

Mount Vernon Gazette

MOUNT VERNON'S HOMETOWN NEWSPAPER • A CONNECTION NEWSPAPER

JUNE 25, 2020

Warner Visits to Tout Bill for NPS Parks

National Park maintenance bill includes million for GW Memorial Parkway and related parks.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

When he got down to the river's edge in Belle Haven to talk about the "Great American Outdoors Act," recently passed in the Senate 73-25, Sen. Mark Warner (D-VA) looked through a spotting scope to see an osprey nesting offshore.

Glenda Booth, one of the Friends of Dyke Marsh, pointed out the bird. "In Dyke Marsh, we probably have 10 osprey nests," she said.

Warner was on site to talk about a bill that will soon be up for a house vote to address the \$12 billion maintenance backlog at national park sites nationwide and provide permanent funding for the Land and Water Conservation Fund. The bipartisan bill includes Sen. Warner's "Restore Our Parks Act," which would help fund much-needed repairs at Virginia national park sites such as the George Washington Memorial Parkway, which currently has more than \$700 million in maintenance needs. The bill was reintroduced with Rob Portman (R-OH), La-



Sen. Mark Warner checks out an osprey off the shores of Belle Haven Park.

mar Alexander (R-TN) and Angus King (I-ME) as bipartisan legislation to address the maintenance backlog, which has delayed the upkeep of visitor centers, rest stops, trails, campgrounds and transportation infrastructure operated by the National Park Service in the Commonwealth and across the country.

In addition to helping the parks, Warner pointed to the number of jobs the National Park's provide, which is about 100,000 jobs nationwide, and 10,000 in Virginia. "That doesn't even include tourism-related jobs," Warner added.

With bicycles going by on the Mount Ver-

non Bike Trail, and ducks floating by in the river, the time is now, he said. "It's now up to the House," Warner said, looking at the upcoming July 4 holiday as a perfect time. "I can't think of a better birthday present for our country," he said.

Virginia's national parks, which host more than 25 million visitors every year, are in need of this funding to continue preserving some of the nation's national treasures. Shenandoah National Park alone has outstanding maintenance needs totaling almost \$80 million, while Colonial National Historical Park is more than \$420 million behind schedule. To make matters worse, recent re-

ports indicate that the 35-day government shutdown exacerbated the NPS maintenance backlog and delayed work preparing park facilities, roads and trails for the busy summer season, according to Warner.

Trailside Talk

Belle View resident Marianne Razzino was on her bike in the parking lot, getting ready for a ride. The Covid-19 pandemic and the quarantine has encouraged a lot of people to get out on the local trails to get some exercise, as is recommended by Governor Ralph Northam (D-VA). "Sometimes the trail could use a little upkeep," Razzino said. "It gets a lot of use," she added.

Representatives from the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Wolftrap Foundation, the American Sport Fishing Association, the Public Lands Alliance and Pew General Trust were on hand to make their needs known. Kevin Brandt cited the needs on the Blue Ridge Parkway, and what this funding will do. "This is an incredible step forward," he said.

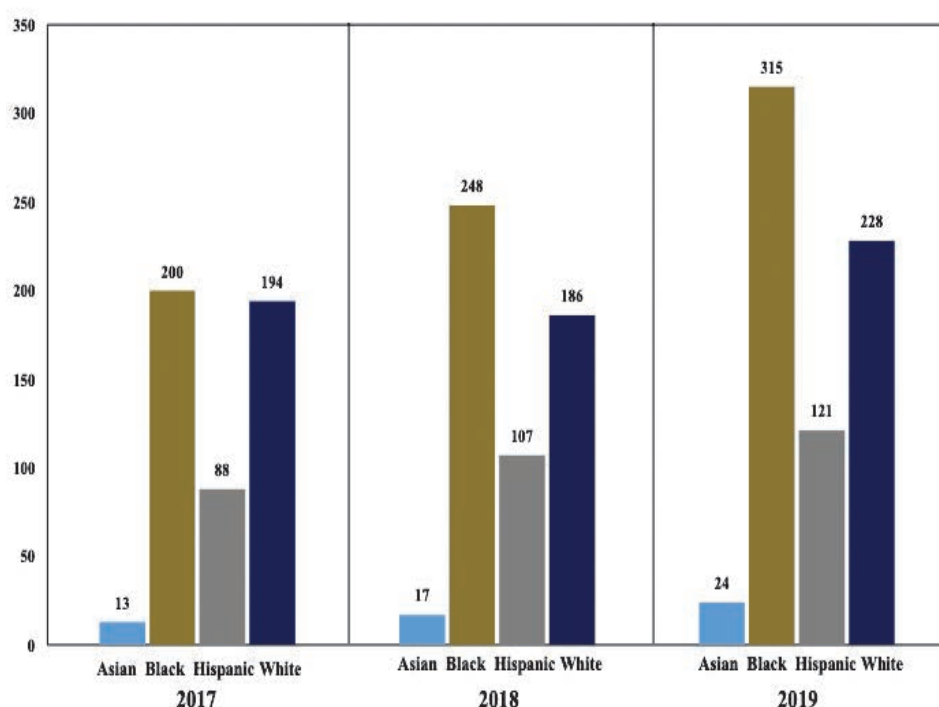
Warner uses the Mount Vernon Bike Trail from time to time, and has seen what happens when the funding falls short of maintenance, particularly at the rest stops. "I was noticing they'd gotten a little shabby around the edges," he said.

Hands-On Lessons

To kick off Warner's event, members from Nature Bridge conducted an exercise where everyone took a pause, and used their senses to feel what was going on around them. There were a few families enjoying the

SEE WARNER VISITS, PAGE 8

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



Use of Force Rises in 2019

Disproportionate treatment of African Americans on the rise, too.

BY KEN MOORE
GAZETTE

While Black people are less than 10 percent of the Fairfax County population (9.7 percent), they are the targets for use of force by police 53 percent of the time, 315 of 594 incidents. In 2018, African American community members were targets of police force 48.6 percent of the time.

Incidents of police use of force rose from 510 incidents in 2018 to 594 in 2019. Fairfax County Police released its published data on Monday, June 22.

This year, police published a look at use of force in each police district for the first time. In The Mount Vernon District, when police used force they used it against Black people 61.72 percent of the time; the population of

the Mount Vernon District is 16.94 Black. The Mount Vernon District is where Officer Tyler Timberlake used his taser multiple times on a Black man who did not appear to be a threat on June 5 in Gum Springs. Timberlake has been charged with three counts of assault.

In the McLean district, where African American community members account for fewer than one in 20 (4.69 percent), they were the subject of police force 57.02 percent of the time.

In the Reston police district, where Black people make up 8.24 percent of the population, police used force 31.03 percent of the time against Black people, and 48.28 percent against white people, who make up 67.23 percent of the district's population.

SEE USE OF FORCE, PAGE 9

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NEWS

'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 GAZETTE

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. 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 be-



SCREENSHOT OF VIDEO RELEASED BY FCPD

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

Watch the Video

FCPD OFFICER CHARGED WITH ASSAULT

<https://fcpdnews.wordpress.com/2020/06/07/fcpd-officer-charged-with-assault-against-community-member/>
<https://youtu.be/MjFEDITCKGE>

cause 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."

"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. Vivan Watts called for NAACP to expand its rec-

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 9

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."



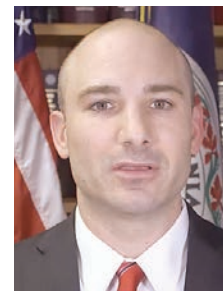
KARLA BRUCE,
CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER

"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."



New Voting Laws

BY DELEGATE PAUL KRIZEK

With the primaries now behind us it is not too soon to turn our attention to the General Election on Nov. 3 and Virginia's new voting laws that will go into effect on July 1st. It won't be long until it is our opportunity and civic duty to vote for the next President, one of our two U.S. Senators, and our local Congressman. As a member of the Privileges and Elections Committee, I was very involved in expanding your voting rights and I am pleased to report that we passed many good bills that will make voting easier, safer, and more accessible, while protecting the sanctity of our election results, which is fundamental to our democracy. Furthermore, you can rest assured that Virginia is committed to ensuring the integrity of our elections and preparing for an historic number of mailed ballots.

The very first bill that was introduced this year, HB 1, was to remove the need to have an excuse to vote by absentee ballot. This law removes the current list of twenty statutory reasons under which a person may be entitled to vote by absentee ballot and now allows citizens to vote early for any reason or no reason at all. If you feel like voting early, you now can. End of story. No excuse necessary.

Another barrier to voting we removed was the requirement to show a form of identification containing a photograph of yourself in order to be allowed to vote. From July 1, you only must show your voter registration confirmation documents, a valid Virginia driver's license, a valid US passport, or any other identification issued by the Commonwealth, or the United States, including any valid student identification card issued by any institution of higher learning located in the United States. Moreover, you could even now use a copy of a current utility bill, bank statement, government check, paycheck, or other government document that shows your name and address. It doesn't even matter if your Virginia driver's license has expired. It is still valid for purposes of voting. And, if you don't have any of these documents you can still vote by signing a statement, subject to felony penalties for making a false statement, that you are the named registered voter you claim to be in order to be permitted to cast a ballot. If you don't complete the statement or have any of the IDs mentioned above you can still cast a provisional ballot according to the provisions of current law which al-



Krizek

low a voter until noon on the Friday following the election to deliver a copy of their identification to the local electoral board. We passed HB 220, my bill to require the return envelope provided to absentee voters for the return of a mail-in absentee ballot to include prepaid postage. It would increase voting accessibility, as obtaining postage can be yet another barrier to voting for the elderly, those with limited access to transportation, and even college students. Casting your vote should be free of charge, period — even if it's just the cost of a stamp.

Unfortunately, this bill had a reenactment clause attached to it before passage, which means that this bill will need to be passed again next year to go into effect. So, you still must pay for postage on your mailed ballot.

With health care in mind, many voters will take advantage of voting absentee by mail. Until now, your ballot would need to arrive at the general registrar's office by the time polls close on Election Day. Now, thanks to a bill that was introduced by Delegate Sickles, the deadline for returning absentee ballots has been moved to the end of the work week, the Friday after the election (before noon on

the third day after the election). It still must be postmarked on or before the date of the election. You can apply for your absentee ballot online now. New expanded in-person absentee voting starts 45 days before the election.

We also passed HB 235, which will allow any eligible voter applying for or making changes to their driver's license to be added to the voter rolls unless they opt out. Election Day has also replaced Lee-Jackson Day as a state holiday, a long overdue change I support. I look forward to the day it is a national holiday to encourage maximum turnout.

Future voting changes may include moving state and local elections to federal years, and allowing voters to vote anywhere in their county of residence instead of having to go to their home precinct.

Remember that all election tabulation equipment in the Commonwealth of Virginia is required to produce a paper trail. Other than ADA compliant systems, all voters are required to vote on paper ballots which cannot be manipulated. There will always be an audit trail that will allow for the verification of the results of any election. You can rest assured that your vote will be secure and counted. Don't forget to vote by or on November 3rd. Thanks to your General Assembly, it is now easier than ever!

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 af-

ter 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;
- ❖ That all USPP officers have completed de-escalation training;
- ❖ That the USPP has a functional disciplinary process that is substantially similar and either equal to or more rigorous than those in use in our local departments;
- ❖ That the USPP has adopted policies requiring transparency practices public incidents that are as robust or more robust than currently utilized by your departments.

❖ Devise and implement team approaches to de-escalation and restraint situations that stress appropriate roles to insure that someone is focused on speaking up if policy and procedure are not

SEE TERMINATE, PAGE 5

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An independent, locally owned weekly newspaper delivered to homes and businesses.

Published by
Local Media Connection LLC

1606 King Street
Alexandria, Virginia 22314

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LETTERS

Terminate Memoranda

FROM PAGE 4

being followed, to prevent over reaction and potential criminal conduct.

Your MOUs are the only leverage we have to effect change on these issues and the only measures that we can utilize to ensure that the rights and safety of our area residents is being maintained in a fair fashion.

Thank you for considering this request.

Senator Scott A. Surovell, 36th District

Delegate Paul E. Krizek, 44th District

Senator J. Chapman Petersen, 34th District

Senator David W. Marsden, 37th District

Senator Barbara A. Favola, 31st District

Senator Adam P. Ebbin, 30th District

Senator Jennifer B. Boysko, 33rd District

Delegate Patrick A. Hope, 47th District

Delegate Kathy KL Tran, 42nd District

Delegate Kaye Kory, 38th District

Delegate Vivian E. Watts, 39th District

Delegate Mark H. Levine, 45th District

Black Lives Matter

To the editor:

The people of our nation are being attacked by the very system that is required by law to help them, serve them, and protect them from crimes against them. While this is the Police force's job, they are rather doing the opposite. They are taking the lives of people who are supposed to be protected. These hate crimes have been going on for CENTURIES. So much of our government system has been changed to make the United States of America the best country in the world, but now, as everyone is seeing in the news, America is no longer taking Black lives into account. Black lives matter whether the racist people of America and our Government think so. BLACK LIVES MATTER. They are not slaves.

They are not servants. They are NOT to be punished for the color of their skin. THEY ARE PEOPLE. THEY WERE PEOPLE BEFORE WE TOOK THEM TO THE AMERICAS FOR SLAVES. THEY WILL BE PEOPLE AND THEY WILL HAVE OUR

SUPPORT.

Our leaders, including Don Beyer, need to help their people protect their rights and lives.

Molly Hamrin
Alexandria

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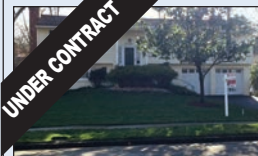
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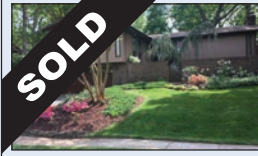
Alex/Riverside Estates \$605,000
3026 Battersea Lane
Riverside Estates, the Biggest Bang for your Buck!! This large Virginia model offers 5BRs, 3 updated baths, a gorgeous upgraded kitchen w/ granite counters, cherry cabinets & 12" ceramic tile flooring. Beautiful hardwood floors on the main level plus upgraded, energy efficient DBL pane windows throughout. The electric panel had major upgrades in 2008, & the deck was rebuilt in 2016, it looks out at the beautifully landscaped backyard complete w/a new privacy fence & underground sprinkler system. Don't miss the 2 car garage as well - Check out the competition, then come talk with us. We're always ready to reach out with a helping hand.



Alex/Riverside Estates \$580,000
8501 Wagon Wheel Road
Beautifully updated 4BR, 3BA Split w/carport - 2500+ square ft. on a large landscaped .3 acre lot w/fenced-in back yard. Freshly painted interior, newly refinished hardwood floors throughout the main level. Large family room w/wood burning fireplace & 4th BR on lower level w/a refinished bath, & two large utility rooms. Perfect for workshop/storage. You can't find a better value or neighborhood for this price! 5 minutes to Fort Belvoir, (S) 15 minutes to Old Town Alex. (N) along the beautiful GW Parkway.



Mt. Vernon/Wessynton \$759,900
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Alex/ Woodleigh Woods \$701,000
3709 Maryland Street
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Alex/Mt.Zephyr \$515,000
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Grads Make the Best of Things in the Mount Vernon Area



Hayfield seniors set up for a parade in Kingstowne.



West Potomac's Jenny D'Angelo.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

Graduating from high school is a big point in the lives of teenagers, but due to the pandemic, a little creativity came out to make the graduations memorable.

At Mount Vernon High School, there was a photo session at the school which brought out a few caps and gowns, but they also produced a video of the grads and their plans for next year, all to the song "A Million Dreams," by Pink.

At West Potomac, a drive-thru was held on June 4, and students arrived at the parade loop in their cars decorated with streamers, balloons, and words of congratulations scrawled in window markers for the event. They were greeted by 2020 balloons, and the school sign wishing them well. JROTC was collecting uniforms. Five masked ladies were collecting seniors' laptops and chargers.

Also in early June, Hayfield Secondary School seniors gathered in the former Toys R Us parking lot in Kingstowne before parading around the neighborhood, honking horns and waving out the sunroof.

"I want you to know that all of our high school principals are committed to recognizing and celebrating your accomplishments at the end of the year as you prepare for the next exciting chapter of your lives," said Dr. Scott Brabrand, Superintendent. "If necessary, we are committed to finding creative ways to celebrate your graduation, including possibly virtual graduation ceremonies."

"While it was not what anyone ever imagined, students and staff still had a celebratory moment that recognized them," added Lucy Caldwell, Fairfax County Public Schools spokesperson.

On June 12, some of the school outdoor facilities reopened, with recommendations for social distancing. Athletic fields opened for organized and permitted use, based on Virginia and Centers for Disease Control (CDC) guidelines pertaining to use of athletic fields; basketball courts where maintaining 10 feet of physical distance; and playgrounds carried the recommendation that visitors use at their own risk and must adhere to social distancing guidelines.

All openings are based on CDC guidelines, state mandates, and guidance from local health officials, FCPS said.

PHOTOS
CONTRIBUTED



Mount Vernon High School grads made the best of things.



Little sister shares in the celebration.



The whole Mount Vernon family shares the spotlight.



Graduation was a little different at Mount Vernon High School.

NEWS

Q&A with Brielle Brown, Graduating Senior, West Potomac High School

1) What has been your biggest disappointment/hardship since schools have been closed for the remainder of the academic year?



Brielle Brown

My biggest hardship since school has been closed for the remainder of the year has been preparing for my AP exams outside of the classroom. With distance learning classes only taking place two days a week, I am doing a lot of studying and reviewing on my own.

2) What are your plans for the fall?

My plan for the fall is to attend North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University as a Lewis and Elizabeth Dowdy Scholar, and major in bioengineering with a minor in Spanish.

3) How have your plans changed, if at all?

My plans have not changed, they have just become more exciting for me!

4) What have you learned about yourself since the COVID-19 closures?

A few things I have learned about myself since the COVID-19 closures are that I enjoy writing and journaling more than I thought. I can be pretty creative when I want to be and that I am very tech savvy!

5) What is your passion?

My passion is to help others. Whether it be donating clothes, serving food to the homeless, tutoring peers, or just being there for someone to talk to, I am passionate about helping others.

6) Have you discovered a new passion in light of social distancing?

A new passion I have discovered in light of social distancing is veganism. I am passionate about eating foods that don't come from animals because it is both great for the environment and myself!

7) What are your hopes for the future?

My hopes for the future are to attend and graduate from North Carolina Agricultural and Technical State University, then attend medical school to become a cardiothoracic surgeon who travels and performs surgeries all over the world for work and mission trips.

8) Is there anything else you'd like us to know about you?

As sad as I am to say goodbye to FCPS and West Potomac High School, I cannot wait for this next chapter in my life.

9) What are you most proud of about your school experience/best memory?

I am most proud of the mark I have left on West Potomac High School. From the sports, clubs, and organizations I joined and influenced, I am most proud of how I was able to be so involved and present in all areas of my high school life.

Source: FCPS

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Warner Visits to Tout Bill for NPS Parks



Sen. Mark Warner talked about the bipartisan support for the bill.

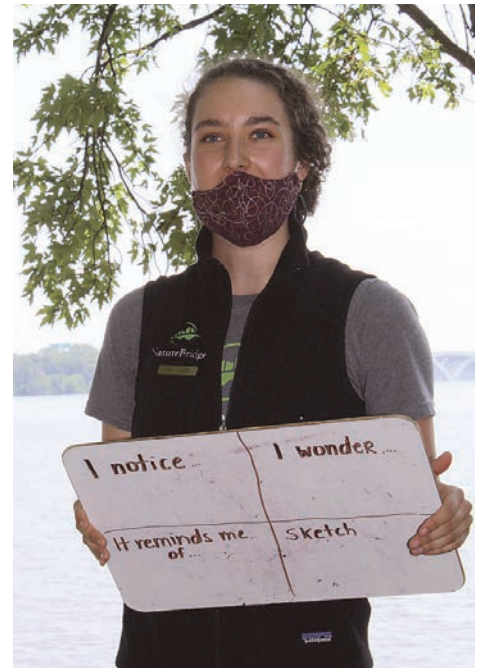
FROM PAGE 1

sunshine, ducks in the water, and airplanes taking off, which is a common sight at Belle Haven Park. “This is something we do at Nature Bridge to help children connect,” said Talia Schmitt.

Dr. Carman Orozco-Acosta represented a group called the “Green Latinos,” and talked about the family gatherings that fill the park on weekends. “As a community member, I really care about the environment,” she said.

According to the list of Virginia National Park Deferred Maintenance as of 2017, the George Washington Memorial Parkway has \$233,441,316 of deferred maintenance needs. “These are parks that we all own,” said Warner.

The event started out with an exercise, led by Talia Schmitt from the Nature Bridge company.



Friends of Dyke Marsh’s Glenda Booth speaks about the bill.



Marianne Razzino gets ready to ride her bike on the trail.

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Mount Vernon Gazette

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Another Mount Vernon Gazette Community Partnership

Police Reform

FROM PAGE 3

ommendation 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 Herrity 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 Herrity, 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."

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

Use of Force Rises in 2019

FROM PAGE 1

A pointed firearm accounted for 396 of the 1,632 times use of force was used (multiple kinds of force were used in the 594 cases), force to hold in 255 incidents, take down 229 times, and force to cuff 206 times.

Use of force includes use of weapons, use of pepper spray, strikes with hands or feet, taser weapons, and more.

The implemented recommendations of the Ad Hoc Police Practices Review Commission, to which FCPD leadership agreed, call for collection and release of more detailed data than has been made available: "Collect data, and publish an annual statistical report, covering all stops, frisks, citations, arrests, and use-of force by district station and magisterial district - include the race, gender, and ethnicity of the individual involved and note whether the suspect is homeless and/or if a mental health crisis is a factor. Document the outcome of each incident and regularly report the collected data to the BOS and the public and post the data online."

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-Werner Heisenberg

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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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News

Original Mount Vernon High School Renovation

VIRTUAL COMMUNITY MEETING ON MONDAY, JUNE 29, 2020

A virtual community meeting is planned for June 29, 2020 from 7 p.m. to 8:30 p.m. to provide updates on the Original Mount Vernon High School Renovation and Adaptive Reuse project.

If you are interested in attending the virtual meeting, please email DPWESCAPOM-VHighSchool@fairfaxcounty.gov to receive meeting sign-on instructions. Or call the Building Design & Construction Division admin office at 703-324-5800, TTY 711.

BACKGROUND

The Original Mount Vernon High School was built in 1939, a classic example of Colonial Revival architecture. The county-owned facility is located at 8333 Richmond Highway on a 22-acre property that was once part of George Washington's estate.

In 1987, the Virginia Department of Historic Resources determined that the high school property was eligible for the National Register of Historic Places. The school was listed on the Virginia Historic Landmarks Register in December 2017, and in the National Registry of Historic Places in May 2018. The approximately 140,000-square-foot Original Mount Vernon High School facility consists of the main high school building and several smaller buildings to the west and south of the main structure. There are two athletic fields to the southeast of the property that are scheduled for community use.

PLANNING EFFORTS

In fall 2016, following the end of the long-term lease in the Original Mount Vernon High School, Fairfax County began an effort to plan for adaptive reuse of the building and the site. A number of interim and permanent occupancies have been implemented.

Parallel to these efforts, in early 2018, the county hired a development team to explore concepts for the long-term redevelopment of the overall Original Mount Vernon High School site combined with George Washington RECenter and park. Following early proposed redevelopment concepts for renovations, a mix of new residential development, and additional public facilities, the county determined to focus on a phased approach to redevelopment that would align with the EMBARK and Bus Rapid Transit project along the Richmond Highway Corridor, which is in the planning phase. As such, the priority for the redevelopment work has been placed on the renovations and adaptive reuse of the historic high school and related site work as Phase I of the overall redevelopment. Phase I work includes ADA accessibility; exterior, windows, and roof work; upgrading the mechanical, plumbing, and electrical systems; and upgrading utilities.

The overarching vision of Phase I is to leverage the former high school to build communities of opportunity, create career pathways, connect different generations and better integrate residents into the economy. se of the building continue.

For more information, contact Katayoon Shaya at 703-324-5800, TTY 711.

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