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Fred Weiderhold in blue, watched as hundreds of cars paraded by, honking and waving to mark his 100th birthday.

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Harmon, Ross Join Incumbents On Fairfax City Council

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Out and About in the Area

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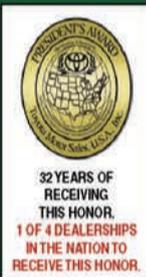
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NEWS

Harmon, Ross Join Incumbents on Fairfax City Council

Meyer and School Board members all re-elected.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION



So Lim



Janice Miller



Jon Stehle



Sang Yi



Joe Harmon



Tom Ross



David Meyer

Fairfax City re-elected its mayor, City Council and School Board incumbents, Tuesday, May 19, and added Joe Harmon and Tom Ross to the Council, replacing Jennifer Passey and Michael DeMarco who chose not to run. And despite the pandemic, which caused many to vote by mail, more votes were cast than in 2018.

Mayor David Meyer received nearly 74 percent of the votes to beat challenger Mark Angres, 2,446 to 835. Re-elected to the School Board were Carolyn Pitches, Mitch Sutterfield, Bob Reinsel, Toby Sorensen and Jon Buttram.

Mayor David Meyer

David Meyer was surprised to win by such a large margin but pleased with the outcome. “I’m proud of all the voters for responding so well during the pandemic, while preserving the integrity of the electoral process,” he said. “Special recognition goes to City Registrar Brenda Cabrera for her leadership in helping us have an open, fair and accessible election. She started early, encouraging people to vote from home, and well above 60 percent voted absentee.”

Saying he’s humbled by the voters’ support, Meyer said, “I look forward to leading the City out of this economic challenge we’re in right now. I believe the fundamentals of our City are strong. The challenges we face now are all too real, especially for small businesses. I’m going to work with the City Council, staff and our Economic Development Authority to help our businesses get back on their feet.”

When this crisis is over, he said, “We all want the City to be well-positioned in the region to be a leader in its economic recovery. I thank all the candidates who ran, and I congratulate the two new members of City Council, the four incumbents and the re-elected School Board members.”

Councilmember comments are below:

Janice Miller

“It was such an unusual election,” said Janice Miller. “We didn’t have an opportunity to get out and meet people; I used direct mail, Facebook, calls and signs. I’m pleased and humbled to be elected, one more time. This is my 14th election – including nine for School Board – and I’m starting my fifth term on City Council.”

She said the new Council needs to reflect on the message sent by the constituents. “The last two years, there were lots of concerns about development and traffic,” said

Miller. “People vote their convictions and concerns, so we need to see how to take their message and make meaningful changes as we go forward.”

“I’m still enthusiastic about working on behalf of our residents and business community,” she continued. “We’ll have a lot on our plate, coming out of COVID-19 and making the most of the funds we have to retain the best services for our community and help the businesses because we need them as partners.”

Jon Stehle

Starting his third term, Jon Stehle said the City must refigure its sense of community, in light of the pandemic. “We need to learn to live life reconnected – in our schools, athletic teams, businesses and community,” he said. “We’ll go through phases of recovery; the ways we reconnect will have to be different – and it’ll be transformational.”

“We have to do what’s right for the City and what works for us,” said Stehle. “We need to make sure we define what success is for us and communicate that to our residents. It’ll be important how we apply it here and work with our School Board, because the fall will be different.”

“This is about us as a community, and we’ll need to be creative about how we support it,” he continued. “We won’t go back to the way it was, and we’ll all have to work and learn together. We want the economy to come back.”

So Lim

So Lim said being elected to her second term is scarier than last time because, now that she’s served on the Council, she realizes even more how important the job is. “And especially now, with COVID-19 and all the small businesses suffering,” she said. “The residents have so many opinions, but if we opened while Fairfax County’s closed, we’d put the City at risk from their residents.”

Calling it a “really weird campaign,” Lim said she sent out surveys to find out people’s concerns – which were traffic, density and green space. “People want smart growth, making sure we have infrastructure going in before the developments,” she explained. “We’re growing by leaps and bounds, but we need to ensure the City’s livability for its residents.”

Noting that Fairfax just received a little over \$2 million in federal, CARES money, Lim wants it to go into the City’s Economic Development Authority (EDA) to help the small businesses. And, she added, “I’m

thrilled and happy to be re-elected.”

Sang Yi

Starting his second term, Sang Yi won every precinct and was the Council’s highest vote recipient. “Especially in a crisis, people hunger for communication,” he said. “And I think they appreciated me sharing my views about keeping our businesses surviving and telling them what’s going on. I also paused campaigning, at times, to reach out to our businesses and residents and ask what I, as a current councilman, could do to help them in this unique time.”

Yi also helped obtain PPE for The Lamb Center and City firefighters and financially helped the 29 Diner feed people in need. “This campaign wasn’t a time for politicking – it was a time to bring the community together,” he said. “I’m grateful and humbled to be re-elected, but my job is to represent the residents to City Hall, not the other way around. You run for office to help people.”

Now, said Yi, “We need to look at how we run this City, while ensuring our businesses survive and people stay safe. That balance is what our City will demand of us.”

Joe Harmon

Council newcomer Joe Harmon previously served six years on Fairfax’s Planning Commission and is delighted that “people had the confidence to vote for me. We need

to concentrate, sooner than later, on how to get the City back to business, working with the EDA and business leaders to push the City forward.

“We need development that fits in with the City’s character,” he added. “We need to create something that’s unique and different from everything surrounding us. I hope to put my Planning Commission background to good use and am honored the City’s voters took a chance on me. I’m ready to get to work.”

Tom Ross

Also new to Council, Tom Ross is a Planning Commission alumnus, as well, and also served on other City boards and committees. He’s a 40-year Fairfax resident and believes his experience and knowledge of the City, its people and traditions will be an asset. “I have a commitment and a willingness to serve,” he said. “Our first task is to get us through this pandemic safely and help local businesses.”

Interested in Fairfax’s economic wellbeing, Ross said, “We’ve got to have a healthy retail and commercial base to sustain our excellent public services and low tax rate. I want to further our relationship with GMU and plan for orderly development. We should also continue making this a walkable and bikeable community and protect our neighborhoods by revitalizing them and providing a diversity of housing type and price range.”

A Local Mystery

In the woods off Beulah Street is an old house foundation that is a mystery to many who walk on the trails near the stream just south of the Metro station.

PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/
THE CONNECTION



OPINION

Don't GO (Yet), But Still "Visit"

BY DAN STORCK
SUPERVISOR (D-MT VERNON)



Just as I reported to you about our nonprofits and local small businesses, our many historic, cultural and arts sites in the Mount Vernon District are currently closed to visitors. Our favorite sites are using their time to create virtual experiences to engage their visitors in new ways and leading fundraising efforts to offset lost revenue. Below is a sampling of the various South County Virtual Experiences that have been created in the past several weeks. I encourage you to "visit," enjoy, learn and provide support if you are able. In addition, several of the sites have on-line gift shops, if you are looking for something special without leaving your home.

George Washington's Mount Vernon

Mount Vernon's website www.mountvernon.org provides a wide range of digital experiences from virtual tours of the mansion to streaming events throughout the week from the estate. Also check out Mount Vernon's YouTube channel to see a live stream of the estate's newborn lambs and other informative lectures.

Workhouse Arts Center

The Workhouse has come up with amazing ways for you to engage with the Arts during this time. They've created virtual exhibitions for you to browse, a variety of videos showcasing everything from yoga to pottery, the NEW Lucy Burns

Museum and artist studio talks showcasing their latest works. Online classes are also available. Find out more on their Facebook page www.facebook.com/WorkhouseArts/ and their YouTube Channel.

Gunston Hall

Sit back and take a virtual tour of George Mason's historic home. Or, have fun visiting Gunston Hall's Learning From Home hub where you'll find activities ranging from cooking and drinking to gardening and games. It's time to explore Gunston Hall. gunstonhall.org

Arcadia's At Home Educational Resources

Check out Arcadia's curated resource sheet with links to virtual field trips, mobile market pop-ups, math and STEM focused activities, and of course — ways to get your kids in nature. Introduce your kids to Arcadia's resources. Arcadia is a nonprofit organization dedicated to creating a more equitable and sustainable local food system. <http://arcadiafood.org/>

Fairfax County Park Authority Virtual Exploration Center

The Fairfax County Park system is one of the best in the nation, and now they're bringing their resources to your home! They've curated a list of on-demand fitness activities, a virtual history tool, and many other activities related to science and nature, culture and history, and health and wellness. It's time to bring the parks to you. www.fairfaxcounty.gov/parks/virtual-resource-center

Explore the beauty of NOVA Parks

The Northern Virginia Park Authority (NOVA Parks) www.novaparks.com invite you to watch their fun videos! They range from a new series of nature videos from Potomac Overlook, a guide to bluebells at Bull Run Park, history highlights at the parks, a fun look at history from Carlyle House and more! Visit NOVA Parks on YouTube.

Historic Woodlawn and Frank Lloyd-Wright's Pope-Leighey House

Woodlawn has launched a hub – Makers and Creators: Cultivating Craft at Woodlawn - which allows you to connect with artists who specialize in a variety of mediums that are available for purchase. A great way to support independent artists while finding that special something for yourself or a loved one. www.woodlawnpopeleighey.org

National Museum of the United States Army

While the Museum's June 4, 2020 public opening has been delayed, they have a way to give future visitors a glimpse of what's in store. The featured exhibits section of their website allows you to see selected artifacts and the layout of the museum in an interactive way from the safety of home.

Other partner sites include: American Horticultural Society's River Farm, National Park Authority, Gum Springs Historical Society and Museum, Fort Belvoir and Mason Neck State Park. Visit their websites for more information. armyhistory.org

For more things to virtually explore around Fairfax County – visit Fairfax at Home.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Keeping Nursing Home Residents Safe

To the Editor

On behalf of the Centers for Medicare & Medicaid Services (CMS), I'd like to thank all those who work in nursing facilities -- doctors, nurses, food preparers, housekeepers, and others -- for their unwavering dedication to compassionately caring for the vulnerable residents who are relying on them during the COVID-19 pandemic. These facilities have been on the front lines

of the pandemic, and our hearts are with all of those who have been affected by this virus and their families.

We at CMS share the goal of keeping nursing facility residents safe and healthy. Under President Trump's leadership, we are using CMS's regulatory authority to facilitate residents' care and ensure that long-term care facilities have the guidance they need to prevent the spread of COVID-19.

The best thing nursing facilities can do to keep residents and themselves safe is to ensure they're following effective infection-control practices. These are outlined in our guidance and include recommendations that employees wash their hands properly; separate ill residents from well residents; use personal protective equipment correctly; get screened for illness; and stay home if they're sick.

By employing effective infection

control and prevention, coordinating with local and state health authorities, and showing patience and kindness to others, we can beat the virus, reopen America, and keep our nursing home residents safe and healthy.

Seema Verma
Administrator,
Centers for Medicare &
Medicaid Services
Washington, D.C.

VIEWPOINTS

What would you like to see happen before the area opens for business?

David Broder, President, SEIU Virginia 512 Fairfax:

"Workers are the backbone of our economy and our community. If we're going to emerge from this crisis safely and securely, workers need a real seat at the table. We need to ensure that every worker at every job has sufficient PPE, paid leave, and true living wages. We need to ensure that every worker has a clean worksite, and a real voice on the job to make sure employers are following CDC guidelines.

We need to ensure that every worker has access to free testing, as well as affordable, quality health care.

To do this, we're going to have to confront the fact that black, brown and AAPI workers and women have been disproportionately impacted because they have historically lacked even basic worker protections. If we can center workers, and if we can honestly address the inequities in our economy, we can emerge from this crisis stronger."



David Broder

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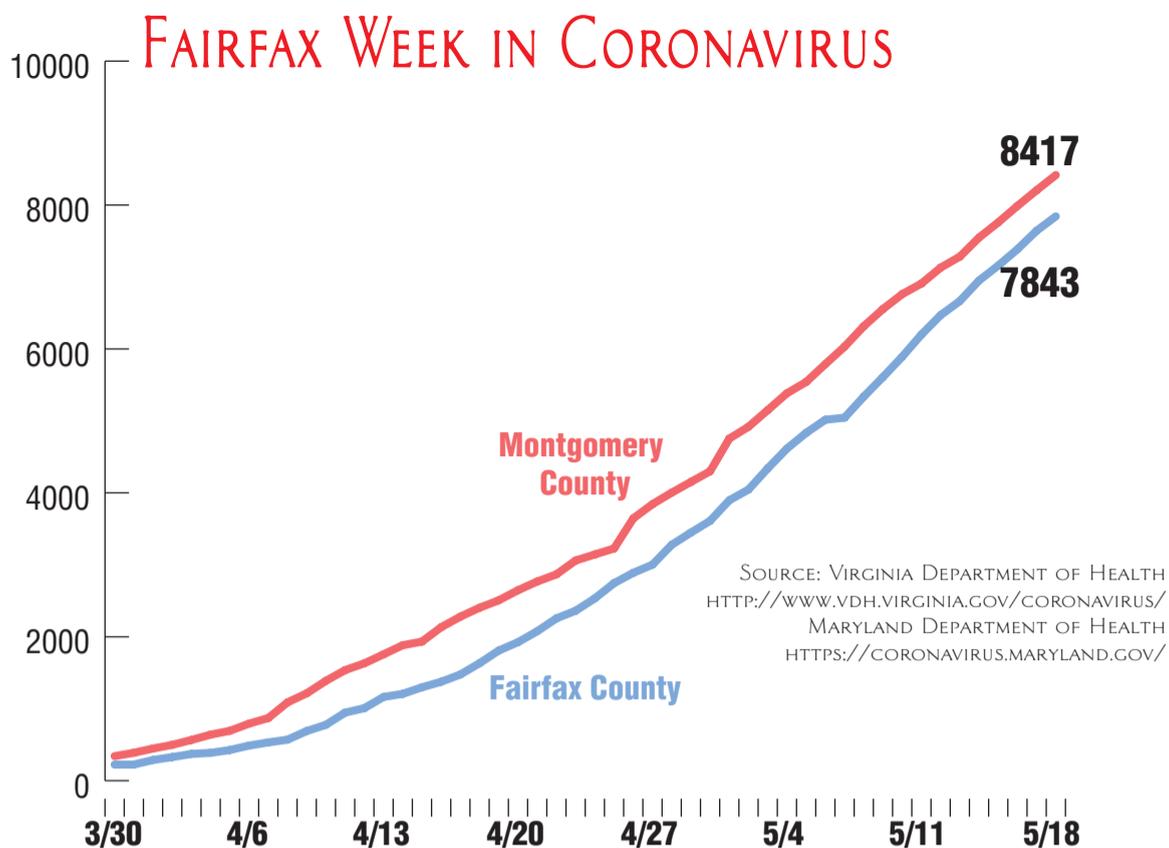
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Fairfax County cases increased more than 1,600 in last week, and Virginia rises more than 6,000 cases as most of the state eases restrictions.

MONDAY, MAY 18
 Fairfax County Cases: 7,843
 Virginia Cases: 31,140
 United States Cases: 1,480,349
 Fairfax County Deaths: 284
 Virginia Deaths: 1,014
 United States Deaths: 89,407

MONDAY, MAY 11
 Fairfax County Cases: 6,200
 Virginia Cases: 25,070
 United States Cases: 1,300,696
 Fairfax County Deaths: 243
 Virginia Deaths: 850
 United States Deaths: 78,771

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Online meeting participants included (top row, from left) City Clerk Melanie Crowder, City attorney Brian Lubkeman, Councilmember Sang Yi and City Manager Rob Stalzer; (middle row, from left) Councilmembers Jennifer Passey, Michael DeMarco and Jon Stehle, and Mayor David Meyer; and (bottom row, from left) Councilmember So Lim, Finance Director David Hodgkins and Councilmember Janice Miller.



Great Value for Citizens' Tax Dollars'

Fairfax City adopts budget for FY 21.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

It wasn't the bright, hopeful document they'd expected to pass before COVID-19 gripped the nation, but last Wednesday, May 13, Fairfax City Councilmembers approved the City's FY 2021 budget.

When City Manager Rob Stalzer first presented his proposed budget in February, it showed General Fund revenues and expenditures equaling \$153.6 million, rising 5.7 percent over FY 20. But in response to the virus – which caused sharp income losses for Fairfax residents, businesses, and the City, itself – he had to dramatically revamp and cut the budget.

Anticipating a \$17.7 million shortfall for FY 21, Stalzer recommended nearly \$3.5 million in operating cuts and \$1 million less in capital-project (CIP) expenditures. Fairfax's adopted FY 21 General Fund budget is \$135.6 million – \$9.7 million, or 6.7 percent, less than in FY 20.

THE TOTAL FY 21 budget for all City funds (General, Wastewater, Stormwater, Old Town Service District, Cable, and Capital) is \$166.8 million – a 1.8-percent decrease from FY 20. It also includes plans for \$5.5 million in short-term borrowing for the FY 21-25 CIP (Capital Improvement Program) of \$95 million, which could be done over multiple years.

Furthermore, the budget contains nearly \$8 million in expenditures held in reserve, such as funding for: 3.5-percent employee, merit-pay increases; more full-time positions; alleviating salary compression; two small-area plans; and reduced contract services and operating costs. Personnel actions include a hiring freeze, eliminating temporary positions, possible furloughs, layoffs and retirements; suspension of two holidays, and freezing overtime. Budgeted expenditures held in reserve will be evaluated quarterly, with the hope that as many as possible may be reinstated when the City's revenue picture improves.

However, the wastewater tax rate will increase 8 percent. Finance Director David Hodgkins said last week that doing so will generate an estimated \$650,000 for the City's wastewater fund. "With reve-

nue shrinking, we need to increase the rates to be able to pay our share of the wastewater-treatment plant maintenance," he explained.

Councilmember Sang Yi asked why the hike was necessary. If not, replied Hodgkins, "This would send our fund balance in the wrong direction, and the credit agencies might not like it. And it would increase our debt for FY 21." The Council then approved the increase, 4-2, with Yi and Councilmember So Lim voting no.

REGARDING THE REAL-ESTATE tax rate, Stalzer initially proposed a 3.25-cent increase, raising the current rate of \$1.075 per \$100 assessed valuation to \$1.1075. He later rescinded it, keeping it at \$1.075. Again, Yi balked, noting that "residents are hurting now" and many have filed for unemployment.

"People's home assessments have gone up, so they're paying more in taxes," said Yi. Arguing for a half-cent lower, real-estate tax rate, he said, "I just want to give people as much relief as possible. A couple hundred dollars to a family of four means a lot."

But Councilmember Michael DeMarco supported the rate increase. "I know it's a challenging time," he said. "[But] if things turn around, future Councils will still have to make tough decisions about what items to bring back from reserve."

"This year has been hijacked by COVID-19, and it's been a difficult and uncertain time," added Councilmember Janice Miller. "But because of the uncertainty, I believe we need to leave things in place so we can keep providing the services, like public safety, our residents are used to."

Ultimately, both this tax rate and the overall budget passed, by 5-1, with just Yi voting no. The budget also retained a 12-percent undesignated fund balance supporting the City's AAA bond rating.

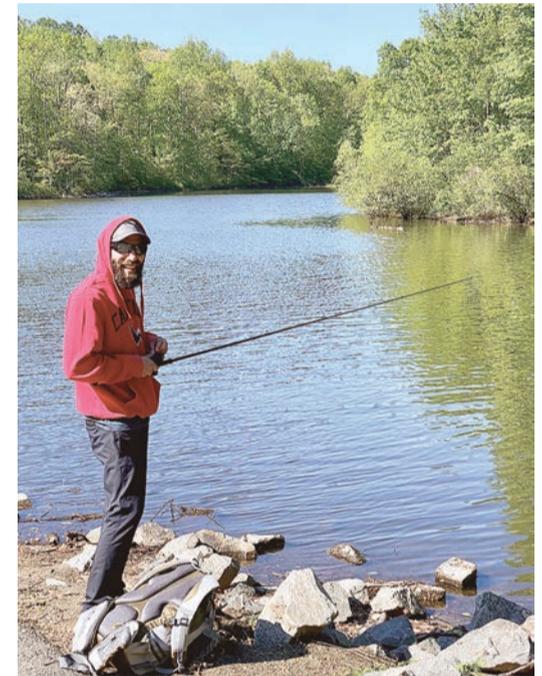
"The City and its residents get great value for what the citizens provide in taxes for leaf-and-trash pickup, snow removal and public safety," said Mayor David Meyer. "City staff always tries to make the most of the money we have, and the citizens recognize that. It's remarkable how much we do, for so many people, for a reasonable tax rate."

Out and About in the Area

Through the stay at home order, work and leisure activities continue for many area essential workers and residents.

— SUSAN LAUME

PHOTOS BY SUSAN LAUME/THE CONNECTION



Vick, of Springfield, tries out his new rod for bass and bluegill fishing at Huntsman Lake.



Eva Ziegler, Springfield, enjoys the Huntsman Lake trail as she walks with Henry and Piper.



Burke golfer, Kelly Towns, gets back in the swing at Laurel Hill Golf Club's driving range.



PHOTOS BY MIKE SALMON/THE CONNECTION

The Rinaldi family came in from Fairfax Station to join the birthday parade.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Connie Brown and Fred Weiderhold on the deck during the party on Saturday.

Burke Community on Parade for Veteran's 100th Birthday

Lots of honks, waves and social distancing.

BY MIKE SALMON
THE CONNECTION

A combat parachute drop on the island of Corregidor during World War II, followed by escaping the Chinese during the Korean War and then coronavirus pandemic cannot stop Fred Weiderhold, who celebrated his 100th birthday last Sunday to a huge parade of 246 cars full of well-wishers.

"Love it," said Weiderhold, who dedicated his birthday celebration to two buddies of his that did not survive the battle on Corregidor in 1944.

"I wish to god they were here," he said, as he sat out front on the driveway, enjoying all the horn honking, flag waving and a few salutes here and there from the crowd.

The whole birthday celebration started on Saturday, May 16, but the party was cut back due to the dangers of the virus. The impromptu event the next day was supposed to be a drive by of sorts, but somehow the word got out and it exploded. The staging area in the nearby parking lot of Cherry Run Elementary School was full in no time. Everyone stayed in their cars, and were led to the Weiderhold's house by a pair of Burke fire trucks.

"I didn't expect this outcome," said Zada Martin, a neighbor that was credited with spreading the word. "People still care about their veterans," she added.

The festivities included an Army soldier in dress blues who stepped out to salute, a car full of Boy Scouts, signs, flowers, horns, and a truck from Mission Barbecue that brought a box full of sandwiches for everyone. "It's really overwhelming," said Mike Weider-



The kids on bikes group waited for their turn to parade by the Weiderhold residence.



Zada Martin, right, with her son Isaac and husband Michael in the Cherry Run Elementary School parking lot, that acted as the parade staging area.



The Grosvenor family jumped in their 1967 Mercedes Benz "Unimog," vehicle which was a military vehicle used for an ambulance or fire fighting.

hold, remembering a promise several years ago from his father that he would make it at least to the age of 100. "My dad's tough, he makes a promise, he keeps it, now he'll need some new goal," he said.

Fred Weiderhold was the youngest of 12 children in upstate Michigan that was born in 1920, and joined the Civilian Conservation Corps during the great depression where he learned teamwork and discipline. Then it was on to the U.S. Army Airborne School and World War II. He made three parachute drops into combat during the war.

He left the Army but reenlisted and went to Korea when that war started as well. After the war, he stayed in the Army and was stationed at Fort Belvoir for part of his time. He finally retired from the Army in 1967, and was in the federal government for years until retirement in 1983.

Parade of Well Wishers

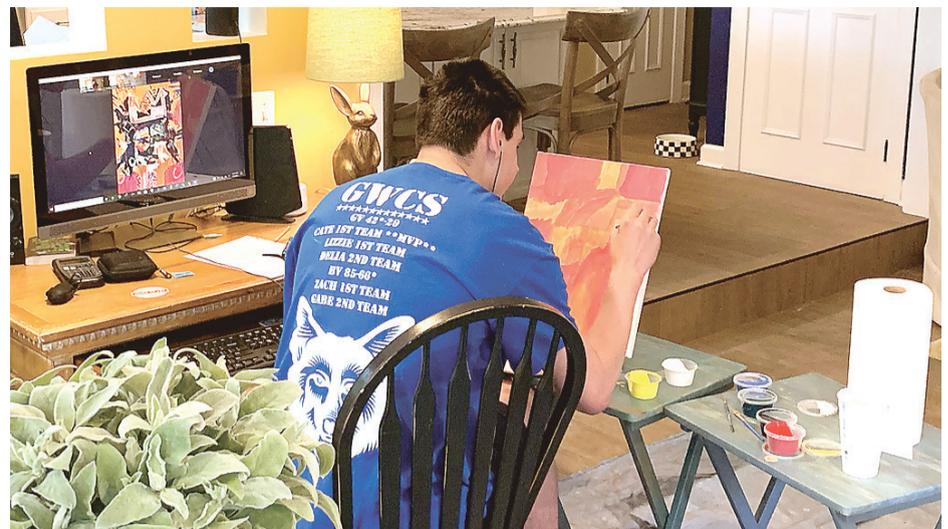
The parade participants noted his time with the Army, and some recognized him as a hero, including Dean Latham who rode in on motorcycles with the Patriot Guard Riders. "I wanted to pay tribute to this hero," he said. He was with fellow motorcyclist Douglas Thompson, who rode with the Herndon-Dulles Riders Group. "We do this stuff for veterans all the time," Thompson said.

A neighbor was happy to see all the outpouring. The Weiderhold family has a disabled son too so they put much time into caring for these two. "It's amazing, what he has done for us," said Adriana Latham. "This is something we can do," she added.

West Springfield resident Amonica Hubbard sang the national anthem at the end, and everyone on the court sang happy birthday, as Fred tipped his hat to the crowd.



Out of the Box (OBX) Friday: Zoom class on Basquiat and Self-Portraits.



Gabe Kimmel-Senior from Fairfax, working on his self-portrait, inspired by artist, Jean-Michel Basquiat.

PHOTOS BY JOAN BRADY

Now, For Something Completely Different

At the GW Community School, distancing doesn't mean disconnecting.

BY JOAN BRADY
THE CONNECTION

School started the way it always had on March 19, with advisories, groggy students and a few snarky jokes. But instead of staring at a teacher, everyone was staring at a screen. The COVID-19 lockdown had begun.

Students at the GW Community School were thrilled to be there.

"We had only missed a few days of school," said history teacher Tim Connelly. "But with everything going on, it felt desperate and lonely. Everyone was so excited to see [each other]. There was a sense of normalcy. We had history class. We were making jokes."

Founded by teachers Alexa Warden and Richard Goldie, GW Community School is a private college preparatory high school. "GWCS students are bright, motivated, often non-traditional learners who don't necessarily fit into the big public high school mold," said Warden, school director. "They may have felt that there was something missing in their previous school environment, a missing connection that kept them from realizing their full selves."

That connection is what they find at GWCS. They become part of the family.

With an average class size of seven, GWCS's 41 students take classes in everything from English to astrophysics and choose from an assortment of extracurriculars, including a basketball team, a theater group and many clubs.

Warden says it's important for kids to have a sense of belonging. So community is core to the school's philosophy. Students are encouraged to help each other, their families and the community at large. Teachers and administrators are expected to model that behavior.

Anthony Parisi, a senior from McLean,



COURTESY OF RODNEY WHITLOCK

10th Grader Matthew Whitlock of Arlington, during school hours.

feels the difference: "Public high school can be lonely. But here, it's one big group ... a community, like the name implies."

The approach to academics focuses on igniting students' interests and passions. Parisi's mother, Suzanne, can't say enough about the impact the school has had on her son's excitement for learning, just since September. "All of a sudden it was like seeing the energy and enthusiasm I had seen in him in grade school," she said. "That [energy] had slowly drained out of him over the years."

For senior Gabe Kimmel of Fairfax, the reason for the school's success is simple, "It's a community," he said. "You support each other and that helps you want to learn."

The GWCS students and their parents didn't waste any time stressing over a shutdown that would ultimately disrupt the education of Virginia's nearly 1.6 million school-age children. Jay Mestraud, a student from Clifton, had confidence in the school's director, saying he "knew not to worry, because Ms. Warden is always super prepared."

And, in fact, Warden had recognized early in the COVID crisis that GWCS needed to move quickly to be prepared in case the school was forced to close.

So, weeks before Virginia schools were shuttered, Warden orchestrated Microsoft Team downloads and updates on every student and teacher's computer. And with one local student already quarantining at home and teachers testing distance learning methods by operating from remote classrooms,



Ana Parker, a junior from Arlington, enjoying some outdoor time during our Zoom interview.

the team was able to troubleshoot the technology.

Warden recognized that technology would be just one of the pieces that would ensure success. Students would need structure and a continued sense of community to energize

them for the rest of the school year.

March 12 was the last day the brick-and-mortar school was open, and Warden and the staff worked to adapt the curriculum as needed. So by March 19, it was business as usual with full-day, live education for all GWCS students.

While many public and private schools struggled with the transition to remote learning, GWCS students quickly learned that there would be no lowering of academic performance expectations, said Goldie, who, in addition to being a co-founder, also serves as the school's assistant director, teacher and coach.

BEFORE THE pandemic, Fridays during the school's fourth quarter were a big deal. Juniors and seniors would go to internships, while freshmen and sophomores engaged in carefully crafted outings. Something had to be created to replace those experiences. It was critical that social distancing didn't result in social disconnecting.

The result was the new-for-Covid-19 version of the "Out of the Box" Friday program, which was kicked off by an all-school Zoom call. On Fridays, Warden splits the students into teams and they are given an activity to complete, and sometimes there's competition between teams. For Earth Day, they used the seek app (iNaturalist) to document biodiversity in their yards and neighborhoods and then analyzed and documented the data together.

Last week, English and math teacher Sam Wallace introduced the work of the late

artist Jean-Michel Basquiat and, led by artists from Artjamz, the students completed self-portraits inspired by Basquiat's style. In preparation, parents and guardians had picked up art kits from a central location.

Ana Parker, a junior from Arlington, started at GWCS just after they began distance learning. She said she "used to dread the idea of going to school on Mondays." But at GWCS, despite not having met any of the other students face to face, they were quick to draw her in. She was immediately invited to the weekly Zoom movie night that one of the students had organized, which she really appreciated. And, while Parker says she, "doesn't love school, the way some people do, [she] loves this school."

GWCS parent Lisa Kimmel said she is "blown away with how the school has handled the remote learning. And how quick they were to adapt to it. It's been an overwhelming success."

"Creating predictable structure and normalcy is very important for young people," said Jackie L. Stout, a Herndon-based trauma specialist. "Especially at a time when the uncertainty caused by the pandemic can increase stress levels. And GWCS's actions benefit not just the students, but the entire family. Knowing that kids are focused constructively during the day minimizes potential tension between family members."

Suzanne Parisi acknowledged that she "doesn't know anyone who is having an educational experience that is even close to what her son, Anthony, is getting." That can make talking to less-satisfied parents a challenge, "I try to edit myself," she said, "so they don't get bummed out."

The school is definitely unusual, but it's hard to argue with the results. All fourteen 2020 GWCS graduates have plans to attend college programs. That is, if the world goes back to normal in the fall.

And graduates are successfully launched.

Ben Suskind of McLean, who graduated from GWCS in 2019, says his classes and teachers set him up for success in college. But what he really appreciated was "having the time and freedom to explore [his] interest in aviation because GWCS doesn't waste time with busy work." Suskind recent-

SEE A+, PAGE 11

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Centreville Man Charged in Female Jogger's Assault

Fairfax County police have arrested a 21-year-old Centreville man in connection with an assault last week on a woman jogging in Franconia. He is Vincent Wesley, and police charged him with malicious wounding and strangulation.



Wesley

Officers responded, last Wednesday, May 13, to the 6600 block of Audrey Kay Court, around 10:30 a.m., after a report of a woman being assaulted. She told police she was jogging on a trail near the end of Thomas Grant Drive when an unknown man began attacking her. A witness came to her aid and the man ran away. The woman was taken to the hospital and treated for serious injuries that were not life-threatening.

After searching the area, officers identified and arrested Wesley nearby. He was then taken to the Fairfax County Adult Detention Center and held without bond. Meanwhile, police continue to seek information about this incident. Anyone with information about it – or having home-surveillance video of Wesley in the area – is asked to call Det. P Edwards of the Franconia District Station, Criminal Investigations Section, at 703-277-2466.

Tips may also be submitted anonymously via Crime Solvers by phoning 1-866-411-TIPS (866-411-8477), texting FCCS plus the tip to 847411, or going to <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>. Tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100-\$1,000 for information leading to an arrest.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Detectives Investigate After Decomposed Body Found in Fairfax Station

Detectives are investigating after a body was discovered May 16 evening in a wooded area near the 7500 block of Lee Chapel Road in Fairfax Station. Officers responded shortly after 5 p.m. when a hiker found a body in an advanced stage of decomposition. The body was transported to the Office of the Chief Medical Examiner where an autopsy will determine cause and manner of death. Identification is pending further investigation and next of kin notification.

This is an active investigation and detectives returned to the scene next morning to continue processing evidence. Preliminarily, detectives do not believe

this was a random act of violence and there is no apparent threat to public safety.

Detectives are asking for anybody with information about this case to contact the Major Crimes Bureau at 703-246-7800, option 4. Tips can also be submitted anonymously through Crime Solvers by visiting <http://www.fairfaxcrimesolvers.org/>, or text-a-tip by texting "TIP187" plus your message to CRIMES (274637). Anonymous tipsters are eligible for cash rewards of \$100 to \$1000 dollars if their information leads to an arrest.

For ongoing updates, please read our blog and follow us on Twitter, Facebook and Instagram at @FairfaxCountyPD

WEEK IN FAIRFAX

Free Face Masks for Fairfax City Businesses

To help slow the spread of COVID-19 and support our community, Fairfax City's Economic Development Authority (EDA) is providing 500 free cloth face masks to City businesses on a first-come, first served basis. Businesses may request up to five face masks, while supplies last.

The machine-washable masks were made by Fairfax City business, Sundog Productions and feature the City logo. They're 100-percent cotton and are contoured with two sets of ear holes to fit most adults and children. The EDA invested \$1,500 in

this initiative, which is part of its COVID-19 Recovery Program designed to support businesses during and after the pandemic.

"Our City businesses have shown creativity and solidarity during this time, and we're proud of each and every one of them," said Economic Development Director Chris Bruno. "We thank them for all they do – and we're here for them, like they are for us."

Fairfax City businesses may request masks by emailing EDAInfo@fairfaxva.gov. They may also purchase additional masks directly from Sundog Productions.

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Parks Reopening Begins in Time for Memorial Day Weekend

The Park Authority has begun reopening of parking lots and parks in the park system to be open for the Memorial Day weekend. Park Authority staff will begin the process of clearing barricades and opening parking lots at all 427 parks for the community on Wednesday, May 20 through Friday, May 22. These parks will reopen for limited use in accordance with COVID-19 safety guidelines from the Virginia Governor's office and the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

All facilities and restrooms will remain closed at this time.

"We greatly appreciate the patience and cooperation shown by County residents during this closure," said Park Authority Executive Director Kirk Kincannon. "We understand this has been a challenge to many who enjoy the park system on a regular basis. And it will be important that everyone follows the safety and physical distancing guidelines recommended by health authorities."

Park visitors are asked to adhere to the physical distancing guidelines and small group guidelines (do not exceed ten people), to avoid closed facilities or apparatus, and to keep in mind that restrooms and park buildings will not be open at this time.

There are certain amenities that will remain closed at this time due in large measure to health safety concerns. Park Authority amenities that are closed are:

- Restrooms and all portable restrooms
- Dog parks
- All playgrounds including Clemyjontri Park and Chessie's Big Backyard
- Nature centers, visitor centers, horticultural centers, and RECenters
- Volleyball and basketball courts
- Athletic fields
- Water fountains are turned off

To get the latest information about how the coronavirus is impacting parks and find answers to many frequently asked questions, go to the FCPA Coronavirus Response page on the Park Authority website. For more information, contact the Park Authority at 703-324-8700 or send an email to parkmail@fairfaxcounty.gov.

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COURTESY OF TIM CONNELLY

History teacher Tim Connelly and his son Jackson showing what GWCS Zoom lunches are like from their house.

Now, For Something Completely Different

FROM PAGE 8

ly finished his freshman year in the Aviation Flight Science program at Western Michigan University.

Another member of the class of 2019, Centreville's Gabriella Holtermann, said she has found college challenging, but has taken lessons learned at GWCS to successfully seek support from her college advisors at The American University, where she's pursuing a double major in anthropology and international studies.

Max Ginsberg of Fairfax, class of 2017, remembers well a time when crippling social anxiety kept him from making meaningful connections with peers. Moving to GWCS for his sophomore year, Ginsburg says, "the family environment is the key reason [I] did well there."

In the face of the welcoming acceptance he felt from the other students he said "[his] nervous shell dissolved away." Ginsberg is a rising senior at Davis and Elkins College, W. Va., with a major in psychology and a minor in theater.

In hours of interviews, there was not even a hint of criticism of the school. In fact, the gushing from parents and students was over the top.

About the only possible dent in the armor seemed to be when one student mentioned that Warden sometimes yelled at the school's pet turtles.

So when I sent Warden a list of mundane follow-up questions, I tucked one devious one in: "What do the turtles do to make you angry?"

Her response: "I never get mad at the turtles. I love them."

When I went back to my source with some follow-up questions, I could almost hear freshman Jay Mestraud's infectious laugh in his typed reply, "Ms. Warden doesn't yell at them in anger she just gives them a stern talking to because they are mischievous and get up to all kinds of things. ... Kinda like her students."

That's just how it is when you are a family.

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Time Will Tell



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

Nearly three weeks into my low iodine diet, in preparation for my hospital overnight on May 28 when I will get my radioactive iodine therapy to be followed immediately by a medical quarantine at home for a week, I wouldn't say I'm thriving. More like persevering. I can't really satiate eating "rabbit" food and what culinary pleasures I can enjoy, I can only have them in small quantities and infrequently at that. I won't give you a list, but just consider what any 10-year-old likes to eat.

As you might imagine, I've lost some weight. Granted, it was weight I could afford to lose. And though I'm not exactly a shell of my former self, I am hardly the man I once was. Nevertheless, as my friend Frank would say: "I'm in pretty good shape for the shape I'm in." And the shape I'm in, and the diet I'm following and all the medical appointments I'm going on is to find and kill my remaining papillary thyroid cancer, the 15% or so the otolaryngologist was unable to get to on my Jan. 29th thyroidectomy.

The purpose of this treatment/activity is to locate and simultaneously eradicate the papillary thyroid cancer tumors still in my body. And since papillary thyroid cancer is called the "friendly cancer" because it is generally curable, I'm not worried about the outcome of all that I've described. However, there is an associated element to this treatment which is more important and potentially life changing.

It's possible, according to my oncologist, that my lung cancer tumors may in medical fact, be thyroid cancer tumors. Not unusual since cancer often moves throughout the body. So on paper, one can have thyroid cancer in the lungs. The thyroid cancer treatment I'm presently undergoing will be the final determination on whether the tumors in my lungs are actually thyroid cancer which migrated or still lung cancer. If the tumors are identified as lung cancer then all goes along much as it has for the past 11 years. However, if the tumors are identified as thyroid cancer, and they are all eliminated by this procedure, then a new day has dawned and life will indeed go on, much as it hasn't since late February, 2009 when I was first diagnosed.

And though I've just written it, it's really too much to consider. After living on an emotional precipice since receiving a "13 month to two year" prognosis 11-plus years ago, the thought of living a non-cancer-centric life/return to normal life expectancy is disjuncting almost. To say it would change everything minimizes the word 'change.' 'Change would barely describe the effect. I'd be reborn almost with an entirely new lease on life.

It's what all "terminal" patients dare not dream: the miracle cure, the medical mix-up, the you're-free-to-go sendoff.

It's early days though and premature until I'm told otherwise. And 'otherwise will be told sometime in early June when I will have had my post-thyroid-treatment CT scan and then the follow-up appointment with my endocrinologist who will explain the findings. Only after learning these details and then discussing them with my oncologist will I know what the future holds.

Right now, my future is a cut-up apple, a four-ounce burger for dinner with no bread or cheese, some kind of vegetable, unsalted kettle potato chips, (thank God for them) and no dessert. To say this list compares favorably to my pre-low-iodine diet is the understatement of the year. The overstatement of the year is come early June I'm likely to be cancer free.

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