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# FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES



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FRIDAY · SATURDAY · SUNDAY

MAY 24 - 26, 2019

**THIS WEEK INSIDE:**



BRANDPOINT PHOTO

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PHOTO BY DEBORAH LANNEN

**South Lakes Track**  
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SUBMITTED PHOTO

**The beautiful ride of Angela Alfano**  
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**Weekend Weather Forecast**

Friday	Saturday	Sunday
Partly Cloudy 83° / 60°	Partly Cloudy 85° / 68°	Mostly Cloudy 90° / 67°

Forecast courtesy Weather.com

## Taps for the fallen

■ Civil War soldiers' historical marker unveiled in Centreville

BY JIM LEWIS AND DREW GRUBER  
COMPILED BY GREGG MACDONALD

On May 18, a vibrant crowd of more than 130 historical enthusiasts were mesmerized by the long-anticipated unveiling of the Civil War Trail's marker entitled, "Mystery of the Centreville Six." The gathering took place at the McDonald's restaurant at 5931 Fort Drive in Centreville, and centered around six Union soldiers whose remains were originally discovered in 1994.

The story dates back to the earliest days of the American Civil War and is as much a forensic one as it is a historic one.

Jim Lewis, author of the marker and master of the dedication ceremony, attributed the marker to the Bull Run Civil War Round Table's efforts to bring closure to the story as part of its mission to remember, preserve, and educate.

Former Sully District Supervisor Michael Frey led off the program with a message regarding Centreville's rich historical heritage and his support for the project. Lewis then



GREGG MACDONALD/FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

Glenn Maravetz of the City of Fairfax Band plays Taps for six fallen soldiers discovered in Centreville in 1994.

See TAPSPAGEA-5

## Reston nonprofit marks 140 years of supporting military families



PHOTO COURTESY AAFMAA

American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association Executive Vice President Michael Meese served in the U.S. Army for 32 years before retiring and joining the Reston-based nonprofit.

■ AAFMAA provides life insurance, survivor assistance, and wealth management

BY ANGELA WOOLSEY  
FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

Before he got a job assisting military members and their families, Michael Meese was in the military himself.

Meese served in the U.S. Army for 32 years, a period that included deployments to Iraq, Bosnia, and Afghanistan and concluded with a stint as professor and head of the

Department of Social Sciences at the U.S. Military Academy at West Point.

After retiring as a brigadier general, Meese became the chief operating officer for the American Armed Forces Mutual Aid Association, and he has worked at the Reston-based nonprofit since 2013, now holding the title of executive vice president.

At AAFMAA, Meese is the norm, rather than an exception.

Almost 40 percent of the nonprofit's 105 employees currently or previously served in the armed forces, or have a spouse in the military, Meese says.

For a company that provides life

See MILITARY PAGE A-4

## Reston National Golf Course sale revives development concerns

■ New owners say no plans for property set

BY ANGELA WOOLSEY  
FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

A new fight over Reston National Golf Course is brewing after two Baltimore, Md., developers announced on May 19 that they had closed a purchase of the 18-hole, 168-acre golf complex on Sunrise Valley Drive.

First reported by the Washington Business Journal, the sale to Weller Development Company and War Horse Cities does not appear to signal any imminent changes to the property, as the new owners say they

have no plans beyond maintaining the existing golf course at this time.

However, the move fuels ongoing concerns from the Reston community that have simmered since 2012 and gained new traction when property owners RN Golf LLC put the course on the market in 2017.

Rescue Reston, a citizens' group that formed in 2012 to oppose any development of the golf course, criticized the sale in a media statement.

"Rescue Reston is disappointed that a developer who fully intended to keep the 18-hole golf course and put the majority of the open space into a permanent preservation trust could not gain traction with RN Golf," the

See GOLF COURSE PAGE A-4

## Fairfax closes floodgates with Northfax project

■ Intersection improvements projected to save 450,000 hours of traffic delays

BY ANGELA WOOLSEY  
FAIRFAX COUNTY TIMES

When a flash flood in 2011 made Fairfax Boulevard more closely resemble a river than a major roadway, one individual decided to take advantage of the street's watery condition.

The resulting video of a man paddling down Route 29 while floating on a large inner tube has racked up more than 300,000 views since it first appeared on YouTube on Sept. 8, 2011, drawing unflattering but necessary attention to infrastructure issues

that had been plaguing that stretch of road for years.

The City of Fairfax hopes to avoid any recurrences of similar hijinks with its overhaul of the Fairfax Boulevard and Chain Bridge Road intersection, a \$42.7 million venture that Mayor David Meyer says ranks among the largest public works projects ever undertaken by the city.

Completed this spring with a formal ribbon-cutting on May 20, the Northfax project involved the installation of a new box culvert under land that used to host a strip mall to the north of Route 29, the widening of Route 123 to six lanes, and the addition of turn lanes and upgraded traffic signals on Fairfax Boulevard.

In addition to addressing recurring flooding issues on Route 29, the improvements aim to reduce traffic

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The dedication ceremony on Saturday, May 18.

**TAPS**

Continued from Page A-1

proceeded to relate the sharp fight that took place two miles towards Manassas in mid-July 1861.

Kevin Ambrose, local relic hunter and keynote speaker, proceeded to recount how he was the one who discovered a skull and skeleton on the property in 1994 while looking for relics, and reported it to the appropriate authorities.

Both the Smithsonian Institution and Fairfax County Archeological Services got involved.

To the surprise of all, five additional burials were then discovered, all lined up in a row. All six burials were exhumed and contents examined in order to identify the bodies. Those efforts led back to soldiers in the earliest days of the Civil War. However, specific identification was inconclusive.

When Jim Van Valkenburg, the McDonald's owner/operator and sponsor of the marker, applied for a permit to build the restaurant, he initiated a process which eventually led to a very well-publicized mass excavation and exhumation of a total of six Union soldiers' remains in 1997.

The mystery arose as many thought the soldiers had to be Confederates, due to their large winter encampment in Centreville 1861-1862. Further study of the forensic data, as well as genealogical and military records, eventually led to identifying the soldiers as Union soldiers of the 1st Massachusetts Infantry, some of whose men had died fighting at the Battle of Blackburn Ford, just three days before 1st Manassas/Bull Run. They were amongst the earliest casualties of the Civil War.

Finally, after receiving an offer to bring the soldiers back to their home state, the soldiers were reinterred with full military honors June 2006 in the Massachusetts National Cemetery in Bourne, on Cape Cod. The dedication of this marker brings



Jim Lewis

closure to the mystery and those whose steadfast efforts brought this remarkable story to light, in addition to educating current and future generations.

The Civil War Trails program connects visitors to more than 1,650 sites across six states. The program's signature signs bring the modern landscape to life as visitors stand in the footsteps of soldiers, citizens, and those fighting to gain their freedom. Each Civil War Trails site is marketed internationally by state tourism offices, destination marketing organizations, and municipal partners.

Fairfax County offers dozens of historic attractions including two dozen Civil War Trails sites. "After the 150th Anniversary of the Civil War ended, we were pleasantly surprised to see a continued interest in travelers of all generations wanting to seek out our Civil War Trails markers," explained Patrick Lennon, Director of Marketing for Visit Fairfax. "We see that visitors not only use their time to explore the hallowed grounds, but also take the opportunity to essentially use

the markers as starting point to visit the surrounding area's restaurants, wineries, breweries and other attractions."

The program continues to experience record visitation providing a strong return on investment and revenue for local jurisdictions. "Our program is experiencing its largest and most dynamic audience to date," explained Drew Gruber, Executive Director of Civil War Trails. "Authentic places, green spaces, and personal stories motivate visitors and Civil War Trails delivers."



A close up of the historical marker.



PHOTOS BY CHUCK MAURO AND JIM LEWIS

Kevin Ambrose stands in front of the actual grave sites, marked off with orange tape.

# Stop Shaking and Start Living



Bill Espinosa was virtually paralyzed by Parkinson's disease. "I couldn't move, swallow, or even blink an eye," he recalls. Deep brain stimulation (DBS) unlocked Bill's muscles right away. Thanks to the physicians at MedStar Georgetown University Hospital—and DBS—his motor symptoms improved immediately and he stood up and walked. Bill is now back to enjoying his full, active life.

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**MedStar Georgetown University Hospital**



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