Protecting Manassas - A New Exhibit

Back when Manassas was a quiet little town, seeing a hearse pull up in your driveway was not a cause for alarm. It meant that help had arrived.

Before the Manassas Volunteer Rescue Squad was established in 1966, it was the Baker Funeral Home that answered emergency calls and transported patients to the nearest hospital in Alexandria. This surprising story is one of many in the new Manassas Museum exhibit, Protecting Manassas, opening May 1.

The exhibit focuses on the evolution of the police, fire and rescue squads in Manassas from those humble beginnings when citizens answered the call for all manners of emergencies. The exhibit coincides with the World Police and Fire Games hosted by the region this summer.

Long before volunteers or professionals responded to fires, citizens would run to the Railroad Depot, grab water buckets and ladders, and help put out fires. The Town Sergeant, armed with nothing more than a nightstick, would respond to every drunken brawl and accident, as well as collect taxes. As the town grew into a city, its emergency services grew as well.

As volunteers and professionals in the fire, rescue and police departments gained training and up-to-date equipment, their jobs became even more demanding.

“Our Fire, Rescue and Police personnel run into a building when others run out,” said Mayor Harry J. Parrish II. “It is that courage and compassion for others that helps keep this City safe and well protected.”

It was not until the 1950s that the police and fire departments really started to change into what we are familiar with today. Remember, the fire services were all volunteer for the longest time, and Manassas was really fortunate to have such dedicated citizens providing these services.

“I hope visitors and residents will come out for this exhibit,” said City Manager W. Patrick Pate. “Our Police, and Fire and Rescue staff are top in their field and our volunteers are some of the most dedicated people I’ve met.”

Protecting Manassas is open through July 15 and is included with admission to the Museum.

Make Sure You Look Up

If you are walking or driving through Historic Downtown Manassas, make sure to look up at the light poles that line the city streets. There are 60 original pieces of art hanging from the downtown light poles.

Over the winter months, Historic Manassas, Inc. in partnership with the City of Manassas, held a Banner Art Competition. This competition was for artists from Virginia, Maryland and Washington, D.C. to create original art that, if selected, would hang from the City of Manassas’ light poles. The competition was run by a small committee led by Debbie Haight, Executive Director of Historic Manassas, Inc.

More than 130 pieces of art were submitted for the competition. In February, members of the community gathered to select the 60 pieces of art that would hang on the light poles. This gathering included City Council members, students, business leaders, and community members. From the 60 selected pieces of art, one grand prize winner, who will receive $1000, will be announced at an awards presentation during the spring gallery walk on May 1, 2015.

All summer long residents and visitors are invited to look at the banners and select their favorite for the “people’s choice” winner. In the fall, the artist who painted the people’s favorite piece will receive $500. A walking tour brochure of the banners will be available after May 1. This will have information about each piece and information on how to vote in the “people’s choice” competition.

So, the next time you are in Historic Downtown Manassas, make sure to take the time to look up and appreciate the art.
As a part of our recent efforts to measure community perceptions about the City of Manassas and to measure citizen satisfaction with services, several prominent themes have emerged from the research. One of those themes revolves around the perception that individuals notice and experience a “sense of place” in the City of Manassas. So what gives individuals this sense of the City of Manassas being a special place? Many people note the historic charm of the community and the authentic downtown. Efforts by the community to have a lively downtown, rich with events, festivals, businesses, arts and community gathering places certainly provide a strong connection to this sense of place. Continued community support for all of these local activities and attractions is critical to the continued vitality of our City.

Our strategic location as a major railway junction and the surrounding transportation network have both played a major role in the creation of our City and its continued development as a unique place. The core value of being an accessible and responsible community, as was prominently noted in the citizen survey responses on customer service, is another way that we distinguish ourselves from other places.

As a part of our strategic planning efforts, over the next several years the City will be looking to build upon this sense of place by providing the services, amenities and programs that demonstrate our core values - strategic location, city spirit, charm and an authentic downtown experience.

This translates into goals of providing attractively designed, well maintained and conveniently located community facilities and spaces that will be distinctive to the City of Manassas. Another goal is the continued enhancements of our gateway corridors so that there is a sense of arrival when visitors enter the City and when residents return home. We will also be looking to work with other regional partners, particularly in the Northern Virginia region, and with the Commonwealth to improve traffic congestion in and around the City of Manassas.

Small town charm and atmosphere, affordable quality of life, outside of the beltway stress, sense of place and pride, and a welcoming community are all terms that were used to describe the uniqueness of the City of Manassas. In fact, in naming the City of Manassas as the top small city in Virginia 2015, citydescribed.com (http://citydescribed.com/2014/11/top-14-small-cities-in-virginia/14/) stated “Manassas is a family friendly, welcoming little town that just begs to be explored.” I agree and I hope you will spend some time this spring exploring this special place that we call home.

**A Few Notes from Public Works**

**Prince William Street Improvement Project**

Beginning in April, City electric crews and other utilities began the relocation work required to prepare for the Prince William Street Improvement project. This entails work on Prince William Street between Grant Avenue and Wellington Road. The project, in the FY 2015 CIP, is essential work that will widen the road, add bike lanes, curbs, gutters, sidewalks and improve storm drainage and water lines in the area. Travelers in the area can expect delays and lane closures continuing through summer of 2015.

**Trash and Recycling Information for HOAs**

In response to the need for improved communication on trash and recycling issues with Homeowner’s Associations, a new webpage has been created to help HOAs keep residents up-to-date on the latest refuse and recycling advisories. Please visit our website www.manassascity.org/trash.

**Stormwater Advice**

Everyone loves a green lawn in the summer. Here are some tips to help your lawn stay green and your drinking water stay clean:

- Set your mower height to 3 inches or higher - taller grass produces a deeper and denser root system that stores water and prevents erosion.
- Keep your grass clippings on site - the clippings decompose quickly and provide important nutrients for your lawn, reducing or eliminating the need and cost of nitrogen fertilizers.
- Don't brush grass clippings to the curb – they may go into the stormwater drain and create a blockage – which can cause flooding during bad weather.
- Have your soil tested before your fertilize your lawn – every lawn is unique and your lawn may need a different range of nutrients to help it grow.
The Farmer’s Market is Open

On April 9, 2015 the City of Manassas Farmer’s Market opened for the season. This is the 24th season the City’s Farmer’s Market has been delivering fresh produce and goods to residents and visitors of the City of Manassas. On Thursdays, the Farmer’s Market is located in the Harris Pavilion and on Saturdays it is located in parking lot B (or the water tower lot). Both markets are open from 7:30 a.m. to 1 p.m. In June, July and August there is a summer evening market from 5 to 8 p.m. in the Harris Pavilion.

About five years ago the City’s Farmer’s Market became a SNAP distributor when Historic Manassas, Inc. applied to the USDA Food and Nutrition Service. This opened the door for people that are receiving assistance to purchase fresh fruits and vegetable from the market. In addition, Historic Manassas, Inc. has formed a partnership with INOVA, who supplied matching funds for dollars spent by SNAP recipients. The City of Manassas Farmer’s Market was one of the first in this region to be able to offer this service to customers.

Primary Election June 9

The City of Manassas will hold a Primary Election on June 9, 2015. There will be one office on the ballot: State Senate, 29th District, for the Democratic Party. There are three candidates for this nomination:

- Atif M. Qarni
- Jeremy S. McPike
- Michael T. Futrell

Polls will open at 6 a.m. and close at 7 p.m. Voters are reminded to bring one of the following forms of photo identification to the polls, or to the Voter Registration office if voting Absentee In-Person:

- Valid Virginia Driver’s License
- DMV-issued photo identification card
- Valid United States passport
- Valid employee photo identification card
- Other government-issued photo identification card
- Valid college or university Student Photo Identification card (issuer must be an institution of higher education located in Virginia)

If any voter does not have one of these forms of Photo ID, please visit the Voter Registration office to obtain a free Voter Photo ID card. This ID will be valid for voting purposes only. Please note: with limited exceptions, Photo ID is not required for Absentee Voting by mail.

Important Dates:
- April 24: Absentee Voting begins
- May 18: Last Day to Register to Vote
- June 2nd: Last Day to Request a mailed Absentee Ballot
- June 6: Last Day to Vote Absentee In-Person
- June 9: Primary Election Day

For more information, visit www.manassascity.org/vote, call (703) 257-8230, or visit the Voter Registration office at 9025 Center Street.

Get Social!
Visit the City at www.manassascity.org.
- www.facebook.com/cityofmanassas
- www.twitter.com/cityofmanassas
- www.flickr.com/photos/cityofmanassas

Put your own photos up at www.flickr.com/groups/mycityofmanassas.

To contact the City of Manassas Connection newsletter, email pprince@ci.manassas.va.us.
The City of Manassas Happenings

Here’s what’s happening in the City of Manassas during May and June.

Now - October - Thursdays and Fridays at noon - Historic Downtown walking tours
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 1, 5 - 9 p.m. - First Friday Spring Gallery Walk in Historic Downtown
www.visitmanassas.org

May 1 - 16, Fridays and Saturdays at 8 p.m. enjoy Rooftop Productions InCorruptible
www.center-for-the-arts.org

May 2, 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. - Manassas Airshow and Open House at the Manassas Regional Airport
www.manassasairshow.com

May 2, 8 a.m. to noon - Hazardous Waste and eWaste Drop Off at the Manassas Transfer Station
www.manassascity.org/trash

May 2, 9 a.m. - 2 p.m. - Manassas Reads a book event for the entire family at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

May 3, 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk: Brandywine with Author Michael C. Harris
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 8 at 8 p.m. - Manassas Cemetery Tour
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 9 at 10 a.m. - Architectural Tour of Historic Downtown
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 9, A Giselle Open House at the Manassas Ballet
www.manassasballet.org

May 12, 10 a.m. - Pre-K Tuesday for ages 3-5 with a caretaker
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 15 - 17 - Giselle performed by the Manassas Ballet at the Hylton Performing Arts Center.
www.hyltoncenter.org

May 16, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Greater Manassas Volunteer Rescue Squad Open House
www.GMVRS.org

May 16, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. - After the War: A One-Day Symposium on the Effects of the Civil War - tickets available at 703-792-4754

May 16, 9 a.m. to noon - MS Walk at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

May 17, Noon to 4 p.m. - Picnic with the Painters at Liberia Plantation.
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 17 at 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk: Bloody Autumn and Hurricane from the Heavens with Author Daniel Davis
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 17, 12 - 6 p.m. - Manassas Lions Vendors Fair at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

May 23, 9 - 11 a.m. - Bike Tour of the City.
www.manassasmuseum.org

May 24, 2 to 6 p.m. - Prince William Community Band Festival at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

May 31 - Aug. 30, Sunday’s at noon tour Liberia Plantation with the Manassas Museum.
www.manassasmuseum.org

June 5, 5 - 9 p.m. - First Friday Corn Hole Tournament in Historic Downtown
www.visitmanassas.org

June 6, 10 a.m. - 3 p.m. - 21st Annual Heritage Railway Festival - featuring excursion rides to Clifton and back, displays and much more
www.visitmanassas.org

June 7, 12 - 4:30 p.m. - Taste of Manassas
www.visitmanassas.org

June 7 at 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk - That Furious Struggle: Chancellorville and the High Tide of the Confederacy with author Chris Mackowski
www.visitmanassas.org

June 9, 10 a.m. - Pre-K Tuesday for ages 3-5 with a caretaker
www.manassasmuseum.org

June 13, 8 - 11 p.m. - Saturday night adult dance to Beatlemania at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

June 14 at 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk - The Battle of First Deep Bottom with author James S. Price
www.visitmanassas.org

June 15 at 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk with author James S. Price at the Manassas Museum
www.visitmanassas.org

June 20, 8 - 11 p.m. - Saturday night adult dance to the T-Birds at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

June 21, 12 - 7 p.m. - Wine and Jazz Festival on the Manassas Museum Lawn.
www.visitmanassas.org

June 26 at 8:30 p.m. - The Lego Movie at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

June 27 at 6:30 p.m. - Washington Balalaika Society - A Festival of Russian Music at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

June 28 at 2 p.m. - Free Book Talk - Walt Whitman in Washington, D.C.; The Civil War and America’s Great Poet with Garrett Peck
www.visitmanassas.org

June 28 at 3 p.m. - Bull Run Troubadours and Ice Cream Social at the Harris Pavilion
www.visitmanassas.org

Take Out Tuesdays and Wednesday Lunch Concerts are back in June, July and August at the Harris Pavilion. Pick up a meal at one of our local restaurants and enjoy the free entertainment.
www.harrispavilion.com