

Sports/page A8  
**SCORING  
 ACHIEVEMENT**  
*RCHS's Jailik Lynch  
 Sinks 1,000 Point*

Lifestyle/page B6  
**ADDING HIS VOICE  
 TO THE SYMPHONY**  
*'Dabbler' Featured Soloist  
 In Weekend Performance*

# The News-Gazette



ISSN 2641-2888

WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 19, 2020

Single Copy Price \$1.50

VOL. 217, NO. 08

## W&L Picks Bernie Contested Convention First In School History

## Cline Stresses Bipartisan Efforts

*Town Hall  
 Speakers Critical  
 Of Divisive  
 Political Rhetoric*

BY KATIE DOAR

Congressman Ben Cline began by chronicling his efforts to "reach across the aisle" in Washington, but many residents called into question his sincerity, citing divisive rhetoric on past occasions.

Yesterday, at a town hall meeting at Lylburn Downing Community Center in Lexington, Cline analyzed the difference in demeanor between state and national government officials, speculating that Republican and Democrat state representatives were more cordial with each other because they had "no option but to sit and have lunch together." In national government settings, however, Democrats and Republicans retreat to their separate cloak rooms.

To have more bipartisan interactions, Cline said he started inviting small groups of freshman Democrats and Republicans to have lunch in the member's dining room on the floor below the House chamber.

"I took what we knew to work in Richmond and brought it to D.C.," Cline explained.

He also said that he co-sponsored about 120-130 bills, two-thirds of which had a Democrat as a co-sponsor.

See Cline, page 2

## Real Voting Only Two Weeks Away

BY ED SMITH

Now that Washington and Lee University students have cast their ballots in a mock Democratic presidential convention, Virginia's voters are preparing to cast votes that will actually count in the state's primary on Tuesday, March 3.

Fourteen candidates qualified to get their names on Virginia's primary ballots but only eight of them are still actively seeking the nomination. Candidates

See Voting, page 2



AT TOP, fireworks go off on the stage of the Washington and Lee mock convention Saturday evening when it was announced that Bernie Sanders had finally won the nomination. ABOVE, W&L students urge Sanders to call the convention hall to accept the nomination himself, but in the end, he declined to call in, allowing a representative to call instead. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)

BY KATIE DOAR

It took two rounds of ballots for Washington and Lee's mock convention team to choose Sen. Bernie Sanders as the Democratic nominee for president last Saturday.

That's because the convention was "contested," meaning that the delegates were too narrowly split amongst the seven nominees, so, at first, no one candidate emerged with the necessary majority.

"The overcrowded field of moderates complicates the democratic primary because it offers multiple moderate alternatives, watering down any majority support," Emily Hersh Gordon, press secretary for the mock convention, explained Sunday.

Given the number of nominees and their various pockets of

See Mock Con, page B2

## Welding School Expanding

*Byers Institute  
 Adding Former  
 Church To Campus*

BY ED SMITH

Byers Technical Institute, continuing to turn out welders who are landing lucrative jobs, is making plans to expand its operations on U.S. 501 between Glasgow and Buena Vista.

Byers has purchased a former church building on an adjoining property that is to be converted into additional classroom space and student

dormitories. "We're real excited [about the expansion]," said instructor and administrator Walt Johnson.

Since opening in August of 2017, enrollment has increased at BTI by 25 percent every quarter, he said. In August of 2018, 28 students were enrolled and all four graduates of the program were employed in welding jobs. This past August, 54 students were enrolled and 29 out of 29 graduates were employed in the field.

Incomes levels for all of the BTI graduates average between \$45,000 and \$48,000. He said six Rockbridge

County High School students are presently enrolled in the program.

Vocational schools such as BTI must be in operation and graduating students for two full years before becoming eligible for accreditation, said Johnson. Accreditation is being pursued and once it's secured, BTI will be able to accept funding through the GI Bill and FAFSA (Free Application for Federal Student Aid). Because of this, students will likely be coming from outside the region as well, necessitating the need for dormitory rooms.

Johnson appeared before the Rockbridge County Planning Commission last Wednesday, Feb. 12, to request two zoning changes. One is to amend the proffers associated with a conditional rezoning that limited the institute's operating hours. Because the church is no longer in operation next door, restricted hours are no longer necessary.

The second request was to conditionally rezone the church property from A-2, agricultural and general uses, to B-1, general business. Both requests were recommended for approval.

## Crickenberger Retiring From County Post

BY ED SMITH

Sam Crickenberger, Rockbridge County's director of community development, is retiring at the end of June.

He made the announcement last week at the end of the Planning Commission's monthly meeting. He said he plans to spend more time with his grandchildren.

Crickenberger has been with the county for more than 26 years. He was hired in 1993 as director of planning and zoning. With economic development later added to his responsibilities, following the dissolution of the Rockbridge Area Economic Development Commission, Crickenberger's job title was changed to director of community development.

In 2008, Crickenberger oversaw an overhaul of the county's land use regulations that had been years in the making. Zoning laws were changed so that development

See Crickenberger, page 4



### ALSO INSIDE:

Deputy Avoids  
 Injury In Tuesday  
 Morning Car  
 Crash/page A2

FOLLOW  
 US ON



### CONTACT US

P.O. Box 1153  
 Lexington, Virginia 24450  
 540-463-3113  
 editor@thenews-gazette.com  
 advertising@thenews-gazette.com  
 classified@thenews-gazette.com

### INDEX

Classifieds	B11-B12
Calendar	B3
Editorial/Letters	A6-A7
Lifestyle	B1-B5
Obituaries	A3
Religion	B8-B9
Sports	A8-A12

### WEATHER

**Today:** Rain showers  
 High 53  
 Low 31

**Thurs.** Cloudy  
 High 39  
 Low 21

# GLASGOW BRIEFS

## Crickenberger New Attorney

Three weeks ago, Tom Simons resigned as the town attorney, effective immediately.

At the February Town Council meeting, Mayor Shane Watts claimed that there was "no ill will," between Council and Simons; Town Manager Eric Pollitt said it was "mutual."

Grace Crickenberger, an attorney at Natkin & Crickenberger in Lexington, will replace Simons.

"I'm excited to learn about new areas of the law," Crickenberger said.

## POW Flag Replaced

Boyd Walker replaced the town's old POW flag with a new one. He also announced that if anyone around town wanted to replace an old flag, but couldn't afford to do it,

he would gladly buy a new flag for them.

He recalled friends of his that had been prisoners of war in Vietnam, saying that anyone who talked to them about their experience would "get a good education in a hurry about what that flag stands for."

Mayor Shane Watts added that relatives of his had fought in Vietnam, and died as a result of injuries incurred there.

"Veterans are very important to me," he said.

## New Committees

A bundle of new committees were announced at the February Glasgow Town Council meeting.

The Community Development Committee will focus on economic development and community events, and one of its first tasks will involve the creation of an events calendar. The town's concert series was refer-

enced, with six bands already lined up.

The Public Works Committee will help current public works staff with both immediate concerns and long-term infrastructure and planning.

Among other things, the new Public Safety Committee will work as a liaison between the government and the fire department and rescue squad. "The committee allows the public safety departments to collaborate on the needs of our town," Mayor Shane Watts explained. "They will be able to perform needs assessments and work hand in hand in developing plans for stronger fire safety and community health awareness." It will also ensure that there is no duplication of services which will require additional funding, Watts added.

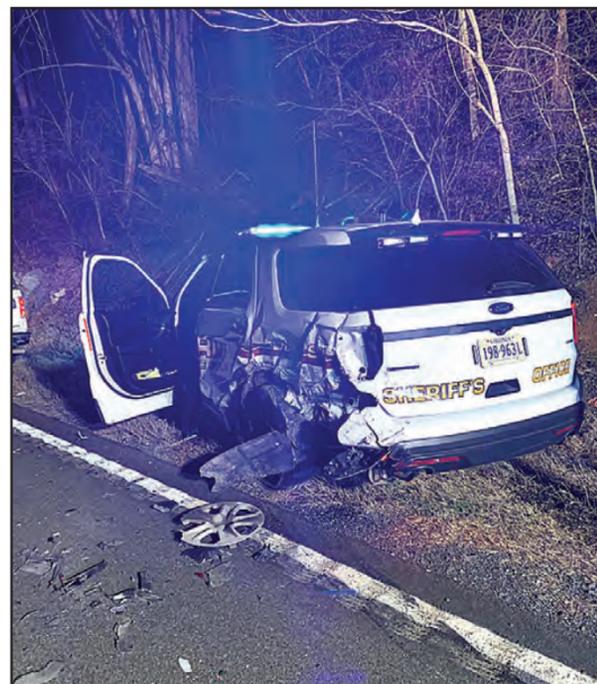
The Glasgow Town Hall Advisory Committee will explore options for a new town hall. The current building could be restructured, it

could be rebuilt completely, or a different location could be found. This committee was charged with coming up for a recommendation by December.

Many felt that the packed Town Council meeting, which didn't have enough chairs for everyone in attendance (some had to stand outside of the room) was proof of the need for a new town hall.

Later, Town Manager Eric Pollitt also announced a new farmers market manager position. The farmers market manager will be paid a small stipend.

After these announcements, Boyd Walker said the new mayor had "hit the deck running," and he thanked the (relatively) new Town Manager Eric Pollitt for his work as well. "Eric is a smart man; he won't be here long," Walker said, drawing laughs from the crowd. "That's why he didn't buy a house; imagine having a house for sale in Glasgow."



## Patrol Car Struck

A Rockbridge County deputy is "OK" after his patrol car was struck during a traffic stop on U.S. 60 near Bares Woods Lane early Tuesday morning. According to a Chief Deputy Tony McFaddin, the deputy had pulled over a driver around 6 a.m. and was on the shoulder of the roadway when an oncoming driver collided with his vehicle. The deputy was transported to the hospital following the incident and was ultimately "OK," McFaddin said. The state police is investigating the collision. (photo courtesy of the Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office)

## Cline

*continued from page 1*

"We're not gonna solve our problems with health care in this country unless we come together. We're not gonna solve our problems related to the border — immigration, unless we come together — the cost of getting a college education ..."

In response, many residents generally expressed their thanks for those politicians making efforts to increase civility across party lines. But they were politely skeptical as to whether or not Cline himself was a prime example of such a politician.

"I feel like you and your colleagues — whether they're Democrat or Republican, spend just way too much time bashing each other. I think most of us as Americans would really like to hear what you're doing, and how you want to do it, and forget the other side," Debbie Pollard, a self-described independent, said. "I feel like you and your younger colleagues, your newly elected colleagues, need to work a little harder to set a better example."

"I like you, and the style of presentation that you're giving right now," Chris Galaver said. "You emphasize bipartisanship, you emphasize a very reasonable approach, you describe ways that you try to reach across the aisle and try to compromise. My concern is that ... this version of you feels

like the version that's designed for Lexington."

Galaver referenced a previous appearance in which Cline struck a very different tone.

"I've read some of your tweets, and some of them are pretty divisive," he continued. "You do speak in rhetoric that seems to contradict a lot of the things you've said here."

Cline said that he is not trying to be nonpartisan, and reminded the audience that he was a Republican. However, he welcomed the criticism.

Someone shouted that partisan is not a synonym for divisive.

Though willing to accept criticism for his own rhetoric, he would not budge on the subject of the president's divisive speech.

Annette Green, a county resident and a retired teacher who spent much of her career doing anti-bullying work, cited surveys that noted increased bullying for Hispanic, black and Muslim students since President Trump took office. Many of those instances of bullying, she said, borrowed Trump's phrases, such as "build the wall, go back where you came from," or threatening deportation.

"Students of color have found Trump 2020 on their cars, and there was the pep rally sign that said, 'Make America Great Again, put the 'panic' back in Hispanic,'" Green

added. "Equally unacceptable are the reported incidents of students being harassed for supporting Trump, but that is a small minority."

Cline would not comment on Trump's behavior, but confined his response to his own.

"I strive to set an example, and that is, uh, one of the main goals that I have as a member of Congress, is to set that example," Cline said. "The best way for me to promote a dialogue that is positive is by engaging in a positive dialogue; like I said, I don't focus a lot on social media. I make sure that my rhetoric is what I feel about a certain issue."

He later said that, though social media is still an important tool of communication, young people aren't using Twitter and Facebook to have meaningful political discussions anymore.

Resident Ann Hopkins echoed previous residents' desires to see politicians step away from dogma and act or speak independently from his or her party every once in awhile.

"I like you, you seem like a nice person, I want to like you," Hopkins said. "I will applaud you, even though you won't be able to hear it, the day that you vote for something from an independent point view ... break ranks when you feel you need to break ranks — stand in your own truth."

## TIMELY TOPICS

By Tom Stanley,  
Extension Agent

### Local Events for Livestock Producers

The Rockbridge Cattlemen's Association invites all cattle producers in Rockbridge to their membership banquet on Wednesday, March 4, at 6 p.m. at the South River Volunteer Fire Department in Fairfield. Cost of the hamburger steak dinner is \$15 per person, payable at the door. Our guest speaker will be Scott Jesse, agriculture Extension agent for Russell County. He will share experiences in establishing the Abingdon Feeder Cattle Association's feeder cattle marketing program.



The recent Jan. 1 U.S. Cattle Inventory Report reveals the size of the national beef cattle herd was

94.4 million head, which is .4 percent smaller than the previous January. This was the first annual decline in cattle numbers since January 2014. Furthermore, heifers (young females) currently make up over 38 percent of the total number of cattle on feed in preparation for slaughter. This is the highest proportion of heifers since late in 2009. This data implies cattlemen nationally are not retaining as many young females as they have in recent years, and it is reasonable to anticipate tightening supplies of cattle in the coming 12 to 18 months.

There are many factors that impact market prices for cattle, but supply fundamentals are favorable for good market prices in the near and medium term. The Rockbridge Cattlemen's Association hopes to foster additional opportunities for marketing cattle, and serve to advocate for cattle producers in Rockbridge County regarding issues that impact their farms. Anyone

interested in learning more about the association and its purpose is welcome to attend this dinner meeting.

A Lambing and Kidning workshop will be held Friday, Feb. 28, beginning at 10:30 a.m. at the Fairfield United Methodist Church's community center at 5622 N. Lee Highway.

The program will feature Dr. Kevin Pelzer with the Virginia-Maryland College of Veterinary Medicine who will discuss management of ewes, does, and their newborns at parturition and early post-partum. After a soup and sandwich lunch, the attendees will travel to Shepherd's Haven Farm to observe practical strategies for lambing management, care of newborns, and artificial rearing. Cost of the program is \$15 payable at the door.

To preregister for these meetings, call the Rockbridge Extension office at 463-4734, or email me at stanleyt@vt.edu by Wednesday, Feb. 26.

The News-Gazette  
**Subscribe Today!**  
Call: 540-463-3113 or www.thenews-gazette.com

## Voting

*continued from page 1*

still running are Vermont Sen. Bernie Sanders, Massachusetts Sen. Elizabeth Warren, former Vice President Joe Biden, Minnesota Sen. Amy Klobuchar, Congresswoman Tulsi Gabbard of Hawaii, former South Bend, Ind. Mayor Pete Buttigieg, businessman Tom Steyer and former New York City Mayor Michael Bloomberg.

All registered voters will be allowed to participate in the primary. Absentee voting is taking place during regular office hours at the offices of local registrars' offices through Saturday, Feb. 29, when offices will be open 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

## Missing Man Found Deceased In County

A missing man was found to be deceased in the Brushy Hills area Tuesday afternoon.

The Lexington man, 56, was first reported to authorities as missing Monday evening.

Deputies of the Rockbridge County Sheriff's Office received a report from family members that the individual had not returned home Monday afternoon and began a search around the area of the trails at Brushy Hills.

The search continued into Monday night with search and rescue teams becoming involved. Virginia State Police also aided in the search Monday evening with the use of a helicopter with thermal imaging surveillance.

Different search teams continued their efforts into the following day, when the man was found deceased Tuesday afternoon in a wooded area of Brushy Hills. A spokesperson from the Sheriff's Office reported the individual's cause of death is suspected to be a self-inflicted gunshot wound.



# Spaghetti Supper

## ROCKBRIDGE CHRISTIAN ACADEMY

21 SNOWY EGRET LANE, LEXINGTON, VA 463-5456

### FEBRUARY 29, 2020

5:00 PM - 7:00 PM  
ALL YOU CAN EAT

\$8.00 9-Adult  
\$3.00 4-8  
FREE 3 and Under

Proceeds Benefit: Rockbridge Christian Academy

SPAGHETTI,  
SALAD, BREAD,  
DESSERT  
AND BEVERAGE

COME AND ENJOY!

## ‘We Must Get Back To ... Where Truth Is Truth’

*W&L Panelists  
Talk Journalism,  
Campaigning*

BY COLIN WHITMORE

“We are living in a world where the truth is becoming lies and lies are becoming truth,” CNN’s chief White House correspondent Jim Acosta said. “We must get back to a place where truth is truth and facts are facts.”

Acosta and other journalists highlighted the profession’s importance and the perceived growing threat the president poses to truth-seeking on last Thursday night at Politics and Media Panel at the Lenfest Center for

the Arts. The panel was the opening event for this year’s Washington and Lee mock convention.

The other panelists included William Roberts, a W&L alum and senior producer for Al Jazeera in Washington D.C., Errin Haines, the editor-at-large for The 19th, a nonprofit newsroom, and Tara McGowan, the founder and CEO of the progressive group ACRONYM. Mike Allen, a W&L alum who co-founded Axios, a comprehensive online news publication, moderated the panel.

The group discussed a variety of issues, including President Trump’s impeachment, the current American political climate, the power

of digital campaigning, the role of women and minorities in politics and the upcoming Democratic primaries.

The most prominent underlying message was that journalism is more important now than ever.

Acosta, who has become nationally known for his willingness to verbally confront the president, shared some of his insights on why he thinks Trump is so dangerous.

“He called me and my organization fake news and named us the enemy of the people,” Acosta said. “How does it escalate after you call the press the enemy of the people?”

See W&L, page B3



ERRIN HAINES, the editor-at-large for The 19<sup>th</sup>, a nonprofit newsroom, addresses the audience at the Politics and Media Panel at the Lenfest Center last Thursday night, the kickoff event for this year’s W&L mock convention. To her left is Jim Acosta, CNN’s chief White House correspondent. The panel was moderated from W&L graduate Mike Allen (right) and also included William Roberts, another W&L alum who now works for Al Jazeera in Washington, and Tara McGowan, the founder and CEO of the group ACRONYM. (Colin Whitmore photo)



## 2020 W&L Mock Convention

### Parading Politics



Members of the New Mexico delegation show their enthusiasm during the mock convention parade Friday morning. (Mary Woodson photo)



The four presidents on Mount Rushmore left their lofty perches to participate in the mock convention parade’s South Dakota entry. (Joann Ware photo)



North Dakota cowboys and cowgirls wave to the crowd during the mock convention parade. (Joann Ware photo)



It was all about lobsters on the Maine delegation’s float in the mock convention parade. (Joann Ware photo)



Virginia’s historic presidents wave to the crowd from the Virginia delegation’s float. (Mary Woodson photo)



The Michigan delegation offered music, posters and a live-sized animal mascot. (Joann Ware photo)



# 2020 DEMOCRATIC Mock Convention

## Mock Con

*continued from page A1*

support, this result can hardly be surprising. However, it is rare: this year's contested convention was the first in Mock Con history, and there have been only 28 contested conventions in American history, with 19 of those happening in the 1800s.

This year, the Democratic candidate has to earn 1,991 delegates in order to win the majority and — with it — the Democratic nomination for president.

After the first ballot in W&L's mock convention, Sanders was in the lead, though he was significantly shy of the majority with only 1,642 delegates. Vice President Joseph Biden trailed behind with 1,237 delegates, Michael Bloomberg had 727, and Mayor Pete Buttigieg had 202. Sen. Elizabeth Warren, Sen. Amy Klobuchar, and Tom Steyer all had less than 100.

After a convention is deemed contested, a second ballot becomes necessary, and this time automatic or "superdelegates," are allowed to vote. Democratic superdelegates aren't tethered to the results of party primaries or caucuses, so they vote for whomever they want. They are like wild cards.

Faithful to the rules of a contested convention, the W&L mock convention team went back to do a second ballot, although the roll call vote, which took over an hour, was not repeated. Still, for a time, the result that everyone had been waiting for was withheld.

During the interim, pop music played on high volume and W&L students either danced or took photographs of others dancing with their iPhones. Spot lights scanned the audience. Sometime after the "Cha-Cha Slide," the audience was updated: a nominee had been chosen.

Three large television screens loomed above the crowd, and the Mock Con student leaders on stage gestured to them for the audience's answer. The video rapidly flipped through photographs of the seven nominees like a deck of cards, but eventually the flipping stopped on the photograph of Bernie Sanders, and after that everyone knew that he had been chosen.

There were lots of cheers but later there were also lots of "boos," when it turned out that Sanders himself would not answer the mock convention when they called. A representative from his campaign addressed the students over the loud speaker instead, expressing the senator's thanks and listing a few of his choic-



SYMONE SANDERS, a Democratic strategist who is serving as the senior adviser for Vice President Joe Biden's campaign, addresses the mock convention Friday afternoon. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



TEXAS DELEGATES tip their cowboy hats during the announcement of number of delegates available to each state during the opening session. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

est causes, which the Mock Con W&L students were surely already familiar with.

Four years ago, Donald Trump had talked to them directly, some attendees pointed out. And it is well known mock con lore that Bill Clinton once played the saxophone during a Mock Convention weekend at Zollman's Pavilion, the performance being, apparently, impromptu.

The students got over the snub by the time Lee Greenwood emerged to sing, "God Bless the USA," however, and later red, white and blue balloons fell from the ceiling. General Chair Jimmy Fleck concluded the convention by telling the crowd that he was sure that, once this was all over, students would caper over to the library as fast as they could to finish their neglected homework. Everyone laughed.

Most students dressed in business formal so fierce that it would put the D.C. metro commute to shame — although some wore cowboy hats with their suits, and one momentarily wore a Trump mask and a pointy statue of liberty hat at the same time. The atmosphere was like the Golden Globes, a Super Bowl watch party, a classroom and a frat party combined; it was, according to the former Mayor of Tallahassee Andrew Gillum, very much like a real convention. Although at a real convention, "It's extremely noisy, and if you're speaking at the podium you can't hear yourself," Gillum explained. "Everybody is talking to each other."

The W&L students would be polite, Gillum assumed (he was right), and for that he expressed his thanks.

Scott Hoover, the mock con faculty adviser, set the tone of the convention in session one, quoting the famous journalist H. L. Mencken: "There is something about the national convention that is fascinating as a revival or



TWO "DEMOCRATIC" DONKEYS were brought to a pen outside the Duchossios Tennis Center for petting during the convention. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

a hanging. It is vulgar, it is ugly, it is stupid, it is tedious, it is hard upon both the higher cerebral centers and the gluteus maximus, and yet somehow charming ... Then there comes a show so gaudy and hilarious, so melodramatic and obscene, so unimaginably exhilarating and preposterous that one lives a gorgeous year in an hour."

For hilarity, there was the Friday parade, where students chanted and dressed in costumes, careening down Main Street on about 60 floats before retiring to after-parade parties, the music from which could be heard all the way from Denny's Circle near the law school.

For tedium, there was the roll call vote for the first ballot during session four, in which student representatives from all 50 states and the territories pledged their delegates — one by one — only to have their

See **Mock Con**, page B3



THE LEADING candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination were pictured in a huge banner hung on the outside of the convention center. The mock convention had to be shifted to the indoor tennis center because the school is building a new indoor athletic facility to replace the Warner Center, the site of the convention since the 1970s. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



MEMBERS of W&L's General Admission perform during the opening session Friday afternoon. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



IT WAS ANNOUNCED on Saturday that the float representing the state of Texas won for best entry in the Mock Convention parade held on Friday. (Joann Ware photo)



# 2020 DEMOCRATIC MOCK CONVENTION



DONNA BRAZILE, speaking Saturday morning the Washington and Lee mock convention, urged the students to seek change. "It's your turn to get up and fight for your values, ideals and ideas," she said. "I want a candidate that will fight for every human being in this country." (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



TREVOR NOAH, host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," is interviewed by W&L students on stage Saturday morning. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



W&L MOCK CONVENTION delegates dance while waiting for the final decision on the nominee. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)



CAMERON KASKY, who was a student at Stoneman Douglas High School during the 2018 shooting, spoke to the mock convention Saturday morning. He helped create the gun control movement "March for our Lives". (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photo)

## Mock Con

*continued from page B2*

pledges repeated back to them from a student on stage before moving on. (During this time, a curious number of iPhone screens lit up the floor.)

For charm and inspiration, there were the famous speakers and the very impressive student speakers, most of whom did not seem at all intimidated as they commandeered microphones in front of 1,500 of their peers and the dozens of influential people who were no doubt lurking comfortably behind the-scenes, watching the proceedings while enjoying strawberries or chips and guacamole in the VIP room.

The first of these influential people to speak in session one was Symone Sanders, the former press secretary for Sanders turned CNN political commentator turned senior adviser for Vice President Biden.

She addressed her decision to leave CNN and return to the campaign trail.

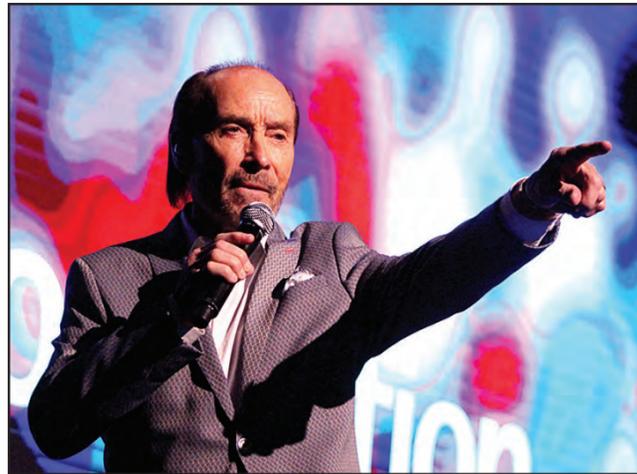
"When I decided to give up my free makeup, my nice car, and my very flexible travel schedule, people told me I was crazy," Sanders said. "But I said, 'I do not want to spend this election cycle pontificating about the work that other people are doing'— if I wanted to help create change in my community, I had to go back out and take a risk."

She said that there was no "magic wand" that would easily create change; the students would have to be radical revolutionaries in their own everyday lives.

"[Change] has to come about in a system that doesn't want the change to happen in the first place," she said.

Joe Donnelly, the former U.S. senator from Indiana, spoke next. Among other things, he encouraged Democrats to focus on voters from rural areas; previously, the party had attempted to appeal only to voters in cities. A broader approach, he implied, would spell success.

Session three was the most star-studded: former Democratic National Committee Chair Donna Brazile, Cameron Kasky of the March for our Lives movement, and "The Daily Show's" Trevor Noah took to the stage in that order.



ABOVE, the balloons come down and the fireworks go off on stage as the mock convention learns that Bernie Sanders has accepted the nomination. AT LEFT, as he has twice before, country music singer Lee Greenwood performs "God Bless The USA" for the mock convention Saturday afternoon. (Stephanie Mikels Blevins photos)

Brazile, a long-time Democratic strategist, urged student voters to "fall in love with" and nominate a Democratic candidate that would take back the White House.

"Our democracy is on the line," Brazile said. "If you vote, we win. The country wins."

Brazile turned to her experience in the Democratic Party to inspire convention-goers to seek change.

"It is your turn to get up and fight for your values, ideals and ideas," she said. "I want a candidate that will fight for every human being in this country."

Kasky, who was a student during the shooting at Stoneman Douglas High School in Parkland, Fla., spoke about his bipolar depression, and how it intersected with "March for our Lives," the gun control movement he helped create. As a survivor of gun violence, and now an advocate for gun control, Kasky began to feel a decline in his mental health.

"Every day was a chore, not an opportunity," he explained.

Getting deeply involved with the issues, Kasky said, showed him the grim reality of politics. He urged students to take care of themselves even as they were advocating for important issues during this election cycle.

Final guest Trevor Noah was interviewed on stage by two W&L students. Noah, a political comedian and the host of Comedy Central's "The Daily Show," turned to communication, empathy and engagement as answers to challenges of American society.

"Political comedy plays different roles depending on the society it exists within," he said of his career. "For countries in turmoil, it can be a space where people come together to share sanity."

Noah spoke about his experience with turmoil in his home country of South Africa, where he was born into the world of apartheid.

"When history is taught correctly, it informs," he explained. "When we teach uncomfortable history, we teach

how to not go back to where we came from."

Andrew Gillum, the former city commissioner (elected at 23) and former mayor of Tallahassee, and the former Democratic nominee for governor of Florida, was the last speaker of session four. He started out by saying that, as of last year, young people make up the single largest voting block in America.

"No pressure," he laughed. "But for real: pressure, I want to remind you that you have a great responsibility."

He said that, instead of getting into tense arguments about different candidates, young voters should start cultivating their own definitions of the "American Way," using those definitions as tools for assessing government actions and government officials.

"We're not going to win by saying, 'Donald Trump is bad,'" he said. "We're going to win by giving people something to vote for, not against."

*Editor's note: Harrison Myles contributed to this story.*

## W&L

*continued from page B1*

The panelists each shared their views on the current American political climate and agreed that the nation is as polarized and divided as ever.

"We are living in a world where we can't talk politics over the holidays," Acosta said. "Is that the type of country we want to live in?"

Haines argued that hostility in politics is not necessarily new, but the persistent animosity towards journalism is unprecedented. "Telling the truth is not something people are placing a premium on these days," she said. "It's a dangerous cycle that we must reverse."

Roberts, who covered the entirety of Trump's impeachment proceedings, said he thinks the political maneuver didn't do Democrats any favors. "It was extremely divisive," he said. "I don't think it worked as well for the Democrats as they thought it would ... the story I wrote suggested it was a big political win for Trump."

Trump's recent approval ratings suggest Roberts is correct in his assessment. Gallup published data on Feb. 4 that showed Trump's approval rating was 49 percent. That was the highest it's been since he took office in 2016.

McGowan, whose organization launched a \$75 million digital campaign against President Trump, said she believes 2020 will be one of the most important election cycles in history.

"We must have historic, unprecedented turnout against the president," she said. "If he gets another term, I'm afraid there will be no way back."

Haines agreed that the election cycle will be determined by voter turnout. "One thing I can say with certainty is that it will come down to voter turnout versus voter suppression."

McGowan said she believes that to beat Trump, the Democratic candidate must establish a powerful online presence. She argued that one of strongest components of Trump's 2016 campaign was his use of Twitter and social media to reach audiences.

Trump's social media numbers certainly support that claim. He currently boasts 72.5 million followers on Twitter and is the ninth most followed account on the platform.

"This election will undoubtedly be won online," she said. "That's where information moves in today's society."

Haines argued that for Democrats to win, they must do a better job of mobilizing women, specifically African-American women.

"Women have historically been treated as a special interest group," she said. "The reality is that women make up a majority of the electorate."

Haines also noted that this pool of Democratic candidates is the most diverse we've ever seen. "It's not just a story, it's the story right now," she said.

The panelists concluded the session by attempting to predict the Democratic nominee, although none felt particularly certain with a prediction at this point.

Acosta said he believes Michael Bloomberg will ultimately win the nomination. "If Sanders wins, I believe a third-party candidate will emerge and take Democratic votes," he said.

Roberts wasn't comfortable picking a nominee at this point, but said he believes it will be either Sanders or Bloomberg.

McGowan argued it will be Sanders. "I think Bernie will eventually emerge, but I think Buttigieg may be around longer than people think," she said.

Haines concurred with Roberts that it will be either Sanders or Bloomberg, but made the case that Bloomberg is the most pragmatic and best positioned of the current candidates.

"It's hard for me to imagine that Trump gets re-elected," McGowan said. "This is an election we must get right."



# 2020 DEMOCRATIC MOCK CONVENTION

## Behind The Scenes At Mock Con: A Contested Convention Not Only Challenge

By COLIN WHITMORE

From writing the rules for a contested convention to dealing with a Corona Virus threat, tons of behind the scenes work went into producing Washington and Lee's 27th mock convention.

Students began working to produce this past weekend's convention four years ago. They knew it would be a tall task, but couldn't have foreseen many of the obstacles they were forced to hurdle.

During the mock convention wrapup panel discussion Sunday afternoon in Stackhouse Theater, Political Chair John Harashinski explained that one major problem was that the Democratic National Convention hasn't written rules for a contested convention, which was the method the students used to select Sanders.

"I called a DNC representative and asked what the rules for a contested convention were," Harashinski said. "She laughed and said, 'We haven't written them yet; we're not worried about that possibility.'"

Harashinski and his team were surprised at the response, but embraced the opportunity to write their own framework.

"The DNC is not prepared for that option, so hopefully they tuned in and took notes," Director of Communications Annie Lentz jokingly said.

Harashinski explained that the specific problem is that the DNC's language is unclear whether the pledged delegates remained pledged or are free to vote for whoever on a second ballot.

"We tried to follow the existing rules the best we could, but also wanted to maintain the integrity

of the convention," General Chair Jimmy Fleck said.

Getting to the result of Sanders through a contested convention wasn't an easy decision, Harashinski explained.

"There were lots of sleepless nights, especially in the post-Iowa days when we were trying to make sense of everything," he said.

Harashinski went to Iowa to observe and report on the caucus. "With the mess that happened out there, this was probably the first convention in which we've ever had to predict Iowa," he joked.

Sanders wasn't who the convention expected to pick. "At the beginning of January, everything we saw pointed to Biden," Harashinski said. But that changed when Biden underperformed in both Iowa and New Hampshire.

"We used a data driven approach," Harashinski said. "By the numbers we have right now, the most logical path we saw was Sanders through a contested convention."

Harashinski's logic behind the pick is that people won't rally behind a more moderate candidate until late March, and by then it will be too late. "Sanders will likely have already established a strong enough base to win the pick," he said.

A member of the audience Sunday asked how the students evaluated Michael Bloomberg's candidacy.

"Bloomberg was a total wild card," Harashinski said. Bloomberg will miss the first four primaries, yet his net worth is \$62.8 billion and he is expected to use that to fund a powerful campaign.

"The main problem we had with Bloomberg is that he's unproven, and we didn't have enough data," Harashinski said. Bloomberg has yet

to compete on the debate stage, has had little negative news published about him, has no primary polling averages and no demographic data currently.

Despite all the unknowns, the convention predicted that Bloomberg will come in third with 727 delegates.

### Other Challenges

Selecting a nominee was a serious chore, but politics was just the beginning.

One unlikely logistical challenge the team faced was having to coordinate last minute with a new factory to produce the student ticket lanyards after the one they planned to use in China was shut down due to a Corona Virus outbreak.

"The factory offered to send us half of the lanyards, which they claimed weren't contaminated," Lentz said. "We had to cancel the entire order a week and a half before the convention and beg a new factory in Wisconsin to manufacture and overnight ship them to us."

Logistics Chair Donald LeCompte took on many of these challenges directly. The convention, which is normally held in W&L's primary gymnasium, was moved to the Duchossois Tennis Center since the gym is currently under construction.

"It was certainly a challenge," he said. "But lots of people gave us feedback about how well it worked there, so we're considering suggesting that the next convention hold it there again."

The rapid transformation of the athletic facility to a convention center was spectacular.

LeCompte explained that the operations and facilities team couldn't

start work on the tennis side of the facility until Thursday morning because the tennis team had practices.

After the convention concluded on Saturday evening, the facilities crew transformed the building back to a functional athletic facility by midnight.

In all, LeCompte estimated that 2,170 people attended the event, compared to the 2,400 who attended in 2016.

Coordinating the slate of speakers for the convention was no small task either.

"For starters, it was far more difficult to get in touch with Democratic campaigns this year than it was Republican ones in 2016 because of the school's reputation," Lentz said.

She and other students on the panel said they believe this is due in part to the school's name as well as the persisting stereotype that the student body tends to be very conservative.

In fact, the panel said a Democrat has never called in to thank the convention after receiving a nomination.

After being nominated, Sanders upheld this trend. Lentz said the senator declined to take the call and address the convention, as Trump did in 2016, despite being available. Instead, a campaign representative briefly thanked the student body.

Trump's impeachment trial further compounded the difficulty of finding speakers.

"At the time, we didn't know how long the trial would go on for, so it prevented us from being able to get any senators or members from the House, like we have in the past," Harashinski said.

If managing the politics and logistics of the convention weren't difficult enough, throw in the added

challenge of fundraising and managing a \$1 million account responsible for funding everything.

Financial Chair Elizabeth Thompson, who is a neuroscience major, embraced the challenge.

"Paying workers, buying everything needed to transform the tennis center and negotiating with speakers, while sending out letters to fundraise was a serious task," she said.

In all, the students raised \$315,000 between February 2019 and this month. That accounted for 32 percent of the convention's total funding.

"Another thing we always keep in mind is leaving the group responsible for Mock Con 2024 something significant to work with," Thompson said. "I think we did a great job of budgeting for this convention, but also for the next one."

Though the convention ended on Saturday afternoon, the team's work is not yet complete.

"Our next job is to prepare a manual for the next group," General Secretary Layne Smith said. In addition, the underclassmen involved with this year's convention will be responsible for selecting the next convention's committee, which will be comprised primarily of members from the class of 2024.

The panel noted that this year's mock convention was one of firsts in many ways. It was the first to launch a mobile ticketing app, the first to use LED screens for livestreaming, the first to host the convention at an alternative venue and the first to document and digitize all the political data that went into the pick.

"This was an incredible convention and the work we put in paid off," Lentz said. "We hope the 2024 group can top it."



### Forecast: Sunny With A Chance Of Balloons

Clear but cold weather provided the backdrop for the W&L mock convention parade Friday morning. ABOVE, the Mississippi delegation members show their support for the state, not to be outdone by the Ohio delegation (below) and the American Samoa delegation (at right). (Mary Woodson photos)



### W&L's Community Grants Committee will evaluate proposals in March 2020

Washington and Lee University's Community Grants Committee would like to remind the community of its Spring 2020 proposal evaluation schedule. Proposals may be submitted at any time but are reviewed semiannually: at the end of the calendar year and at the end of the fiscal year. The deadline for submitting a proposal for the Spring 2018 evaluation is 4:30 p.m. on Friday, March 6, 2020.

Established in the spring of 2008, the purpose of the program is to support non-profit organizations in the Lexington/Rockbridge community. The program began its first full year on July 1, 2008, coinciding with the start of the University's fiscal year. The University will award a total of \$60,000 during the program's 2019-20 cycle.

During the first round of the 2019-20 evaluations held in November, 2019, twenty organizations submitted proposals for a total of over \$85,000 in requests. The University made \$28,190 in grants to 16 of those organizations. Those organizations were:

- American Red Cross of the Roanoke and New River Valleys Virginia
- Gospel Way Church of God in Christ
- AmeriCorps VISTA Program
- Blue Ridge CASA for Children
- Boxerwood Education Association
- Buena Vista City Public Schools
- Buena Vista Rescue Squad, Inc.
- Hoofbeats Therapeutic Riding Center
- Lex Lax Wildcat Booster Club
- Mission Next Door
- Natural Bridge/Glasgow Food Pantry, Inc.
- PMHS Lady Blues Soccer
- RCHS Boys' Baseball Team
- Rockbridge Historical Society
- Rockbridge Regional Drug Task Force
- Community Foundation of Rockbridge, Bath, and Alleghany Counties
- StuFund program

Interested parties may access the Community Grants Committee website and download a copy of the proposal guidelines at the following address: <http://go.wlu.edu/communitygrants>.

Please call 540-458-8417 with questions. Proposals should be submitted as electronic attachments (word or pdf) via email to [kbrinkley@wlu.edu](mailto:kbrinkley@wlu.edu). If an electronic submission is not possible, materials may be faxed to 540-458-8745 or mailed to:

Washington and Lee University Community Grants Committee, Attn: James D. Farrar Jr., Secretary of the University, Chair, Community Grants Committee, 204 W. Washington St., Washington and Lee University, Lexington, VA 24450.