



**HITTING THE HIGHWAY**  
DEMAND FOR RVS UP DURING PANDEMIC  
**B1**

< T&C



**PRIMARY TUESDAY**  
STATES TO PUT VIRUS SYSTEMS TO THE TEST  
**A10**

< NATION



**MLB, UNION SWAP IDEAS**  
SEASON RESTS ON FINDING AGREEMENT  
**B3**

< SPORTS

# The Free Lance-Star

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WEATHER: HIGH 84, LOW 67. **B10**

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**TUESDAY, JUNE 2, 2020**



MIKE MORONES / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Protesters throw a tear gas canister back toward Stafford County deputies on the Falmouth Bridge.

## PROTESTS CONTINUE WITH CLASH AT BRIDGE

BY KEITH EPPS, SCOTT SHENK AND ADELE UPHAUS-CONNER  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

A showdown on the Falmouth Bridge between protesters and members of the Stafford Sheriff's Office ended Monday evening with some burning eyes but no serious injuries.

It was one of at least three demonstrations in the Fredericksburg area Monday and was the third straight day of protests spurred by the death of George Floyd during a police arrest in Minneapolis. In response to the continuing tension and an emergency declaration by Gov. Ralph Northam, Fredericksburg City Manager Tim Baroody imposed a curfew from 8 p.m. to 6 a.m. beginning Monday evening and continuing through Wednesday morning.

That followed a protest Sunday that resulted in police firing tear gas to disperse the crowd twice, first on Cowan Boulevard and later downtown. A cou-



ROBERT A. MARTIN FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Protesters on the Falmouth Bridge meet up with Stafford County law enforcement on Monday.

ple of downtown businesses had broken glass afterward.

The protest that led to the bridge started downtown Monday evening. Demonstrators headed down Caroline Street before moving over to Princess Anne Street, chanting the familiar refrains such as "no justice, no peace" and "hands up, don't shoot."

The march was peaceful, though some motorists appeared not pleased that those streets were basically shut down as the group passed. Other motorists expressed

**AUTOPSY >>** Examiners classified George Floyd's death as homicide. **A3**

support by blowing their horns and joining in the chants.

But tensions rose considerably as the large group turned onto the Falmouth Bridge and headed into Stafford. A large contingent of deputies was waiting with tear gas canisters, heavy equipment and a drone. When someone from the Sheriff's Office announced over a

SEE PROTESTS, A9

### TRUMP WOULD USE MILITARY TO KEEP THE PEACE

BY JONATHAN LEMIRE, JILL COLVIN AND ALAN SUDERMAN  
ASSOCIATED PRESS

WASHINGTON— Amid racial unrest across the nation, President Donald Trump on Monday declared himself "the president of law and order" and threatened to deploy the United States military to American cities to quell a rise of violent protests.

As Trump spoke, an incredible TV split screen developed around the White House. While he addressed

SEE TRUMP, A7

### LOCAL CASES

As of Monday, there were 1,597 COVID-19 cases in the Rappahannock Area Health District. There were 722 in Stafford County; 571 in Spotsylvania County; 166 in Fredericksburg; and 69 in both Caroline and King George counties.

Elsewhere in the region, there were 713 cases in Culpeper County; 323 in Fauquier County; 106 in Orange County; and 68 in Westmoreland County. Virginia reported 45,398 cases and 1,392 deaths associated with COVID-19.

## Area records its 18th virus death

BY CATHY DYSON  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

While the Fredericksburg area, along with the rest of the country, faces protests over the death of George Floyd and deals with the continuing fallout from COVID-19, activities related to one crisis may impact the other.

Mary Washington Healthcare officials talked last week about learning to live with the novel coronavirus because it's not going anywhere. They outlined activities that put people at highest risk for getting the disease, and some on the list are exactly what's happened during demonstrations by those outraged by Floyd's death at the hands of a white policeman in Minneapolis.

Protesters have gathered close together in large groups, and "crowds are a no-no" in the wake of the virus, Dr. Christopher Newman, MWHC's chief medical officer, said at last week's virtual town hall.

Many protests have been peaceful, but when the shouting starts, so does the amount of saliva being propelled into the air—and the virus is

transmitted by these respiratory droplets. That's why Newman classified as high risk similar activities, such as singing inside a church or other closed area as well as cheering from the sidelines as kids play sports.

That's also why public health officials repeatedly have stressed the need to avoid close contact and wear masks in public.

"I assure you, this virus is widespread, it's amongst

SEE LOCAL VIRUS, A9

## Local schools work on fall restart plans

BY ADELE UPHAUS-CONNER  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Though the 2019-20 academic year just ended for Fredericksburg area students, they are scheduled to return in only 10 weeks, and local school divisions have been discussing whether and how that can safely happen.

Area school systems have assembled task forces and committees to study what returning to school amid a global pandemic might look like.

According to Charles Pyle, director of media relations for the Virginia Department of Education, Gov. Ralph Northam will first have to announce a modification to his March order closing Virginia schools for the remainder of the 2019-20 academic

**GERMANNA >>** Enrollment up for summer and fall. **A2**

year.

VDOE will then "provide guidance to school divisions on reopening schools within the parameters established by the governor," Pyle said. "The specifics of reopening—the exact day and local application of the VDOE guidance—will be the responsibility of the local school divisions."

School divisions are looking at several possible scenarios for the beginning of the 2020-21 academic year, depending on how COVID-19 is spreading at the time.

If a "normal" in-person return isn't safe, school

SEE SCHOOL, A5

## VOLUNTEERS CLEAN UP, PRAY AFTER DOWNTOWN PROTEST

BY ADELE UPHAUS-CONNER  
THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Volunteers carrying trash bags, brooms and grabber tools walked the streets of downtown Fredericksburg Monday morning, both wanting to help clean up the city and trying to process what happened Sunday night.

The city called a state of emergency and imposed a curfew lasting from 11:30 p.m. Sunday to 6 a.m. Monday morning after police used tear gas to disperse a crowd of protesters gathered downtown.

The Caroline Street



DAVE ELLIS / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

David and Rochelle Preut and their children bow their heads in prayer at Market Square Monday.

door of Bodyworks Downtown Athletic Club appeared to have

been shattered during the protests and a window at Corky's

Military Surplus store further down Caroline was boarded up Monday morning.

The slave auction block at the corner of William and Charles streets was spray-painted with profanity and graffiti tags.

Other than these signs of violence, the streets of Fredericksburg were largely unmarked by Sunday's events, but people gathered downtown Monday morning were hurting and grieving.

"I think there are a lot of people who just need

SEE DOWNTOWN, A5



MIKE MORONES / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Dixon-Smith Middle Principal Andrew Bathke waves to a student returning to pick up belongings.



PROTESTS

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loudspeaker that “this has been declared an unlawful assembly,” some of the protestors responded with loud shouting and expletives.

A standoff that shut down bridge traffic for a considerable time included periods where protesters sat and even laid on the roadway.

Finally the Sheriff’s Office’s Civil Disturbance Unit formed a line across the road and move methodically toward the protesters. A number of tear gas canisters were fired toward the group, many of which were picked up and thrown back in the direction of law enforcement.

One motorist heading into the county apparently couldn’t wait any longer. He drove through the protesters and had a window broken out of his car. A baby was in a car seat next to that window.

The protesters were eventually forced back across the bridge into the city, where they headed back toward downtown. The group had dwindled considerably by the time they reached the intersection of William and Charles streets, where they sat down in the middle of the road with their fists raised.

City Sheriff’s Deputy Billy Reyes reminded the crowd about the 8 p.m. curfew that was in place and warned that arrests would begin at 8:30 p.m. The crowds responded with shouts that included negative comments about the police.

Nevertheless, the vast majority dispersed prior to 8:30. A woman who appeared to be leading the protest stood on the slave auction block and led several minutes of fist-raised silence.

Most of the group then dispersed, and several people were overheard talking about plans to get together downtown again Tuesday afternoon.

A much smaller group was seen later heading down College Avenue toward the city police station. However, the group passed Cowan Boulevard, the street the police department is on, and con-



MIKE MORONES / THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Protesters stand on top of the slave auction block in downtown Fredericksburg on Monday. The protesters marched through town, briefly blocking intersections before making their way to the Falmouth Bridge.



ROBERT A. MARTIN FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

A large crowd turned out to listen to Stafford County leaders speak at the courthouse complex.

tinued south on U.S. 1.

A city police spokeswoman said officers begin arresting people who were still marching in the College Avenue area around 10:30 p.m., but details were not available.

Two other rallies Monday, at the Stafford County Courthouse and at Market Square downtown, were peaceful and without major incidents.

At the Stafford Courthouse, a crowd of roughly 200 protesters turned out to march with signs, chant and hear others talk about equality and justice.

The crowd was composed mostly of younger people and included a mix of black and white protesters alike. There was no noticeable police presence, unlike problems that arose between police and demonstrators Sunday night along State Route 610 in Stafford, when 10 protesters were arrested after the Sheriff’s Office declared an unlawful assembly.

Those who addressed the crowd Monday explained that their main focus was to keep things organized and peaceful.

Prior to the march, Gary Holland, a pastor at Word of Faith in Dumfries, addressed the protesters in the courthouse parking lot. He told them they were there to be “a little bit disruptive” and emphasized they were there to change policies and do it “without violence and



ROBERT A. MARTIN FOR THE FREE LANCE-STAR

Del. Joshua Cole addresses the rally for Black Lives Matter, injustice equality and community involvement at the Stafford County Courthouse complex Monday.

without destroying property” or arrests.

The protest started with the crowd marching from the parking lot and circling the courthouse, chanting and holding up signs. They urged passing drivers to beep, which many did.

The group then gathered at the courthouse steps, where Holland and other speakers emphasized the need for change and inclusion for everyone. They also stressed to the protesters that they need to stay active and try to get others to speak out or nothing will happen.

Algiers Diamond—a U.S. Army veteran, activist, actress and comedian who lives in Stafford—gave an impassioned speech.

“America has a problem. It’s racism. We need to take it back,” said Diamond, who then mentioned slain civil rights

leader the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr.

“I had a dream,” she said, “but unlike Martin, my dream was a nightmare” of a cross burning in her yard and a neighbor asking her to remove the ashes that drifted into his yard. “Our neighbors aren’t helping us.”

She, like other speakers, said there is a need for white people to address racism and a “system working in their favor. Otherwise, we can’t talk.”

“It’s time for action, an accountability check ...,” she added. “Until then, we won’t let you have peace.”

Speakers also talked about a need for more accountability and better practices by law enforcement and about the importance of voting and running for political offices to spark change.

Del. Joshua Cole, who represents parts of Staf-

ford and Fredericksburg, showed up to address the crowd, telling them to remember the list of black people killed by police “every single day.” He also told the group to hold elected officials accountable and said those politicians are afraid when groups like the protesters gather.

Cole, the first African American to represent the 28th District in the General Assembly, said in an interview that he was at a Fredericksburg demonstration Sunday night that police dispersed. He said he didn’t see any violence and that police “had us boxed in” and then hit them with tear gas. He believes “outsiders” came in and stirred up trouble.

Around 3 p.m. Monday, as police cruisers circled downtown Fredericksburg, protesters began gathering in Market Square for another march. They held signs reading “Silence is Complicity,” “All Lives Won’t Matter Until Black Lives Do” and “I can’t breathe,” which were Floyd’s last words, uttered as a police officer pinned his neck to the ground.

At around 3:30, the group began marching down Caroline Street toward the train station and then up Princess Anne past the courthouse and City Hall. Sisters Claire and Lili Watkins, of Fredericksburg, learned about Monday’s march on social media and joined in.

“We’re hoping the police department will listen

and include more diversity training,” Claire Watkins, a rising college freshman, said. “We want them to know that the system is brutal and that they have power and that many are abusing it.”

Fredericksburg Sheriff Paul Higgs watched the march as it passed the courthouse.

“There’s no reason for that man [George Floyd] to be dead,” he told protesters as they walked by.

In a brief interview, Higgs said police and deputies would be looking for “people being disruptive,” but he said the mood Monday afternoon was nothing like the one Sunday night.

“They have a right to be protest,” he said. “And they have a right to be upset.”

In a statement Monday, the Fredericksburg branch of the NAACP said it does not “condone or support violent actions,” such as an unsuccessful attempt early Sunday to set the Fredericksburg police headquarters on fire.

“We are pleased with the peaceful protests involving many diverse members of the community,” the statement reads. “We invite the community to join us in our continued efforts to address social injustices, including ways to further enhance police-community relations to further ensure that our community does not face the brutal actions that many other communities have faced.”



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Protesters lay down on the Falmouth Bridge, blocking Jefferson Davis Highway on Monday.



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Nahjaj Wilson (left) looks over the crowd while her mother, Nyesha Wilson, speaks at the courthouse.



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Protesters throw a tear gas canister back at Stafford County deputies on the Falmouth Bridge Monday.

LOCAL VIRUS

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the population,” said Dr. Donald Stern, acting director of the Rappahannock Area Health District. “This is just something we’re going to have to learn to live with because it’s going to be here.”

Instead of referring to COVID-19 as a pandemic or disease that’s spread across continents, Stern is calling it “endemic,” as in something that belongs to a particular group or country—such as the way malaria is endemic to parts of Africa.

Stern said that people will continue to get sick, be hospitalized and die from the coronavirus—and Monday’s report confirmed that. A Stafford County man in his 80s has become the 18th person

to die from COVID-19 in the local health district, which includes Fredericksburg and the counties of Caroline, King George, Spotsylvania and Stafford.

The state website also reported a ninth outbreak of the disease in the Fredericksburg area, but local health district officials believe that was a reporting error.

In addition, the Lidl store on State Route 3 in Spotsylvania County closed Monday for deep cleaning after one of its workers tested positive for COVID-19. The employee last worked on Sunday and consistent with Lidl’s COVID-19 task force, the store closed for sanitization, according to a sign posted on the door. The Lidl store was to reopen at 8 a.m. Tuesday.

In terms of resuming activities that were com-

monplace before the shutdown in mid-March, Dr. Jake O’Shea believes the same routine that’s been preached should continue to be practiced.

“I think a lot of it is listening to public health officials and following the guidelines for social distancing, masking and hand hygiene,” said O’Shea, who is the division chief medical officer with HCA Virginia and works closely with Spotsylvania Regional Medical Center. “I also think it’s realizing that by being smart and making the right decision, you can go back to some of what you used to do.”

His message, first and foremost, is the same one that Mary Washington Healthcare officials have stressed at four of their five virtual town-hall meetings. And that is, people

should seek medical care when they need it and not put off regular checkups, screenings and procedures.

“It’s important for them to do that and it’s safe for them to do that,” O’Shea said. “One of the scariest parts of the whole pandemic is that people have been delaying care for heart attacks and strokes. It’s fear of COVID that’s kept them out of hospitals.”

When the crisis started, medical officials were learning about disease transmission and health care workers were sickened. But as proper safety protocols have been implemented, those on the front lines have been protected, Newman said. For the last seven weeks, no doctors, nurses or other associates at MWHC have contracted the virus while at work, he said.

Still, as of Monday, 108

health care workers in the local health district have gotten the virus. That includes staff at nursing homes, small group homes and other medical offices.

In terms of activities, people are safer outside than inside, said Dr. Michael McDermott, CEO of Mary Washington Healthcare. The virus has a greater chance of spreading inside confined spaces.

Those returning to offices or shopping in grocery stores and malls should wear face coverings and limit how much time they’re in close contact with another person, medical officials said.

“Keep it simple,” said Eileen Dohmann, MWHC’s chief nursing officer. “If you’re going to be inside, be socially distant and wear a mask. No matter what you’re doing, wash your hands. A lot.”

Initially, officials with health districts have defined a close contact as someone who was exposed to a sickened person for 10 minutes. The Rappahannock Area Health District reported on Monday that the definition of a close contact has changed to 15 minutes of prolonged exposure.

As for whether the virus will wilt in the summer heat and humidity, O’Shea said he wished warm weather would be the cure, “but it’s not going to be.”

Instead, people will become used to what McDermott and others are calling “a new different.” “We’re in a period of different,” he said. “We’ve gotta be flexible and adaptable and recognize we don’t have a new normal today.”

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