

Camryn Frederick of Vienna, left, pictured with the other two rising seniors on the James Madison High School varsity cheerleading team, Lucy Fraser, right, and Jobie Steele, middle. Today in Connection: Local student athletes weigh in on the upcoming Fall Season.



Uncertainties of the Fall 2020

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'We Can't Wait Until 2021'

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'Happy Birthday Dear Lucille'

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OPINION, PAGE 4 ♦ CLASSIFIEDS, PAGE 6

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PEOPLE



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Friends from nearby Lewinsville Presbyterian Church gathered (at six-foot intervals) beneath McLean resident Lucille Quinn's balcony with balloons, cake, banners and flowers to make sure the day was remembered properly, and Happy Birthday was sung accompanied by a trumpet.

'Happy Birthday Dear Lucille'

The "Roarin' Twenties" were just getting started when McLean resident Lucille Quinn was born. Her indomitable spirit and enthusiasm for life were evident to all she met, including most recently, her many friends at the Lewinsville Retirement Residence where she has lived the last two decades of her ten.

As she approached her actual birth date, June 21, it became clear to her friends that the pandemic was going to rule out the typical celebration. Determined friends from nearby Lewinsville Presbyterian Church gathered (at six-foot intervals) beneath her balcony with balloons, cake, banners and flowers to make sure the day was remembered properly, and Happy Birthday was sung accompanied by a trumpet!

Quinn, a North Carolina native and one of 10 chil-

dren, moved to Washington, DC, in 1938 in pursuit of a government job. After a short stint with the IRS, she accepted a "more interesting" offer from a Georgetown dress shop. Eventually, that experience led to her own business in Georgetown, "Lucille's Fashions." But somehow, she found time to work evenings as a substitute teacher preparing others to enter the workforce.

Lucille Quinn raised three children from her first marriage, but only one—a daughter in Massachusetts—survives today. Her first and second husbands have predeceased her.

When asked the secret of her long life, she was quick with her response. "There is no secret," she said. "Be good to yourself, treat other people the way you want to be treated, and when faced with a decision between right or wrong, try always to choose the right."

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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 CONNECTION



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>

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 because

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."

SEE POLICE REFORM, PAGE 7

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."



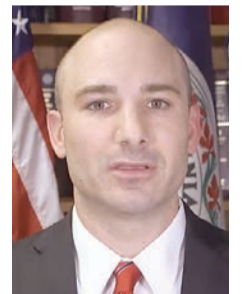
KARLA BRUCE,
CHIEF EQUITY OFFICER

"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."



Words Have Meanings

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

Words have meanings defined in the dictionary that can take on other meaning within the context in which they are being used. Never has it been more important that we understand the meaning and use of words than in present day politics.

Last week I wrote about "Black lives matter" and the importance that we hear the message that is being conveyed with that sentence. It is a group of words whose meaning has been ignored for too long. The current demonstrations literally around the world are intended to place an exclamation point at the end to emphasize that they must finally be heard and understood. I believe with each demonstration of thousands of people and with each statue that comes down the message that black lives matter is finally coming through. We need to get on with the changes that are needed in society and in our laws that show that we understand that



COMMENTARY

black lives do matter. There is no turning back now.

When the grossly disproportionate number of black persons are killed by white policemen that videos have made totally clear, the need for major and immediate changes to our policing system have become obvious. We need to make sure that the words

we use to bring out those changes are not used against us. The societal needs for which our current police forces have been given responsibility in recent years are too broad and need to be reimagined and redefined. We cannot allow those who view societal challenges in law and order terms to use the term "defund the police" against those who understand that policing policies need to change. While some people mean a total defunding of police departments when they use the slogan, "defund the police," many of us believe police departments will continue to need to exist but be demilitarized and not be the sole responders to community incidents. We need to define a role for public safety and com-

munity personnel who can keep our communities safe without confrontation and expand the availability of mental health workers in our communities. You can be sure that there will be a war of words over public safety and policing in the next several elections, and we must work hard to get our message clear.

In 1993 the first woman attorney general of Virginia was up by 20 points in a race to be the first woman governor of Virginia by defeating the Republican candidate, George Allen Jr. An incident of a person committing a crime while on parole from a Virginia prison during the political campaign led to Allen adopting an "end parole" theme to keep Virginians safe that led to his upset victory. The resulting end parole policy led to filling the jails and prisons, a massive prison building program, and lengthy prison terms for persons who were no longer a threat to society. We have only recently begun to undo the damage done by that simple bumper-strip term "end parole" that led to many lives—disproportionately black—being destroyed by a terrible public policy.

Words do have meaning, but we need to be clear what those words truly mean as they impact public policy.

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;
- ❖ 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 some-

one is focused on speaking up if policy and procedure are not 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,
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PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED



Senior cheerleader Camryn Frederick of Vienna cheering at a James Madison High School football game last season in front of the student section.



Lauren Sung of Great Falls passing a ball during Langley High School varsity volleyball's home game against Washington-Liberty High School last season.

Uncertainties of the Fall 2020

Local student athletes weigh in on upcoming Fall Season.

BY MALLORY CULHANE
THE CONNECTION

Part six in a series.

As the fate of in-person classes for high schools in the fall remains unknown, another uncertainty – the fall high school sports season – is on many student athletes' minds. Many of them haven't missed a season in years.

"[Football] gives me something filled with hype and excitement to look forward to at the end of a week of hard work," said Jaden Sarinana of McLean, a senior varsity football player at McLean High School.

"Cheer is literally my life, I love it so much," said Camryn Frederick of Vienna, a senior varsity cheerleader at James Madison High School. "We don't just cheer at games, we have competitions and we practice for hours and literally put blood, sweat and tears into everything we do."

Many students are curious how different the fall season may look, given new precautions like social distancing between players and among the crowd, or having to wear a mask.

"Honestly, I'm not that worried for the players on the field but more about how we're going to let the fans in and watch," said Sarinana. "Football is a community event that brings people together for fun and memories."

"The worst-case scenario is that we don't play at



Nina Kernan of McLean passing the ball at Langley High School varsity volleyball's game against Herndon last October.

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all," said Nina Kernan of McLean, a senior varsity volleyball player at Langley High School. "The potential for not having fans in the bleachers will definitely lower the energy in the gym and our game feeds off of that energy."

Lauren Sung of Great Falls, a junior varsity volleyball player at Langley High School, also mentions how the pandemic may negatively affect team bonding, and in turn, how they play.

"[Team bonding] is really important because we're constantly together so we have to create a good bond," said Sung. "Then, we play so much better because there is no tension on the court – this shows when we're playing."

RIISING SENIORS like Kernan are concerned about the fall season being cancelled altogether, and having to lose their final high school season.

"We've built such an amazing team chemistry during the time that I have been here and I have some close friends on the team that I won't be able to play with again," said Kernan, who's committed to Lafayette College to play volleyball. "For some of my teammates who may not be playing in college, it may be the end of their volleyball experience."

"I would honestly be really sad [if the season is cancelled] because I've been looking forward to my senior season since middle school," said Frederick, who is planning on continuing competition cheer after high school, but not school cheer.

Student athletes in other classes – especially juniors – are also worried about the season getting cancelled or cut short and missing out on big future opportunities.

"If the season is cancelled I feel like I will lose a lot of my skill, and instead of improving, I wouldn't be," said Sung. "Junior year is a major year for recruiting to play in college, so it would push back recruiting because college coaches wouldn't be able to see any film nor practices."

SEE FALL 2020, PAGE 7



Prior to a game, Jaden Sarinana of McLean, practices linebacker drills to get ready to play.



PHOTOS BY MARIN HEBERLIC/THE CONNECTION

A group of children playing at Clemyjontri Park while wearing masks.

McLean Parks Open for 'Responsible Recreation'

BY MARIN HEBERLIC
THE CONNECTION

As of June 12, McLean parks have opened under Phase Two COVID-19 Guidelines. According to the Fairfax County Park Authority, Clemyjontri Park and Central Park are open for "responsible recreation." That entails gatherings of no more than 50 people, with all parties socially distancing. The safety of kids and families at these parks is completely up to the people that decide to visit. There are no special cleaning procedures for the parks, and anybody with sanitary concerns is encouraged to bring their own cleaning supplies. Masks are recommended but not mandatory.

This past weekend both parks had low attendance compared to normal pre-COVID times. Normally Clemyjontri is mobbed with kids, so much so that cars have to park down the block in the extra lot. However, on Saturday there was a total of about five cars in either parking lot. Additionally, the carousel that is normally flooded with kids has

been shut down for safety purposes. The usual comradery of kids running around and making new friends has also been halted as families are encouraged to maintain distance from other visitors of the park.

Similarly, Central Park was completely abandoned aside from a group that had reserved the gazebo. The playground that is normally full of kids was completely abandoned. This could have been for a number of reasons. The most obvious reason is COVID-19 and all of the safety concerns present in the community. Another factor was the poor weather for the past week. It has been raining for a majority of this past week. Additionally, a sign located at Central Park stated that the park was still closed to "prevent the spread of COVID-19".

With better weather in the upcoming weeks, families and children will start visiting the parks again. The atmosphere will be different due to the number limit and social distancing, but at least children will have the opportunity to be outside and play on playgrounds once again.



On a rainy weekend, very few visitors enjoyed McLean parks: Equipment at Central Park.

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THURSDAY/JUNE 25

Interfaith Pride Livestream. 7-8 p.m. Virtual event. At 2854 Hunter Mill Road, Oakton. Join faith leaders from throughout Northern Virginia to help celebrate Pride Month with prayer, stories, and music. Visit the website: <https://lgbtq-interfaith-pride-2020.eventbrite.com/?aff=cnnews>

SATURDAY/JUNE 27

Veteran Donation Event. 10 a.m.-12 p.m. Drive-by donation event at Vienna Presbyterian Church Parking Lot, 124 Park Street NE, Vienna. Operation Golden Shield was founded by Caleb Suh, a first-year cadet at the U.S. Military Academy and a graduate of James Madison High School in Vienna – who coordinated with the Community Living Center at the D.C. VA Medical Center to identify the most urgent needs of healthcare providers and of CLC residents. Delivery to the VA is scheduled for Tuesday, June 30 at 10 a.m. Visit the website: www.operationgoldenshield.com

DRIVE-IN MOVIES AT THE BORO

The Boro is hosting a weekly summer drive-in theater series from now thru July 11. Gates open at 7 p.m. and the movie will begin around 8:30 p.m. with parking spots as first-come, first serve. The address is 400 Westpark Drive, Tysons, VA. Movies will be shown on the lot of the former NADA headquarters. Tickets are available for \$20 per vehicle and available at <https://www.eventbrite.com/e/drive-in-movies-at-the-boro-tysons-tickets-109175222028>. \$20 tickets are also available for groups of four wishing to bring chairs or blankets.

Schedule:

Thursday, June 25 | Harry Potter and the Sorcerer's Stone (PG)

Friday, June 26 | Back to the Future Part 1 (PG)

Saturday, June 27 | Back to the Future Part 2 (PG)

Thursday, July 2 | Batman (PG-13 | 1989)

Friday, July 3 | Mission Impossible 3 (PG-13)

Thursday, July 9 | Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory (G | 1971)

Friday, July 10 | Star Trek (PG-13 | 2009)

Saturday, July 11 | Jurassic Park (PG-13)

★ ★ ★ UPCOMING ★ ★ ★

AUCTIONS

ABSOLUTE


Commercial Wood Shop Liquidation

Monday, June 29 @ Noon

415 Crowell Ln, Lynchburg, VA

Commercial woodworking equip incl. kiln, saws, end matcher, moulding machine, briquetter, shop equip, tools, and more.

Bid live or online at trfauctions.com



ABSOLUTE

102 Wooded Acres near Smith Mtn Lake

Wed, July 8 @ 12:30PM

Sale Site: Saunders Vol. Fire Dept.

12253 Smith Mtn Lake Pkwy, Huddleston VA

Beautifully wooded with stream, trails, and hunting cabin. Offered in 2 tracts.

Bid live or online at trfauctions.com



ABSOLUTE


Riverfront Home on 13 Acres

Wed, July 15 @ 12:30PM

7176 Clarkton Rd, Nathalie, VA

Prime frontage on the Staunton River with recreational area on the river! Spacious home offers 3,264 sq.ft., 4BR, 4BA.

Bid live or online at trfauctions.com



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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

TELL US WHAT YOU THINK

SUBMIT YOUR LETTER TO THE EDITOR HERE

www.ConnectionNewspapers.com/contact/letter



BULLETIN

FROM PAGE 6

PHASE 3 DATE NOT YET SET

Governor Ralph Northam presented the third phase of the "Forward Virginia" plan to continue easing public health restrictions while mitigating the spread of COVID-19. The Commonwealth does not yet have a targeted date for entering Phase 3. He added that the earliest that the Commonwealth can enter Phase 3 is Friday, June 26.

Police Reform

FROM PAGE 3

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 Herryry 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 Herryry, 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."

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

Fall 2020

FROM PAGE 5

In addition to their own precautions, schools are relying on guidelines from the Virginia High School League (VHSL) on starting up high school sports and the fall season. VHSL has stated that they believe "it is essential to the physical and mental well-being of students to return to physical activity and athletic competition," in many of their COVID-19 related guidelines that have been released in the last several weeks.

THE LATEST set of guidelines from VHSL, released on June 19, details phase two in the reopening of high school athletics. Guidelines include precautions such as cleaning procedures to be completed at least every two hours, indoor and outdoor practices with at least 10 feet of distance between all participants at all times, and workouts being conducted in "pods": groups of coaches and students of the same five to 10 people each week to limit exposure. In developing these guidelines, VHSL's Sports Medicine Advisory Committee is working with the Virginia Department of Health.

VHSL is holding a meeting of the Executive Committee on Thursday, June 25 to discuss the fall season, according to Mike McCall, the Director of Communications at VHSL.

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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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