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Fairfax County Fire and Rescue.

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FEBRUARY 16-22, 2022

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GFCA Concerned Over Reduced Emergency Response

Requests community involvement and decision takeback.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

The Great Falls Citizens Association wrote to Fairfax County Board of Supervisors Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay (D) and Dranesville District Supervisor John W. Foust (D) on Feb. 12 to express their disappointment and concerns about the outcome of a meeting of the Board's Public Safety Committee that permanently cuts emergency response service to Great Falls, as well as the community's lack of input in the decision. Bill Canis, president of the GFCA, signed the letter, which he copied to the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors and County Fire Chief John Butler.

Canis said that while the Fire and Rescue Department must address urgent workforce shortages, the GFCA is concerned that permanent changes to its paramedic service delivery are not as urgent, should not be paired with temporary Covid-related decisions, and would result in a reduction in service levels to the Great Falls community. Canis added that community engagement could have resulted in a better conclusion since the Board may not have adequately examined Great Falls' specific characteristics.

One problem is that the Potomac River prevents access to Great Falls from the north. Homes are difficult to reach due to the hilly, winding, two-lane roads. In addition, they rely on a limited number of backup fire stations, which are only accessible from the south and complicated access to water. GFCA requests a response time and risk assessment for paramedic emergencies for the community that now relies on a backup station's response.

According to Canis, Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Station #12 Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department is staffed by Fairfax County fire and rescue personnel and over 40 volunteers — five firefighters, thirty-two EMTs, and five to six paramedics. He maintains that the volunteers were excluded from the staff evaluation process and are now being requested to serve outside of the Great Falls region.



MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS
Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Station #12 Great Falls Volunteer Fire Department



Supervisor John W. Foust (D)

"With the elimination of one of the two paramedic positions from the Great Falls Station and removal of life-saving medications and equipment from Great Falls ambulances, the BoS has placed the Great Falls community at a greater life-threatening risk," Canis wrote. According to the Board of supervisors' plan, a paramedic who doesn't have Advanced Life Support equipment or medicine will be sent.

Canis wrote in the letter if the paramedic verifies the requirement for Advanced Life Support, a request for another Advanced Life Support paramedic will be issued to a backup station. To get to the northern area of Great Falls, that unit must travel from their community's station over Rt 7 into Great Falls and probably past Station 12.



Fairfax County Board of Supervisors



Assistant Fire Chief Thomas Arnold

"We estimate this new procedure ... will take 20-25 minutes compared to 6 minutes if the services were available in Great Falls," Canis wrote.

Canis disputed Fire and Rescue Department's emergency response data, claiming that Station 12's data showed a greater number of Advanced Life Support calls.

GFCA requested that the BoS ensure that in the future, the impacted communities are involved in discussions and decisions. Their questions should be answered before other significant BoS decisions are made and "consider the Great Falls specific concerns raised... [about response time, risk, volunteers, cost, and service capabilities] to see if

the eliminated paramedic positions and ambulance capabilities can be restored."

According to Fairfax County Assistant Fire Chief Thomas Arnold, the Fire and Rescue Department does not view any challenges or impact for Great Falls Community or any other of the 12 stations that have converted units. "In CY2021 for the Great Falls station, there were only 70 ALS transports, and over the last 12 months, the total is 53, this is in the bottom 10 percent of ALS transports by station." He added that the Fire and Rescue Department still has an Advanced Life Support provider on the engine assigned to this station who can provide ALS services. "We have always relied on other stations to assist if the first due station is on an incident or unavailable. We will do the same in this situation," Arnold said.

On Feb. 11, the day before GFCA sent their letter to Supervisor Foust, he commented on the pending matter.

"Chief Butler and his team are very conscientious and provide an excellent level of service to all county residents, including Great Falls residents," Foust said. "They would not adopt a service model that puts peoples' lives at risk. They have explained the difficulty in recruiting and retaining paramedics and how their plan makes adjustments that will maximize the utilization of the paramedics. I believe that plan will be implemented without adversely impacting the service that is provided."

Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Transitions From All Advanced Life Support System

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Reintegration of the dual-tier EMS system.

Over the next several months, the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Department is making some changes in staffing to accommodate staff shortages beyond concerns about Covid. Migrating from an all Advanced Life Support system back to a two-tiered Emer-

gency Medical System system will allow countywide coverage that addresses the current hiring situation.

On Feb. 8, Assistant Fire Chief Thomas Arnold said that the county's Fire & Rescue Department does not view any challenges or negative impact on the 12 stations that have

converted units. The initial change will be followed by a performance data acquisition and analysis review period.

The twelve fire stations are Annandale 8, Bailey's Crossroads 10, Great Falls 12, Chantilly 15, Clifton 16, Gunston 20, Reston 25, West Springfield 27, Fox Mill 31, Fairfax

Center 40, Crosspointe 41, and Scott's Run 44. According to Arnold, the Fire & Rescue Department would operate 43 transport units, 12 Basic Life Support, and 31 Advanced Life Support.

While Great Falls Citizens Association expressed concern about the plan, Supervisor John Foust said, "Chief Butler and his team

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Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Transitions From All Advanced Life Support System

FROM PAGE 2

are very conscientious and provide an excellent level of service to all county residents, including Great Falls residents,” Foust said. “They would not adopt a service model that puts peoples’ lives at risk. They have explained the difficulty in recruiting and retaining paramedics and how their plan makes adjustments that will maximize the utilization of the paramedics. I believe that plan will be implemented without adversely impacting the service that is provided.”

The degree of training and certification dictates duties, with Advanced Life Support, paramedic being the highest. Advanced Life Support providers may provide cardiac life support, CPR, endotracheal intubation for airway management, intravenous catheters for medication and fluid administration, and more as pre-hospital emergency medical treatment.

Arnold wrote the factors that came into play to determine which stations were the percentage of Advanced Life Support/Basic Life Support dispatches, call volume, and proximity to hospitals. He cited that some averaged less than two hours of utilization per 24-hour shift due to the saturation of Advanced Life Support equipped transport units. Using a variety of data points and an equity lens avoided disproportionately impacting certain county areas more than others.

The Fire & Rescue Department’s former all Advanced Life Support system prioritized having an Advanced Life Support provider, a trained paramedic, on all transport units. However, he added, “This move requires the abundant availability of Advanced Life Support providers and comes with associated personnel, equipment, and training costs.” When the Fire & Rescue Department implemented the current staffing model in 2015, it was determined that the county needed to hire 48 new paramedics each year to meet the target goal of Advanced Life Support providers and account for attrition. But the Fire & Rescue Department has averaged only 20 new Advanced Life Support providers per year over the last eight years, accounting for 43 percent of the target goal.

The loss of Advanced Life Support providers and not being able to replace them left the Fire & Rescue Department to depend on staff overtime and the use of “dual-hatters,” Advanced Life Support providers who served in two roles at the same time — as an Advanced Life Support provider and an apparatus driver, or as an Advanced Life Support provider and a unit officer. Conflict may arise when both tasks are vital and time is of the essence.

Although the Fire & Rescue Department relied on using dual hatters for over ten years, which helped bridge staffing challenges, it proved less than ideal due to the issues presented, according to Arnold. When dual hatters have other primary responsibilities, their skills degrade when assigned to stations with lower call volumes. “Over

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SCREENSHOT

Fairfax County Fire and Rescue



SCREENSHOT

Fire Chief John Butler, Fairfax County Fire and Rescue



SCREENSHOT

Fairfax Center, Station 40 in Fairfax

time, this may adversely impact patient care,” Arnold said.

Arnold added that the overall impact of the change on staffing needs would be a decrease in Advanced Life Support providers per day and an increase in Basic Life Support providers per day. The transition would



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/CONNECTION NEWSPAPERS

Reston, Station 25 in Reston

be permanent and not part of the staffing adjustments made in early January due to the rise in COVID cases among staff.

As for procedures, EMTs can perform, Arnold wrote, “The potential skills at which our EMTs can perform has increased over the last several years as the Virginia Office of Emergency Medical Services (VAOEMS) adds skills to the EMT scope of practice.” These include administering oral glucose, Epi Rite, baby aspirin for chest pain, iGel airway insertion, tourniquet use, and hemostatic gauze for wound packing. “Working with our Operational Medical Director, the Fire & Rescue Department has added skills to the EMT. This increased skill set will allow EMTs to perform skills that previously could only be completed by an ALS provider,” he said. Skills that will be implemented soon, according to Arnold, are administering oral ondansetron for nausea/vomiting, acetaminophen/ ibuprofen for pain, and other procedures.

Proposed unit reductions formally came to light on Jan. 11, during the Board of Supervisors Public Safety Committee Meeting. According to Fire Chief Butler, it was a

question of balancing reduced staffing and health and safety department staff with service to the community.

“We’re working through some challenging times as you’ve seen and heard me talk about,” Butler said, referring to, among other things, vacancies, COVID cases, and attrition.

“We estimated we would have around 90 vacancies today (as of Jan. 1, 2022), but we’re currently at 105 with the two recruit schools in session. ... Then omicron happened, and that took up a lot of the gains we had achieved from the new graduating classes and wiped those gains out ... causing our vacancies to spike,” Butler said.

There is a concern for the health and safety of the Fire & Rescue Department providers and frontline responders.

“Some have been working 60 consecutive hours at a time. This poses a risk to them at work and commuting to and from their homes to their families, the fatigue factor,” Butler said. “So, we’re here to provide the highest quality service to our community and balance staffing.” The Fire & Rescue Department has a reported 1,260 career staff.

Progress Impeded

DELEGATE KENNETH R. "KEN"
PLUM



For much of the last two years I have used this column to laud the steps that were being taken in the Virginia General Assembly with the support of then Governor Ralph Northam to bring Virginia into the modern era. Virginia has a rich history, but one that is also shrouded in controversy. There is a tendency on the part of long-time Virginians to want to focus on the earliest history of the Commonwealth in the new nation with an emphasis on the Virginia Statute of Religious Freedom, the Declaration of Independence authored by a Virginian, and the Virginia Declaration of Rights that served as a model for the federal Bill of Rights. Unfortunately, the history that surrounded that era is not so glorious. Forgotten until recent times were the indigenous people who were forced out with the settlement of the colony and new state, the horrors of slavery, a Civil War in which the state was a major battleground, and a white supremacist government until recent years.

The shift in attitudes was not confined to Virginia alone as movements such as Black Lives Matter forced us to examine our history and our actions under the laws as they had been written. The success of Democrats at the polls to control both houses of the General Assembly as well as the governorship and attorney general's office brought about the amazing changes in the laws of Virginia in 2020 and 2021.

Virginia moved into a leadership role in rewriting its election laws to make them among the most progressive in the nation. Early voting was instituted, absentee voting was permitted without the need for an excuse and voting generally was made more accessible. Laws against all forms of discrimination were passed and hate crime laws were strengthened. Common sense gun control laws were passed including my universal background checks bill. Major steps were taken to end the classroom to prison pipeline, and laws that were unevenly applied to racial minorities were repealed or revised. Symbols that represented the oppressive period

of our history were removed. Our educational institutions moved to interpret our history more broadly to be inclusive of all persons who lived in the state.

I was feeling good that democracy was expanded, we were becoming more inclusive, our criminal justice system was being reformed, and our communities were becoming safer. And, then there was the election of 2021. Democrats lost the majority in the House of Delegates, and Republicans swept the statewide elections of governor, lieutenant governor and attorney general.

In the current session of the General Assembly bills have been introduced to turn back all the progress that had been made over the last two years. The clock is being turned back to the more conservative Virginia that many of us have been struggling to get past for many years. All the bills are passing in the Republican controlled House of Delegates. Fortunately Democrats have a majority in the State Senate that will be able to defeat these Republican measures, and our progressive measures will remain in place. We must be eternally vigilant to ensure that while progress might be impeded it is not lost.

LETTERS

Protecting Student Learning

This is in response to Ken Plum's (D-36) opinion piece in your Jan. 26 edition in which he asserts that "Critical Race Theory (CRT) is not taught in the public schools" in Fairfax County. That statement, frequently repeated by politicians on his side of the aisle, is, at best, very misleading. Sure, you can't find a class labeled CRT in Fairfax Public Schools. However, CRT has been infused within the system as a "framework" or "lens" through which education can proceed. How else do you explain FCPS paying Ibram X. Kendi, a well-known proponent of CRT, to speak to principals, teachers, and staff during the summer of 2020? (Contract #247981511). FCPS' Chief

Equity Officer, who appeared with Professor Kendi during his presentation, is reported to have used the term "academic frame" to describe lessons that teachers could be expected to present during the 2021-2022 school year. (See Washington Times, Oct. 26, 2021.)

Parents have legitimate concerns that there is more "indoctrination" going on in FCPS than repeated denials that CRT is not being taught would suggest, all too frequently explained as being in alignment with "equity," "social and emotional learning," and Fairfax's One Fairfax policy.

Richard Porter
McLean

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Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

PARTICIPATE IN MCLEAN DAY 2022

Local businesses, nonprofit organizations and crafters have a unique opportunity to show their community spirit and meet more than 10,000 prospective new customers at McLean's largest annual community event, McLean Day: Celebrating Our Hometown. The festival will be held from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday, May 21, at Lewinsville Park, 1659 Chain Bridge Road. Admission is free for patrons. The cost of exhibitor booths varies from \$125 to \$295, depending on location and vendor criteria. Several sponsorship opportunities are also available.

Produced by the McLean Community Center (MCC), McLean Day draws families and individuals from all areas of the DMV. Carnival rides, gourmet food trucks, games and other family friendly activities create a comfortable and festive atmosphere for businesses to introduce their products or services to new customers. Applications are now available online on the MCC website: www.mcleancenter.org/special-events. Exhibitor spaces are assigned on a first-come, first-served basis.

Contact the Center at 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, or visit: www.mcleancenter.org/special-events.

Submissions for Pet Connection

Our next Pet Connection will publish the last week of February, Feb. 23, 2022. Photo submissions are due by Sunday, Feb. 20, 2022. Sooner is better. Please complete a submission form and send us your photo(s). <http://www.connectionnewspapers.com/pets/> or email editors@connectionnewspapers.com

We welcome short stories about how you got your pet, a noteworthy talent or anecdote about your pet, tales of the bonds between your family and your pet, plus drawings, paintings or other artwork of your pet by children or adults. Please tell us a little bit about your creature, identify everyone in the photo, give a brief description of what is happening in the photo, and include address and phone number (we will not publish your address or phone number, just your town name).

Let Us Know Your View

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Black History Month: Filling in the Gaps

African American parents are giving their children accurate and comprehensive lessons on Black history.

BY MARILYN CAMPBELL
THE CONNECTION

When Tracy Grant's fifth-grade son Hunter came home from school one day during Black History Month several years ago, she recalls his recounting of a lesson that he'd just learned. He said that his social studies teacher told the class that most slaves were treated well because their owners saw them as an expensive investment. Grant was speechless.

"I was baffled by that level of ignorance. Did that teacher not know that slaves could have their finger chopped off for knowing how to write or that some small slave children were fed slop in the same trough that were used to feed pigs on the plantation?" asked Grant, a registered nurse and Springfield mother of two. "That was when I decided that if I wanted my children to learn about Black history, I would have to teach them myself."

In the age of racial tension and restrictions around the teaching of African American history, black parents are serving as history tutors to ensure that their children receive a comprehensive and unbridled education on the atrocities, both past and present, faced by members of the African diaspora. A few local parents share their ideas.

"I don't focus on blaming or bad mouthing anyone, but I make sure my children know about the racist things that happened in the past," Anderson said. "They have to know our country's past actions so that they can understand what is going on today and why. Minimizing the realities of slavery does a disservice to not only Black students, but to society as a whole. How can we even begin to deal with racial problems in this country if children grow up with inaccurate views of the tragedies of our past?"

From slavery and lynching to the Jim Crow era and the Civil Rights Movement, Grant uses trips to historical sites to give her children a lesson in Black history. "When I take my children and their friends to Mount Vernon, I don't go on the guided tour," she said. "I give them my own tour and explain our history. No matter how the media portrays us today, our children need to understand that we come from hardworking ancestors."

As an African American parent, Gloria Anderson, a Chevy Chase, Maryland mother of three, believes that it is her job to offer her children in-depth lessons rather than broad overviews. "Most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks when they think of Black history, but there are so many more people of color who have made great contributions to this country," she said. "Everyone should visit the African American History Museum. Even though we've made

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PHOTO COURTESY OF VONETIA HARTLEY

African American parents and grandparents, like Vonetia Hartley, pictured here with three of her grandchildren, are giving their offspring in-depth lessons during Black History Month.

"Most people think of Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks when they think of Black history, but there are so many more people of color who have made great contributions to this country,"
— Tracy Anderson, mother of three

strides, stereotypes and feelings of victimization have caused members of our race to have a sense of hopelessness."

"I have to make sure that my children know about Black heroes like Dr. Charles Drew, continued Anderson, referring to an African American surgeon who was known for his lifesaving blood plasma research.

SEE BLACK HISTORY MONTH, PAGE 10

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The original U.S. Army Band at Fort Hunt in 1922.

It All Started at Fort Hunt The U.S. Army Band centennial was Jan. 25, 2022.

BY GLENDA C. BOOTH
THE CONNECTION

Fort Hunt Park's visitors today hear crows cawing, chickadees chirping, airplanes descending to National Airport and vehicles buzzing up and down the George Washington Memorial Parkway. One hundred years ago, they might have heard the melodious sounds of trumpets, saxophones and flutes rippling across the rural landscape from what was then the U.S. Army's Fort Hunt.

January 25, 2022, marked the centennial of the U.S. Army Band's founding at Fort Hunt.

In 1922, the Coast Artillery Corps was stationed at the fort to help protect Washington, D.C., the nation's capital, from naval assault ships coming up the Potomac River, though one observer at the time wisecracked that this unit was not capable of attacking a dinghy.

The Army had started a music school in 1910-1911 at the Washington Barracks, today's Fort McNair, but when they organized a formal band of around 100 men, they moved to Fort Hunt because some buildings, now long gone, were available. Most of the band members were single and lived in barracks. In just nine months, September 1922, the band moved from Fort Hunt to the Washington Barracks.

There's another local connection: Fort Belvoir's Army Institute of Heraldry created the Army Band's uniform, one authorized exclusively for this band.

The original band had both professionals and novices. The first leader, Warrant Officer Francis Leigh, graded the musicians.

"Some could barely play an instrument," snickers Adam Lessard, today's head of the band's collections and archives.

The band's first public performance was at an April 27, 1922 dedication of a statue of General Ulysses S. Grant at the U.S. Capitol. To travel from Fort Hunt to performance sites members had to be



Members of the U.S. Army Band "Pershing's Own" march down Pennsylvania Avenue during the 59th Presidential Inauguration in Washington, D.C., Jan. 20, 2021. Military members from across all branches of the armed forces of the United States, including Reserve and National Guard components, provided ceremonial support and Defense Support of Civil Authorities during the inaugural period.



The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets pose for a photo on the White House lawn. The Herald Trumpets are The Official Fanfare Ensemble to The President of The United States.

"creative," Lessard says, navigating over muddy roads, using street cars and taking water taxis across the Potomac River. (The south section of the George Washington Me-

morial Parkway to Mount Vernon Estate was completed 1932.)

They had their first radio broadcast in 1923 and in the 1930s averaged four a week. In 1927, they

performed at a ceremony honoring Charles Lindberg's historic Spirit of St. Louis flight from New York to Paris, France.

In 1942, Fort Myer in Arlington

became their home installation and is still their home today, near Arlington National Cemetery where they often play for funerals and ceremonies. Fort Myer today is called Joint Base Myer-Henderson Hall.

Starting as a mostly concert band of around 86 musicians, today the band has 256 professional musicians who stage 6,000 performances or missions a year. There's a concert band, ceremonial band, strings, chorus, herald trumpets, blues band and a band that plays rock, pop, country, rhythm and blues and inspirational music.

Pershing's Own

The band is called "Pershing's Own" because General John "Black Jack" J. Pershing believed the U.S. Army should have a band like the polished ones he had seen in Europe in World War I. He ordered the band's formation and believed it could boost the troops' spirits.

MAKING HISTORY

Today's Pershing's Own is a group of highly-trained, professional musicians who perform at some of the nation's most high-profile events, for U.S. Presidents, the U.S. Congress and foreign dignitaries.

They are the official band for full honor ceremonies at Arlington Cemetery's Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. They provide buglers for wreath layings and do the fanfare for arrivals of foreign heads of state. They perform patriotic programs, for example, at the U.S. Capitol with the National Symphony Orchestra.

Mount Vernon resident Sergeant First Class Paul Tucker, a saxophonist, loves the camaraderie, shared sense of mission and playing with world-class musicians, he says. "Performing in the Army Band at important ceremonies and concerts in our nation's capital has been an incredible honor, whether it is the Presidential inaugural parade or a Medal of Honor recipient ceremony or an outdoor summer concert. It is personally very re-

SEE IT ALL STARTED. PAGE 7
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DOD PHOTO BY U.S. ARMY SGT. JACOB HOLMES

U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY THE UNITED STATES ARMY BAND



U.S. ARMY PHOTO BY STAFF SGT. VICTORIA CHAMBERLAIN
Sgt. Major Christal Rheams sings with The U.S. Army Blues.



PHOTO BY ANDREA HANKS
The U.S. Army Strings perform in the Rose Garden of The White House.

It All Started at Fort Hunt

FROM PAGE 6

warding to both make music and also represent the U.S. Army.”

The band welcomed John Glenn back from his historic space flight in 1962 and played for the Apollo 11 astronauts’ return from the moon in 1969. Pershing’s Own performed at the 1987 summit of U.S. President Ronald Reagan and the Soviet Union’s General Secretary Mikhail Gorbachev.

After the Sept. 11, 2001, terrorist attacks, band members helped with recovery efforts at the Pentagon and a month later, participated in a memorial service at New York City’s Ground Zero. They performed for the 50th anniversary of NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization) in 2005.

In 2021, they played for the post-inauguration wreath-laying ceremony for President Joseph Biden at Tomb of the Unknown Soldier. Their brass quintet, one of the band’s ensembles, played for people arriving for the late General Colin Powell’s funeral this past November.

Diplomacy

The musicians have also practiced diplomacy. In World War II, the band had a two-year deployment to North Africa and Europe. It came under a German V-2 rocket bomb attack in Antwerp, Belgium, in 1944. Rockets aside, “Playing concerts in countries like Algiers and Morocco, they were representatives of the American liberating force,” Lessard says.

In 2002, some band members did a six-day USO tour of Kuwait, Afghanistan and Uzbekistan to support Operation Enduring Freedom.

The band had a memorable exchange with China’s Military Band of the People’s Liberation Army in 2011 and 2012, performing together at the Kennedy Center, at the United Nation in New York and in China, playing both American and Chinese pieces. “We are more similar than we are dissimilar,” commented then Major General Michael Linnington.

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The U.S. Army Herald Trumpets for the White House arrival of Chinese President Hu Jintao with U.S. President George W. Bush.



PHOTO BY PFC. GABRIEL SILVA
Staff Sgts. Adrienne Doctor and Sidonie McCray play taps for a wreath-laying at The Tomb of the Unknown Soldier.

When dignitaries visit the U.S., the band plays the national anthem of the visitor’s home country.

Hollin Hall resident and percussionist Larry Ferguson found his two USO tours to Iraq and Afghanistan to be very rewarding. For him, the band has been a capstone of his musical pursuits that started 36 years ago. At age 10, he began playing drums and he’s been a percussionist playing instruments like the drum, cymbals, xylophone, triangle and tambourine for 20 years. “The Army and the Army band have been an amazing career. I’ve been fortunate enough to pursue my passion while giving something back to the nation through concerts and high-profile ceremonies,” he says.

Emily Ross, who handles band operations, played the clarinet

with the band for 17 years. “It’s a great way to serve your country and perform the music that you love,” she believes. Band members surely agree.

Forthcoming Events

The U.S. Army Band will have several centennial events, including an April gala concert at Washington’s Constitution Hall, virtual and outdoor concerts and possible tours. Visit usarmyband.com, Facebook www.facebook.com/usarmyband, Instagram @usarmyband, and YouTube www.youtube.com/c/usarmyband

In China

See the YouTube documentary, “In China,” the U.S. Army Band’s trip to China, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BL5VJ9o7y6g>

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- Burke, Fairfax, Lorton, Springfield Connection
- Centre View, Chantilly, Herndon, Reston Connection
- Great Falls Connection
- Mount Vernon Gazette
- Potomac Almanac
- Vienna, McLean Connection

Coyotes Spotted in All Parts of Fairfax County

Seldom seen, coyotes have been living next to people for a long time.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE GAZETTE

A coyote spotted in Lee District Park caused some alarm amongst nearby residents that coyotes possibly pose a threat to pets that are left unattended.

“Coyotes differ from most other wildlife species in urban areas in that they are often perceived to be a danger or a nuisance simply by being seen,” says Fairfax County information on the website. “Most complaints regarding coyotes are that they occur near people, even when no incidents or damages have occurred. Simply seeing a coyote should not be cause for alarm.”

A picture of the animal at Lee District Park was posted on the Next-door social media site, and there were several responses.

Renee Grebe, of Loft Ridge Small Side, praised the presence of coyotes. “We’ve got them all over here - what a joy to have! Thank you, coyotes, for helping keep our rodent population in check,” she said.

In nearby Huntley Meadows Park, coyotes have been heard after dark, said one of the Friends of Huntley Meadows Park.

Marlene Koenig of Manchester Lakes said on social media, “I have seen [coyotes] in the Kingstowne area since the late 1990s. There is a pack of perhaps six that live in Huntley Meadows. You can hear the howling at times.”

According to the county, coyotes are opportunistic foragers with diverse diets that commonly prey on small animals such as mice, rats, voles and rabbits but will also readily eat fruits, plants and carrion.

But coyotes may “mistake” small, unattended pets including cats and small dogs as prey.

“They will however see any small pets as food, particularly outdoor cats, when they find them wandering off in the woods,” according to Alonso Abugattas in the Capital Naturalist blog. “This is just one more good reason among so many to not let cats out.”

“Coyotes are remarkably shy and avoid people any way they can,” Abugattas said. “Most are rarely seen, and certainly are no danger to people.”

Coyotes are territorial and may view larger dogs as potential competitors, particularly from January to June while mating and birthing pups, although actual confrontations are rare.

In May 2018 Animal Protection Police Officers and the Fairfax County Wildlife Management Specialist reported that a small dog was attacked and killed in the forested area of the Parklawn community of Alexandria.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Coyotes have been seen in every part of Fairfax County.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

This coyote goes to the Lake d’Evereux neighborhood frequently. The neighborhood is right next to Huntley Meadows Park.

“The best way to safeguard pets in areas where coyotes are active is to keep them indoors and do not leave them outside without supervision,” said Dr. Katherine Edwards, Fairfax County Wildlife Management Specialist.

According to the Capital Naturalist blog by Abugattas, <https://capitalnaturalist.blogspot.com/> or on Facebook:

“Our Eastern Coyote (*Canis latrans*) ... was first noticed around 1930 or so spreading East near the Great Lakes, as Western Coyotes wandered over and took over the areas vacated by most gray wolves. They mixed with Algonquian Wolves and continued to travel, mixing along the way with dogs as well. What resulted was a mix

of about 60% Western Coyote, 30% Algonquian Wolf, and the remainder dog, though these averages can vary. They are now found in every county in the mid-Atlantic.

“The Eastern Coyote is bigger than those in the West, about the size of a border collie or even German Shepherd, often between 45 to 55lbs, though occasionally bigger. The males are usually larger than the females. They are not only larger, but often tend to be more quiet than their western cousins, not howling as much, and often in much smaller groups. Their color can be variable as well, though they’re often some shade of tan, with erect ears, bushy downward-pointing tail with a dark tip. Most have white chins as well.”



NEXTDOOR

Coyotes are in every part of the area. These were near the Potomac River on the Maryland side.

Fairfax County lists a series of tips for coexisting with coyotes:

- ❖ Never feed or attempt to “tame” a coyote.
- ❖ Place garbage and compost in an animal-proof container, such as a metal trash can with latches on the lid or secure with bungee cords.
- ❖ Do not feed pets outside or store pet food outside.
- ❖ Keep small pets inside and do not leave unattended when outside.
- ❖ Provide secure shelters for poultry, rabbits, and other vulnerable animals.
- ❖ Coyotes are most active at night and early morning hours; however, they may be active during the day in search of food or denning sites.
- ❖ If you see a coyote crossing your property, and you don’t want it there, let use hazing techniques to frighten coyotes from the property or exclusion measures to restrict their access. Yell and wave your arms at the coyote. Use noisemakers such as whistles, air horns, bells, “shaker” cans full of marbles or pennies, or pots and pans banged together.

Time to Hang Up the Bird Feeders

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Mark Ludlow, the owner of For the Wild Birds in downtown McLean, spoke at the Great Falls Citizens Association Environment and Parks Committee meeting on Monday, Dec. 13. He focused on the three basic needs of birds in winter: shelter, water, and food. Each helps birds maintain their body temperature, critical for cold weather survival.

According to Ludlow, birdhouses do nothing as a shelter for birds in winter. "Birds live outdoors in the bushes. They don't live in houses," he said. Although referred to as "birdhouses," they are nesting boxes. "Rarely will a bird use the nesting box in winter," he said. Chickadees, woodpeckers, Barred Owls, wrens, and nuthatches are cavity-nesters, meaning they prefer a roof over their heads, but only when nesting.

Birds try to keep their body temperatures constant. "The best thing is a giant brush pile in the backyard, [but] not everybody wants to do that," said Ludlow. "It's warmer, and...cuts down on the wind. Otherwise, they just should sit in the bush." If it is below freezing all night, some bird species can lose up to 30 percent of their body weight in one night," said Ludlow.

Water is a second critical need for more than just hydration. Birds must bathe in the winter to keep their feathers oil-free and clean. Oily feathers matt and do not offer the same level of insulation. Fluffing up their feathers and producing air between them is one of the ways birds stay warm at night. They can then metabolize whatever food they have in their tiny stomachs throughout the evening to keep their body temperature stable. "So, you're helping birds by cutting down on the high mortality rates during the wintertime," Ludlow said.

He added that many people have "those big old concrete deep things" as birdbaths. "You'll never see a bird bathe in them. "It's a life-threatening event to go into water over their heads. All these backyard birds can't swim, so the shallower, the better. Splash



Mockingbird



Carolina wren

PHOTOS COURTESY OF CONNEE CHANDLER



Blue Jay

type of binoculars to use, Ludlow suggested the All Squirrel Buster, a squirrel-proof feeder. Once on the feeder, a squirrel's weight forces the shroud down, blocking the ports.

Ludlow recommended large binoculars for bird watching. They are heavier but superior to pocket binoculars that resemble old opera glasses. "If you

have a little pair of binoculars, it's like looking through a little teeny tunnel, and you can't find the bird ... [And] you can't follow it because the screen is too small. So, you need a big opening so that you can find that bird. Your natural eye-hand coordination will just bring it right to the bird, and then when it moves, it often hasn't left the field," he said.

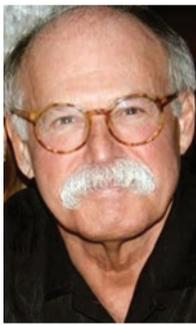


PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Mark Ludlow, owner of For the Wild Birds in downtown McLean

around in a half-inch of water".

Finally, and perhaps most significantly, there is the matter of food. While birds would perish without it, food provides much more than the essential nutrients birds require. In winter, food keeps birds warm. Because their stomachs are so small, birds cannot consume enough food to maintain temperatures constant throughout the night. They stay

warm by metabolizing food, and for some species, this can be a life-or-death situation.

Ludlow advised providing only hulled sunflower seeds, commonly called sunflower hearts, during the winter and most of the year. Many birds crave sunflower seeds, but some birds, including chickadees, finches, and nuthatches, did not evolve to open shells. Cardinals can crack open shells with their large beaks, but small titmice have difficulty. In addition, according to Ludlow, grocery store multi-mix, birdseed lacks nutritional value in line with the winter oil and fat requirements of birds. He added that the size of the bird has no relation to the seed it eats. "Folks assume that little stuff is there for little birds," he said. Sunflowers provide all the nutrients birds need for a balanced diet.

However, sunflower seeds are also loved by squirrels, says Ludlow. They have a propensity for depleting feeders and damaging those stocked with sunflower seeds. An environmentally sound and legal aversive agent can reduce their birdseed consumption to deter the rodents. Capsaicin-soaked shells, the chemical that causes some peppers to be

hot to humans, have the same effect on mammals but not on birds. "They actually have no reaction to it, literally," said Ludlow.

The research article, *Effectiveness of Capsaicin as a Repellent to Birdseed Consumption by Gray Squirrels* substantiated Ludlow's assertion. Birds do not perceive this effect because they either lack the capsaicin-binding receptors or have

capsaicin-insensitive receptors.

Suet is another food option; it is rendered animal fat typically mixed with nuts, corn, or berries. A suet cage will attract chickadees and cardinals. A suet holder with a "tail prop" helps attract woodpeckers. This gives woodpeckers three points of contact, "like a third leg," according to Ludlow.

Asked what bird feeder and

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Black History Month: Filling in the Gaps

FROM PAGE 5

Many Post-Civil War periods in African American history, such as the forced sterilization of African American women, are omitted from mainstream teachings, says Anderson. "Reading historical fiction gives children a sense of the psychological damage that African Americans have endured throughout history," she said. "I make sure that all of my children read books like 'Like Roll of Thunder Hear My Cry' by Mildred Taylor. It paints a real picture of what life was like for sharecroppers. There are some children who grow up thinking that sharecropping helped Black people get on their feet and create a better life for themselves after slavery ended. In reality, Whites used lynching, beatings and burnings to intimidate sharecroppers so they stayed chained to the land without the possibility of improving their lives."

Presenting Black history in a way that young children can understand, preschool teacher Vonetia Hartley, Alexandria mother of three adult children and four grandchildren, uses the achievements of prominent African Americans figures to help her students and grandchildren realize that there are no limits to what they can achieve. "I want them to understand the importance of knowing who they are and how unique they are," she said. "I want them to know that there are so many options in their future. Whether they want to be president, governor, doctor, police officer, airplane pilot or inventor, they can become it."

Extending lessons on African American history beyond 28 days in February is what Grant encourages. "It should be woven into our everyday lives so that it's not seen as something special to think about in February," Grant said. "Our ancestors made contributions that affect us every day."

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Obituary

Obituary

Gerald (Jerry) George Prehn CIA Senior Intelligence Officer



Jerry George Prehn, 90, a retired CIA senior intelligence and executive officer in the Directorate of Operations, died February 7th in Leesburg, VA.

Jerry joined the CIA in 1958 and served in a number of senior positions in Washington, D.C. and abroad in Moscow, Vienna, Munich, London and Ottawa, including as Chief of Station in two postings and subsequently as Chief of the Agency Congressional Liaison Division, and Chief of the National Detector Operations Center.

His Moscow assignment (1963-1966) occurred in the aftermath of the Cuban Missile Crisis, during the overthrow of Premier Khrushchev, the assassination of President Kennedy and of the signing of the first US - USSR Atomic Energy Agreement in which he participated. He later served with the CIA Office of the Inspector General. His varied assignments entailed traveling to all of the continents.

During his thirty-five year career, Jerry received numerous awards for meritorious service and upon retirement was awarded the CIA Distinguished Intelligence Medal. Following his formal retirement, Jerry worked for ten years as an independent contractor for the agency's Operations Directorate.

Jerry was a native of Michigan and graduated with honors from the University of Michigan in 1958 (Go Blue!). During the Korean War, his college education was interrupted by his enlistment in 1951 in the United States Air Force. While still in the Air Force, he attended the University of Syracuse and was certified in the USAFIT intensive Russian language program which served him well in his subsequent roles and assignments with the CIA. He was discharged from the USAF in 1954 with the rank of Staff Sergeant, receiving a superior performance rating.

In retirement, Jerry served on a volunteer basis as a docent for the George C. Marshall International Center at Dodona Manor in Leesburg, Virginia. He was also a member of the Diplomatic and Consular Officers, Retired (DACOR, Inc.) of Washington, D.C.

Jerry was predeceased by his parents, Florence C. Prehn and Marshall A. Prehn, his brother-in-law Bob Savage, and his brother-in-law Jack Henderson. He is survived by his beloved wife of 62 years, Shan Savage Prehn, of Leesburg, Virginia; sons Jeffrey M. Prehn and Matthew R. Prehn (Jill) and daughter Elizabeth P. Hogan (Michael). His memory will be forever cherished by those who call him Grandad: Greyson Goodenow, Chance Hogan, Beau Hogan, Jackson Prehn and Shea Hogan. He is also survived by his sisters Marcia Snyder (Duke) and Gayle Henderson, sister-in-law Sue Savage and loving nieces and nephew.

The memorial and celebration of the life of Jerry Prehn will be held on Friday, February 18th at 12:00 pm at the River Creek Club (43800 Olympic Blvd Leesburg, VA.) A reception will immediately follow. Memorial donations may be made in Jerry's name to the Alzheimer's Association.

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CALENDAR

NOW THRU FEB. 27

"Winter Winds" Art Show. 12-5 p.m. At Reston Art Gallery and Studios, 11400 Washington Plaza W. at Lake Anne, Reston. See the season's sentiments depicted in oil, acrylic, and watercolor paintings, mixed media collage, metal mobiles, and more, created by the eight artists of RAGS. Open weekends, 12-5 pm, through February 27, located at the "ART" sign on Lake Anne Plaza. Visit the website: www.restonartgallery.com.

NOW THRU MARCH 13

"The Phlebotomist." Thursdays at 7:30 p.m., Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m. At 1st Stage, 1524 Spring Hill Road in Tysons. Tickets can be purchased online at www.1ststage.org or by calling the 1st Stage box office at 703-854-1856.

THURSDAY/FEB. 17

Mardi Gras Celebration. 12-2 p.m. At the Vienna Community Center, 120 Cherry Street SE, Vienna. Cajun cuisine lunch, Mardi Gras mask making, trivia and entertainment. Dressing up is part of the celebration so be sure to wear purple, green and gold. To register, call 703-281-0538.

FRIDAY/FEB. 18

Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo. 7 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. Couldn't you use a good laugh? "The Trocks" recreate the glories of the Royal Imperial ballet in the biggest pointe shoes you'll ever see. Cost is \$40/\$30 MCC district residents.

FEBRUARY 18 TO MARCH 13, 2022

"Every Brilliant Thing." At NextStop Theatre, 269 Sunset Park Drive, Herndon. Guided by an unnamed narrator, the audience is drawn into the story of a young boy who tries to cure his mother's depression by creating a list of all the most wonderful things in the world. At times humorous and at others gut-wrenching, this extraordinary, interactive play brings the actor and audience along together on a unique journey of shared discovery and catharsis. Visit www.NextStopTheatre.org.

FRIDAY/FEB. 18

Old Firehouse Snack & Paint Night. 7-9 p.m. At the Old Firehouse, McLean. Whether you are a beginner or an expert, love snacks or want to get your hands dirty with some paint, come on down to the Old Firehouse for our Snack and Paint Night. Led by a professional art teacher, the event will allow you to create your own masterpiece with your family while having tons of fun doing it. All materials and snacks are included in the fee.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Annual Salzman Lecture. 7 p.m. Via Zoom. At Lewinsville Presbyterian Church, 1724 Chain Bridge Road, McLean. The lecture will feature Dr. Charles Chavis, Jr. on the subject of "Hidden in Full View: Confronting the Legacy of Racism in the Age of Fracture." Dr. Chavis is the Founding Director of the John Mitchell, Jr. Program for History, Justice, and Race at George Mason University's Jimmy and Rosalynn Carter School for Peace and Conflict Resolution. Visit the website: <https://www.lewinsville.org/events/salzman-lecture/>

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Traditional Celtic Music. 4:30 and 6:30 p.m. At the Old Brogue Irish Pub, 760-C Walker Road, Great Falls. Featuring Abbie Palmer: Scintillating Celtic harper and singer. Tickets must be purchased in advance through the link at www.oldbrogue.com: \$21 general admission. Season ticket: \$110.

SUNDAY/FEB. 20

Maple Syrup Boil Down. Noon, 1 p.m. and 2 p.m. At Colvin Run Mill, 10017 Colvin Run Road, Great Falls. Bundle up, watch, and learn as sap is boiled down into sweet syrup over an outdoor, open fire. Sample the delicious combination of maple syrup served



Les Ballets Trockadero de Monte Carlo will perform on Friday, Feb. 18, 2022, at the McLean Community Center in McLean.

over cornbread made from Colvin Run Mill cornmeal. Cost is \$10 per person. Call 703-759-2771.

FEB. 21-MARCH 30

Fiber Optics. 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. At McLean Textile Gallery, 6819 Elm Street, McLean. Philadelphia printmaker Fay Stanford will show her fabulist banners. Stanford creates wry fairy tales about suburban family life – especially death, disease and aging. Visit the website: mcleantextilegallery.org.

THURSDAY/FEB. 24

Performing Arts Documentaries. 1 p.m. At The Alden, McLean Community Center, McLean. Learn a little about the performing arts through these one-hour (or so) documentaries. Safety permitting, join Performing Arts Director Sarah Schallern Treff for a discussion after.

FRIDAY/FEB. 25

Sweetheart Parent & Child Dance. 7-9 p.m. At McLean Community Center, 1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean. For all ages. Children can come to MCC for a fancy "date" with their parents or guardians. Create lasting memories by joining us at the MCC's Sweetheart dance. Activities include a dance lesson, music played by a DJ, a photo booth and craft activities. Visit www.mcleancenter.org

FRIDAY/FEB. 25

McLean Art Society Meeting. 10 a.m. to noon. Via Zoom. Ann Wallace, an established local artist who paints with pastels, will be the featured presenter at the meeting of the McLean Art Society. The meeting will be held on Zoom and the art demonstration will begin at 11 a.m. Guests are invited and anyone who would like to be included for the Zoom presentation should contact M.A.S. President Anna Katalkina at annakatalkina@aol.com.

FEB. 25-26

Capital Remodel and Garden Show. At the Dulles Expo Center, 4320 Chantilly Shopping Center, Chantilly. Barry Williams, former teen star of "The Brady Bunch" and of HGTV's "A Very Brady Renovation," will be headlining. More than 200 companies will be on hand to showcase the latest products and services in home remodeling, renovation, home décor, landscape and garden design. An ongoing schedule of home remodeling and landscape experts conducting seminars will be carried out throughout the three-day event. From 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. Friday and Saturday and from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. on Sunday. Tickets may be purchased at: www.capitalremodelandgardenshow.com

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Date With Destiny – Or Not



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Despite having cancer and having been given a "terminal" diagnosis/13 month to two years" prognosis in late February 2009, I rarely, believe or not, consider my own mortality. Well, occasionally in these columns, but day-to-day, hardly ever. Oddly enough, something occurred the other day which meant very little to me when I first heard about it until I read more about it today on the ESPN website. 'It' being that former Major League baseball player Jeremy Giambi had died. Mr. Giambi was 47, but initially no cause of death or any other particulars were provided. Today's story, an Associated Press release filled in some of the gaps. His cause of death was suicide and listed his date of birth (finally the point of this column) as September 30, 1974.

Why should you care? Probably not for the same reason as I do. Jeremy Giambi and I share the same birthday: Sept. 30, though not the same birth year. Nevertheless, seeing a person you have heard of – which I have, or whom billions of others haven't, die, and whose birthday is identical to yours is – sobering, and I don't even drink. In an odd and complicated way, seeing/hearing/reading about someone dying with whom you share a birthday is unsettling somehow. To invoke a "Star Wars" reference, I feel something akin to a weakening of the force. And in this context, that feeling being whatever intangible/physical/spiritual 'force' keeps us alive. I don't want to see anyone dying, especially anyone who has the same as birthday as I do. It's as if any other person dying who has a September 30 birthday affects my mortality somehow, and that I'm at greater risk because of it, like we have some sort of connection. It's like when another cancer patient succumbs to our shared disease. I don't exactly feel their pain, but I feel the loss, as if I've lost a key member of Team Lourie. And as a cancer patient still undergoing treatment, I don't need any negativity seeping in.

In fact, I can't see how thinking about death in any context is helpful. Early on in my cancer life, I was told by multiple medical professionals how important – and helpful, maintaining a positive attitude would be – and has proved to be. Though there's no real empirical evidence, anecdotal evidence suggests however, that there is a link between attitude and survival. As a longtime cancer patient who has remained positive about this incredible negative, I believe this to be way more than an abstract theory.

For me, and all of you, life goes on until it doesn't, duh. Still, I don't want or need to be reminded of my own mortality, in any context. Moreover, I realize I had already jumped to the head of the mortality class when I was diagnosed 13 years ago. Perhaps I'm overstating the significance of Mr. Giambi's death to me? Perhaps, his having been a Major Leaguer who played his last season for the Boston Red Sox, my hometown team, and I'm a sports' guy from Boston, intensifies the effect on me? Whatever it is, I don't ever want to see my birthday associated with death.

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



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