

“To my Black people: I see you. I grieve with you. I breathe fear with you. And I will continue to fight for us and demand that white America stop murdering, stealing, and restricting our breaths.”

—Mayor **Nikuyah Walker**, in a statement about the national protests against police brutality



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# INTERVIEWS

## Marching for justice

### Charlottesville joins nationwide protests against police brutality

Nearly a thousand protesters took to the streets of downtown Charlottesville May 30, demanding an end to police brutality and justice for the murders of black people across the country, including George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, Ahmaud Arbery, and Tony McDade.

In solidarity with the dozens of other Black Lives Matter demonstrations around the nation, people of all races and ages carried homemade signs and chanted statements like “Cops and Klan go hand in hand,” “White silence is violence,” and “No justice, no peace.” Others joined in by car, blowing their horns and waving signs as they drove along Market Street.

“I was extremely pleased both with the turnout and the resiliency of the participants to remain peaceful...I am certain we got our message across,” says community activist and former Blue Ribbon Commission member Don Gathers, who spoke at the march.

But he believes there should have been “tens of hundreds more” at the event. “Anyone with a pulse and a moral compass should have been out there protesting the disgusting murder and ongoing brutalization of blacks across this country,” he says.

The march was initiated by local resident Ang Conn, who, after seeing the murder of Floyd on video, felt “just completely distraught with what to actually do.” Floyd died after white Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin pressed his

knee into the black man’s neck for nearly nine minutes, despite Floyd’s pleas that he could not breathe. (Three other police officers on the scene, who failed to intervene, were fired along with Chauvin, but only Chauvin has been arrested.)

Conn reached out to multiple racial justice groups and put a local team together to plan the Charlottesville protest, and get the word out.

The event started at 3pm in front of the city’s police department, where activists, including Zyahna Bryant and Rosia Parker, led chants, gave speeches, and invited the crowd to take a knee.



Don Gathers

By Brielle Entzminger  
reporter@c-ville.com

CONTINUED ON PAGE 11

## IN BRIEF

### Uninspiring Ryan

UVA President Jim Ryan’s recent bland statement on the national unrest has drawn ire from university student leaders. Rising second-year and well-known local activist Zyahna Bryant resigned from the Executive Council on UVA-Community Partnerships over his comments, saying they have “proven that there seems to be no real interest in supporting Black students at UVA in an explicit and direct way.”

### Read the room

The Charlottesville Police Department excitedly announced a preview of a new police recruitment video on

May 28, after people across the country had been protesting police brutality for days. The next morning, perhaps realizing its timing could not have been worse, the department decided to delay the video’s release “until a later time.”

### Messy monuments

From Oxford, Mississippi, to Charleston, South Carolina, and Norfolk, Virginia, Confederate monuments have become renewed targets for protesters this week. In Richmond, graffiti covered Monument Avenue’s Robert E. Lee statue, a bright-white “BLM” tag shining against the bronze plaque on its base. The Daughters of the Confederacy building in

Richmond was also targeted, with windows burned out and “Abolition” spray painted by the steps. Meanwhile, Charlottesville’s memorials, repeatedly vandalized in the past, have been untouched.

### See you in the fall

During a faculty town hall last week, Ryan announced that UVA hopes to hold its fall semester at least partly in person, with classes beginning in late August and running until Thanksgiving. The details have yet to be ironed out, but students will have to agree to targeted and random virus testing, and those who test positive will be sent to a yet-to-be-determined quarantine area.

**“Anyone with a pulse and a moral compass should have been out there protesting the disgusting murder and ongoing brutalization of blacks across this country.”**

COMMUNITY ACTIVIST DON GATHERS



Nearly a thousand protesters, including local activist Zyahna Bryant (left), took to the streets of downtown Charlottesville May 30, demanding an end to police brutality and justice for the murders of black people across the country.

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

Demonstrators later marched down the mall to City Hall, then through Market Street Park, along Preston Avenue, and into Washington Park, chanting and listening to speeches from area activists and residents. Nearly all wore masks, bandanas, and other facial coverings.

While police in other cities have responded violently to protesters (including in Richmond, where peaceful demonstrators were tear-gassed Monday evening), cops did not confront the crowd in Charlottesville, and the event remained nonviolent. CPD, which has been criticized in the past for heavy-handed treatment of protesters, chose to have “officers remain at a respectful distance, so that people attending could engage in civil discourse peacefully,” says spokesman Tyler Hawn.

City Councilor Sena Magill was thankful that CPD took a hands-off approach to the protest, instead of “trying to stop it.” She says she’s also “proud of our community in general for coming out and saying enough

is enough, and doing it in a way that was peaceful.”

As for Conn, she says she hasn’t thought much about how it was peaceful, or how many supporters came out. “We’re protesting black people getting murdered. That’s not fun. It wasn’t a party [or] a get together. We’re in the middle of a pandemic and there are millions of black and brown people locked up in jail cells...which was also what this protest was about.”

On Sunday, the Albemarle High School Black Student Union hosted a demonstration in front of the Albemarle County Office Building. Joined by community members, students of all races stood on the sidewalk in masks, chanting and holding signs with phrases like “Justice for George.”

“We wanted to continue the momentum. It’s important for us to keep protesting peacefully and raising awareness,” says BSU president Faith Holmes. “We’re actually really happy with the way it turned out...we weren’t expecting the numbers that we had.

It was fulfilling to see people from [the community] come out and support Black Lives Matter.”

Moving forward, Gathers says he and other local activists will “continue to monitor the situation across the country,” and “should there be a situation that comes to light, God-forbid, here in Charlottesville, we certainly will be at the ready and quick to respond.”

Charlottesville has its own fraught relationship with the police. Following community anger over the tear-gassing of counterprotesters during the July 2017 KKK rally, and CPD’s failure to protect residents during the violent Unite the Right rally later that summer, City Council created the Police Civilian Review Board to enhance transparency and trust. After years of controversy and disagreement over the board’s bylaws, City Council appointed seven members to the board in February. It will not begin to meet, though, until council appoints an eighth member, who must have

prior law-enforcement experience, and hires an executive director.

Before Saturday’s protest, organizers also released a list of demands for the city, county, and state, which Conn read to the crowd on Saturday. It included an end to pretrial detention and home monitoring fees; the demilitarization and defunding of CPD; and the release of more people from jail and prison, especially given the current high risk of death from COVID-19.

Several Charlottesville officials offered statements condemning Floyd’s death and police violence against the black community. And While Magill did not comment on the specific demands, she says the recent incidents of police brutality around the country “have been weighing heavy on all of council” and, from what she’s seen, council is “committed to true change.”

“So many things are hard to get moving quickly, but we all know that we have to do something real,” she adds. “The time for thoughts and prayers is done—it’s been done.”

## High school seniors modify end-of-year traditions

Senior year traditions—from proms and sports banquets to senior nights and graduation ceremonies—have long been a way to commemorate the end of high school, giving students the chance to celebrate and say goodbye to one chapter of life before beginning a new one. But with schools closed since March and social-distancing regulations still in place, Charlottesville-area teens have had to finish their high school careers with makeshift versions of the events they had looked forward to for years.

Although many seniors are disappointed, some have found these celebratory moments special. Covenant School senior Madi Alley remembers when she was in ninth grade, watching the seniors in a capella perform their traditional spring concert. Now she’s a member of the a capella group herself, but this year’s concert looked much different. It took place at a family friend’s barn, with only four people in the audience, and the singers stood six feet apart, wearing masks. Still, Alley is grateful to her teacher

for organizing a concert at all. “It felt like we were being seen and still cared for,” she says.

At Saint Anne’s-Belfield, it’s a tradition for seniors to break the dress code one day in the spring and paint their school uniform skirts with the logos of the colleges they will attend in the fall. Senior Miguel Rivera Young, who’s going to Brown University, says he and some friends found a modified way to take part in the tradition (which isn’t limited to girls): They spread tarps across a street, and painted the skirts while physically distancing from each other. Then they took photos, standing six feet apart.

But there was no substitute for some once-in-a-lifetime events, like prom. For Monticello High senior Catherine Taylor, prom was one of the main things she was looking forward to, and she had begun making plans for the night. “We all already had our dresses because it was so close.”

Having these memorable events within arm’s reach, only to be snatched away, has devastated many seniors.

“At first it was really, really heartbreaking,” says Albemarle High senior Cora Schiavone, “I was just really upset because there was so much I was looking forward to.”

Swimmers Charlie Cross, a senior at AHS, and Noah Hargrove, from Western, are mourning the cancellation of their summer league, where they would have had senior night and a last chance to swim on the teams they grew up competing with. While Hargrove’s year-round swim team coach put together a virtual form of senior night, “it wasn’t even close” to the real thing, he says.

Like everything this spring, many long-anticipated events weren’t typical of senior year, but they were better than nothing. “I would rather have the big graduation with everybody,” says Ally Schoolcraft, a senior at CHS, which held a “victory lap” and photo op for graduates last week. “But for the time being, I think they did good with the resources that they had.”—Claudia Gohn

“With this remarkable medical achievement, we are beginning to see the light at the end of a long, dark tunnel.”

—Governor Ralph Northam, as vaccine distribution begins

# NEWS



*Heel turn*

PAGE 15

## False alarm?

### CPD refutes racial profiling claims, calls on church leaders to “apologize or be terminated”

By Brielle Entzminger

reporter@c-ville.com

**I**n October, leaders at the Unitarian Universalist Church of Charlottesville penned a blog post accusing the Charlottesville Police Department of racial profiling. According to the clergy, CPD unnecessarily detained and intimidated a Black congregant as he was walking to church.

On December 10, Charlottesville Police Chief RaShall Brackney held a press conference during which she shared body camera footage, and announced that an internal investigation conducted by her department found no evidence of police misconduct during the October 7 stop.

After sharing the results of the investigation, Brackney demanded that Unitarian church leaders “apologize or be terminated,” calling the church’s claims “baseless and race-baiting.” The press conference drew concern from activists in town, and placed renewed scrutiny on the department’s internal investigations policy.

#### Profiling incident

In an open letter released October 15, the clergy accused the department of harassing one of their church members, a 63-year-old Black man. According to the church, the man was allegedly surrounded by five police cars after a UVA student called the police on him while he was walking to church. The officers asked him what he was doing in the neigh-



STAFF PHOTO

Leaders at the Unitarian Church on Rugby Road accused the police department of racial profiling in October. The police department denies the claim.

borhood, and demanded his social security number and identification, suspecting him of committing a recent series of break-ins.

The church claimed he looked nothing like the photo of the suspect, but was still interrogated until a white church member came over to investigate the situation. The clergy called on the department to apologize to the man.

After reviewing the 911 call, radio transmissions, and body camera footage, and interviewing the parties involved, CPD’s internal affairs unit concluded that the church’s claims were false, said Brackney last Thursday.

According to audio and visual evidence, the 911 call that sparked the incident was not made by a UVA student, but a teenager. She claimed that a Black man was loitering on private property, and that he had previously broken into a neighbor’s house.

While standing on the sidewalk, the church member flagged down the responding officer because he had seen someone run into the house and assumed the homeowner had called the police. A second officer soon arrived on the scene, and explained he should not cut through private property to get to his church, in light of the recent break-ins.

Body camera footage showed that the church member, who had a tracheostomy and could not speak, was visibly upset. He believed the officers were accusing him of committing the break-ins, which they clarified they were not.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13

## IN BRIEF

#### Fellini’s closing

Yet another Charlottesville business has been shuttered by the coronavirus. Last week, the owners of downtown Italian restaurant and music venue Fellini’s announced that December 19 would be the spot’s final day. “We literally tried EVERYTHING,” reads a post on the restaurant’s Facebook page. The owners report that they asked the city to use the sidewalks for outdoor dining, but were not allowed to do so.

#### Turnover continues

The list of high-profile departures from Charlottesville this year just keeps getting longer. After six years as CEO of Jaunt, Brad Sheffield resigned last week, wanting to take the “next steps” in his career, reports The Daily Progress. Charlottesville Police Chief RaShall Brackney is also eyeing a new job—last week, she was selected as one of seven finalists for police chief of Dallas. The new chief is expected to be selected by January 1.



AMY AND JACKSON SMITH

Brad Sheffield

#### Cut the check

For months, thousands of Virginians have been waiting to receive their badly needed unemployment benefits. After the Legal Aid Justice Center, Virginia Poverty Law Center, and other legal partners threatened the Virginia Employment Commission with a class action lawsuit last month, nearly 80,000 people are now receiving payments while their claims continue to be reviewed.



more protective for cyclists pedaling uphill toward Rugby Road.

Krebs, who works to connect the city and county for safe bike and pedestrian routes, says that what can be done now to encourage cycling and walking is especially important during the COVID-19 pandemic, when there is more demand to be outdoors pursuing safe activities. He says the project is also important from another health standpoint—reducing vehicle miles will help “to get in front of climate change,” and help people be more healthy.

Homeowners Barnett and Kraus both emphasize that they aren’t against the bike lanes, but they are opposed to the removal of street parking for residents who need the parking spaces. Barnett says that the city should postpone public discussions “until the neighborhood knows the impact that the new large units [on Cabell] would have on an already strained parking system.”

Krebs says it will be feasible, but not for a long time, to install a sidewalk on the opposite side of Preston, and that the project overall is not perfect and calls for creative responses.

In addition to angst about the possible bike lane, homeowners don’t like the way they found out about it. Ponce says that whenever parking might be removed, the city posts information about a two-week comment period on streets or other structures nearby.

Kraus says, “If I had not walked up and down the street, I would not have seen the posters.”

“The two-week comment period was over the Thanksgiving holiday, during COVID-19,” Barnett says. “The city can get in touch with you if you don’t clean the snow off your sidewalk or if you owe taxes. So, the city can get in touch if they are going to take away your parking, and they chose not to.”

Ponce says the period for public comment will extend until an ultimate decision is made next year. “Given the amount of public comment we have received, the city will be conducting further studies in this area and will notify homeowners once this occurs,” Ponce says. The next round of assessments will likely take place in February. 🗳️



CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

“The thing is, if I lived there, and somebody walks behind my house every day, it would make me nervous too,” said the second officer. “If you’re freaked out, and they’re freaked out, and the common denominator is not to walk through there, then why don’t we do that?”

When the man claimed the police were called because he was Black, the second officer, who is also Black, insisted “it [had] nothing to do with race,” and told the three detectives who arrived on the scene that the man was playing “the race card.” A church member later came over to check on the man, who was never detained or charged with a crime.

## Press conference sparks strong feelings

The police department initiated an investigation into the incident after it received the letter from interim lead minister Reverend Dr. Linda Olson Peebles in October, but it wasn’t until a month later, when the letter was shared on Twitter, that the activist community took notice. In late November, the Defund Charlottesville Police Department Campaign and other advocacy groups penned an op-ed in the *Cavalier Daily*, calling for the firing of the officers involved in the alleged racial profiling incident.

During the press conference, Brackney fired back. The chief listed the names of the church members who signed the open letter, accusing them of leveraging “their privilege and self-serving agendas.” She also called for the activist groups who “co-signed this smear campaign” against CPD to issue apologies.

Shortly before the press conference, Peebles issued a statement to her congregation, expressing the church leadership’s concern over the investigation’s findings. She claimed there were “a number of discrepancies between the testimony of the police and the account of the church member,” but that the church member no longer wanted them to address the situation.

Peebles later said Brackney made “unfair accusations” about the church leadership during the press conference. She claimed the church leadership penned the letter after talking directly with the church member, and had him approve it before sending it to CPD. They also never asked for the officers to resign.

“We are disappointed...as it seems [CPD] has minimized our member’s experience, our concerns, and our right to ask for the police to respond to us without malice,” she stated.

In a statement released December 12, Defund CPD also criticized Brackney for her retaliatory rhetoric during the conference.

“Brackney [attempted] to publicly intimidate those who rightfully questioned and criticized the police,” read the statement. She “intended to discredit the voices and experiences of the Black community...and to silence anyone who might think of filing a complaint against the police in the future.”

Defund CPD demanded Brackney resign immediately for abusing her power, and called on City Council to take action.



Chief Brackney called for the resignation of church leaders at a press conference on Thursday.

Sarah Burke, a member of the city’s initial Police Civilian Review Board, hopes Brackney’s behavior will not deter local residents from filing complaints about police misconduct, which they can also send to the oversight board, with the department.

“When you have a press conference... where the narrative is so spun to be protective of police and critical of anybody who wants to report what they believe to be racial profiling, [that] is part of a bigger pattern of the way people have been silenced historically,” she says. “It begs the question of how impartial the police can be in investigating their own conduct.”

## Internal affairs

Usually, the police department publishes the results of its internal investigations on its website, describing the outcome with a single word: sustained, unfounded, exonerated, or not resolved. The department found the church’s racial profiling complaint to be unfounded.

The internal affairs data on the police department’s website was last updated on September 28 of this year, and from January 1 to September 28, the department opened 28 internal investigations. Ten were sustained, meaning the officer “acted in violation of applicable procedures.”

The results of the department’s internal accountability procedures don’t always align with outside sources’ assessments of the incidents.

After officer Jeffrey Jaeger, who is white, slammed a Black man’s head into a fence while responding to a verbal dispute in March, he filed a use-of-force report and was cleared by the department. But when body camera footage from the incident was shown during a trial in July, a complaint was filed with CPD concerning potential criminal wrongdoing. Charlottesville Commonwealth’s Attorney Joe Platania reviewed the case and ordered a full-scale investigation, charging Jaeger with misdemeanor assault and battery.

On December 11, Jaeger was found guilty, and handed a 12-month suspended sentence and two years of unsupervised probation, meaning he will not spend time in jail. He

appealed his conviction to the Charlottesville Circuit Court, and currently is on administrative leave without pay. As things stand now, the police department’s examination of the incident cleared an officer who was later convicted by a court of law.

In its internal affairs data, the department does not explain the reason for each case ruling, or disclose which disciplinary measures were taken against the officers found guilty of violating department policy, or the law.

The “opacity” of internal affairs investigations has long been a concern for many community members and activists, says Maisie Osteen, a civil rights attorney for the Legal Aid Justice Center.

“In so many cases, the problem [is] the process being so impermeable to citizens being a part of it and understanding it. The public only knows what the police want us to know,” she says, “What comes out of the investigation is a curated lens from the police department—good or bad.”

Osteen has also seen many people hesitate to file police complaints because they are afraid they won’t get taken seriously, nothing will be done, or they’ll face retribution.

“What’s going on right now is showing how necessary it is to create a robust police civilian oversight board,” she says. “[It] adds legitimacy and accountability to both the peoples’ understanding of what’s going on, and the police internal investigations.”

Community activist Walt Heinecke also feels that the internal investigations process has been “pretty tightly held,” especially given the limited advisory role currently afforded to the Civilian Review Board.

Heinecke ultimately hopes that the church member who filed the complaint will appeal it so it can be reviewed by the CRB. (The board will be allowed to independently receive and investigate complaints with subpoena power when new state criminal justice reforms go into effect next year.)

“There may be another version of the story that is possible from a larger review by the [CRB], if asked to review the case, of evidence beyond the edited version presented,” says Heinecke. “If that does not happen, the mistrust of the police by some in the community may be exacerbated.” 🗳️

# Not over

## Activists reflect on Black Lives Matter protests, next steps in 2021

By Brielle Entzminger

**W**hile the coronavirus pandemic has disproportionately impacted communities of color this year, Black people have been dealing with “a pandemic of racism” in the United States for centuries, as Black mental health advocate Myra Anderson told C-VILLE over the summer.

When Minneapolis police officer Derek Chauvin knelt on George Floyd’s neck for nearly nine minutes on May 25, ultimately killing him, these deep wounds of systemic violence and oppression were once again ripped open, sparking protests across the globe—and here in Charlottesville—in support of the Black Lives Matter movement.

From June to September, local activists led a string of demonstrations demanding an end to police brutality, and calling for justice for Black people who’ve been murdered at the hands of cops. The events drew large crowds of all races and ages.

“The killings of Breonna Taylor, George Floyd, Ahmaud Arbery...they woke people up,” says activist Zaneyah Bryant, a member of the Charlottesville Black Youth Action Committee and a ninth grader at Charlottesville High School. “It put a spark on people, like wow this is happening to our people. This could happen to anybody—this could happen in Charlottesville.”

While protests against police brutality continue in places like Portland, Oregon, it’s been several months since people in Charlottesville have taken to the streets. Though there haven’t been any drastic changes made in the city—CPD’s \$18 million budget has not been touched, for example—some activists believe progress has been made toward racial justice.

“These are tough and difficult conversations. Up until at least recently, people were reluctant to begin to initiate them, but now [they] are actually being had,” says community activist Don Gathers. “We’ve reached the point in the... racist history of this country where people are willing to have these conversations.”

“[The protests] really just opened up more conversation surrounding how the police interact with the community, and allowed for us to envision a police-free society,” adds Ang Conn, an organizer with Defund CPD. “We have community members looking at budgets, policies, things that never prompted their attention before. And when you have a lot of eyes on things, there is bound to be change.”

With the support of the community, Charlottesville City Schools was able to end its school resource officer program with



Protesters march through Charlottesville in July.

EZE AMOS

CPD in June, another step in the right direction, says Bryant.

Other activists like Rosia Parker say they have yet to see any progress in the city.

“[My protests] were peaceful, decent, in order, and orchestrated with Captain Mooney. For them to deny me my march, I don’t feel it was right,” says Parker, referring to the city’s threat to fine her and other activists in August, and its denial of her event permit in September. “Other protests, no they didn’t help Charlottesville. A lot of people came out and supported Black Lives Matter, but at the end of the day, [it] didn’t do anything.”

“There’s been no change in the governmental structure—it has gotten worse,” she adds, citing the resignation of City Manager Dr. Tarron Richardson in September as an example of the city’s pattern of staffing instability.

Pointing to the police assault of a Black houseless man on the Corner last month, Bryant also fears that, despite the months of protests, Charlottesville police “have gone right back to their old ways—harassing Black people.”

In the new year, the fight against police violence and systemic racism must continue, the activists emphasize.

Though it may be a few months before protesters hit the city streets again, there are plenty of ways to remain involved in the fight, says Bryant. She encourages allies to participate in city government meetings and mutual aid programs, especially for people experiencing homelessness or food insecurity.

“If you are white and you see someone of color or Black being harassed, stand up and use your voice,” she says. “When you say something to those officers, you have power to stop them.”

The city government must also strengthen its relationship with Black communities,

especially in light of multiple recent shootings in town, says Bryant.

“Those people in those communities are asking for more police presence. [They] feel unsafe,” she says. “But we can’t use [that] as a reason to say, ‘Oh they’re asking, so we have to keep harassing them.. We need people to help them understand what they are asking for, and what they mean by wanting more police presence.’”

For Parker, ensuring police and government accountability is a priority for next year, as the Police Civilian Review Board works to update its bylaws and ordinance, per the new criminal justice legislation passed in the General Assembly this fall.

“If that means the mayor and police chief have to go, then so be it,” she says.

In addition to advocating for the CRB, Parker plans to offer programs for Black youth through her community organization, Empowering Generations XYZ, with a huge focus on mental health.

“If we can educate our own, become peer-support recovery specialists, become more trauma informed, we can be around for our community, and won’t have to be overpoliced or underpoliced,” she says. “We won’t even need the police—we can do what we need to do ourselves in our own communities. It’s just about getting the resources and education.”

Finally, Gathers and Conn say they will keep on pushing City Council to slash CPD’s \$18 million budget, and reallocate those funds to various social services and programs within the next year.

“That’s a lot of money, and people are really struggling out here with a lot of things,” says Conn. “We must continue to work towards hacking away at that police budget until it’s zero.”

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

“I’m looking forward to giving my mom a hug and not worrying about getting her sick. I’m looking forward to sleepovers and playdates for the kiddos. I’m looking forward to kids getting to enjoy their friends again. Looking forward to breathing in fresh air without a mask.”

LASHUNRA BRYSON MORSBERGER,  
CHARLOTTESVILLE SCHOOL BOARD

“I look forward to being able to sit at dinner with friends and family—to be able to hug again. To get back into church for worship and fellowship. Mostly, I look forward to large numbers of people not getting sick and dying. The days when we can look out for each other, in person. Looking forward to seeing people’s faces and not just their eyes.”

DON GATHERS, ACTIVIST

“When it’s safe to do so, I’m looking forward to spending early mornings with UVA students, faculty, staff, and community members as we continue our weekly community runs—involving Bodo’s, of course. The pandemic has been challenging and isolating for many of us, but it has also taught us how important exercise is for our overall health and well-being. So, I hope that sooner rather than later we can get back to gathering as a community and doing things that bring us joy. I also can’t wait to get to when I can high-five as many UVA community members as possible, in gratitude for all they did this past year.”

JIM RYAN, PRESIDENT, UVA

“Funny thing to say for an introvert, but man I miss being with people. Especially in bars and at Virginia sports games. Less surprisingly, I really miss large quantities of draft beer with my buddies, and the smiling faces of our friends, regulars, and tourists. If anything, it’s a bleak but well-met reminder that C’ville is one special place.”

HUNTER SMITH, OWNER, CHAMPION HOSPITALITY

“I am looking forward to visiting my family as soon as safely possible. I am also looking forward to sharing my new music with people, whether performing or listening in the same room. I would have loved to be in Hawaii to shoot the “Ohana” video with Akoni. It was so dope to watch the reactions to the song go to No. 6 on the iTunes Reggae chart. Hopefully, I can go there and hit a stage as well.”

A.D. CARSON, ASSISTANT PROFESSOR OF HIP-HOP  
AND THE GLOBAL SOUTH, UVA

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23

“We have community members looking at budgets, policies, things that never prompted their attention before. And when you have a lot of eyes on things, there is bound to be change.” **ANG CONN, DEFUND CPD ORGANIZER**