

[https://fredericksburg.com/news/local/artists-collective-takes-over-gallery-space-in-colonial-beach-operating-as-artists-alliance/article\\_dc3f3c6e-eea0-52d6-ad35-b864b62bf8b7.html](https://fredericksburg.com/news/local/artists-collective-takes-over-gallery-space-in-colonial-beach-operating-as-artists-alliance/article_dc3f3c6e-eea0-52d6-ad35-b864b62bf8b7.html)

## **Artists collective takes over gallery space in Colonial Beach, operating as Artists' Alliance**

Rob Hedelt  
Jul 12, 2018

---

SALE! Subscribe for \$1/mo.



**T**he three artists were somewhere between upset and distraught when they met at the Jarrett–Thor Fine Arts Gallery in Colonial Beach several weeks ago.

The owners and operators of the gallery, where much of the best art in the riverside town has been displayed, had gotten sad news. Age and health concerns meant they couldn't operate the art space anymore, and it would be shutting down unless somebody could step in. Peter Fahmey, a photographer who's photos have been displayed at the gallery, joined painter Connie Canby and fellow photographer Rob Rudick at the gallery to seek a solution.

“We were wracking our brains, trying to think of another space in town where we could set up another gallery,” said Canby. “Everything we thought of would be too expensive, and none of the spaces we came up with were as good as this one.”

---

The gallery is a light and airy space facing the river at 100 Taylor Street.

After a while, Fahmey got a smile on his face and asked a question that cut through the gloom: “How about staying here?”

It sent the trio on a different but positive direction, the result being the formation of an artists’ collective. That group of some 20-plus artists is now operating and leasing the space in Suite 101 as the Artists’ Alliance at the Jarrett-Thor Fine Arts Gallery in Colonial Beach.

The renamed gallery will welcome visitors Friday from 6 to 9 p.m. to a free grand opening reception as part of Colonial Beach’s 2nd Friday Art Walk. The featured artist of the month is Barbara Brennan, who paints in oils and pastels and has a particular interest in disappearing landscapes, both urban and rural.

---

The July show highlights multiple works from each member, in media that includes painting, photography, pottery, encaustic, stained glass and jewelry. There are even combined displays of kitchen and bathroom art in, appropriately enough, the gallery’s kitchen and bathroom.

The decision for artists to operate the gallery as a collective “was a solution that made more sense the longer we focused on it,” said Rudick, the director of the new organization. Fahmey is its assistant director and Canby its artistic director.

Rudick explained that so far, about 20 artists have joined the group that will operate the gallery, replacing Carl and Joyce Thor.

---

The new director explained that artists in the group will be required to work there a day or so per month, and will pay nominal fees and commissions for artwork that is shown and sold at the gallery. Those funds will pay the lease and provide funding for the alliance.

Fahmey noted that Colonial Beach has become quite an art town in the past decade or so, with 80 or more artists involved in an artists' guild. Most of those signing on to the new alliance come from that group.

“And we’re still looking for others to sign on,” said Canby, a painter who’s working in watercolors and abstracts. “We’re especially looking for 3D artists to fill out our group: potters, basket-weavers, sculptors and others in that field.”

---

Rudick said that the members in the alliance will do the work of selecting and hanging artwork, and will man the gallery when it’s open each week, from Thursday to Sunday, 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and a little longer on nights when special events are happening.

The artists’ group plans to offer workshops, some taught by its members, others by guest artists, with the idea that the workshops might work for several days and bring artists in from all over the state and region.

Joyce Thor, an artist who has been losing her sight over the past few years, said the shift is a relief for her and her husband, who had been stressed by keeping the gallery going. They have planned four different times to close the business, but hung on because they cared about the artists, who were also their friends.

---

---

The pair will for now keep their studio and smaller gallery next door, but will work there and open the doors only when they care to, like during the Friday art walk. In addition to Joyce Thor's artwork—she was previously involved in the Torpedo Factory in Alexandria—the studio also features work by her husband Carl, who uses mixed media to do primitive scenes with strong messages.

Canby said the whole idea of the artists working together to keep the gallery open makes so much sense, it's hard to see how they hadn't thought of it earlier.

“Part of it is the Thor's great willingness to work with us on this, but a lot of it was just getting our head around the idea of operating as an alliance that spreads the work and responsibility around,” she said. “We're very excited to move forward.”

**Rob Hedelt: 540/374-5415**

**[rhedelt@freelancestar.com](mailto:rhedelt@freelancestar.com)**

 0 comments

---

## Get local news delivered to your inbox!

Subscribe to our Daily Headlines newsletter.

Email Address Sign up!

\* I understand and agree that registration on or use of this site constitutes agreement to its user agreement and [privacy policy](#).

### Rob Hedelt

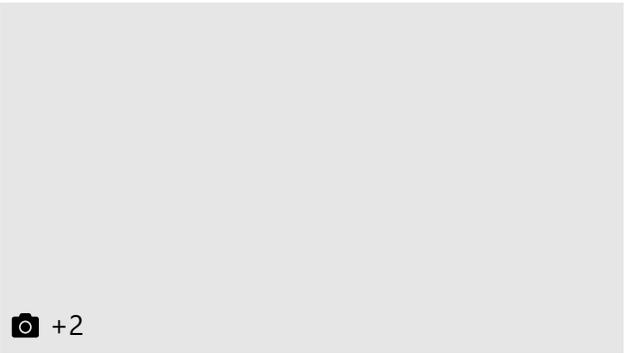
Here for more than four decades, I'm a feature columnist out and about seeing what people are thinking and sharing what interesting things they're doing.

---

## Most Popular

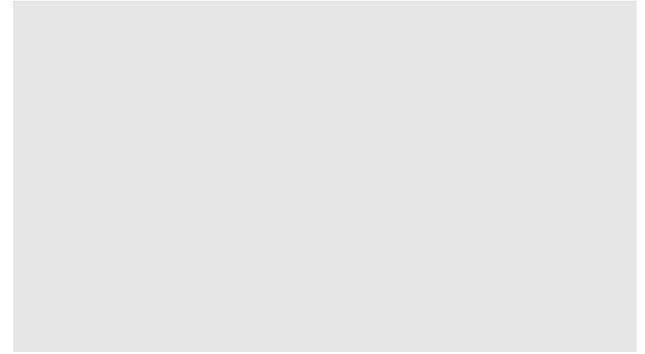
### **WATCH NOW: Backyard encounter with a black bear in Spotsy is a reminder to be smart and safe**

Oct 2, 2020



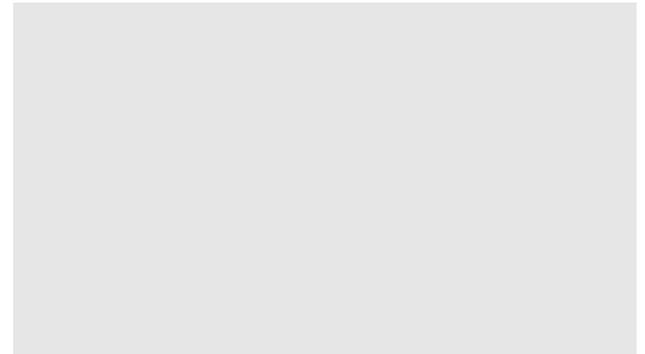
## **Suspect charged in shooting that left one man dead in Fredericksburg**

Oct 1, 2020



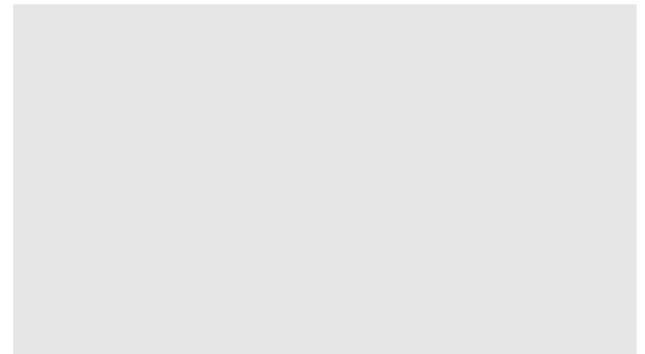
## **Police say fight between brothers escalates to gunfire, leaves one dead in Stafford**

Oct 2, 2020



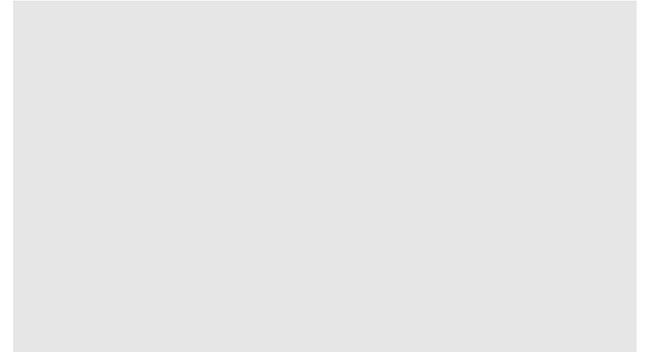
## **Motion denied in fatal King George hit-and-run case; trial date set**

Oct 1, 2020



## **Former Fredericksburg police dispatcher sentenced for relaying information to suspected criminals**

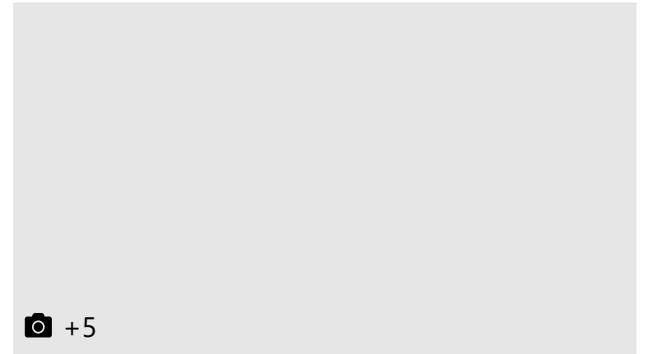
Sep 30, 2020



---

## Film crew shoots ad to promote Fredericksburg, downtown businesses

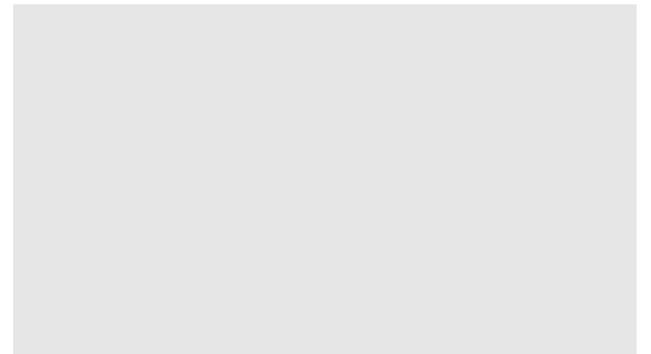
Oct 3, 2020



---

## Another Kids' Station staffer tests positive for COVID; new cases slow in Fredericksburg region

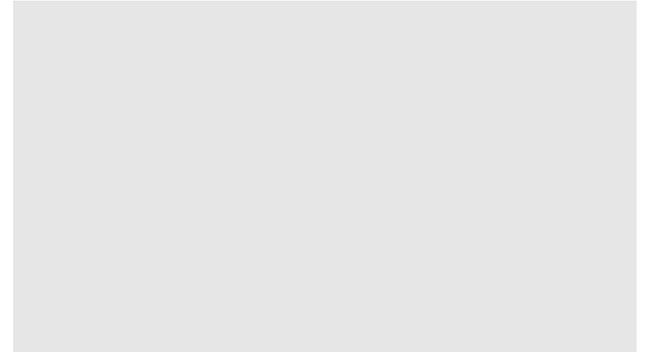
Sep 29, 2020



---

## Stafford man convicted of armed robbery in Fredericksburg

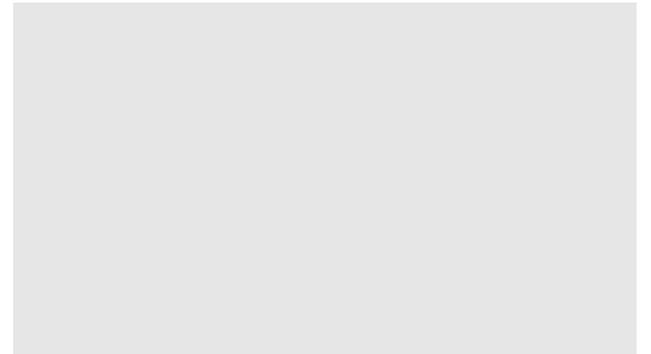
20 hrs ago



---

## Man sentenced in hit-and-run connected to an affair

Sep 30, 2020



---

## Two more deaths bring Fredericksburg-area COVID-19 toll to 77

Oct 1, 2020

