

Black, Male and Arrested Alexandria's war on drugs hits black males hardest.

BY MICHAEL LEE POPE
GAZETTE PACKET

When Harold Cook arrived at the Longview Terrace Apartments one summer day three years ago, he had no idea he was about to find himself, a Black man, in the middle of Alexandria's war on drugs. Cook was caring for an ailing fiancée, and he was bringing a basket of her laundry from her apartment to his truck when he was confronted by a white police officer. As he approached the truck, he put an unlit cigarette in his pocket so he could get his keys. According to a lawsuit filed in federal court, that aroused the suspicion of a white police officer.

"This is a case of holding a cigarette while black," the lawsuit says.

Alexandria Police Officer Brandon Smith ordered Cook to stop and began questioning him. According to the lawsuit, the officer repeatedly accused him of having drugs and demanded to know what was in his pockets. Cook said that he didn't have any drugs. But, according to the lawsuit, the officer handcuffed Cook and searched him before taking his driver's license to check for outstanding warrants. The lawsuit says Cook was detained and in handcuffs for almost half an hour, charging racial profiling and violating his constitutional rights.

"He was simply a perfectly normal man attending to perfectly normal everyday activities. Then Officer Smith drove up," the lawsuit explains. "Officer Smith believed Mr. Cook was a drug user or distributor solely by reason of being African American and being in an apartment complex in which a majority of residents were African American and lower income."

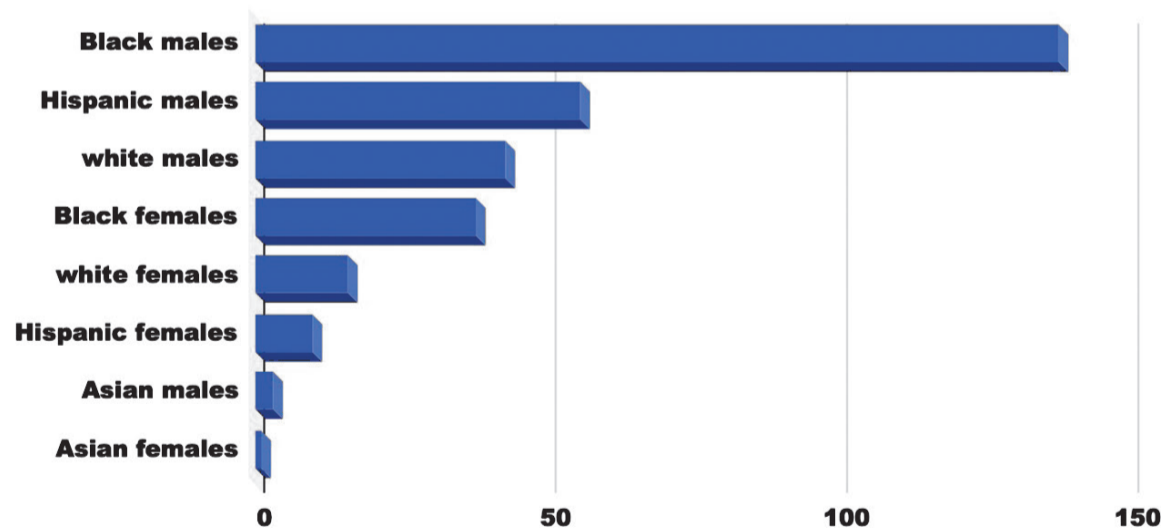
After being released, Cook called his brother, Earl Cook, who was chief of police at the time. Then he filed a formal complaint against Smith, which launched an Internal Affairs investigation. Chief Cook recused himself, and the investigation concluded that the officer engaged in racial profiling. Smith was let go from the Police Department in 2018.

But many people in the department believed the finding of racial



Longview Terrace Apartments is tucked away in a leafy corner of the Taylor Run neighborhood. In 2017, it was the location where a white police officer handcuffed a black man and falsely accused him of carrying drugs.

Drug Arrests in 2019



source: Alexandria Police Department

profiling was in error. When Michael Brown replaced Cook last year, the new chief reversed the decision and rehired Smith, who is now a detective.

"It was determined there were some deficiencies in the investigation that did not support the findings in accordance with legal stan-



Michael Brown



Bryan Porter



Christopher Harris

dards used in establishing bias," explained Brown.

DOCUMENTS OUTLINING Alex-

andria's war on drugs show how the interaction between Cook and Smith reveal the complicated intersection between race relations and law enforcement. According to the Alexandria Police Department, 64 percent of people arrested in Alexandria for drug arrests last year were African Amer-

ican. Almost half of those arrests were Black males. Across Virginia, Black people are 3.4 times more likely to be arrested for marijuana possession, according to a recent report from the American Civil Liberties Union, which also found that arrests for possession of marijuana make up about 52 percent of drug arrests.

Chief Brown says in his experience drug arrests are often influenced by substance abuse.

"Putting somebody into a court or a jail facility doesn't always help that problem. Putting a cop on it doesn't always help it either," said Brown. "The best treatment is the treatment in the social services system, and this city has a very robust social services system. I'd much rather see them go there than go to jail. But sometimes you've got nowhere else to put them and no one who's going to be able to treat them."

It's not just drug arrests that are disproportionate. Documents from the Alexandria Police Department show most arrests in the city are of black people. Of the 4,300 arrests in Alexandria last year, about 2,300 of them were of African Americans. That's disproportionate for a city that's only 23 percent black, although police officials note that many of those arrests were not of people who live in the city. Brown says his department is currently digging through the data to figure out why these numbers are so lopsided, and what his department can do about it.

"We have no red flags that show our officers are being biased," said Brown. "But if we're looking at that number at its face value, I want to make really sure we're not doing something that is biased."

EARLIER THIS YEAR, the General Assembly passed a bill to decriminalize marijuana, an effort led by two prominent members of the Alexandria delegation, House Majority Leader Charniele Herring and state Sen. Adam Ebbin (D-30). Gov. Ralph Northam signed the bill. Advocates for criminal justice reform are hopeful the new law would reduce mass incarceration rates that have been a burden to the black community since the war on drugs was launched by President

SEE BLACK, MALE, PAGE 4

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NEWS

Engin Artemel Dies at 81 Former Director of Planning spearheaded waterfront development.

BY JEANNE THEISMANN
GAZETTE PACKET

The story is one of family legend. When Engin Artemel first arrived in the United States from Istanbul, Turkey, he had \$20 in his pocket and virtually no English in his vocabulary. It was 1958 and Artemel was embarking on what would become an influential and international career that forever changed Alexandria's historic waterfront.

A certified urban and environmental planner with additional degrees in architecture and civil engineering, Artemel served as the Director of the City of Alexandria Department of Planning from 1997-1984. During that time, he spearheaded negotiations between the city, federal agencies, the private sector and residents to transform a decaying, industrial waterfront into one of open space and public access along the Potomac River. Named a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2009 for his efforts, Artemel died June 17 at his Alexandria home at the age of 81.

Engin Mehmet Artemel was born in Ankara, Turkey, on July 31, 1938 to parents Mehmet Ali Artemel and Fatma Belkis (Osten) Artemel. He graduated from Istanbul's Galatasaray High School, Turkey's oldest private school, before moving to California to study at Santa Ana College. He earned a degree in architecture at Cal Poly in San Luis Obispo, and master's degrees in urban planning and civil engineering at the University of Kansas in Lawrence.

After completing his studies in Kansas, Artemel returned to Istanbul to fulfill his Turkish military service as a naval officer. He began his career with the City of Alexandria shortly after his return to the United States in 1973.

As Director of Planning, Artemel took a contingent to study waterfronts in Europe. To Artemel, an important part of the development process was educating the public and decision-makers about the issues.



front area, including the Torpedo Factory, the Canal Lock at Montgomery Street, Oronoco Bay Park and Waterfront Park.

A plaque in appreciation of Artemel's lasting efforts to preserve the waterfront was dedicated in 2016 and can be seen near the gazebo at the City Marina. After leaving the public sector, Artemel continued to be involved in urban planning and development through his consulting firm Artemel International. He advised municipal governments in the Middle East, Eastern Europe, and across the former Soviet Union on urban planning issues, including waterfront design, tourism, and infrastructure development.

Artemel is survived by his wife Agnes; children, Steve Lollman, Suzan Saracoglu (Ugur), Deniz Artemel (Ste-

“Sit down with an educated public and develop your plans with them.”

— Former director of Planning Engin Artemel

PHOTO BY NINA TSARA

Engin Artemel, a Living Legend of Alexandria in 2009, died June 17 at the age of 81.

“First, study the past; then ask for public input. Bring everyone together to hear from the experts so the public gets to see the possibilities. Sit down with an educated public and develop your plans with them,” Artemel said when honored as a Living Legend.

In his role as Planning Director, Artemel coordinated all public and private sector planning and development on the Alexandria waterfront during a significant period of transition for the City. During this time, the waterfront area began to transition from

a heavy industrial and warehouse center to a more diverse economic base focused on recreation, open space, scenic vistas and a vibrant mix of residential, commercial and office uses.

Through his expertise on waterfront issues, he assisted in negotiating complex waterfront title suit settlement agreements and the formation of waterfront principles used to guide waterfront planning. He was instrumental in preserving important historic resources and open space along the water-

phen Morgan), Sibel (Recep), and Ali John Pierre Artemel; and grandchildren Necati and Jenna. A previous marriage to Janice Finch Artemel ended in divorce in 1983.

Private interment was held at Ivy Hill Cemetery on June 19. A memorial service will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, Deniz Artemel said that her father would have wanted to be remembered by taking a stroll to “enjoy his beloved Old Town Alexandria waterfront.”



PHOTOS BY JEANNE THEISMANN/GAZETTE PACKET

Engin Artemel, right, celebrates with Office of Historic Alexandria Director Gretchen Bulova during the 2018 Friendship Firehouse Festival.



PHOTO COURTESY DENIZ ARTEMEL

Former City Planning director Engin Artemel died at his home June 17 at the age of 81.



Engin Artemel, left, is shown at a celebration of his 80th birthday in 2018. With him is former Mayor Bill Euille.

Black, Male and Arrested

FROM PAGE 1

dent Richard Nixon. But a recent study from the ACLU found that in every state that has decriminalized marijuana, black people are still more likely to be arrested for possession than white people.

“Black Americans are disproportionately arrested because we have a racist system that over-criminalizes whole communities where the police are present at levels that they’re not present where white people are smoking marijuana,” said Claire Gastanaga, executive director of the ACLU of Virginia. “We have a racist system, and the racist system is structured to put more black people in jail and prison, and it’s structured to make sure when that happens they can’t vote and don’t have any civic power.”

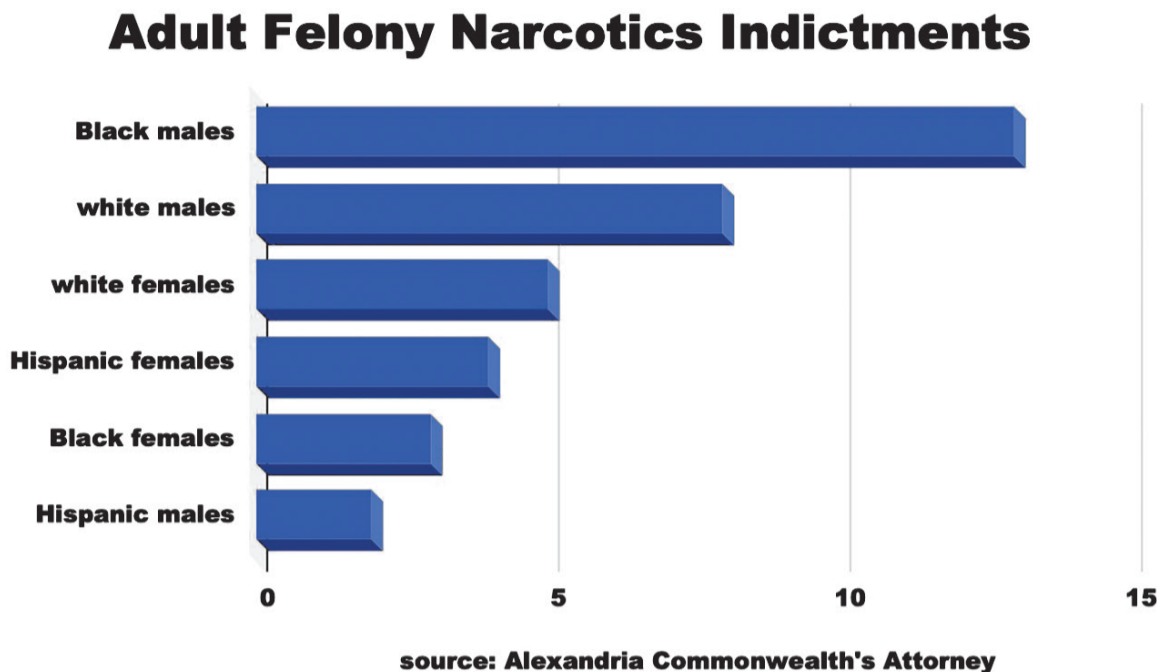
For a while during the Obama administration, it seemed that marijuana arrests were on the decline as a growing number of states decriminalized. But then, in 2015, that trend reversed. The FBI reports more marijuana arrests in 2018 than in 2015, despite the fact that eight states legalized marijuana for recreational use or decriminalized possession during that time.

Here in Alexandria, Chief Brown is reaching out to groups like the NAACP to have them participate in a community action team to make sure that more voices are at the table for decisions that guide policing in the city.

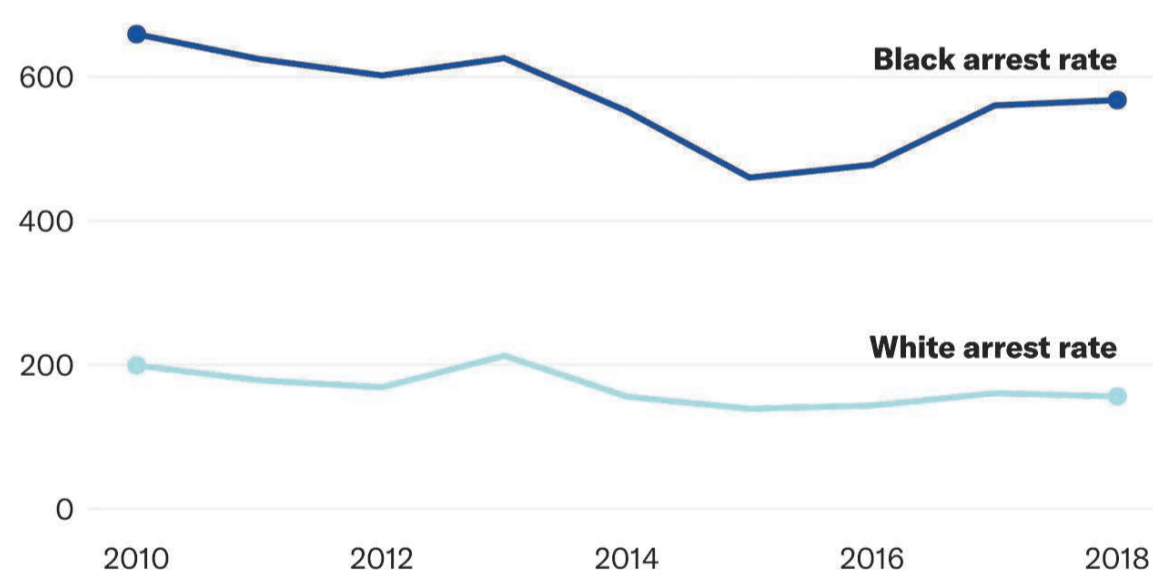
“Being on these committees and being actively involved in policy goes a long way,” said Christopher Harris, president of the Alexandria NAACP. “I have a confidence in the police department that I have rarely had in all my years in Alexandria, and I believe that Chief Brown and his department are being proactive to try to wane these numbers and decrease these arrests.”

RACIAL DISPARITIES also exist at the courthouse, where black males arrested for drugs must defend themselves against prosecutors. Most of those are misdemeanor cases, which are handled in the General District Court. Sometimes they are handled with diversion programs, but often they end up leaving a record that can cause people a hard time getting a job or finding a place to live. The more serious cases are felony crimes handled by the Circuit Court, where Commonwealth’s Attorney Bryan Porter says about half are of African Americans.

“I think it’s very apparent that there are disparities built into the system,” said Porter, “and I think



Rates of Black and White Marijuana Possession Arrests per 100k People



Source: FBI/Uniform Crime Reporting Program Data

Note: Florida and Washington, D.C. did not provide data.

it’s important for people in a position like mine to acknowledge that and to do what we can to address them.”

One strategy he uses to accomplish that goal is decreasing the number of felony cases that come out of his office.

Three years ago, Porter says, his office indicted about 400 felonies. Last year, he says, he was able to get that number down to about 300. This year, he says, his office is on course to bring that number down to 200, although he acknowledges that part of this year’s reduction was the result of COVID-19.

Porter says part of the reason

he was able to cut the number of felony indictments in half was because by changing them to less serious charges or diverting them out of the criminal justice system altogether.

“The idea is to wherever possible avoid incarceration and get people services for mental health problems and substance abuse problems, which are often colocated,” said Porter. “I think it’s important for all of us to look at numbers because they do paint a somewhat bleak picture. But it’s obviously important for us to know that so we can continue to address, reduce and hopefully one day eliminate these disparities.”

MORE PEOPLE are arrested for simple drug possession in the United States than for any other crime, according to a recent report from Human Rights Watch. The 2016 report was titled “Every 25 Seconds” because that’s the frequency people are funneled into the criminal justice system, the report found. Ultimately, the group concluded, the long-term consequences of waging a racially imbalanced war on drugs is separating people from families, excluding people from jobs and making people dependent on welfare assistance and public housing.

“There is no good reason for narcotics to be illegal, and it just

becomes an excuse to criminalize people and it leads to all these other highly negative effects,” said John Raphling, a senior researcher at Human Rights Watch. “We need to end the drug war, and we need to find better ways to support communities than policing.”

Here in Alexandria, the numbers show a disparity that has many city leaders asking questions about equity and justice. Alexandria police could shed some light on the circumstances behind individual arrests, but so far the department has declined to offer that level of transparency. City Council members are talking about establishing a police review board, but the details about who would be on it or what kind of oversight abilities it would be able to exercise have yet to be worked out. Ultimately, the dialogue about racial disparities in the criminal justice system isn’t as easy as plugging numbers into a spreadsheet and calculating a ratio.

“In the current environment, people assume that racial bias and racial profiling lead to higher arrests and higher levels of interaction with the police. That could be true, either on the margins or as a systemic problem. However, it could be true there are innumerable other factors,” said Rich Kelsey, former assistant dean at the George Mason University School of Law. “Drugs, crime, and interaction with police tend to be a function of economic circumstance and desperation, which also contributes to disproportionate numbers affecting people of color.”

THE DEBATE about racial profiling is an area where some people see more shades of gray than black and white. Back in 2017, the City Council agreed to pay \$100,000 to settle the federal lawsuit brought by Harold Cook alleging that an Alexandria police officer who handcuffed him and falsely accused him of carrying drugs was guilty of racial profiling. Under the settlement, Smith and the city did not admit to any wrongdoing.

“Most black people are not arrested, and few are killed by police.

But lots and lots of them, all of them, likely, have suffered directly or indirectly from the slings and arrows of, at least, cultural and institutional racism,” said Victor Glasberg, the lawyer who represented Harold Cook. “The latter receives less dramatic press than the deaths, but it is embedded in our culture and is pernicious. That is what has to change.

NEWS

Alexandria City Council Prohibits Firearms on City Property

Following a public hearing June 20, the Alexandria City Council unanimously adopted an ordinance prohibiting firearms and ammunition in City facilities, parks and areas requiring special event permits. Effective July 1, it will be a Class 1 misdemeanor to possess, carry or transport firearms or ammunition in any building, park or recreational or community facility owned or operated by the City for governmental purposes; or at any special event requiring a permit and being held on a City public street, road, alley, sidewalk or public right of way. The ordinance also applies to City employees, agents or volunteers in workplaces that are owned, operated or managed by the City.

Exemptions from the ordinance include military personnel acting within the scope of their official duties; sworn law enforcement officers; private security personnel hired by the City; museum exhibits and historical re-enactments involving unloaded firearms; and official Senior Reserve Officer Training Corps (ROTC) and collegiate sports programs.

A similar City ban on firearms in the 1990s was overturned by a law passed by the Virginia General Assembly in 2002, which prohibited localities from regulating firearms in their buildings. The General Assembly reversed this policy during the 2020 legislative session, permitting localities to regulate firearms and ammunition in public buildings, parks and special event areas requiring permits. The City is the first jurisdiction in Virginia to adopt such an ordinance under the new law.

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SATURDAY/JUNE 27

Free Mask Distribution. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. At Commonwealth Baptist Church parking lot, 700 Commonwealth Ave., Alexandria. To help stop the spread of COVID-19, Alexandria Boy Scout Troop 135 is producing and distributing T-shirt masks for the Rosemont community. These masks will be available for pickup, free of charge. Email: jacksondevallance@gmail.com.

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It's Time to Rename Pickett Street

In 1953, the Alexandria City Council renamed more than 30 streets for Confederate military leaders after it annexed a portion of Fairfax County.

At the time, Virginia was a segregated state with segregated public schools, facilities, and transportation. It is obvious that the renaming of these streets for Confederate military leaders was not because of their military achievements. Rather it was a deliberate racist response to send a message to the civil rights movement that was starting to gain traction.

Some argue that renaming streets, schools, and military bases currently named for Confederates is erasing history. That's absurd. It doesn't erase the thousands of books written about the Confederacy and Civil War. But it does help to erase something else – systemic racism.

I commend the Alexandria City Council for changing the name of Jefferson Davis Highway to Richmond Highway. But more Alexandria streets should be renamed, starting with Pickett Street.

Confederate Brigadier General George Pickett is no military hero. He is best known for the bloodbath that was "Pickett's Charge" at the Battle of Gettysburg. Pickett's brigades sustained heavy losses during the assault. More than half of his troops were killed, wounded, or captured, including his three brigade commanders and all 13 regimental commanders. Pickett survived because he positioned himself well to the rear of his troops.

After Gettysburg, Pickett commanded Confederate troops in North Carolina. Following a Confederate defeat at the Battle of New Bern, NC, Pickett ordered the execution by hanging of 22 captured Union soldiers who were from North Carolina, but chose to join the Union Army instead of the Confederate Army.

Following the Civil War, Pickett fled to Canada fearing that he would be tried as a war criminal. He returned to the United States one year later after being promised by General Grant that he would not be prosecuted.

Why does Alexandria have a street named for this Confederate military leader and war criminal?

I propose that Pickett Street be renamed Loving Way, in honor of Mildred Loving, a Black and indig-

enous woman, and her white husband, Richard Loving.

In 1959, the couple was convicted of violating Virginia's Racial

Integrity Act, which made it a crime for persons classified as "white" to marry persons classified as "colored." They were sentenced to one year in jail, suspended on the condition that they leave the state and not return for at least 25 years. They moved to Washington, DC. In 1963, frustrated over not being able to travel together to visit family in Virginia, they filed a lawsuit that eventually reached the U.S. Supreme Court. In a landmark civil rights decision (*Loving v. Virginia* – 1967), the Supreme Court ruled that laws banning interracial marriage violated the Equal Protection and Due Process clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment to the U. S. Constitution, and struck down the Virginia law.

Loving Way. It has a nice sound to it and would be an appropriate replacement name for Pickett Street.

John Johnson
Alexandria

A Different Way of Looking at the Data

To the Editor:

The Gazette reports that "African Americans are often targets of strong-arm tactics" by the Alexandria Police Department, and that disproportionate growth of the Department's budget over the last 20 years has "led many to question the allocation of public resources." ("Disproportionate Use of Force", June 11, 2020.)

Those shocking charges would be — and should be — matters of the utmost concern if further investigation were to bear them out; but the data reported by the Gazette do not yet meet that standard.

Far the more serious charge is that the Alexandria police choose African Americans as targets for the application of excessive force. The Gazette cites a report that "in 2019, 54 percent of the instances of use of force was against African Americans ... significantly higher than the Black population in Alexandria, which is 23 percent."

That comparison would be damning if, indeed, APD selected persons from among the population at large against which to use force. But that is not how the police operate. Some of those who come into contact with the police are persons whom patrol officers happen to observe in the course of what may be unlawful behavior; but far the greater number of po-

lice-citizen interactions are the result of calls to the police initiated by persons who fear that they may be the victims of criminal behavior.

If the use of force by police against a particular group were comparable to the proportion of that group among all of those who come into contact with the police (rather than their proportion among the population at large), that would not support a conclusion that the police deliberately "targeted" that group. Note, for example, that 19% of Alexandria's population have a high school diploma or less, and 24% come from households whose income is less than \$50,000. It is likely that both of these groups are substantially overrepresented among those with whom the police interact, and thence among those against whom force is used. But this is not because of conscious selection or "targeting" by the police, but because of the disgraceful economic and educational disparities which too often condemn their victims to disproportionate engagement with law enforcement. Those social pathologies are not the "fault" of the police: we should look to all of ourselves for blame, rather than to others to scapegoat who in fact fall far short of the capacity to correct the underlying societal failures.

The proposed FY2021 budget for the police was 103% larger than the approved FY2001 budget. Meanwhile, Alexandria's estimated 2020 population is 14% greater than the 2000 Census.

It is not uncommon, however—and in fact is usually the case—that government budgets grow much more rapidly than the population. Most governmental functions are labor intensive, and the cost of personnel typically increases somewhat more than the increased cost of living, rather than in proportion to the rate of population growth. If Alexandria's budget had increased by only 14% over the past 20 years—the rate of population growth—that would have been truly remarkable, in fact almost unimaginable.

In fact, the police budget as a share of the total has declined by one third over that period, from 7.7% in 2001 to 5.1% today. While the police budget has barely doubled (+103%), the rest of the City budget—including such community-serving functions as public education, housing, human and social services, public transportation, and environmental services—has more than tripled (+218%), as has the budget as a whole (+209%).

These trends do not support a conclusion that the amount, rate of growth, or proportion of the police budget over the last 20 years has been accomplished at the expense

of social services and should "lead many to question the allocation of public resources."

Michael E. Hobbs
Alexandria

Police End Barricade Peacefully

To the Editor:

On June 4, police were alerted to a person in distress in an apartment building in Potomac Yard that ended without incident thanks to a professional, measured, well-trained response from the officers of the Alexandria Police and Sheriff's Departments, as well as assistance from the Fairfax County Police Department. Although shots were fired at responding police officers, there was no return fire from these officers. Instead, they showed considerable

restraint and patience during the 20-hour barricade situation, focusing on deescalating the situation and waiting until the individual fell asleep before making entry into her apartment and taking her into custody without harm to her, the officers, or other residents of the building.

The police officers also took great care during the barricade situation to ensure the safety of other citizens, through securing the scene and continued communication with the public, including instructions to shelter in place for those in the building and assistance to those residents who were out of the building when the incident began. As members of the Alexandria Police Foundation, we want to commend the Alexandria Police and Sheriff's departments along with other participating law enforcement agencies for serving and protecting our citizens honorably and professionally, as reflected in this standoff that involved shots fired at our police officers without similar retaliation. Such a response by law enforcement and the peaceful outcome to a very tense situation seems unusual in this current climate but gives further credence to the excellent training and leadership exemplified by responding Alexandria Police officers that cannot go unnoticed.

The first officers on scene set the tone for all responding units, which allowed them to successfully mitigate the crisis and restore public safety. For your bravery, for your professionalism, and for your compassion, we applaud you. You, like we, are sons, daughters, spouses, moms and dads.

The Alexandria Police Foundation takes great pride in its relationship with the Alexandria Police. See LETTERS, PAGE 7



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LETTERS

FROM PAGE 6

tionship with the Alexandria Police Department and our Chief Michael Brown.

We also appreciate our Sheriff, Dana Lawhorne and the Alexandria Sheriff's department, who work hand in glove with the Police Department 24/7/365 to ensure the safety of our residents. We are grateful for their service and continue to expect to see strong leadership, transparency and accountability from these two leaders and the men and women who serve with them in the future. The peaceful resolution of this barricade situation without return fire by police is a tribute to these attending departments and something that should make the citizens of Alexandria proud.

Anne Rector, Chair, with Willem Polak, Past Chair; Charlotte Hall, Vice Chair; Janet Barnett, Secretary; Michael McMillan, Treasurer; David Baker, Kendra Carey, Michele Evans, Adnan Hamidi, Gordon Kromberg, Pat Miller, Roger Parks, Cathy Puskar, Roger Smith, Jeanne Theismann, Ginny Obranovich, Richard Obranovich

Removal of Statue Denies City's History

To the editor:

I am writing to comment on the removal of the iconic Confederate Soldier statue at the intersection of South Washington Street and Prince Street in Old Town, Alexandria.

The Civil War was one of the most important and traumatic events in the city's history. The city suffered for four long years under the heavy hand of an oppressive occupying army. There were many depredations. That monument honors all Alexandrians who died in the war while serving in the Confederate Army. That

was their generation's version of our own Vietnam War Memorial.

Those who dedicated the statue were simply honoring the lives of their fallen comrades. What could be more noble than that?

It's a sad day when historic Alexandria, which relies on history-related tourism for so much of its image and revenue, would eviscerate its heritage.

As a 59-year-old lifelong Alexandrian with family roots in the city that date back almost 100 years to the early 1920s, I worry about where we are headed.

Greg Paspatis
Alexandria

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.

SEE LETTERS, PAGE 8



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PHOTO BY MIKE SALMON/THE GAZETTE

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

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), Lamar 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 Vernon 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 reports 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 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.

FROM PAGE 7

Our leaders, including Don Bey-er, need to help their people protect their rights and lives.

Molly Hamrin
Alexandria

Terminate Local Agreements with 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

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 tra-

ditions, 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 someone 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.

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Legals



Public Hearing will be held by the City Council of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, by video conference, City of Alexandria, Virginia, on Saturday, July 7, 2020, at 5:30 p.m., or as soon as may be heard on the hereinafter described items.

PUBLIC HEARING and Consideration of an Amendment to a five-year agreement dated December 1, 2018, between the City of Alexandria, Virginia and Zayo Group LLC, to permit Zayo to install a 66-foot conduit and fiber optic cables in the City of Alexandria's public rights-of ways.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain the Master Plan of the City of Alexandria, Virginia, by adopting and incorporating therein the amendment heretofore approved by city council to the Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens Small Area Plan chapter of such master plan as Master Plan Amendment No. 2020-00001 and no other amendments, and to repeal all provisions of the said master plan as may be inconsistent with such amendment.
The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Master Plan Amendment No. 2020-00001 to amend a principle in the "CDD Guideline for Potomac Yard/Potomac Greens" to change references of Home for the Elderly to Continuum of Care Facility and increase the number of these types of dwelling units from 150 to 190, approved by the City Council on June 20, 2020.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 5-602 (COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS CREATED, CONSISTENCY WITH MASTER PLAN, REQUIRED APPROVALS) of Article V (MIXED USE ZONES) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment No. 2020-00004.
The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Text Amendment No. 2020-00004 to amend and development levels in Coordinated Development Districts #10 to increase the number of allowable Continuum of Care dwelling units from 150 to 190.

AN ORDINANCE to amend and reordain Section 5-602 (COORDINATED DEVELOPMENT DISTRICTS CREATED, CONSISTENCY WITH MASTER PLAN, REQUIRED APPROVALS) of Article V (MIXED USE ZONES) of the City of Alexandria Zoning Ordinance, in accordance with the text amendment heretofore approved by city council as Text Amendment No. 2020-00001.
The proposed ordinance accomplishes the final adoption of Text Amendment No. 2020-00001 to amend Coordinated Development District Number 19 to revise uses and associated regulations.

THE PUBLIC IS ADVISED THAT AMENDMENTS OR ADDITIONS MAY BE MADE TO PROPOSED ORDINANCES WITHOUT FURTHER PUBLICATION. IT IS RECOMMENDED THAT PERSONS INTERESTED IN ANY OF THESE ORDINANCES OBTAIN FREE FULL-TEXT COPIES FROM THE CITY CLERK AT CITY HALL. If the Mayor determines that weather or other conditions are such that it is hazardous for members to attend the Saturday Public Hearing, the hearing will be continued to the next Saturday that is not a legal holiday. GLORIA SITTON, CMC, CITY CLERK

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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

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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APPETITE

On the Menu: Goings-On in Alexandria Restaurants

BY HOPE NELSON

From permanent restaurant closures to a focus on private parties to wholesalers becoming direct-to-consumer distributors, the pandemic has brought with it quite a few changes to the area's food-and-drink landscape. Here's what's been happening over the past week.

Nectar Coffee and Wine Bistro Closes Its Doors for Good

Del Ray's caffeinated set is mourning the closure of Nectar Coffee and Wine Bistro, located at 106 Hume Ave. After closing as a result of the pandemic, owners (and sisters) Susan and Shirley Waller have elected not to reopen, they said in a statement on Facebook.

"Susan and I have made the extremely difficult decision to close Nectar permanently. We have loved our business, awesome staff, customers and neighbors and are truly grateful for your business over the past three years. See you in the neighborhood!" wrote Shirley Waller.

The People's Drug Offering Private Parties

In this age of social distancing, wondering about restaurant crowds is a real concern for many. The owners of The People's Drug at 103 N. Alfred St. are aiming to put patrons at ease by offering up the entire establishment for rent for parties of 6 to 10 people.

The cocktail menu sports an array of options, ranging from cheese boards to burger and chicken sliders to Brussels sprouts and more. Drink tickets are good for any beverage off the summer cocktail menu as well as beer and wine. The reservation allows patrons to take over the entire space, inside and out, for a two-hour period. The People's Drug is offering two seatings a night, with a deep cleaning between guests. (Weekend brunch, too, is an option.)

The deal will run patrons \$50 per person, plus \$10 gratuity, and will include food and two cocktails. Reservations are required; call the restaurant at 571-251-8851 for more.

Keany Produce to Continue Curbside Service Through Summer

The wholesale produce distributor Keany Produce & Gourmet will continue its curbside service throughout the area as the summer progresses, the company said. Though the distribution sites and times have changed as the state's reopening has moved ahead, there are still plenty of locations around the city for fruit-and-veggie pickup.

The YMCA, Good Shepherd Catholic Church and Clyde's at Mark Center are all still open for business at various times throughout the week. Visit keanyproduce.com for all the latest - and to place an order for the week.

Hope Nelson is the author of "Classic Restaurants of Alexandria" and owns the Kitchen Recessionista blog, located at www.kitchenrecessionista.com. Email her any time at hope@kitchenrecessionista.com.

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McEneaney Associates has always had one motto in mind... not to be the biggest, but the best. This year marks our 40th year in Alexandria, and we are celebrating our investment in helping to build our town into the thriving community it is today. To learn more about our Associates and our firm, visit www.WeAreAlexandria.com

#WeAreAlexandria



Old Town | \$1,350,000

Discover this welcoming 3-bedroom, 3.5-bath, 18th-century home constructed on one of the original 84 lots sold in 1749 to formally create a dignified residential town of Alexandria, as it grew from an early shipping port. True to its provenance with aged wood floors, period woodwork, iron box locks and H hinged doors, you'll find a striking bright kitchen, inviting, large formal rooms, a cozy library and spacious private bedrooms. Rest, grill and entertain in the serene walled garden. A lower level stone-floored room would be perfect as an artist or yoga studio.

Ann Duff 703.965.8700
www.AnnDuff.com

OPEN 6/27 & 6/28 - VIRTUAL & IN-PERSON



Old Town Village | \$1,549,000

Beautifully updated two-level courtyard home with 3 bedrooms, 2.5 bathrooms, 2 car garage. Amazing European style library. 405 S Henry St. Facebook Live Saturday & Sunday 11:30AM @sweethomealexandria. In-person Open House Saturday & Sunday 1-4PM.

Lisa Groover 703.919.4426
LisaGroover.com



Fairfax | \$839,500

Large 4-bedroom, 3.5-bath, brick Colonial tucked away on a tree-lined street on .43 acres, surrounded by mature landscaping and located between Dunn Loring and Vienna Metros. View 2831 Maple Lane on Instagram @kayblemker.

Kay Blemker 703.623.8563
www.KayBlemker.com

VIRTUAL OPEN SAT 6/27, 12PM



Del Ray | \$849,900

Charming 4-bedroom, 3-bath Cape Cod! Inviting front porch opens to living room with cozy fireplace. Large fenced in backyard complete with deck and garage. Finished lower level. Convenient to "The Avenue" and Potomac Yards shops and restaurants. 207 Ashby St.

Jen Walker 703.675.1566
www.JenWalker.com



Old Town Village | \$645,000

Fabulous 2-level condo in Old Town Village. Open floor plan in this 1,407-SF home, plus two master suites on the upper floor. Two bedrooms, 2 full & 1 half baths total. Northeast facing balcony for morning coffee!

Peter Crouch 703.244.4024
www.CrouchRealtyGroup.com

OPEN BY APPT. ONLY SUN 6/28, 2-4PM



Old Town \$1,649,000

Built in 1849, this plaqued 4-bedroom, 4.5-bath home offers High ceilings, spacious rooms, hardwood floors, beautiful moldings, & 3 fireplaces. Gourmet kitchen. Spacious master bedroom with sitting area and elegant bath. Lower level family room and private patio. 206 N Royal Street

Sally Z. Harper 703.517.2849
www.sallyzharper.com

VIRTUAL OPEN THURS 6/25, 5 & 5:30PM



Watergate of Alexandria \$625,000

Pristine 2-bedroom, 2-bath townhome offers updated kitchen, recently renovated baths including en-suite master bath, upgraded flooring, replacement windows, fireplace, brick patio, almost new HVAC & water heater, and garage parking. 1028 N Royal Street

Jodie Burns 571.228.5790
www.JodieBurns.com

OPEN BY APPT. ONLY SUN 6/28, 2-4PM



Nethergate \$724,000

Beautiful 3-bedroom, 2.5 bath, brick end townhouse. Large kitchen with dining space opens into a family room & enclosed patio. Assigned Parking is at door for 2 cars. Just a short walk to bus, Braddock Metro, Mount Vernon trail, Trader Joe's and more. 1221 Michigan Court

Sally Z. Harper 703.517.2849
www.sallyzharper.com

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