

CONNECTION

Burke ♦ Fairfax ♦ Springfield ♦ Fairfax Station

Competitive wake surfer and South County grad, Luke Dietrich of Fairfax Station, rides out his senior year of 2020 in style. In today's Connection: Area college students reflect on how pandemic affects their plans.

Fall Like No Other

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School Board Votes to Change The Lee High School Name

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NEWS

School Board Votes to Change the Lee High School Name

The Fairfax County School Board has voted to change the name of Robert E. Lee High School, and will gather community input prior to voting on the new name on July 23. The new name will go into effect with the start of the 2020-21 school year.

Superintendent Scott S. Brabrand submitted his recommendations for a new name for the school as new business at the School Board's business meeting on June 23. A one-month public comment period begins today.

Brabrand's recommendations include the following:

John Lewis (U.S. Congressman), Barack Obama, Mildred Loving, Cesar Chavez, Legacy, and Central Springfield.

The School Board has the final say on the new name and can consider the superintendent's recommendations or choose a different name.

School Board vice chair and Lee District representative Tamara Derenak Kaufax said, "We are grateful for the feedback provided by the community during this process. We have carefully considered their input, and will be moving forward with the name change at Lee High School. As I stated in February when this process began, Confederate values are ones that do not align with our community. I have seen the pain and hurt that these names have inflicted on friends, colleagues, and community members. Our schools need to be places where all

students, staff, and members of the community feel safe and supported." Derenak Kaufax and at-large member Karen Keys-Gamara initiated the name change.

A community meeting is scheduled for Wednesday, July 15, for community members to provide feedback on the recommended names for the school. Additional details about the community meeting will be announced in the near future. Citizens are also welcome to submit their feedback to Region3admin@fcp.edu. The School Board will hold a public hearing on the name change on Wednesday, July 22, at 4 p.m. Information on citizen participation is available online.

BULLETIN BOARD

Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

COMMUNITY MARKET AT WORKHOUSE

The Workhouse Arts Center announces a new Community Market initiative in partnership with the South Fairfax Chamber of Commerce every Saturday beginning June 27 from 9 a.m. – 1 p.m. The Community Market

SEE BULLETIN, PAGE 5

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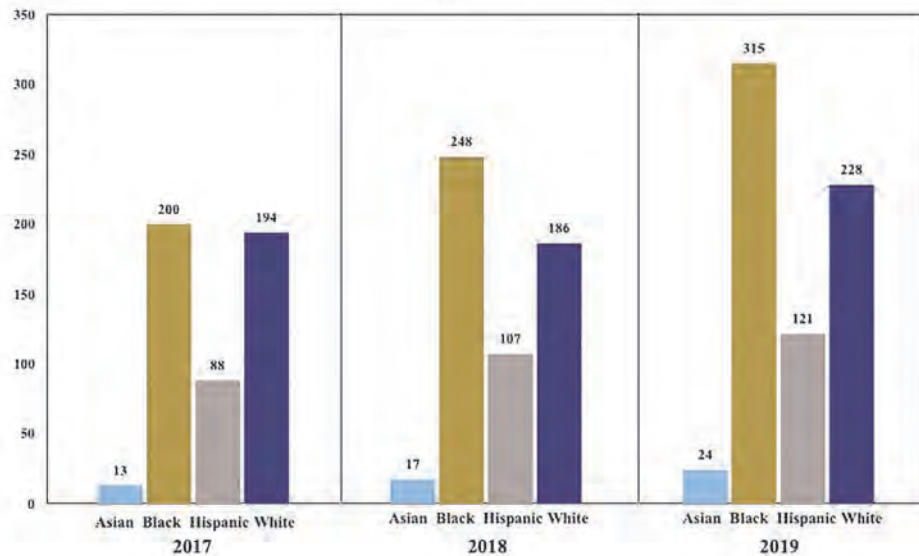
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NEWS

Demographics of Community Members Involved in a Use of Force
2017 - 2019



SOURCE: FAIRFAX COUNTY POLICE DEPARTMENT

'We Can't Wait Until 2021'

Calls for police reform intensify in the days since Fairfax officer charged with assault for tasing man in Gum Springs.

BY KEN MOORE
THE CONNECTION

The institution of policing dates back to the institution of slavery. "It has to be acknowledged as such. What happened 400 years ago is actually manifesting itself in practice today," said Fairfax County Chief Equity Officer Karla Bruce.

"Here's what we know," said Sean Perryman, head of the Fairfax County NAACP. "In a county where black people make up a little bit less than 10 percent of the population, we make up nearly 50 percent of the use of force. That's it. That alone should have every Board of Supervisor demanding answers and reform."

Data has to be available and examined to impact policy and practice, both Bruce and Perryman said in separate meetings last week, and the data proves how Black and Latinx communities are disproportionately and negatively impacted.

"We've had this data for a long time, but we're now seeing protests across all 50 states," said Perryman. "The data has always been there and black people have always said that we are being policed differently."

Last week, the Fairfax County Chapter of the NAACP held a Town Hall on June 16, and listed eight demands for police reform, including reporting long-promised data on disparities in police enforcement, removing police from schools, equipping all officers with body worn cameras, and more.

"There is urgency here," said Perryman. "I'm not sure people are recognizing that. This needs to be addressed."

BODY WORN CAMERAS are the reason authorities could see the actions of Officer Tyler Timberlake, who used his taser multiple times on a Black man who did not appear to be a threat on June 10 in Gum Springs.



SCREENSHOT OF VIDEO RELEASED BY FCPD

Fairfax County Police Officer Tyler Timberlake was charged with assault after shooting a taser directly into a Black man's neck.

In the released video, officers and fire rescue personnel are calmly responding when officer Timberlake enters the scene with his taser drawn. Then he can be seen with his knees on the man's back when he uses his taser again, directly to the man's neck.

"It was gut wrenching for me to watch that video," said Lee District supervisor Rodney Lusk, also chairman of the Board's Public Safety Committee.

"They are criminal acts which violate our oath of office, and they ignore the sanctity of human life," said Colonel Edwin C. Roessler Jr., Fairfax County Police Chief.

Commonwealth Attorney Steve Descano charged Timberlake with three counts of assault.

What would have happened if there was no video? The Mount Vernon police district uses body worn cameras because it was part of a pilot study, but the Board of Supervisors had defunded plans to expand the body worn cameras to the rest of the county because of the financial impact of the Covid-19 crisis.

Shortly after the incident, the Board reversed course and now will go forward with implementing body worn cameras.

"The number one thing is accountability, accountability is a must," said Descano. "If you're going to collect that video you have to have someone who is going to watch all of it."

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 11

VIEWPOINTS

RODNEY LUSK,
LEE DISTRICT SUPERVISOR

"There is the need for a softer touch on some issues in our community. Imagine police running up to someone who is in the middle of a mental health crisis and demanding that person to put his hands up. That person is not in the condition to process all of that. If the police don't understand that, they may make the wrong decision."



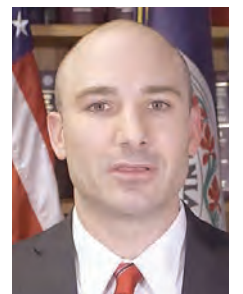
KARLA BRUCE,
CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER

"There's just a fundamental distrust of government in the community in particular among the communities that are most negatively impacted. ... I think we've heard from the community an interest in taking a broader view of public safety and one that would be inclusive of understanding the root causes and underlying factors and putting as much emphasis into addressing those."



STEVE DESCANO,
FAIRFAX COUNTY COMMONWEALTH'S ATTORNEY

"The best person to respond to a situation is not always a person who holds a gun. ... Once people are in that system there is a narrow window of what that system can do. It pushes that individual down that path to more recidivism."



PAT HERRITY,
SPRINGFIELD SUPERVISOR

"We need to do something to not just address our community in crisis but our [police] department in crisis. The department really has lost confidence in its chief."



SEAN PERRYMAN,
NAACP

"It should be equally disturbing that some elected officials seem to have no recognition that black people have a very different lived experience than white people when it comes to law enforcement."



DANIEL STORCK,
MOUNT VERNON SUPERVISOR

"Neighborhood patrols for me are a big deal. We don't do enough of them. ... I think it's an important part of how we change the dynamic at least in the Mount Vernon community and other communities that have had histories of policing that may have been less positive."



Our Work Continues

This year has the potential to bring about profound, long-overdue change.

BY GERALD E. CONNOLLY
US REP. (D-11)



Like millions of Americans across the country, Congress has had to adapt to the new reality we find ourselves in. But our work has never stopped. Throughout this pandemic, my team and I have continued to work on your behalf.

While we've had to limit in-person meetings and events in the interest of everyone's health and safety, I've made it a priority to connect virtually with as many constituents as possible. Since the stay-at-home guidance was issued, I've held 28 virtual town halls and webinars with community members, leaders, and organizations. For example, I hosted conversations with local hospitals and nursing homes, small business owners from our Latinx community, the NoVa Labor Airport Union Caucus, the Virginia Council of Muslim Organizations, Virginia non-profits, and many more. I also teamed up with Delegate Elizabeth Guzman, Delegate Jennifer Carroll Foy, Delegate Hala Ayala, and Fairfax County School Board Members Rachna Sizemore Heizer and Stella Pekarsky for three separate town halls on the issues most important to our constituents. But I have to admit, I had the most fun during my Kids Town Hall on Facebook Live.

Since March 1, we've responded to more than 14,000 emails and messages from constituents on a wide array of issues -- from PPE and the Postal Service to COVID-19 testing and support for small

businesses. As your representative in Congress, it's always important that I hear directly from you about your concerns and opinions, but it's especially critical in times of crisis.

In addition to those 13,000 email responses, we've sent 40 e-newsletters with important updates, resources, and information to help our neighbors more easily navigate this crisis. In total, that's more than 1.2 million individual e-news-

letters delivered to members of our community since the pandemic began.

As you may recall, Congress established the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP) as a lifeline for businesses struggling to stay afloat during the coronavirus crisis. Since then, I have been proud to send letters in support of 75 local small businesses as they made their way through the PPP loan application process.

I have been in close, consistent contact with my colleagues in the House Democratic Caucus and with Governor Northam and his cabinet. During the crisis, I've joined 38 conference calls with Speaker Pelosi and my fellow House Democrats. These calls often feature conversations with policy experts, and have been vital to crafting our legislative response to COVID-19. Weekly conference calls between the Governor, his cabinet, and the Virginia congressional delegation have been equally valuable, offering us the opportunity to stay updated on the Commonwealth's response to the virus and to ask questions and offer input.

This crisis has not slowed our legislative and oversight efforts in the House. In fact, since this crisis began, I've cosponsored more than 50 pieces of legislation and signed more than 100 letters requesting information and documents from federal agencies and the White House. Additionally, as a senior member of the Oversight & Reform and Foreign Affairs committees, and chairman of the Subcommittee on Government Operations, I've participated in or chaired 29 virtual committee hearings and briefings over the past few months. They covered a range of critical issues, including our response to COVID-19, the pandemic's effects on our ability to conduct a fair and accurate census, combating the spread of disinformation about the virus, and the Trump administration's outrageous attacks on the independent Inspectors General tasked with weeding out waste, fraud, and abuse across the federal government.

Finally, as the coronavirus spread rapidly around the globe, Americans travelling in other countries found themselves scrambling to make it home before border closings and cancelled flights left them stuck abroad indefinitely. We worked with the State Department and U.S. Embassies in various nations to successfully repatriate more than 40 constituents who would have otherwise been forced to wait out this crisis away from their homes and families.

This has been a hectic and trying year, both in Congress and across our country. But, as I stood with hundreds of friends and neighbors at the Fairfax NAACP rally and at the "Lights for Justice" candlelight vigil in Woodbridge, it was clear that this year also has the potential to bring about profound, long-overdue change -- if we're willing to stand up and demand it.

I am more determined and hopeful than ever. Nothing, not a global pandemic nor anything else, will deter me from continuing to fight for our community.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Terminate Memoranda of Understanding with US Park Police

To: Fairfax County Chairman Jeffrey C. McKay, Supervisor Daniel T. Storck, Supervisor Rodney L. Lusk; Mayor Justin M. Wilson, City of Alexandria; Chairman Libby Garvey, Arlington

Dear Chairmen McKay and Garvey, Mayor Wilson, Supervisors Storck and Lusk:

As you know, on Monday, June 1, 2020, the United States Park Police (USPP) used tear gas on citizens at Lafayette Square who were peacefully exercising their constitutional rights prior to any curfew. While clearing the crowd, they also assaulted a journalist who was taking video of the event. The next day, they issued a public statement denying the use of tear gas. This was later contradicted by WUSA 9 who found a tear gas canister which caused USPP public relations officer, Sgt. Eduardo

Delgado to acknowledge the use of tear gas who was then contradicted by Acting Chief Gregory T. Monahan.

The day before, on May 31, 2020 a recent West Potomac H.S. graduate and area resident, Michael Cunningham, was killed in a single car accident on the George Washington Memorial Parkway near the Mount Vernon Estate where two other individuals were injured. As of this writing, we do not believe a statement has ever been issued by the USPP about the fatal accident. One reporter we are aware of made an inquiry and received a two-sentence response which did not even identify the victim.

On Sept. 13, 2019, a different fatal accident occurred about half a mile further north near the Stratford Landing interchange on the Parkway. As of today, the USPP still

has not released the name of the driver who was killed.

Finally, we are all aware of the situation involving Bijan Ghaisar who was shot 10 times including 4 times in the head about two blocks from my house on Nov. 17, 2017. Mr. Ghaisar was unarmed, a victim of a minor traffic accident, and it has been confirmed that his pursuit and the shooting violated numerous USPP policies. Very little explanation has been given about that incident.

The USPP public statements seem to be driven more by political considerations and self-interest rather than building public trust. The Department also appears to operate under a set of principles which are wholly inconsistent with the traditions, restrictions, oversight and transparency that the citizens of Fairfax County, Arlington County and the City of Alexandria

expect of law enforcement. There seems to be very little training, oversight or control of its officers. The USPP transparency practices are non-existent. While the USPP operates under the oversight of federal authorities, they do have a memorandum of understanding (MOU) with the Arlington, Alexandria and Fairfax County Police which also shares jurisdiction with the Parkway.

We are aware that Arlington County withdrew its officers after the Lafayette Square incident and are currently reviewing their MOU. However, we would ask that your jurisdictions terminate your memoranda of understanding with the USPP until your local police chief has certified the following:

❖ That all USPP officers have completed diversity training;

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 10



BULLETIN BOARD

FROM PAGE 2

is designed to help businesses rebuild during Virginia's Phase II reopening in a unique setting all while keeping local arts alive. Surrounded by historic buildings, the Workhouse offers a unique venue for Fairfax and Prince William businesses and organizations to market and sell goods and services. The outdoor environment provides greater exposure to traditional brick and mortar businesses as well as a way for community to shop in a safer way during Phase I and Phase II of re-opening the local economy. The address is 9601 Ox Rd, Lorton. Interested vendors should contact Elena Romanova at elenaromanova@workhousearts.org.

MOSAIC DEBUTS OUTDOOR DRIVE-IN MOVIES

EDENS Mosaic has launched a new outdoor drive-in movie series this summer, kicking off with "Captain Marvel" on Friday, June 26. Located on the top level (7) of Market Garage across from Mom's Organic Market and Hyatt House. Check-in is on level 6. Address: 8295 Glass Alley, Fairfax. The films begin at 8 p.m. The lineup includes:
 Friday June 26: "Captain Marvel;"
 Friday July 24: "Toy Story 4" and "Jurassic Park;"
 Friday August 28: To Be Announced
 There is a \$28 fee to reserve a designated spot in accordance with the new social distancing guidelines. Tickets can be purchased at https://mosaicdistrict.com/events/event/drive-in-at-mosaic/?event_id=8599 Visit www.mosaicdistrict.com.



Emily Key

Honored at William and Mary

Emily Key, of Burke, is on the Fall 2019 and Spring 2020 dean's list at the College of William and Mary and was inducted into Phi Eta Sigma National Honor Society for Freshman and the Alpha Lambda Delta National Honor Society for first year success.

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Honoring the Confederacy Does Not Honor Black Lives

Seven descendants of Confederate colonel support renaming of Mosby Woods Elementary.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

As mass movements across the United States and Virginia respond to generations of police brutality and systemic racism toppling Confederate statues and holding protests, members of the Fairfax County School Board are using their power to effect change. They are in the process of removing Confederate names from County schools. Following the June 8 submission of a Forum Topic Request to the Fairfax County School Board to rename Mosby Woods Elementary School in Fairfax by School Board members Karl Frisch (D-Providence) and Karen Keys-Gamarra (D-Member-at-Large), on Thursday, June 18, the Board unanimously approved to support the topic and move forward in the process.

The elementary school was named for Colonel John Singleton Mosby, a Confederate army cavalry battalion commander. Frisch said at the June 18 meeting, “Over the past two weeks, I have had conversations about this important matter with Mosby Woods’ Principal, PTA leadership, and stakeholders, as well as the Regional Assistant Superintendent and many of you, my School Board colleagues... As evidenced by our Board’s work to rename other schools, we cannot live up to that standard if we force students to attend schools named in honor of the racist vestiges of our past — especially as we seek to combat racism in our present. In other words, a school system that honors the Confederacy cannot honor black lives. We owe it to our students, staff, and communities to take decisive action and demonstrate the sense of urgency that these and other issues deserve.”

THE BOARD approved the Topic Forum Request on June 18. It came on the heels of the Board’s unanimous consideration to begin a similar process for Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield, the only other high school in the County named after a Confederate leader. The Board set a precedent in 2017 when in a vote of 7-4; it approved to rename J.E.B. Stuart High School to Justice High School. The name change took effect for the 2019-20 School Year.

In their Request, Frisch and Keys-Gamarra wrote: “In its strategic plan, the Board commits to fostering “a responsive, caring, and inclusive culture where all feel valued, and hopeful.” According to Frisch, the process for Mosby Woods Elementary School would start when the current renaming process underway for Robert E. Lee High School in Springfield concluded. An updated timeline detailed two public hearings, a community meeting and final board vote on a new name for the high school on July 23, in time for the new school year.

In a letter dated the next day, June 19, which coincidentally occurred on Juneteenth, the oldest nation-



PHOTO BY FCPS
Fairfax County School Board Member Karl Frisch (D-Providence)



PHOTO BY FCPS
Fairfax County School Board Member Karen Keys-Gamarra (D-Member-at-Large)



SOURCE GOOGLE MAPS
Mosby Woods Elementary School in Fairfax, VA

ally celebrated commemoration of the ending of slavery in the United States, seven descendants of Mosby wrote to Frisch and the Fairfax County School board members stating their position.

THE SIGNED LETTER read in part: “...In solidarity with Black Lives Matter and the peaceful demonstration against the continued oppression of people of color going on across the U.S. and Europe, (we) respectfully request that you change the name of Mosby Woods Elementary School... Mosby Woods was founded in 1963, at a time when only 1.6 percent of African American Students in Virginia attended schools with white students...The choice of name clearly designated what is now your school as an institution where black students were not welcome... We must also consider the message this sends to white students who may through their home environment or social media be susceptible to the propaganda of neo Nazis and white supremacists, who have openly opposed the removal of confederate memorials...We the undersigned do not claim to represent the views of all of Mosby’s descendants...We are, however, in complete agreement that the symbols and history of the Confederacy have been so effectively misrepresented and co-opted by proponents of white supremacy that there can be no justification for “honoring” Confederate military figures by displaying monuments of them or having roads or schools named after them.”



BONNIE HOBBS/THE CONNECTION

The lion, already painted on the wall of Fairfax High’s field-house – shown during a past graduation ceremony there – is now the school’s new mascot.

Fairfax High Lions Instead of Rebels

Next name change could be Lanier Middle School.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

In the wave of the Black Lives Matter Movement – plus the anti-Confederate sentiment sweeping the country – Fairfax High’s mascot and teams will no longer be the Rebels. Instead, they’ll be called the Lions.

Principal Erin Lenart made the announcement last Thursday afternoon, June 18. And accordingly, that night, the Fairfax City School Board held a special meeting and changed the name of the street leading to the school from Rebel Run to Lion Run. These changes are effective immediately.

School Board Chairman Carolyn Pitches explained them – as well as what’s next on the horizon – in a statement to parents and the community. Regarding the team name-change, she said, “While this is solely a principal decision, the City of Fairfax School Board fully supports Dr. Lenart and shares her pride in officially becoming the Fairfax High School Lions.”

As for the street, Pitches said it’s owned by the School Board, so that’s why it has jurisdiction to change its name. This street was named Rebel Run in 1972 to reflect the school’s team name. And now, she said, Lion Run will do the same.

In addition, the Board voted to open public comment on possibly changing the name of Lanier Middle School.

It was named by Fairfax County Public Schools in 1959 after poet Sidney Lanier, who served in the Confederate Army from 1861-1865. The City of Fairfax acquired the land and



COURTESY OF GINNY CATE

The new, Lions Run street sign has already replaced Rebel Run.

building from Fairfax County when it incorporated into a city in 1961. The facility was then called Sidney Lanier Intermediate School, and the core name continued, as well, when it later became a middle school.

“As all naming rights of the City’s school buildings and facilities are the responsibility of the City of Fairfax School Board, I have asked our Superintendent, Dr. Phyllis Pajardo, to develop a plan that includes multiple opportunities for community engagement,” said Pitches. “The plan will be presented to our board at our regular School Board Meeting on Monday, July 6.”

The Board expects to begin public engagement later this summer, concluding in the fall, with a possible vote in September or October on whether to change the school’s name. Following the July meeting, it will inform the community of all the ways the public may provide input and ask questions. Meanwhile, residents are welcome to contact the Board by emailing SchoolBoard@FairfaxVa.gov or calling 703-293-7131.

NEWS

Four Road Projects Move Forward in Transportation Approval Chain

Road projects are spread throughout Fairfax County.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Transportation in Fairfax County got a boost lately when the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority moved forward on four projects in the county that are designed to help traffic congestion.

The four projects are the Richmond Highway Widening from Mount Vernon Memorial Highway/Jeff Todd Way to Sherwood Hall Lane in the Alexandria section of the county; the Rolling Road Widening project from Hunter Village Drive to Old Keene Mill Road in Springfield; Fairfax County Parkway Widening from Lee Highway (Route 29) to Nomes Court; the Soapstone Drive Extension from Sunset Hills Road to Sunrise Valley Drive in Reston. The Soapstone Drive Extension is a Fairfax County DOT project, and the other three are state projects and are listed currently on the Virginia Department of Transportation webpage under "In Design."

According to the NVTA, these projects were picked because they compared the congestion reduction relative to the cost of the project, and these four projects are aimed at reducing congestion which is a quantitative factor referred to as Congestion Reduction Relative to Cost (CRRC) impact of the respective projects, looking out to a 2040 horizon, NVTA said. With the backing from the NVTA, the funding will be in place to the completion of the project, said NVTA'S Monica Backmon.

That doesn't mean bulldozers will roll out any sooner than originally planned, but funding will be in place and that "definitely helps getting to the ultimate goal which is completion," Backmon said.

The NVTA regularly partners with the two state agencies that are heavily involved in surface transportation in Northern Virginia – VDOT and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation (DRPT). Both VDOT and DRPT have their own funding sources for transportation projects

and sometimes jointly fund transportation projects with the NVTA, their information stated.

NVTA's revenues result from legislation enacted by the Virginia General Assembly in 2013 via House Bill 2313, which taps into three existing taxes – Sales Tax, Grantor's Tax, and Transient Occupancy Tax – which were increased in Northern Virginia to generate the NVTA's annual revenues of approximately \$300 million. In addition, the NVTA can finance projects through the issuance of long-term bonds. NVTA revenues would be used to repay debt service on the bonds.

The Richmond Highway Widening project is a \$372 million project that will widen Richmond Highway from four to six lanes, add separate bicycle lanes and sidewalks on both sides of the road, and reserve median width to accommodate Fairfax County's future dedicated bus-only lanes.

The Rolling Road-Old Keene Mill Road project in Springfield will widen a portion of Rolling Road that is currently a choke point for traffic in the area, and improve portions of Old Keene Mill Road near the intersection with Rolling Road. Both of these together have a price tag of \$78.9 million. The Old Keene Mill Road Intersection construction is scheduled to begin in late 2020, and the Rolling Road Widening Construction will begin in early 2024.

The Fairfax County Parkway Widening project includes work on the Popes Head Road interchange which is presently a big chokepoint for traffic on the parkway. Officials are looking at several different options for the interchange but are leaning towards the option with triple roundabouts that will allow traffic to flow freely via two new bridges over Fairfax County Parkway. The rest of the \$290 million project will widen about five miles of Fairfax County Parkway from four lanes to six between Route 29 (Lee Highway) and Route 123 (Ox Road). Construction is scheduled to begin in late 2022.



The intersection of the Fairfax County Parkway and Popes Head Road is a focal point of one of the four projects.

PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/
THE CONNECTION

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Preparing for Fall Like No Other

Area college students reflect on how pandemic affects their plans.

BY JESS KIRBY
THE CONNECTION

As the fall semester approaches, Virginia colleges have begun to make plans to reopen with precautions to keep students, faculty and staff safe from COVID-19.

Even living on campus, students will experience a very different version of college this fall.

James Madison University is “putting in two one-hour blocks to clean the campus per day,” said Springfield resident and JMU student Griffin Evans. The university is also considering prohibiting off-campus students, like Evans, from having meal plans.

Others do not know for sure what their college will look like in the fall.

“There are no concrete plans for GMU’s fall 2020 semester as of today. Classes with an option for online sessions are preferred over in-person sections, but classes that do not offer online sessions are still in debate over whether to make a push for online or in-person classes,” said Fairfax resident and George Mason University student Andy Tran.

Some students have fallen behind because of the pandemic.

“[COVID-19] has made me take less classes to reduce risk and limit time on campus. I would be taking six but I’m taking four in person and one online. It is going to set me back and I will have to take classes next summer to catch up,” said Evans.

“I’m going to be taking paramedic classes which cannot be taken online,” said Northern Virginia Community College student and Fairfax Station resident Peter Nichols. “I was planning to apply to Fairfax County Fire Rescue right after I got my paramedic certification and my AAS in emergency services, but if they don’t have classes in the fall I’m going to have to wait an entire semester or maybe even another year to be able to apply. If they don’t end up holding the classes I’m probably just going to go to a private, paramedic-focused institution to finish out my certification.” He says this will be more costly than attending NOVA, but it will be faster.

ONE STUDENT has had her life turned upside down because of the pandemic.

“My family was planning on moving at the end of this year, but then the world shut down so those plans got put on hold. When things began to open up the opportunity came to move in a couple of weeks, so my parents took it. Now I have to transfer all my credits and find a school in Pennsylvania. I’m thinking of transferring to another community college for RN [registered nursing] to get my RN degree,” said



Griffin Evans, Springfield, James Madison University



Andy Tran, Fairfax, George Mason University



Kate Mansfield, Lorton, Northern Virginia Community College



Peter Nichols, Fairfax Station, Northern Virginia Community College

Northern Virginia Community College student and Lorton resident Kate Mansfield. “My college plans have changed quite a bit without much notice.”

Some students would prefer to have classes online. “I prefer to have online classes, as they allow me more freedom in my day. In-person classes would be less beneficial since social distancing means less social contact, and face masks are a huge distraction to students and teachers,” said Tran.

“I would like to take as many online classes as I can because I like to work at my own pace, but for nursing I feel like in-person classes would be required because it’s a hands-on job!” said Mansfield.

OVERALL, most students are thankful to be able to continue their education in the fall, even if things will be different.

“As a freshman, my college plans are flexible and not yet set in stone. Though I see my friends less often, I am personally not too affected by these circumstances as I am still attaining the education I need for my career,” said Tran. “COVID-19 is just a minor inconvenience in my college plans and life goals.”

Local Students Receive Sheriffs Institute Scholarships

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Several local students recently received Virginia Sheriffs Institute scholarships. Given to students pursuing an education in criminal justice, they were presented by Fairfax County Sheriff Stacey Kincaid.

Students must attend Virginia colleges and universities and must be in jurisdictions where sheriffs participate in fundraising

for this scholarship. Applicants must include a personal essay and a letter of recommendation from their county sheriff.

“Before writing the letters, I meet with each applicant to learn more about their academic achievements, community activities and career goals,” said Kincaid. “This year, in light of the COVID-19 pandemic, we met via Zoom. I was inspired by their diverse interests and enthusiastic commitment to public service.”

Here are the 2020 scholarship winners:

*William Singleton is a life-long resident of Fairfax City and is currently a junior at GMU, studying Criminology, Law and Society. He’s made the Dean’s List every semester and holds a 3.91 GPA. He also works nearly 40 hours a week at Trader Joe’s. He’s been a summer swim-team coach, youth basketball official and certified Red Cross instructor and is also active in his church.

In pursuit of a career in local law enforcement, Singleton has begun talking to recruiters and internship coordinators and going to career fairs and ride-alongs. He hopes to someday serve the community where he grew up, Northern Virginia.

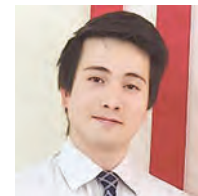
*Samantha Messina is a freshman at GMU, majoring in Criminology with a concentration in Homeland Security and a minor in Intelligence Analysis. In her first semester, she earned a 4.0 GPA. After graduation, she wants to work for the Department of Homeland Security or the Department of Justice. Said Messina: “I want to play a crucial role in the



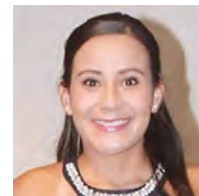
William Singleton



Samantha Messina



Daniel Nephew



Dannyela Rivera Jiron

safety of the United States by identifying threats and providing decision makers with the information they need to combat any threats.”

Throughout high school, she excelled academically, graduating in the top 10 percent of her class, while also actively participating in field hockey, lacrosse and other clubs. She’s currently a member of the Students Demand Action chapter at GMU, where she advocates against gun violence in the community.

*Daniel Nephew is a GMU freshman with a 3.75 GPA. He’s majoring in Criminology, Law and Society with a concentration in Homeland Security and a minor in Intelligence Analysis. While living in Brazil, he developed a passion for criminal justice. After graduation, his dream is to become an FBI agent. “Every day I try to build myself better so I can meet their high standards,” he said.

Besides his academic schedule, Nephew participated on GMU’s Army ROTC and Color Guard/Drill Team. He’s also an active volunteer firefighter and EMT at a Fairfax County Volunteer Fire and Rescue station and is fluent in Spanish and Portuguese from his time abroad.

*Dannyela Rivera Jiron is in her second year at Northern Virginia Community College, pursuing a degree in Criminology and Criminal Justice. She has a 3.56 GPA and will attend GMU this fall. Her goal is to become a police officer. She says the field of law enforcement provides the opportunity to make a dif-

Locals Embark on Paranormal Television Series

“The Witching Hour” was awarded for their non-fiction series.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

If it goes bump in the night somewhere around Northern Virginia chances are, the folks at Argos Paranormal are on it. They’ve dug up some paranormal happenings from their experiences and produced an award-winning show called “The Witching Hour,” that just had their second season premiere on Fairfax Public Access Channel 10 on Friday, June 19.

Fear not though, “the investigators of Argos Paranormal go where no other paranormal show has gone before as they will be investigating locations that the locals fear and no other paranormal show has ever dared to investigate,” they claim. These investigators make sure they set up around 3 a.m., also known as the witching hour, when paranormal activity is believed to be at an all-time high during the night. At a spot in York, Pennsylvania, “we were there in the basement all night,” said producer Ryan Martinez.

The three-man team consists of Ryan Martinez, a resident of Clifton, along with his brother Remso, the production assistant, and Brian Suojanen, an Ashburn resident that is a camera operator. All three have “cast member,” on their position description too. Even though Clifton has a history dating back past the Civil War, and some homeowners have ghost stories of their own to tell, Argos Paranormal hasn’t done any work in the town. “They weren’t necessarily comfortable with paranormal investigators being there,” Martinez said.

The team goes around with cameras and a highly technical “EVP,” an electronic voice phenomenon system, and picks up sounds and voices in the haunted sites in various spots in Virginia and Pennsylvania. Stops along the way have included east coast sites such as St. Albans Sanatorium, Belle Grove Plantation in Port Conway, Virginia; Fleetwood Church in the Virginia countryside, the Graffiti House near Fleetwood Church and the Occoquan Inn on the Occoquan River.

St. Albans, in the college town of Radford, Va, was the site of killings in July 1755, when a group of Shawnee Indians fought with the colonists of Draper’s Meadow, killing at least five people and taking others as hostage. “To survivors, the Shawnee left behind grisly reminders of their wrath such as a bag containing the decapitated head of Philip Barger,” reported the “Colonial Ghosts,” a tour group in Virginia.

Season One had six episodes of paranormal mania, and Season Two has eight episodes of the team and spirits in action. It’s not something that just happens though, according to producer Ryan Martinez, who has found that “spirits don’t want to encounter investigators,” he said.

During the 2019 award season, The Witching Hour was recognized as the Best Non-Fiction Series at the 10th Annual Indie Series Awards in Burbank, Calif., making it one of the very first paranormal TV series in television history to earn an award, they said. Martinez was unable to attend the ceremony but did send a pre-recorded acceptance speech that was played during the ceremony. On his recording, Martinez talked about the honor of winning, saying that “this is also a victory for my fellow paranormal investigators.”

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PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Group session inside of the Lord Baltimore Hotel’s old speakeasy in Baltimore.

Graveyards and Ghostly Gatherings

One of the episodes of Season Two is filmed in the “Old Jail Museum,” in downtown Warrenton. “Many deaths have occurred there,” said Martinez. The Fleetwood Church in Culpeper County is another site they staked out. It was close to the Civil War site known as the Battle of Brandy Station, and the church was built on top of an old graveyard, Martinez said.

The battle was fought in June 1863, and known as the largest cavalry battle of the war. The Union troops under Union cavalry commander Maj. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton were up against Confederate general J.E.B. Stuart, and in the end, there were 1,299 soldiers killed in the battle. The battle occurred just south of the Rappahannock River along the Orange and Alexandria Railroad. Their investigation at the Fleetwood Church uncovered “spirits of those buried under the church,” Martinez said.

Tapping into this area’s history is part of it too, and Martinez feels he’s possibly uncovering things that may not be as famous as the Mount Vernon Plantation of the trail of Mosby’s Raiders. At the Occoquan Inn, where The Witching Hour set up camp for an episode, there is reportedly the “Entity of Dogue Indian,” and an “English Gentleman,” haunting the premises. “When we go out and film at these locations, we’re preserving history too,” he said. In Fairfax County, “we’ve done a few private home investigations,” he added, “they would hear walking.”

At the Occoquan Inn, they experienced “ceiling lights turning on and off, footsteps and stomping that could be heard from the second floor, and even witnessed our mini maglites turn on and off after we would ask the spirits if they could use some of their energy to manipulate the lights,” said Martinez. With their various electronic tracking equipment, the spirit energy seemed to be traced to a second floor bathroom. It turns out the inn had a history of being a hospital and funeral parlor in the Civil War, the owner Gary Savage told them.

They are looking to travel back to Pennsylvania for future shows. For one or two of the shows in season three, “we’re hoping to film at a couple of places near Gettysburg,” Martinez said.

Quiet on the Set

With all these spirit recordings, and the land surrounding Northern Virginia, rich with history, the team had to learn to put it all together for a show, and Martinez tapped into the Fairfax Public Access channel for guidance. Although “I taught myself a lot of skills,” he said, the classes at FPA were needed too, particularly the studio camera course. “That course was very helpful to me,” Martinez said.

All the travel and time involved might have landed them an award, but everything is funded out of the trio’s pockets, which includes travel, food, membership fees and equipment. Even the EVP has to be paid for by someone, and they decided against bringing in advertisers because they wanted to be in control, and with someone else making decisions based on money, “it really wouldn’t work out well,” Martinez said.

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Scholarships

FROM PAGE 8

ference in the community, "whether it's a moment that requires the law to be enforced or one where I can step into someone's life when they need help."

On top of her academic success, she volunteers with the Metro Police Department as a Domestic Violence Liaison and participates in church mission trips. She also participated in the Fairfax County Police Department's Citizens Police Academy in 2019.

LETTERS

FROM PAGE 4

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Calls for Police Reform Intensify

FROM PAGE 3

"I would argue that police have some responsibility in watching all of that as well," said Lusk. He asked police to research technology that would help review the footage, as well as technology to automatically turn on body-worn cameras if an officer grabs his weapon, his taser, or uses his voice over a certain decibel or uses types of commands.

"WE CAN ALL AGREE there are more issues demanding our attention and items that we can cover in a single meeting," said Lusk, at the Public Safety Committee meeting on Tuesday, June 16. "I've got to say, when Chairman McKay asked me to chair this committee, I never expected so many urgent priorities facing our county would end up under its purview."

"The best way to reestablish trust with the community and through dialogue and communications," he said.

"I'm committed to looking at how we can alter the way we do policing here in Fairfax County," Lusk said.

Perryman said one promise of policing data has been asked for since 2018. "We have had a lot of promises of data and transparency, but we're not actually getting the data. We can't wait until 2021," he said.

Perryman and the NAACP are calling for an end to School Resource Officers in schools.

"That's what we call the school to prison pipeline," said Perryman. "An officer [in schools] will lead to arrests of Black students, Latino students and students with disabilities. It's just not good policy. Police in schools are a danger because they can escalate situations that shouldn't be escalated to a crime."

The School Board has to make the decision first, said Lusk. "I'm certainly open to having the SROs removed from our schools."

Del. Vivian Watts called for NAACP to expand its recommendation on removing officers from schools to include training school administration to refrain from involving law enforcement in what should be school disciplinary issues.

Perryman agreed. "What should have been considered a behavior issue became a criminal issue because you have the presence of a police officer."

SPRINGFIELD SUPERVISOR Pat Herryty said an elephant in the room had not been addressed in the Public Safety Committee meeting.

"We need to do something to not just address our community in crisis but our [police] department in crisis," said Herryty, the only Republican on the Board. "The department really has lost confidence in its chief some time ago. ..."

"The rush to pad a national resume and the incident with Officer Timberlake has exacerbated that. You compound that with a Commonwealth Attorney who ran on an anti-police platform who filed not just one assault charge but three for a single incident. ... Our officers are at a loss."

Herryty said none of the officers he spoke to are of the opinion that Timberlake's actions were criminal.

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Masking My True Feelings



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For those of us living in states where mask-wearing is mostly mandatory (indoors: yes, outdoors: not nearly as much), it is very easy to hide one's emotions. If your mouth is undercover, and being that it is located under your nose and above your chin, it most definitely is, communicating with the public has become strictly verbal. Body language as personified by the expression on one's face has become non grata. All that remains - above the mask, are your eyes and to a much lesser effect, your ears, your hair and your forehead. If words are not spoken when passing by, either within the six-foot cone of safety or not, no one knows whether they've been greeted with a smile or disparaged with a frown.

Still, I can't help doing either the former or the latter which invariably leads me to remind myself that what can't be seen must either be heard or not considered part of the new social-distancing equation. After a few months of donning the mask and viewing others donning the mask, I can't really see how I'm able to read the tea leaves, so to speak, that is, one's eyes. And how frustrating, because eyes have often been described as "windows to the soul." Unfortunately, without one's other facial features visible to the naked eye, interpreting one's eyes has become the only clue in conversation.

I refer you all back to the early game-show television, specifically to "Make a Face" which aired between 1961 and 1962. In the game, contestants attempted to name the famous celebrities after seeing only a portion of their faces. Of course there was a revolving wheel whose spin would provide clues to the celebrities being featured that day. I vaguely remember anything more, except I thought the host was Art James (who was actually the host of "Say When," another game show from the same era). The host was actually Robert Clayton for whom I have zero recollection. I can still see the wheel however, sort of, and I can recall seeing images of eyes, ears, noses, etc., and contestants trying to guess identities based on these facial fragments.

Life is sort of like that now. We're all receiving incomplete information. The masks are hiding all manner of interesting and identifiable characteristics which we've all spent years interpreting. Just the other day, I met a woman from the local tree-service company offering free quotes to me and my neighbors. As she walked around our property with us, mask on and clipboard in hand, she identified trees which needed to come down and limbs which needed to be trimmed back. And while she spoke, naturally there was eye contact, from which I developed an impression. A few days later, she was back in our neighborhood supervising her company's work cutting down some neighbor's trees. I inadvertently bumped into her while she was driving up the street just as I was at my on-street mailbox. She stopped her car and when she rolled down the passenger window to say "Hello", I could see she was not wearing a mask. I saw her entire face and I thought she was older than her eyes had led me to believe ("not that there's anything wrong with that"). It only confirmed my suspicions of just how poor my judgment had been after initially having only seen her wearing a mask. And then later I realized that just as I hadn't seen her face entirely, so too would other folks not be seeing mine. So regardless of any facial gesture I had made, it was only my words that mattered, not my deeds. But since I hadn't "deeded" anything, I realized that an entire level of communication and impression is now missing.

It feels like a combination of Halloween and Stanley Kubrick's "Eyes Wide Shut" where you're not sure who you are, but neither is anybody else. And in that anonymity breeds some contempt and lack of need for any familiarity. It's that lack of familiarity while quarantining at home which has led to the infrequent opportunity to interact socially - from distance or not. As a result, I believe I've lost some of my humanity, some of my dignity and perhaps even some of my friends.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

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