

# Great Falls CONNECTION

## Remembering 9/11

PAGE 10

MacPhearson Strassberg, a high school sophomore, plays "Amazing Grace" on his circa 1800 bagpipes at the 2022 9/11 ceremony in Great Falls.

### Hidden Gems

PAGES 3, 8, 9

### Give Locally

PAGE 7

### Q&A with Dr. Reid; Jobs in

SPACE PAGE 6

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Following a bugler sound “Taps,” the airplane overhead can be heard as keynote speaker Richard Haver lights the first candle of six, one each for a member of the Great Falls community who died in the 9/11 attacks.



BSA Troop 55 presents the colors.



Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky, pastor at St. Catherine of Sienna Church, gives the invocation.

# 9/11, 2022

Speaker suggests the attacks’ impacts waning.

BY MERCIA HOBSON  
THE CONNECTION

**O**n the 21st anniversary of the 9/11 attacks, the Great Falls, Virginia community gathered for its annual ceremony. It and another ceremony in Falls Church and one in Vienna marked the only official 9/11 ceremonies held in Fairfax County on September 11, 2022.

On the morning of Sept. 11, 2001, many of us witnessed the catastrophic and coordinated terrorist attacks in one of the most widely covered events in media history. We watched television screens as events unfolded, and driving to work, we listened to the radio for updates. Many could see the smoke rise from the Pentagon.

What transpired between 8:46 a.m. when the hijacked American Airlines Flight 11 crashed into the north face of the North Tower of the World Trade Center, killing all 92 aboard, and 10:03 a.m., when hijackers, fighting with passengers, caused United Flight 93 to crash in Somerset County, Pennsylvania killing all 44 aboard, was difficult to comprehend.

In the immediate aftermath and subsequent months, American patriotic sentiment soared. Many vowed never to forget the Sept. 11 attacks and nearly 3,000 victims. The shared grief reverberated with no age, gender, or political restrictions.

Fast forward to 2022, and Americans seem to be setting aside the deadliest terrorist attack on American soil in U.S. history, drawn to other matters, said keynote speaker Richard L. Haver during his remarks at the 9/11 Ceremony in Great Falls.



MacPhearson Strassberg, a high school sophomore, plays “Amazing Grace” on his circa 1800 bagpipes.

Haver’s career in the military and government included serving as Special Assistant to the Secretary of Defense for Intelligence during the Bush administration. He was responsible for establishing the Defense Intelligence Undersecretary’s Office, according to his bio.

“We must always remember, we must never forget. But beyond remembering, we must learn the lessons that were taught to us so painfully on 9/11,” Haver said. “The first lesson is vigilance; the second is our convictions and optimism; the third is that we must strive for unity.”

In the 1990s, the United States fell asleep,



Members of Daisy Troop 51156 and troop leader Lindsay Harper attend the 9-11 Ceremony in Great Falls at the Freedom Memorial on Sept. 11.

according to Haver. America had become overconfident and ignored the alerts and warnings. He discussed the initial bombing 1993 of the World Trade Center. A bomb went off beneath the two towers of the World Trade Center, signaling a new terrorist challenge. “Trying to destroy an American icon, a symbol of America’s economic power and strength,” Haver said.

“The 9/11 report, which I had a hand in, recounts several other occasions where we

were given a warning. We were given an alert... (but) we didn’t put the pieces together,” Haver said. “We didn’t put ourselves in our enemies’ positions.”

Despite our wealth and success, Haver said that our enemies can destroy us if we are complacent and preoccupied with other matters. “We give our enemies opportunities to undermine our security,” he said.

SEE 9/11, 2022, PAGE 11

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PHOTOS BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION



Attendees at the 9/11 Ceremony in Great Falls

# 9/11, 2022

FROM PAGE 10

According to Haver, the United States invests half as much in research and development as it did sixty years ago. In the 1940s, the United States possessed the greatest industrial capacity, he recalled.

Haver believes that now in the post-9/11 era and 21 years later when we yield to the desires of our adversaries to break up our unity and focus on our differences rather than what we have in common, we play into their hands. "Unity is the answer," Haver said. "One nation under God indivisible with liberty and justice for all."

THE SIX Great Falls residents who died on 9/11 are Ann C. Judge, Barbara K. Olson, Diane M. Simmons, George W. Simmons, Lisa J. Raines, and Retired Marine Corp. 1st Lt. Richard P. Gabriel.

The Friends of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial is a volunteer organization that built and maintains the site dedicated to the memory of the residents of Great Falls who died on 9/11 in the attacks. The Friends support this mission and welcome contributions to the effort. Contact Andy Wilson at [president@gffree-dom.org](mailto:president@gffree-dom.org) to learn more or to purchase an engraved brick to line the path to the memorial.



Andy Wilson, president of the Great Falls Freedom Memorial



Dranesville District school board member Elaine Tholen at the ceremony.

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Gary Pan, BSA Troop 55 adult leader and Commissioner of the Virginia Department of Labor, with Rev. Jerry J. Pokorsky, pastor of St. Catherine of Sienna Catholic Church in Great Falls.



## Opening new classrooms in January 2023!

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## PUBLIC NOTICE

**In-Person Public Hearing on the McLean Community Center's FY2024 Budget**  
(July 1, 2023-June 30, 2024)

**McLean Community Center Governing Board**  
**Wednesday, Sept. 28, 6:30 p.m.**

Small District 1A-Dranesville residents who wish to speak at the Public Hearing are asked to call 703-790-0123, TTY: 711, to be placed on the speakers list. The draft budget proposal is available on the Center's website. Copies will be available at the Public Hearing.

Written comments may be delivered to the McLean Community Center (see address below) marked "Attention: Executive Director," or sent by email to [holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov](mailto:holly.novak@fairfaxcounty.gov). Written comments may be provided after the Public Hearing up through Monday, Oct. 24.



**McLean Community Center**  
1234 Ingleside Ave., McLean VA 22101  
703-790-0123, TTY: 711  
[www.mcleancenter.org](http://www.mcleancenter.org)