

# THIS WEEK

February is Black History Month, a time when schools across the country dutifully trot out lessons about Martin Luther King, Jr. and Rosa Parks. In 2015, a minor firestorm ensued when Orange County High School students connected the civil rights movement of the 1960s and today's Black Lives Matter movement in a school performance, and an anonymous deputy complained on Facebook.

"It's supposed to be black history, not black current events," another parent, who also worked in law enforcement, told C-VILLE.

Similar complaints have cropped up at other schools when Black History Month events draw a line from the inequities of our past to the problems of the present. But racism can't be safely contained in feel-good plays. The past, as William Faulkner famously observed, "is never dead. It's not even past."

We live in a city that was literally built by black people, in a county that, at the end of the Civil War, was majority black, but which more than a century later is still dominated by monuments to Confederate soldiers. In this week's cover story (p.17), we document the ways our local government, schools, university, and community members are unearthing and commemorating black history in Charlottesville, not out of some wan impulse toward "political correctness," but because this *is* our history, and any story that disregards it is incomplete. As Charlene Green, head of the Office of Human Rights, tells us, "You may think that what happened only affects someone else, but it affects you."

In 2019, as we commemorate the 400th anniversary of the beginning of slavery in Virginia, as our elected officials continue to struggle for the right to control our own monuments (p. 10), and as our governor has unexpectedly prompted a conversation on the legacy of blackface as entertainment (p. 9), we are fairly freighted with the past. The question is what we do with it. —*Laura Longhine*

## NEWS 9

- 10 State lawmakers kill effort to allow local control of monuments.
- 11 Marie Kondo effect is a boon for thrift stores.
- 13 Latest from the General Assembly session.
- 15 City Council candidate was banned from City Hall.
- 15 Harding backs Dem for sheriff.

## FEATURE 17

# Missing history

The people who are recovering our African American past.

## ARTS 23

- 25 Calendar Listings
- 25 Tunes: Album reviews

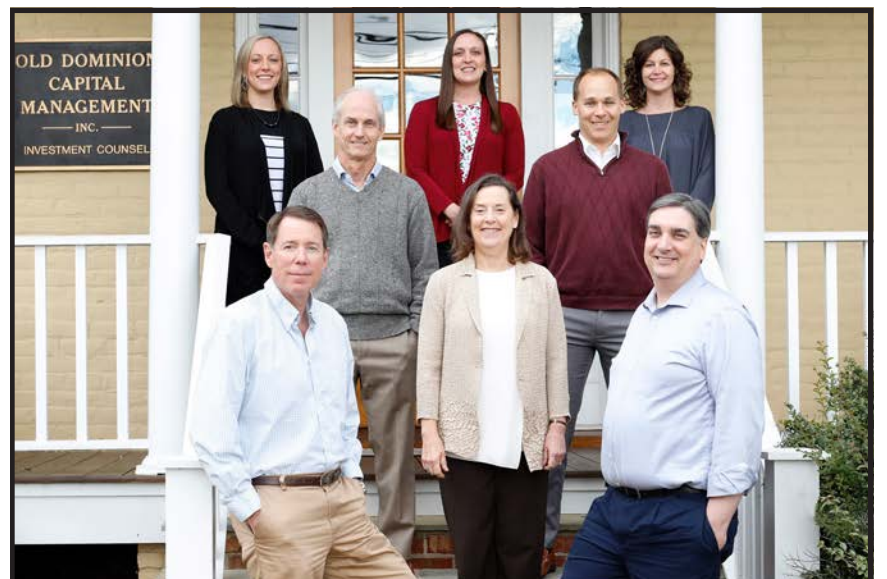
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# THIS WEEK

We're a city that can't seem to escape our statues, and at Monday's City Council meeting they were on the agenda again—this time, the West Main monument to Lewis and Clark, with the figure of Sacagawea at the men's feet, either cowering or tracking.

Paul Goodloe McIntire, who commissioned the statue in 1917, had only asked for Lewis and Clark, but noted New York sculptor Charles Keck "threw in the Indian," as McIntire put it, and he was pleased. I've heard it suggested that this addition may actually have been meant as some kind of feminist gesture, at a time when public monuments tended to exclusively depict men.

Regardless of the original intent, at Monday's meeting a Crow Creek Sioux man echoed previous complaints about Sacagawea, calling the depiction of her "demeaning." A local Native resident said her children asked her why Sacagawea was scared, and sad.

Her words recalled a story that former New Orleans mayor Mitch Landrieu told at the book festival here in March. Landrieu realized his city's Confederate monuments had to go, he said, when he thought about a black parent having to explain to their child why a statue of someone who would have enslaved them was still standing in the center of the city.

Since the Lewis and Clark statue must be moved as part of the upcoming West Main streetscape project, it's been suggested that City Council put it in an entirely different location, like the Lewis and Clark Exploratory Center.

On the one hand, such a gesture, like commemorating the end of slavery instead of Thomas Jefferson's birthday (which also came up at the meeting), does nothing to tangibly change current-day inequities. On the other, it's a way of broadcasting what matters to us as a city.

Our culture changes over time, and the meaning we ascribe to public monuments changes, too. It's okay to adjust. —*Laura Longhine*

## NEWS 9

- 10 What's over the line online?
- 11 Keeping Chris Greene Lake clear.
- 13 Primary results upend the status quo.
- 15 Slot machine or game of skill?

## FEATURE 21

# Work with your hands

Getting more women involved in the skilled trades.

## ARTS 29

- 31 Calendar Listings



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# THIS WEEK

On Monday night, City Council took another step in its plan to tear down Guadalajara and Lucky 7 and build an \$8.5 million, 300-car parking garage on Market Street, just a few blocks from an existing parking garage (p 9).

The move is part of a larger project to keep the county courts downtown, in which the city agreed to add 90 parking spaces for courthouse use. How the other 210 parking spaces got into the mix (or around 150 if you subtract existing spaces) is less clear—a study by “nationally recognized transportation consulting firm Kimley Horn” suggested the 300-car design “based on the dimensions of the site, traffic volumes in the area, and existing zoning.”

In other words, the thinking seems to have been, if you’re going to build a parking lot, why not make it as big as it can be?

The city’s proposed capital budget for 2021 includes almost \$5 million for the garage, while cutting the amount for new sidewalks from \$400,000 to \$100,000 and eliminating funding for bicycle infrastructure entirely.

That this might be in opposition to the climate goal this same City Council passed only months earlier (to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 45 percent by 2030, and achieve carbon neutrality by 2050), seems not to have been considered.

But projects like these don’t operate in a vacuum. Transportation accounts for roughly 27 percent of our local greenhouse gas emissions, according to a 2016 report. Investing in car infrastructure while cutting funding for bike and pedestrian infrastructure is moving in exactly the wrong direction.

Last week, the U.N. released its annual Emissions Gap report, noting that greenhouse gas emissions are still rising worldwide, despite pledges to curb them. Clearly, Charlottesville City Council is not alone in being unwilling to connect the consequences of its daily decisions to the climate promises it has made. But that isn’t an excuse.

As Alden Meyer of the Union of Concerned Scientists put it, “We are sleepwalking toward a climate catastrophe.”

It is well past time to act, and every decision matters.—*Laura Longhine*

## NEWS 9

- 11** The flap over Virginia’s weak anti-SLAPP law.
- 13** Activist mom’s at it again—this time she wants a playground.
- 15** Middle school teacher champions esports.

## FEATURE 21

# What’s changed?

How UVA’s dealing with sexual assault five years after Rolling Stone.

## ARTS 33

- 35** **Calendar Listings**
- 37** **Feedback:** Chris Campanelli returns to the C’ville music scene.

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