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## Legislators OK barrage of bills for military

By T.D. Brown, Capital News Service

The General Assembly has approved a barrage of bills aimed at keeping Virginia a military-friendly state.

The Senate and the House recently approved a resolution that encourages local governments and private employers to conduct military-awareness programs, such as Military Appreciation Day.

Sen. Jay O'Brien, R-Clifton, chief sponsor of the resolution, said lawmakers enthusiastically embraced the idea. "We all respect the service members' sacrifices, and support for this resolution was absolutely unanimous."

O'Brien, who is a member of the Army Reserve, said the burden of wartime service is different for reservists and National Guardsmen than for soldiers who enlist full time.

"When you're a reservist, you're being called to war from your job and your community. When you're a reservist, it's hard to transition from peacetime to overseas fighting and then back to community life," he said.

"This resolution suggests that it is always appropriate to recognize non-career military members."

Both the Senate and the House also passed legislation that would require supplemental pay for public school teachers and administrators who take a salary cut when called to active military duty during a defense crisis. Del. Kirk Cox, R-Colonial Heights, proposed that law, House Bill 318.

The General Assembly also passed Cox's House Bill 319. It would grant a 60-day grace period for service members coming off active duty to renew their driver's licenses.

Under the bill, Virginians who serve in the armed forces would not have to worry about expiration dates on permits, certificates or other credentials issued by the Department of Motor Vehicles.

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Legislators also approved House Bill 618, which incorporates HB 481, to protect the job security of members of the military reserves. This law would allow the attorney general to represent an employee denied employment protections-- such as seniority -- when on active military state duty.

The sponsor of HB 618, Del. Charles W. Carrico Sr., R-Independence, acknowledged that he had not heard of many cases of reservists being denied employment protections. "This is more like preventive maintenance in case something like this were to occur," he said.

"We need to ensure that they're protected and that their families are protected ... because they protect us."

The bills approved by the House and Senate now go to Gov. Mark Warner for his signature.

#### Sidebar

#### Other bills to help soldiers

The General Assembly also passed these other bills to help military personnel:

\* HJ 278, sponsored by Del. Joseph P. Johnson Jr., D-Abingdon. It encourages local governments and private employers to conduct awareness programs by holding Military Appreciation Day and other ceremonies.

\* SB 573, sponsored by Sen. Bill Bolling, R-Mechanicsville. It gives more time to Virginians on active military duty to meet continuing education requirements so that their professional licenses or certificates won't automatically expire.

\* HB 1443, sponsored by Del. Viola O. Baskerville, D-Richmond. It helps children whose parents are divorced and whose custodial parent has been called to active duty. It ensures that the student can attend school where the non-custodial parent lives.

\* HB 1379, sponsored by Del. M. Kirkland Cox, R-Colonial Heights. It establishes civil law protections, such as protection against default judgments, for members of the military.

#### [Earth Day celebrates its 34th birthday](#)

More than three decades have passed since former Wisconsin Senator Gaylord Nelson organized the first national recognition of the declining health of the Earth. During the 1960s, he observed that air and water quality around the country were appalling, but the politicians were oblivious. Nelson brought the situation to the attention of the country by holding a massive grassroots rally on April 22, 1970-20 million demonstrators strong in cities across the country. Since then, Earth Day has been celebrated all

over the world on this date.

### [Del. David Albo fights taxes, gangs and gridlock](#)

Higher taxes. Gang violence. Highway gridlock.

### [South County Secondary School Gets A Principal](#)

After an exhaustive selection process, Dale Rumberger, currently the principal at Westfield High School, has been appointed as the first principal of the new school being constructed near the former Lorton prison site. Until a permanent name is chosen, the school will be known as the "South County Secondary School." It is designated a secondary school, not a high school, because, when it is fully enrolled it will house grades seven through twelve. The other secondary schools in Fairfax County, Hayfield, Lake Braddock, and Robinson, opened in the early 1970s, so South County will be the first secondary school built in more than three decades. As Rumberger explains, it will probably be a long time before a middle school is built in the south county area, so it was felt that the new school should be configured to contain both middle and high schools.

### [Legislators OK barrage of bills for military](#)

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### [Town of Clifton prepares for election](#)

The town of Clifton will hold its mayoral and town council race on May 4, 2004. Two people are running for mayor, seven for five town council seats. Three candidates, James Chesley, Deborah Dillard, and William Watts, will be write in candidates.

### [Cicadas Ready For Their 17-Year Fling](#)

Rising out of the night darkness, they will emerge from their hiding places like invaders to take control of the trees, the forests, and our neighborhoods. Millions of tiny visitors will alarm people, disrupting routine activities. Red eyes gleaming they will leave tiny armor-like remains on the ground, trees and fence posts. A unique deafening sound will resonate from the trees like a hundred buzz saws. The 17-year cicadas are coming back!

### [Go south for an afternoon getaway](#)

Take a cup of history, add a dash of nostalgia, and you have

a recipe for an afternoon getaway that's less than an hour's drive south- Fredericksburg, Virginia.

### [Foolish History](#)

Ah, 'tis the season for falling in love, cleaning your house, and coming up with or recovering from a new and exciting April Fool's joke. Did someone play an April Fool's joke on you this year, or were you the perpetrator? How did such a "foolish" practice become a worldwide custom? Just for kicks, as you read this article, there are 10 very obvious typographical errors. Can you find them all.

### [Follow Me to Tuolumne for California Gold](#)

In the Sierra Nevada foothills, men and women squatted along the creek panning for gold. Prospector Bryant Shock, dressed as a forty-niner in canvas pants and slouch hat, taught the swish and swirl method of finding flecks of gold sparkling in the mud.

### [Historic Fishery Once Declined but Now in Good Shape](#)

"When the dogwoods bloom the shad are running hard in local rivers," the old timers will tell anyone who will listen.

### [Shaped note singers come to Lorton](#)

The fifteenth annual Potomac River Sacred Harp Singing Convention, sponsored by the Folklore Society of Greater Washington, will take place April 2 and 3 in the Parish House at Pohick Church, 9301 Richmond Highway in Lorton and on April 4 at the Great Falls Grange, 9818 Georgetown Pike (Rt. 193) in Great Falls, Virginia.

### [Local dancer to appear in prestigious Spoleto Festival](#)

The prospect of a south county arts center is creating a lot of interest and excitement among area residents. Lorton resident Suzie Celentano read in The South County Chronicle about the Lorton Arts Foundation's efforts to establish such a center on the grounds of the former D.C. Prison Workhouse. Further inquiries led to her joining the board of LAF as a member of the Performing Arts Committee. Her qualifications are in the areas of theatre and dance.

### [Edwin Lynch-Changed the face of Fairfax County](#)

One of Fairfax County's most distinguished citizens, Edwin Williams Lynch, died at the age of 91 on March 17 at his home on Mason Neck. A lifelong resident of the County, he

became very successful as a real estate developer, but equally important were his achievements as a family man, political leader, advocate of human rights and peace and philanthropist.

### [State Park Celebrates Elizabeth Hartwell Environmental Education Day](#)

The Forth Annual Elizabeth Hartwell Environmental Education Day will be celebrated at Mason Neck State Park on Saturday, April 24, 2004. Festivities begin with the 7:30 a.m. check in for the Liz Hartwell 5-K Run Walk and will continue throughout the day concluding with a 9:00 p.m. Astronomy Presentation. In between will be hayrides, canoe trips, music, a children's magic show and a nature hike. There will also be various interpretive displays, an Under the Seas Interpretive Sea Creature Program and the popular Raptor Conservancy of Virginia program of owls and hawks. From 9-11:00 a.m. there will be a Canoe and Kayak Egg Hunt for which there will be a \$10 per person charge. This charge includes not only admission to the hunt but a commemorative tee shirt as well.

### [The Topsy-Turvy World of Autistic People](#)

I enjoyed the movie Rain Man starring Dustin Hoffman as Raymond, an autistic savant with photographic memory and an inability to empathize or relate emotionally to others. I personally could relate to Raymond because I, too, am autistic. I write this to offer a general explanation of what autism is and is not. I know firsthand how frustrating it feels when others misunderstand my autistic behaviors. With better understanding, there can be friendship, and with it, opportunity for great personal and professional growth.

### [For some college students, the Capitol is their classroom](#)

Most college students spend the semester attending boring class lectures, poring over stacks of textbooks and dreaming of a sunny spring break.

### [Gary Lloyd tells it like it is and then some](#)

Once upon a time, Gary Lloyd, a Centreville resident, began to tell stories to people of all ages and has not stopped. I recently had the pleasure of talking with Lloyd. This is how our interview went.

### [A piece of Americana at Kings Dominion brings back childhood memories](#)

Roller coaster thrills, splashing water rides, miniature trains,

and big stuffed animals; popcorn, hotdogs, and cotton candy-you can enjoy all this at Paramount's Kings Dominion Amusement Park, be sure to visit the carousel as well. Built in 1917, it's a genuine piece of Americana.

### **Local Health Analyst Finds Pharmacies less than Helpful in Getting the Best Price--Buyer Beware He Says**

Tom Yerg of Annandale has 30 years experience as a statistician and health analyst. His work with the Pan American Health Organization, where he was a technical reviewer of Health in the Americas, has sensitized Mr. Yerg to the adverse effects of high health costs, particularly for those least able to pay. He says, "The price of drugs becomes even more important when we consider that 44 million U.S. citizens and 30% of citizens living in poverty have no health insurance, and millions more have no coverage for medications."

### **Stars Over Virginia**

A while back, I lived in rural, upstate New York, far from city lights, where I took the stars for granted. I'd go to my back yard, and there was the Milky Way, a band of gently glowing starlight sweeping across the sky from the eastern horizon to the setting sun. But the winters were awful, and the summers were short. So I moved to Virginia to get away from the cold and find a job that I might be able to retire from. The dark sky was gone-replaced by the glow of Washington and the glare of the shopping malls. Sometimes, though, at sunset, I'd see a bright blue jewel hovering above the horizon and realize, "Oh, that's Venus!" Or I'd go out, see shadows pouring through the tree branches and realize, "We have a full moon tonight!" But I really didn't miss the dark sky and all those stars.

### **SYA Umpires Prepare for Spring Season**

Lee Stanton, chief umpire for the Southwestern Youth Association (SYA) baseball league, and Chris Reamy, SYA umpire, have been working very hard to get umps ready for play this year.

### **The Domain Name Game**

Lets face it: No matter who you are, in one way or another, you are linked to a Universal Resource Locator (URL). While the term "URL" is new techno-speak that has entered our vocabulary via the information age, not everyone is clear on its definition. Simply put, a URL is the internet address used to locate given web sites. It is also known as a domain name.

### [Entertaining with Elegance -- Romantic Dinner](#)

What better way to make someone feel loved than to prepare a romantic dinner for him or her? Even if you can't cook, pulling off a romantic dinner for two at home is both easy, simple and manageable, as long as you have a strategy. The first order of business is to decide what to do with the kids for the evening. See if Grandma or another relative is free. If there's no way to get the kids off-site for the evening, another option is to hire a babysitter to keep the kids in the playroom or in the den for three hours.

### [A Spring Drive Down I-81 to](#)

The East Coast Championship Show

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