, Treasurer of the Virginia Trust for Historic Preservation, and as a member of Alexandria’s America250 Committee.

Remembering the Victims

FROM PAGE 3

year Army veteran, Mattson had plans of being a Lutheran pastor before committing to the Army when he was drafted in 1964. The Belle Haven Towers apartments resident left behind his mother Bernice and brothers Glenn, Dwain and Dale.

Maj. Clifford L. Patterson Jr.

Major Clifford L. Patterson, Jr., 33, was a native of Washington D.C. and graduate of St. John’s College High School. In 1991 he graduated from Howard University as a Distinguished Military Graduate. He was working at the Pentagon on Sept. 11, 2001.



Maj. Clifford L. Patterson Jr.

Cmdr. Robert Allan Schlegel

Cmdr. Robert A. Schlegel, 38, followed his father and brothers in the Navy. Prior to being posted to the Pentagon, he was executive officer of the USS Arthur W.



Cmdr. Robert Allan Schlegel

Radford, a 9,000-ton destroyer.

Lt. Col. Gary F. Smith (Ret.)

Retired Army Lt. Col. Gary Smith, 55, was at a meeting at the Pentagon when American Airlines Flight 77 struck. A resident of Waynewood since 1984, Smith coached his daughter’s soccer teams, kept time for the West Potomac High School track team and was a fixture at high school football games on Friday nights. A 23-year Army veteran, Smith received the Soldier’s Medal for Heroism after saving a number of soldiers from a helicopter crash during his service in Vietnam. He was survived by his wife Ann and daughters Natalie, Nicole, Kristie and Tracy.



Lt. Col. Gary F. Smith

Airlines Flight 77 en route to visit a daughter in Japan and her husband Eugene, who was teaching a seminar in Singapore.

Sandra C. Taylor

Sandra Carol Taylor, 50, worked as a civilian for the U.S. Army for 30 years and at the Pentagon for almost 10. She was a volunteer at the Hospice of Northern Virginia and at the time of her death was engaged to Timothy Dudgeon. She left behind her daughter Smantha.



Sandra C. Taylor

Meta L. Waller

Meta L. Waller, 60, was a 12-year civilian employee of the U.S. Army at the Pentagon and was at her desk when the hijacked airliner struck the building. Named after her grandmother, the African American sculptor Meta Warrick Fuller, Waller received a master’s degree in government from Harvard University and was active in civil rights affairs.



Meta L. Waller

FCPS Board Seeks to Boost Enrollment at 5 High Schools

Mount Vernon High School among 5 schools considered underutilized.

BY 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 below 85% and fewer than 1,800 students, and sets a Nov. 12 deadline for Dr. Reid to present her recommendations to the board.

Five high schools meet the motion’s criteria: Mount Vernon, Lewis, Herndon, Annandale and Justice.

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

“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.”

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.

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.

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 & 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](https://hopelinkbh.org/calltextlive).

HopeLink operates 988 Suicide



Joseph Getch is the CEO of HopeLink Behavioral Health.

& 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 commu-

nities. 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](https://hopelinkbh.org/calltextlive) and through HopeLink's social media channels.

Suicide prevention is not some-

thing 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.




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).

PUBLIC NOTICE

Please be advised that there will be a 5-minute firework display taking place as part of a private evening event at George Washington's Mount Vernon on

**Thursday, October 8,
between 7:20-7:40pm.**

The Mount Vernon Ladies' Association thanks you for your tolerance and apologizes for any disruption.

To receive Mount Vernon fireworks notifications via email, please write to events@mountvernon.org

**GEORGE WASHINGTON'S
MOUNT ★ VERNON**



**STRONGER NEIGHBORS
BRIGHTER TOMORROWS**

**YOUR COMMUNITY.
YOUR VOICE.
YOUR VOTE.**

Big changes start right down the street. Don't let others decide the future of your schools, parks, and local roads.

Local elections impact your daily life more than any national race. When you vote local, you choose the leaders who manage your immediate taxes, safety, and community growth. Your ballot is your direct say in the place you call home.

Vote Local.

Find your polling place via your state's official election website.

VOTE LOCAL

PEOPLE PLACES PROGRESS TOGETHER

Late Summer's Butterflies Delight

BY GLENDA BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

The pearl crescent was gently waving its little wings in the sun as the morning warmed up around 10 a.m. “The butterflies are waking up, getting their juices flowing,” Larry Meade, the leader, told a 12-member group on a three-hour butterfly walk in the Dyke Marsh Wildlife Preserve on a sunny Aug. 29.

He pointed out Eastern tail blues and several species of sachems flitting around in the grass of Belle Haven Park, including one Huron sachem male trying to mate with a fast-moving female. The sachem is the most common skipper, he said. A skipper is a one-or-so-inch butterfly that darts around in quick flights.

“She’s a pretty nice looking butterfly,” Meade quipped, pointing to a female Zabulon skipper. The male and female have very different characteristics, called “sexual dimorphism,” and he showed pictures of the two from a guide by Robert Blakney and Judy Gallagher. The male is mostly yellow with brown patches. The female is rusty brown with some dark blotches.

The Eastern tiger swallowtails with their distinctive black and yellow wings stood out. “It looks like a girl,” Meade said, since she has “blue skirt” which males do not have. Some females are all black, he clarified. The group saw all three. Swallowtails have tail-like extension on the hindwings.

Another highlight included three monarch butterflies. Monarchs are orange and black butterflies around two inches in size. In late summer and early fall, they migrate through northern Virginia en route to Mexico to join millions to overwinter on oyamel trees. The monarch is the only butterfly to regularly undertake a two-way migration.

The red-spotted purple stood out for its orangey-red spots, visible when their wings are closed. While this butterfly is big like swallowtails, it has no tail, Meade clarified.

A silver-spotted skipper flitted around the ironweeds’ magenta blossoms. “We call them ‘triple S,’” Meade said, since all three words of their name start with the letter S.

Summer azures were sipping minerals from the soil. The six-foot-tall bears’ foot plants’ yellow blossoms were magnets for many species.

The group zeroed in on Needham’s skimmers, Eastern amberwing and common whitetail dragonflies and two damselflies, a big



PHOTOS BY GLENDA C. BOOTH

Leader Larry Meade helped the group identify 15 butterfly species.



Leader Larry Meade searched for butterflies on the bears’ foot plants.

bluet and an eastern forktail damselfly.

The whitetail has a striking white body and distinctive dark bands on its otherwise translucent wings. “Dragonflies cannot walk. They fly or perch,” Meade said.

The group spotted 15 butterfly, three dragonfly and two damselfly species.

Dyke Marsh Surveys

Led by Jim Waggener, Friends of Dyke Marsh volunteers have collected butterfly and dragonfly data in Dyke Marsh and Belle Haven Park since 2015 and have identified 55 butterfly, 42 dragonfly and 13 damselfly species.

Butterflies Are in Serious Decline

Butterfly abundance in all U.S. regions dropped by 22 percent between 2000 and 2020, with 13 times as many species declining as increasing, a 2025 study published in Science magazine found. Two thirds of the surveyed species

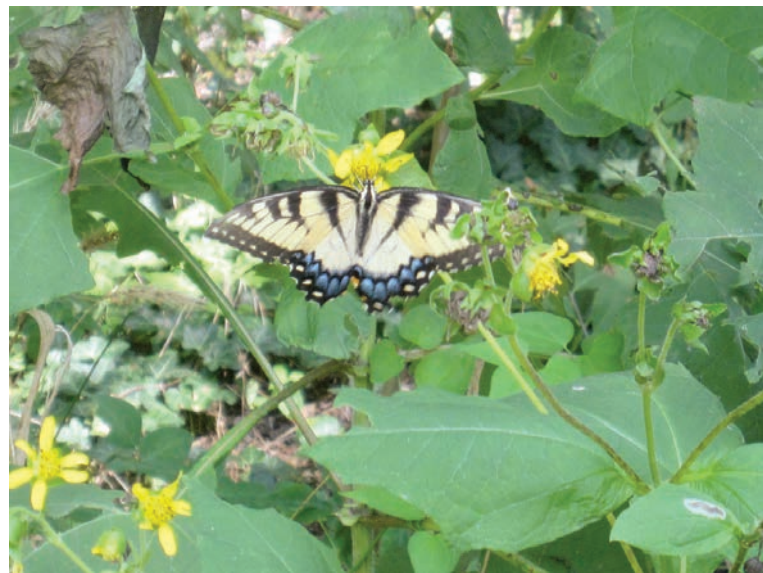
showed declines of more than ten percent. The major drivers are habitat loss, pesticide use and climate change.

How to Help Butterflies

Butterflies need host plants in their caterpillar stage and as adults, plants to feed on. The National Wildlife Federation explains, “The insects need places to lay eggs, food plants for their larvae (caterpillars), places to form chrysalides and nectar sources for adults. ... Many butterflies and native flowering plants have co-evolved over time and depend on each other for survival and reproduction.”

“Butterflies are more common in areas with native plants,” says the field guide Butterflies through Binoculars. “So, for example, you will find very few species of butterflies on large manicured lawns – these are essentially biological deserts.”

Glenda Booth is president of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, www.fodm.org.



The eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly has a “blue skirt.”



A male eastern tiger swallowtail butterfly.



A monarch butterfly on a milkweed blossom.

A common whitetail dragonfly



Virginians Will Vote on Three Constitutional Amendments

BY SHIRLEY RUHE

Three amendments to the Virginia Constitution will be on the ballot November 3 including protection of women's reproductive rights, removing the ban on same sex marriage and automatic restoration of voting rights for convicted felons. This is the first of three articles focusing on each of the proposed amendments.

A Constitutional amendment follows a rigorous process in Virginia before it can be put before the voters. The proposed language must be passed in the General Assembly. Then after an intervening election, the exact language must be passed by the General Assembly again. Finally this language goes before the voters.

The language of the first proposed Constitutional amendment reads:

"Should the Constitution of Virginia be amended to protect the freedom to make personal decisions about prenatal care, childbirth, postpartum care, birth control, abortion, miscarriage management and fertility care; (ii) protect doctors, nurses and patients from punishment for these decisions; and (iii) allow for restrictions on abortions during the third trimester of pregnancy except when the patient's health is at risk or the pregnancy cannot survive?"

State Senator Jennifer Boysko, Fairfax County, who patroned the amendment in the Senate says this is personal for her. She was diagnosed with a rare condition when she was pregnant with her second child.

"Right before 32 weeks they told me I needed a C-section or I wouldn't have survived. It was a life and death situation for me. Imagine having your toddler sitting beside you and hearing mommy may be ready to die."

But her doctors made sure she understood the process, and working with them she was able to make the right decision.

"Politicians shouldn't be dictating what a woman or doctor can do. In Richmond they never meet the people making these decisions."

She says her interest in this issue goes back even further to when she was a college student at Holland, and reproductive rights was a big issue. Boysko says she helped to organize an anti and pro-abortion debate. "This is really when I was trying to understand what the issues were."

The amendment doesn't change the current law on abortion and reproductive rights in Virginia. If the present law adequately protects



State Senate
Jennifer Boysko

women's reproductive rights, why repeat it in the constitution?

"When we see what is happening in other states doctors are afraid to treat patients. We are seeing really horrific stories. We want to protect what we have in Virginia."

She adds the Dobbs decision which overturned Roe vs. Wade in 2022 could have a negative impact on Virginia and put reproductive healthcare at risk. "If another Administration comes in, we don't want them to be able to take away

these rights by changing the law currently in place so we are putting these rights and responsibilities in the Constitution."

Boysko says "If we look at polling, this amendment is wildly popular for regular people to make their own decisions. They want women to be safe and to be able to make decisions with their doctor without the politicians telling them what to do."

She says she has been in office 11 years, and "this has been a top priority back to when a Republican was a seat holder in the 86th district. Republicans, women and men, Democrats all would like the

General Assembly to get out of our decision making. People have had enough.

We are thoughtful people. We trust our doctors who are trained in the quality of care and the pledge that doctors give."

The amendment is facing some opposition from former Lieutenant Governor Winsome Earle-Sears who has announced a tour to urge Virginians to vote no on the proposed amendment. She says, "It's not what I'm against, it's what I'm for." Earle-Sears says the people will make a decision. "I'm trying to give information. That's what this is all about."

Become a chamber member today and get ALL of the benefits!

- Membership decal and plaque for your business
- Exclusive access to Chamber committees and marketing activities
- Free admission to networking events
- Access to key information on public policy issues affecting your business
- Enhance your SEO with an online business directory profile
- Business listing in the popular annual Community Guide
- Receive and provide Member-2-Member discounts
- Your news promoted on the Chamber website, emails, and social media
- Promote your events in the online community calendar

www.mountvernonspringfield.com/member-benefits/

www.connectionnewspapers.com/advertising

THE CONNECTION

Alexandria Gazette Packet Mount Vernon Gazette

Turn to the Connection Newspapers digital and print advertising options to reach customers in your community!

- EMAIL BLASTS
- DIGITAL BILLBOARDS
- FRONT PAGE SHOUTOUT
- SOCIAL MEDIA
- SPONSORED CONTENT

Target the right audience.

For Advertising: Call 703.778.9431 or Email sales@connectionnewspapers.com

Let us know about an upcoming event

www.connectionnewspapers.com/Calendar

Your future. Your care. Our focus.

RenalX

Introducing our onsite Hemodialysis Unit, in partnership with Nova Dialysis, providing advanced care and personalized services to meet all of your dialysis needs.

Clinical Capabilities

- IV Antibiotics
- Vent and Trach Dialysis
- Short-Term Dialysis Management

Comprehensive Services Include

- Consultative Visits by On-Staff Nephrologists
- On-Site Cardiology & Pulmonary Rounding
- Health Coaching & Dietary Education
- Routine Medical Management of Co-Morbidities
- RenalX Monthly Support Group
- Dialysis Wing
- Dedicated Transport Aides
- Full Case Management Services
- 24/7 Guest Service

Woodbine
Rehabilitation & Healthcare Center

2729 King St, Alexandria, VA 22302
WoodbineRehab.com / 703.836.8838

It's All about Kids and Camaraderie



Each person creates her own design and chooses the colors.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
MOUNT VERNON GAZETTE

In 2025, they knitted, crocheted and gave away 1,185 hats; in 2024, 1,350. This year, by mid-November they are likely to exceed those records. As of Sept. 1, they had already made 1,150.

This is Kaps4Kids, a group of around 20 women who meet every Tuesday afternoon at the Hollin Hall Senior Center in Mount Vernon and stitch hats for youngsters in kindergarten to sixth grade who attend Mount Vernon area Title I schools, including Riverside, Woodley Hills and Hybla Valley Elementary. Federal Title I funding is based on the percentage of students eligible for free or reduced-price meals.

A dedicated group of retirees has been making hats at the center for over 20 years. Why? "Children use more hats than anything else," answers Harriett "Sam" Foley, co-leader.

In mid-November, the hat crafters take plastic kitchen trash bags stuffed with 50 hats to the schools' front offices where school staff distribute the hats to students.

The weekly cap-making gatherings are like traditional quilting bees and "very collegial," says Mary Margaret Green, the other co-leader. Jean Prevete concurs: "There's a lot of camaraderie. No pressure."

Khuong "Kim" Nguyen who grew up in Vietnam had limited knitting skills, but her colleagues have coached her along. Rhonda Rose, who has participated for only two months, is learning too and working on her second hat. The participants guide and learn from each other, for example, how to correct the traditional knitting stitch -- knit two, pearl two -- when



Group members buy yarn locally and accept donations of yarn. Co-leader Mary Margaret Green shows their shelves of yarn, awaiting hat-making.

it somehow turns into knit two, pearl three.

Most of the women have been knitting and crocheting for years, many taught by their mothers, grandmothers and aunts.

Hat Therapy

As they knit and crochet, they chat about whatever topic surfaces, like their families, food, world events, high school memories. JoAnn Moreno offered, "It's cheaper than therapy."

Prevete agrees, "It relaxes your mind."

Green says, "It's a nice creative outlet."

The "granny crafts" are coming back, Green says, and more and more people are trying to avoid computer screens and de-tox from modern-day electronics by crafting projects like these.

The "hatters" create their own designs and choose their colors so



Women gather every Tuesday in the Hollin Hall Senior Center and knit and crochet hats for youngsters.



Rhonda Rose started recently and is working on her second hat.

almost every hat is original. "Everyone has a different aesthetic," explains Green. They use acrylic yarn, not wool, because of allergy risks. Part of the artistry is the tactile experience of feeling the yarn and the hat as it evolves.

Foley says that she never buys yarn online. "I have to feel it," she remarks.

Ruth Adams makes hats "to help the children."

Prevete comments, "I feel like I'm doing something productive."

School officials distribute the hats to the kids so the hat makers do not see the youngsters try out their new hats. One child lamented in a thank you note, "I took it home and my sister took it." Another wrote, "Love the hat. It looks like an ice cream sundae."

Sam has an inspiring saying: "There's a hat for every child and a child for every hat."

Welcomed

Newcomers are welcome and



Co-leader Mary Margaret Green shows the bags of hats made this year and bagged, ready for delivery to schools.

they accept donations of clean acrylic yarn, not wool, from smoke-free homes.

Oct. 17 Pop-up

While over 95 percent of the hats go to children, the group will sell some hats and other items at the Oct. 17 craft pop-up at the Hollin Hall Senior Center, alongside other products made by other local crafters and other items. The Kaps4Kids sales revenues go to the senior center's advisory council.

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

ENTERTAINMENT

MEETS EVERY SUNDAY

Bird Walks. 8 a.m. At 6401 George Washington Memorial Parkway, Alexandria. Friends of Dyke Marsh organizers lead bird walks every Sunday morning. Meet at 8 a.m. in the south parking lot of the Belle Haven picnic area. Walks are led by experienced birders and everyone is welcome to join.

MEETS EVERY MONDAY

Monday Morning Bird Walk. 7 a.m. Meets at 3701 Lockheed Boulevard Alexandria. The Monday Morning Bird Walk is sponsored by the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park and takes place every Monday at 7 a.m. April-September and 8 a.m. October-March. Following the walk, members of the group gather at the nearby Denny's for breakfast and to compile the morning's bird list. Call (703) 768-2525.

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Wednesday Night Bingo. 7 p.m. At Atlas Brew Works, 2429 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. The Capital City Showcase, the company that brings you some of the DC area's best events, is hosting an amazing night of everyone's favorite game at Atlas Brew Works Alexandria. Win prizes on every round, and the winner of the final round gets a \$50 Atlas Brew Works gift card for your next visit! There's also \$6 select Atlas drafts! Plus pizza served from the world famous Andy's Pizza! Email at capitalcityshowcase@gmail.com

MGNV PLANT CLINICS ARE OPEN

The Alexandria Old Town Farmer's Market Plant Clinic at 301 King St., Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 7 - 9:30 a.m. Del Ray Farmers Market Plant Clinic at Oxford & Mt. Vernon Avenues, Alexandria operates on Saturdays from 8:30 - 11 a.m. The Arlington Farmers' Market at N. 14th and N. Courthouse Roads, Arlington operates on Saturdays from 8 - 11 a.m. The Fairlington Farmers' Market Plant Clinic at 3308 S. Stafford St., Arlington, operates on Sundays from 9 - 11 a.m.

YEAR ROUND ON SUNDAYS

Farmer's Market. 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. At Casa Chirilagua Community Center, 4109 Mt. Vernon Ave., Alexandria. Experience fresh foods, native plants, artisan crafts, music and community at Four Mile Run Farmers & Artisans Market in the heart of Arlandria outside the Casa Chirilagua Community Center, every Sunday 9-1 p.m.

NOW THRU SEPT. 17

Summer Concerts at Carlyle Crossing. 6-8 p.m. At Carlyle Crossing, 2455 Mandeville Lane, Alexandria. Beginning June 11 and continuing through Sept. 17, the free outdoor series will bring an eclectic lineup of local and regional musicians to the plaza on select Thursday evenings, creating a lively gathering place for residents, visitors, and the surrounding community.

Concert dates:

September 17 – Sol Roots (Funk, Blues, Soul & Rock)

NOW THRU SEPT. 30

Spiritual Expressions: Differences and Similarities Exhibit. At Mount Vernon Unitarian Church Art Alcove, 1909 Windmill Lane, Alexandria. Digital photographic images by Jeanne Tiffit. Contact: Nina Tisara, ninat@ninatisara.com, 703-625-8313.

NEPENTHE GALLERY EVENTS

Location: Nepenthe Gallery, 7928 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria.

September 17th: New Collection from Tamara Minarchi;

September 24th: Opening of Special Exhibit, Alexandria Experience, by World Renowned Artist, Alexei Butirskiy;

September 25th: Live Painting Demonstration by Alexei Butirskiy;

September 29th: Fundraiser for EdenSpring;

October 1st: Fundraiser with ERIKA JAMES-JACKSON for Shelter House;

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM



Author Heather Schneider will speak on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 at Green Spring Gardens in Alexandria.

October 8th:EVE STOCKTON: New Collection of Breathtaking Woodcut Prints;
October 15th: SUNNY GOODE and PRESLEY GOODE: Mother-Daughter DUO;
October 22nd: Tours with Bill: Art and History Featuring BILL SHUTE;
October 29th: Grand Re-Opening.

SEPT. 4-26

Celebrating Hispanic Heritage: Voices

Through Visuals Art Exhibit. At Del Ray Artisans Gallery, 2704 Mount Vernon Ave, Alexandria. This exhibit honors Hispanic culture, and its rich traditions, resilience, and artistic contributions through a range of media and perspectives, and explores themes like heritage, migration, family, cultural pride, and transformation. Opening Reception: Friday, September 4 from 7-9 p.m. Gallery hours are Thursdays 12-6 p.m., Fridays 12-9 p.m., Saturdays & Sundays 12-6 p.m. Details at DelRayArtisans.org/exhibits

THURSDAY/SEPT. 17

September After Hours. 5:30-7 p.m. At Royal Restaurant, 730 N. St. Asaph Street, Alexandria. Shake off the workday and join the Alexandria Chamber of Commerce for its September After Hours at Royal Restaurant. It's taking over this Alexandria favorite for an evening of drinks, delicious bites, and plenty of good company. Come catch up with familiar faces, make a few new connections, and enjoy a night out.

SEPT. 17 TO NOV. 1

Plein Air Sketches. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Artist's reception Sunday, Sept. 27 from 4 to 6 p.m. Featuring works by Anne Alden, Ann Meagher Cook, Carol Cowie, Katie Flack, Abigail Muncy, Christine Raymond, Margaret Stewart, Ann Tannous

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Chalk-A-Block. 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. At TideLock development, 1111 N. Fairfax Street, Old Town North in Alexandria. Chalk artists will transform TideLock's interior drive into a spectacular temporary canvas, creating large-scale works of art throughout the day. Artist/architect Anila Angjeli, who captivated the crowd last year with her colorful "Wings in Bloom" creation and accompanying interactive art activity, and master muralist Patrick Kirwin will be among the artists returning to Chalk-A-Block this fall. Visitors can watch the artwork come to life while enjoying live music from local favorite The Okays, browse handmade goods from local artisans and makers curated by Made in ALX, and sample food and beverages.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Author Heather Schneider. 1:30 to 2:30 p.m.

At Green Spring Gardens, 4603 Green Spring Road, Alexandria. Heather Schneider presents a virtual book talk

about her Evergreen Academy series. Presented in partnership with Kingstowne Library, this event can be enjoyed online or in-person at Green Spring Gardens.



The Chalk-A-Block celebration takes place on Saturday, Sept. 19, 2026 at the Tide-Lock development in Old Town North.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 19

Write Like a Woman Networking Workshop. 1 p.m. At The Athenaeum, Alexandria. Enjoy an afternoon of engaging conversation and writing! Facilitated by poet, author, and Athenaeum Poet in Residence, KaNikki Jakarta, this workshop welcomes amateur to professional women writers ages 18-100. Each workshop centers on uplifting and inspiring through writing and allows participants to enhance their writing styles.

WEDNESDAY/SEPT. 23

The Mount Vernon Springfield Chamber of Commerce's 29th Annual Chamber Golf Classic. 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. At Laurel Hill Golf Club, 8701 Laurel Crest Drive, Lorton. For almost thirty years, this popular event has provided more than \$365,000 in scholarships for local high school students to study business, preparing the next generation of business and community leaders.

THURSDAY/SEPT. 24

September Coffee & Connections. 8:30 to 9:30 a.m. At Gadsby's Tavern Museum, Alexandria. Presented by The Chamber ALX's Professional Women's Network. Kick off your morning with the Professional Women's Network at the September event—featuring coffee, conversation, and valuable connections with women (and men) from across the region. This quarter, they'll hear a guided look at Women in Business: We Were Always Here, a special exhibit at Gadsby's Tavern Museum that explores the remarkable stories of women entrepreneurs who helped shape Alexandria's past and present. Come ready to network, be inspired by the women who came before us, and celebrate the lasting impact of women in business.

FRIDAY/SEPT. 25

Senior Driving Safety & Mobility Seminar and Book Signing. 2 p.m. At Martha Washington Library, 6614 Fort Hunt Road, Alexandria. The event will help older adults and families navigate driving safety, mobility options, and planning for driving retirement. The seminar will begin at 2:00 p.m., followed by a book signing from 3:00 to 3:30 p.m. featuring Kurt E. Gray's new resource guide, Planning Your Driving Retirement: A Practical Guide for Aging Drivers and Their Families. Gray, President and CEO of Seniors Helping Seniors Metro Springfield and Principal of KEG Consulting LLC Driver Safety Services, brings decades of experience in driver education and senior mobility. He previously spent 29 years with AAA Club Alliance, including 17 years as Director of Driver Education & Training. The program is designed to help older adults

remain safe, confident, and independent while also encouraging families to begin planning for future mobility needs before a crisis occurs. Topics will include:

How aging can affect driving ability

Warning signs that may indicate increased driving risk

Strategies for extending safe driving

When a professional driving evaluation may be appropriate

How families can begin difficult conversations about driving

Transportation and mobility alternatives

How to proactively plan for an eventual driving retirement

FRIDAY/SEPT. 25

ALX Pink Gala. 7-10 p.m. At Above ALX Community, 277 S. Washington Street, Alexandria. Join Breast Cancer Collective for the ALX Pink Gala on Friday, Sept. 25 in Alexandria, supporting greater access to breast cancer screening and diagnostic care. Join ALXPinkGala.org.

SATURDAY/SEPT. 26

Author Matthew Quick. 7 p.m. At Alexandria History Museum at the Lyceum, Alexandria. The event is presented in partnership with the Alexandria Festival of the Book and Old Town Books. "The opportunity to connect with noted authors, discuss books and explore our history and culture is a special one." - Carolyn Fuller, coordinator of the Alexandria Festival of the Book.

SEPT. 26-27

Carmen & The Firebird. Featuring Louis Lohraseb, conductor; also featuring Chee-Yun Kim, violin.

Saturday, Sept. 26 at 7:30 p.m.

At Rachel M. Schlesinger Center,

Sunday, Sept. 27 at 3 p.m.

At George Washington Masonic Memorial

SEPT. 26-27

24th Annual Alexandria Art Festival. 10 a.m.

to 5 p.m. At John Carlyle Square, 300 John Carlyle Street, Alexandria. The free show-

case features thousands of fine art works

from over 125 local and national artists. The

annual Alexandria Art Festival is presented

by the nation's largest art festival producer,

Howard Alan Events (HAE). Throughout the

decades, it has become a hallmark staple

event for residents and visitors alike. The

show encompasses fine jewelry, exquisite

works of art, and handcrafted apparel and

decor. Attendees can look forward to discover-

ing paintings, life-sized sculptures, jewelry,

glasswork, photography, ceramics, and more.

Visit artfestival.com.

CLASSIFIED

WWW.CONNECTIONNEWSPAPERS.COM

TO ADVERTISE IN THIS PAPER, CALL BY MONDAY 11:00 AM 703-778-9411

Reach Over 1 Million Readers With This Ad!

No other media offers the audience of loyal, local, repeat readers you'll reach through community newspapers! We can target your message, statewide or regional.

Let Commonwealth Media Solutions do all the work for you at a discounted cost.



Contact Kelly McCauley
(804) 521-7580

Commonwealth
Media Solutions

WHERE
THEY FELL

WHAT
THEY CLAIMED



Their lies come out of your wallet. Insurance fraud costs everyone in Virginia \$1,000 per year. Learn how to spot it and report it at TheCostOfFraud.com

STAMP OUT
FRAUD
VIRGINIA STATE POLICE
INSURANCE FRAUD PROGRAM

Past issues of

**THE
CONNECTION
NEWSPAPERS**

back to 2008
are available at

<http://connectionarchives.com/PDF>

Find us on Facebook
and become a fan!

[www.Facebook.com/
connectionnewspapers](http://www.Facebook.com/connectionnewspapers)

**THE
CONNECTION**
Newspapers & Online
The Connection to Your Community
www.connectionnewspapers.com

NEWS



PHOTOS BY TAMARA O'NEIL

The crossing flags at a Springfield crossing.

Crossing Guards Are on Everyone's Radar

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

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

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 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.

'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 heart-felt 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 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



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

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 heart-breaking 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.

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.



CHRIS WHITE
FAMILY REAL ESTATE
OF LONG & FOSTER



91 Homes SOLD in 2026 so far!



9344 Mount Vernon Cir | \$1,074,000



3723 Riverwood Rd | \$1,319,000



4217 Scotland Rd | \$1,050,000



9400 Ludgate Dr | \$1,450,000



2008 Mason Hill Rd | \$1,000,000



1115 Cameron St #212 | \$820,000



2203 Pennsylvania Blvd | \$2,200,000



8540 Mount Zephyr Dr | \$650,000



4401 Dolphin Ln | \$1,199,000



3801 Washington Woods | \$1,500,000



9426 Mount Vernon Cir | \$1,510,000



3602 South Pl | \$1,450,000



3612 Center Dr | \$1,565,000



6403 14th St | \$860,000



8339 Wagon Wheel Rd | \$850,000



8910 Bordeaux St | \$1,025,000



9352 Mount Vernon Cir | \$1,150,000



4212 Pickering Pl | \$1,049,000

LONG & FOSTER®
REAL ESTATE

Alexandria/Old Town Historic
110 N. Royal St. 3rd Floor
Alexandria, VA 22314

703.283.9028

www.chrisandpeggywhite.com
chris.white@longandfoster.com

BEST OF
WASHINGTONIAN
TOP PRODUCING AGENT 2015 - 2025