

BROADSIDE

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Campus Bids Farewell to Mascot Mason to Retain Gunston for Community Relations

BRIAN CHAN
Sports Editor

For the past couple of years, the skeptics have finally spoken. Entering the 2009 season, George Mason University ousted their fuzzy green mascot of 12 years from the sidelines. Mason will unveil their new mascot at tonight's home opener against Brown University at the Patriot Center.

With ratings compared to those of the United States president and Congress, the former Gunston received mixed reactions from the Mason student body.

A couple years ago, Associate Athletic Director for Marketing Andy Ruge surveyed a 60-student marketing class and found that none of the students approved Gunston as a mascot.

The controversy began with the uncertain depiction of Gunston. Gunston, a cross between "Oscar the Grouch" and a muppet, emerged as Mason's main mascot at a men's basketball game against Ohio State University in 1996. For 12 years, the "what's that" mascot made appearances at basketball

games and campus events. Yet, a number of students did not have an issue with the mascot even though they did not know what it exactly was.

"Sure he might not look like an actual 'Patriot,' but he looked and did the job as any mascot should do: look like you are fun to be around and rev up the audience to cheer on the team," said junior Brian Rita. "I really felt Gunston was fine for [Mason] and as I remember an old saying, 'do not fix something that is not broken.'"

At times, Gunston created a family-oriented environment at the Patriot Center as the younger fans filled the arena.

Prior to Gunston's existence, Mason was represented by the Mason Maniak, a patriot, gorilla, and the Green Mask.

The Mason Maniak, like Gunston, was an unidentified animal character. The mascot sported a white t-shirt bearing the words "Mason Maniak" and bright striped pants.

Like Gunston, the Mason Maniak was seen dancing in front of the fans. The patriot only lasted three years from 1990-1993 as George Johnson, the

school president at the time, believed a white male mascot did not portray the university's diversity. The Green Mask was based on the 1995 movie, in which he performed outside Mason basketball games.

Gunston is another member of the 2006 Final Four run who will not show his face at Mason basketball games in the 2009 season. Even after the team made their run in the Final Four, Gunston's questionable appearance did not get the green fuzzy mascot off the hook.

In a June 2006 column in *The Washington Post*, writer Dan Steinberg mentioned how "[Gunston's] job had been on the line for some time." After two years, Gunston's time as the primary mascot is up.

There has been speculation from Steinberg and Mason basketball blogger Ryan Kish that the mascot at 7'0" and 240 pounds will be represented more like a Patriot rather than a creature like Xavier University's Blue Blob.

"I really do feel sad that Gunston will no longer be our official mascot for George Mason. I thought Gunston was not bad

for a mascot since he was fun, energetic, and he knew how to give the Patriot Center some volume when cheering on the team," said Rita.

"To me, we shouldn't have changed if nothing was broken, but either way, Gunston will be missed on the sidelines," said Rita. "For the new mascot, as long as it can do the same things as Gunston did and look relatively decent, the change to the new mascot will be a lot less painful for me."

On the other hand, the new Gunston will still partake in Mason's "Go Green" events on campus. Recently, a video of the new Gunston leaked to the Mason community, which is not to be confused with the team's new mascot.

In the video, Gunston receives a diploma from university President Alan Merten and a makeover. For the first time, Gunston reveals his teeth, which is not seen in the original Gunston. The new, less furry Gunston will no longer be on the sidelines at the basketball games.



PHOTO BY COURTNEY ERLAND | PHOTOGRAPHY MANAGER

Gunston participates at his last Mason Madness.

Men's Basketball Season Kickoff Schedule:

Kickoff Begins

12 p.m.

Pep Rally in the Johnson Center atrium: Featuring Coach Larranaga and the men's basketball team, Doc Nix and the Green Machine, the Masonettes, Mason Cheer, WKYS DJ Iran, and Student Government. There will also be a special announcement about the Mason Celebrity Weekend (visit celebrityweekend.gmu.edu for more information about scheduled guests and activities).

4 p.m.

Student Government will begin distributing Gold Rush T-shirts in the residence halls.

5 p.m.

Students and the Mason Drumline and Color Guard will lead Gold Rush from the Liberty Square courtyard to the Patriot Center

Don't forget to pick up a copy of *Broadside's* Basketball Guide 2008-2009 Season at the Patriot Center!

Gold Rush Housing Area Meeting Schedule

5 p.m.

Begin at Liberty Square

5:15 p.m.

Arrive in Presidents Park

5:40 p.m.

Arrive at Southside (Chesapeake and University Commons)

5:45 p.m.

Arrive at the George Mason Statue (Student Apartments)

6 p.m.

End at Patriot Center

7 p.m.

Mason vs. Brown at the Patriot Center



Burglaries In Presidents Park

Thefts Concern Mason Community

GORDON DAY
Broadside Correspondent

Over the last few weeks of October and the first week of November, a string of robberies occurred in Presidents Park. The losses have run from money stolen from a wallet to several thousand dollars worth of electronics. Police are still looking for suspects.

The first of these recent thefts occurred October 21 in Jefferson Hall and involved \$6,300 worth of various electronics.

A week later, on October 28, a wallet with an estimated \$150 in cash and several personal effects were taken from Monroe Hall.

Then, on November 7, Monroe Hall was hit again, and \$45 was removed from a wallet. According to authorities, these crimes were not connected and were not the responsibility of a gang.

"The problem with these types of crimes is the lack of a witness," said Major George Ginovsky, the assistant chief of police. While serial numbers can be tracked, cash almost never reappears.

Ginovsky also said that, these thefts are "not sophisticated." He thinks that the thieves are simply looking for rooms with open doors. When a door is closed and locked, the person simply moves on to the next door. These thefts are just "targets of opportunity."

The key, said Ginovsky, is prevention. The two things that need to be watched are leaving unattended items in areas such as the Johnson Center or Fenwick Library and locking the door to your room, even when one is sleeping.

Ginovsky also added that people on the first floor should close and lock their windows. "If you do these two things, you should be OK," said Ginovsky.

Ginovsky said that George Mason University has "a low crime rate" and that assault and

robberies occur rarely. According to the George Mason Security Report 2008, there were zero weapons arrests in 2007, nine cases of burglary and only one case of robbery in 2007.

Olivia Damico, a resident of the afflicted Jefferson Hall, responded to thefts.

"I feel pretty safe, I just lock my door, even when I take a shower," said Damico.

Will Bellows, a resident of Adams Hall in Presidents Park, summed up the mutual feeling with, "I feel personally safe, but I am worried that I may have my stuff stolen."

■ Things to Keep in Mind:

Housing suggests keep your doors locked at all times when:

1. You and your roommate are not in the room or apartment.
2. When going to the bathroom.
3. When going down the hall.
4. At night.

The Cost Of Water

Students May Find Water Cheaper When Going Green

KEVIN LOKER
Interim Asst. News Editor

As the end of the semester draws closer, some George Mason University students are finally realizing that paying 30 cents a day for a plastic cup of water at La Patisserie may just be adding up. Moreover, some are disgruntled.

"It's bull," said freshman biology major Nyssa Fin, "I don't get why I have to pay for a free commodity. Isn't it a standard to be given water at a restaurant if you ask for it?"

Resident District Manager of Dining Services Denise Ammaccapane says complaints like these are only partially justified.

"Water is a free commodity," Ammaccapane said, "but in the Johnson Center, for instance, what we charge for is for the cost of the lid, the cup and so on. And that's consistent across all college campuses."

While a paper cup may potentially be cheaper, it is policy for them to be made from clear plastic. "In order for staff to see that the cups are only used for water, this has to be," said Ammaccapane, "Nonetheless, it gets expensive. That's why we started the greening bottles."

Last spring, Student Government's Food Committee approached Ammaccapane and dining services with student concern for the price of water and soda on campus.

The committee worked to design a container similar to the refillable coffee travelers. The end-result resembled a Nalgene bottle, only in one shade, green.

Mason's greening bottles hold 16 ounces of liquid and can be refilled at any of Mason's soda fountains without the 30 cent charge.

For less than \$5, students can purchase the bottles at either of the campus' convenience stores, Patriot Express and the One Stop

Patriot Shop. Since their release, over 1,000 greening bottles have been sold.

"The Mason refillable bottles are not expensive, you get a free soda when you buy it, and you get free water or discounted prices on soda every time you use the bottle," said Nicole Kukuruda, a senior government major and Student Government member. "I fail to see a sensible reason not to purchase one."

Freshman mathematics major Kristen Steinman is one of many new Mason students who have realized that a cup of water everyday can add up. To her, Mason's greening bottle was a cost-effective and environmentally more-friendly way to get water on campus.

"They are a great investment. I don't have to spend money on those cups ever again," said Steinman, "That is, of course, especially if you can remember it. Unfortunately, I always seem to leave it in my room."

BROADSIDE GAME WEEK

Women's Basketball

vs.
Virginia Tech

Sunday, Nov. 23rd, 2:00 p.m.
Patriot Center

***FREE Tote Bag**

* While supplies last.

Admission is **FREE** with your valid Mason Student I.D.

