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Crooked Run Condemnation Hearing Scheduled for Jan. 11th

– *By Kelli Grim*

On January 11, 2011, the Purcellville Town Council will hold a public hearing on the “quick-take”/eminent domain condemnation of a portion of Crooked Run Orchard. The 200 year-old farm carries a “Century Farm” designation and is the only working farm in the Town of Purcellville. Portions of the farm are due to be condemned to make way for the proposed Southern Collector Road (SCR). The condemnation seeks to take immediate possession of 4 to 7 acres of one 16 acre parcel of the farm – an action that would cut the farm in two, and place the 4 lane portion of the SCR less than 75 feet from the Brown’s home.

The Town of Purcellville is seeking the condemnation even though Sam Brown is involved in a family partition lawsuit seeking to purchase his brother’s share of the property. Sam owns 100% of the Crooked Run Orchard business, but shares ownership of the 16 acres and another parcel with his brother. Once he is sole owner of the land, Sam and his wife Uta plan to fully restore and place their home on the Historic Registry. It was built in 1908, and Sam’s father moved into it when he was three months old – the same year Purcellville was incorporated. Sam also intends to place the land in Conservation Easement to preserve it in perpetuity for the enjoyment and education of generations to come.



Crooked Run Orchard’s business continues to thrive and grow – Fall 2010 was particularly busy.

It was only one year ago that the Town held a public hearing to “quick take” over 2 acres of the Brown’s back 40 acre parcel of the farm for the Town’s preferred alignment of the SCR. “Quick Take” powers, which transfer land from private ownership to government ownership is a particularly severe form of eminent domain, and is one of the most intrusive powers of a government. It means that the Town can take immediate title to the land, and parts of Crooked Run Orchard can be bulldozed and built on as soon as the title is secured.

Even if the government’s possession of the property is later judged to be unwarranted, the owner has no recourse for compensation for damages that the town might have done to the property and business. In Crooked Run Orchard’s case, planned government activity would include the destruction of dozens of mature fruit trees, and the demolition of

the large main barn used by the Browns to store all of the farm equipment used for daily operations. Immediate activity would also remove an existing farm road (the only road providing access to the back 40 acre parcel) and create a development path that would threaten significant streams and tree canopies. The Town would not be obligated to pay for any

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Local Farms Partnering With Schools and Loudoun’s Central Kitchen

– *By Valerie Joyner*

Blue Ridge Supervisor Jim Burton is working on a pilot program with the Loudoun County School System and Loudoun Central Kitchen which would guarantee a certain percentage of local farm produce and products to be used for Schools and the Central Kitchen.

There is an indication of support from both groups and the

program is trying to get the producers organized. Both groups would have to guarantee a certain amount of products to buy from the local farms and the program would have to start small and then expand. The private and public sector would be working together on this project.



Spring 2011 registration for Upper Loudoun Little League baseball is now open at www.ULLL.org. The cost is \$100.00 per child and \$160.00 per family. There is a \$10.00 Loudoun County Per Player Tax for each child registered. There is one walk-in registration day – Saturday, January 29, 2011 from 9:00 am to 11:00 am at the Purcellville Train Station.

On the web at www.BRLeader.com

Simple Tips for Teen Skin Care

By Tiffany Bogaty

Clinical Aesthetician at Loudoun Dermatology Associates

If you're in your teens, you are just at the right age to start taking care of your face properly. This will help avoid skin care problems caused by improper habits. It doesn't take a lot of time, and it doesn't have to be expensive. Teen skin care differs from when you were younger to your mom's skin care, so it's the perfect time to develop your own routine.

Five Healthy Teen Skin Care Habits to Follow

1. Ditch the bar soap you have in your shower. Find a facial cleanser that's best for your skin type. Do you have oily skin? Many teens find that oily skin is their main concern, so look for a gel based cleanser. Make sure you wash your face in the morning and at night. You never want to sleep in your makeup. It's important to strip your face clean before you go to bed.

2. Tone your Skin. Try to find a non-alcohol toner. I am big advocate of a toner. Toner removes any extra residue that your cleanser may have missed and restores your pH level. Acne skin really needs to be toned and you should try and find one with glycolic acid or salicylic acid in the ingredients. Just keep in mind that acne/oily skin needs constant exfoliation but in a mild form. Can't find a toner over the counter without alcohol in it? Then you can use witch hazel or ask your Dermatologist what they would recommend.

3. Moisturize your face. The idea that those with oily skin don't need a moisturizer is false. What you do need is a light oil-free moisturizer to put on after you cleanse and tone. Look for a moisturizer that is oil-free and says non-comedogenic on the label. SkinCeuticals line has some great choices for simple moisturizer.

Always moisturize after you wash and dry your face. If your skin is very oily, then just moisturize in the morning.

4. Protect your skin. Use sun screen. We all know that sun screen protects your skin from the sun, and this obviously reduces your chance of skin cancer. Did you also know that this reduces your chance of signs of early aging? 90% of premature aging is caused by the sun. Sure, it may not be something that you are thinking of when you're in your teens, and I always thought when I would be my mom's age they would have some magic cream to fix wrinkles. But believe me, I haven't seen it yet! So your next best bet is to apply your sun screen to keep wrinkles from appearing to early. Apply



... Uncover the Truth About Acne & Teens

sunscreen with a minimum SPF 15 (or higher) daily. Don't forget to reapply. Sun screen come in all different ways now, you can get a mineral SPF in a powder or moose form. Look for SPF in make up or tinted moisturizers, you can even get a sheer SPF that feels like nothing is even on your skin. (SkinCeuticals makes an ultra light sheer SPF that feels and looks invisible).

5. Use a weekly mask and a weekly exfoliator. A mask deep cleans your pores, while an exfoliator removes the top layer of skin. When choosing a mask, look for a clay mask or sulphur based mask. Exfoliators you want to look for something that isn't too harsh and be sure not to overdo it, over exfoliating can just irritate your skin. Once to twice a week is enough.

Is Acne Your Teen Skin Care Problem? – Pimples and You

If acne is a problem for you, just know that you are not alone. I know at times it may seem like you are, but the best of us have had our share of pimples. (Including my-self!) What I know is that acne is no fun at all. Here are some things that you may or may not have known about acne.

What causes acne? It's not from food or that you are dirty! In most cases it's just your hormones and during the Teen years they are developing and in return can cause your skin to react. In some cases it could be something your body is allergic too. Acne is not something you want to treat lightly; it can cause scarring on your face that can last forever. My best advice is that you see a Dermatologist when you start seeing the first signs of break out. The Dermatologist and you can start a plan and they can help you find the right solutions to stop acne and be proactive instead of reactive. It is important not to procrastinate on finding a solution works for you. There are some many NEW choices to help treat Acne skin.

There are a TON of skincare products out there and it seems overwhelming! The best advice I can give you is to keep it simple. Look for skincare lines that are right for your skin type, start by checking to see if they are oil free, Non-comedogenic, dye free and fragrance free? If you are having a problem finding that at the drugstore or super market talk to your Dermatologist and see what they recommend. Another good source is to speak with an Aesthetician; you can find Aesthetician at Dermatologists, Plastic Surgeons, Med-Spas, Holistic-Care Centers and Salons.

Tiffany can be reached at (703) 723-7171 ext. 229.





Customers enjoying a fun day at Crooked Run Orchard.

Crooked Run Condemnation Hearing, continued from page 1

damages, even if the damages were so severe that it caused major losses to the farm business. Moreover, the Town has never addressed their farm operations and safety concerns. The most recent contract to purchase this land for the road did not mention a bridge, road, culvert, or tunnel, which might provide access to the back 40 acres of their farm. Nor is there language about fencing the portions of their property that would be exposed to pedestrian, vehicle and other traffic.

For this reason, in early of 2010, a judge granted Sam Brown a temporary injunction to protect his livelihood and avoid irreparable damage to his property until a Town vs. County lawsuit is settled. Purcellville has failed to include the County in its Phase 2 annexation procedures, as required by joint agreement. Purcellville is annexing land, and approving development projects at a very fast pace and without County input, even though the County and Town joint agreement requires Purcellville to prove it can provide short and long term utilities to existing and future residents and businesses.

Ironically, in November of 2010, Vice Mayor Wiley sent a letter to Blue Ridge Supervisor Jim Burton admitting that the current alignment does the most damage to Crooked Run Orchard and is not the preferred alignment of the Town Council. The Town is moving forward anyway and quickly. It has been standard operating procedure for the Town of Purcellville to hold a vote on the same night as the public hearing. Most localities do not vote the same night as a public hearing, in order to give sincere consideration to the input of their residents.

Previous Town Council actions have shown a distinct disapproval of government overreaching while exercising the extreme and potentially destructive powers of eminent domain. For example, at the July 19, 2005 Purcellville Town Council meeting, a

“Quick Take” powers, which transfer land from private ownership to government ownership is a particularly severe form of eminent domain, and is one of the most intrusive powers of a government ...

Even if the government’s possession of the property is later judged to be unwarranted, the owner has no recourse for compensation for damages that the town might have done to the property and business.”

“Resolution outlining the Town’s Policy toward the use of eminent domain powers for Economic Development” carried 7-0. A motion was made by then Council member Robert Lazaro that “Therefore, be it resolved that the Town Council of the Town of Purcellville hereby refrains from legislating law that allows government to take property from citizen A and give it to citizen or corporation B.” Major commercial development is planned for the areas immediately surrounding Crooked Run Orchard. Sam Brown and others see the Town’s planned Quick Take action as a way to promote developer interests at the farm’s expense – indeed favoring one citizen or corporation over another.

In April 2010, Virginia Attorney General, Ken Cuccinelli told the Roanoke Chamber of Commerce that he wants to add stronger property rights protection to Virginia’s Constitution. He also has said, “The right to own and keep private property was considered among the most fundamental rights by the Founding Fathers; a right that I believe should be protected at both the state and federal levels”. ***Public comments on Eminent Domain/Quick Take of the Brown property will be heard on Tuesday, January 11, 2011 at the Town Hall at 7:00pm.***

Blue Ridge Leader Interview with Lincoln Resident Jean Brown – A Overview of Historic Districts and Why are They Important –

BRL: You’ve been a resident of Loudoun County for quite a while. Can you tell us a little bit about yourself and your family history?

Jean Brown: I’m originally from Mobile, Alabama – where my mother and father were born, and my brother and sisters and I were raised.

I came to the DC area in 1961 to work for my Congressman on Capitol Hill, and then with the House Committee on Foreign Affairs.

In 1971, I married William Holmes Brown. Bill was the 8th generation of the Brown family to live at Oakland Green, an historic family farm just south of the village of Lincoln. We settled in at Oakland Green to raise our family, with



Bill commuting into Washington D.C. where he served as Parliamentarian of the House of Representatives for 36 years.

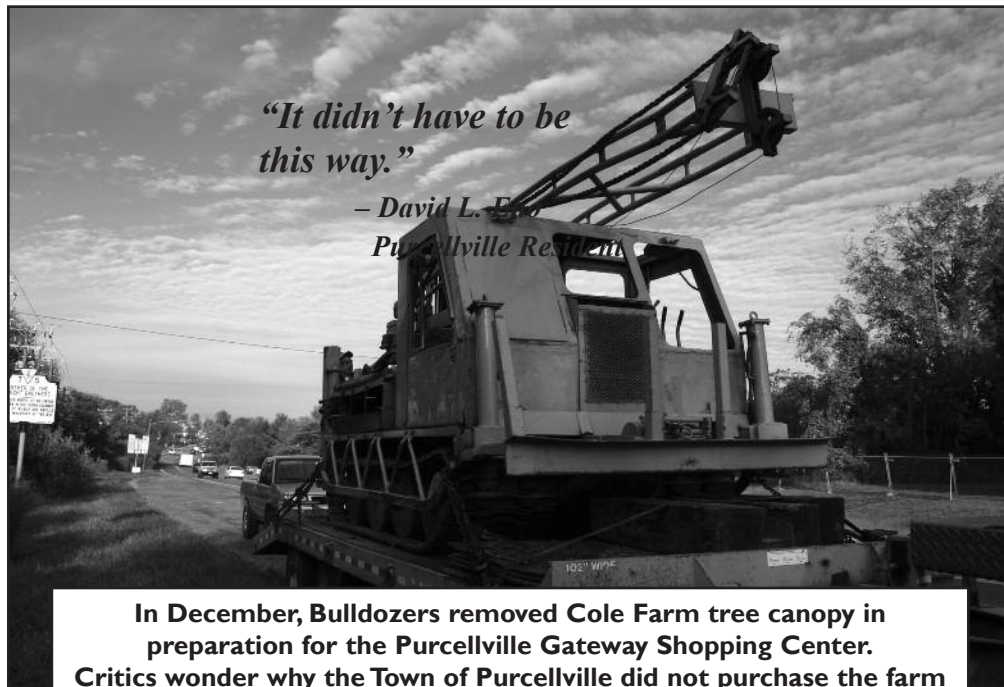
BRL: So, you’ve been involved in the Historic Districts for quite a while?

Jean Brown: Yes. In the first year of our marriage, Bill and I opened our farm for what was called a “Dirt Roads Tour” – an event giving people the opportunity to learn about some of the historic properties in what is now the Goose Creek Historic District.

That was my first exposure to the wonderfully historic houses in the area. Our farm is still here, and still in the family.

Together with other nearby properties such as Montrose Farm, the Gregg home on the northern edge of Lincoln, Hedgewood Farm, Meetinghouse Farm, Somerset Farm, our community has some really beautiful examples of 18th and 19th Century village and farm life in Loudoun County.

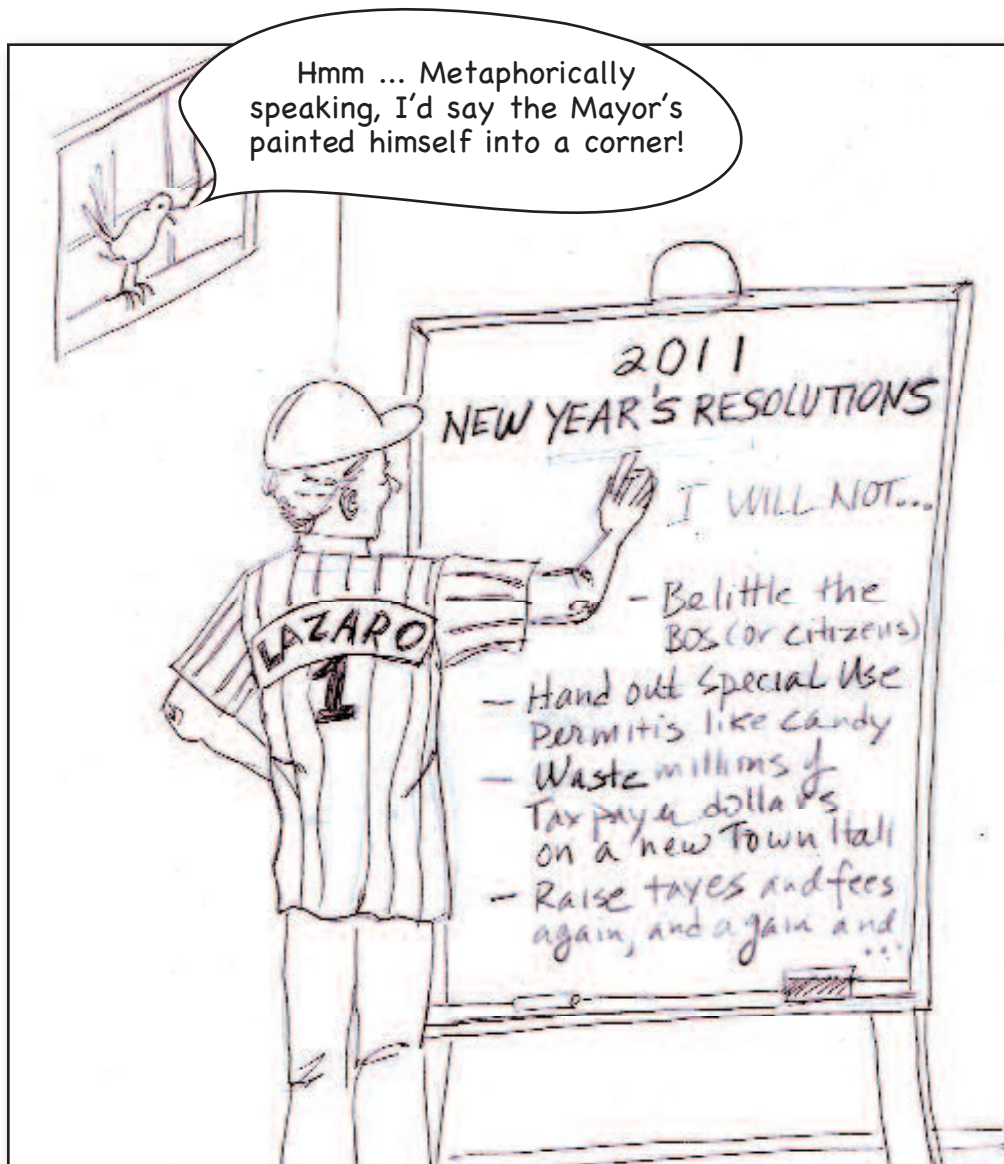
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"It didn't have to be this way."

– David L. Egan
Purcellville Resident

In December, Bulldozers removed Cole Farm tree canopy in preparation for the Purcellville Gateway Shopping Center. Critics wonder why the Town of Purcellville did not purchase the farm and negotiate a conservation and /or historic easement to protect it.



OPINION

Time to Put Purcellville "In the Blue Zone"

Blue Zones are places that have the highest level of overall well-being in America (according to the Healthways-Gallup survey) – places where people live more satisfying and fulfilling lives. They smoke less, suffer less from obesity, spend more time socializing, spend less on healthcare, and choose professions that give them personal gratification rather than just monetary gain.

Having studied the environmental factors that promote well-being, one Blue Zone town took measures to promote the kind of surroundings that would enhance the health and happiness of its citizens. Here is a short list.

- 4 A green buffer zone into which no new development could be built. This forced the town to practice the "compactness" economic development expert Donovan Rypkema talked about at a Carver Center function this past June. City planners couldn't "build away" from their problems, they needed to face them and solve them.
- 4 No drive-thrus, so that idling cars wouldn't contribute disproportionately to the air pollution.
- 4 More green space and open public squares that became places so pleasant that people stopped to enjoy and socialize more, the interaction among residents being a large part of promoting personal contentment.
- 4 A transportation system that paid more than lip service to the idea of a "walkable community."

Purcellville is doing the exact opposite of the Blue Zone Model.

It is building into the buffer zone that the PUGAMP was designed to protect. It is now in the process of destroying the canopy trees on the Cole Farm that have cleaned and cooled the air for decades. It has built a new highly-polluting fast-food drive-thru, and has also approved several more future drive-thru pharmacies, restaurants and banks. It is planning to condemn land that will bisect a working, 200-year-old farm (Crooked Run Orchard) with a major new road and attendant commercial development. And it is creating traffic. With one single act alone – the newly zoned Catocin Corner Shopping Center – the Town added an additional 8,501 car trips per day to Purcellville's roads.

Blue Zone localities make a conscious decision to put the quality of life of their populations above purely economic interests. This has a positive impact on the daily lives of the residents and the visitors there. But, Purcellville seems to put its ability to generate new tax revenue above all else. Whatever attempts the builders of the Gateway shopping center will make to soften the obliteration of the Cole Farm, the entire essence of that authentically restful scene will be buried in the faux-farm mediocrity of a noisy, polluting, distracting commercial center – the same-old shiny storefronts and parking lots whose only claim to green space will be a few strategically placed ornamental bushes and trees in a sea of cement and asphalt.

FROM THE EDITOR

The Truth About the Route 690 Interchange

– By Valerie Joyner

Over the past month there has been quite a bit written about the 690 Interchange. Up to 2005 the Purcellville Town Council's Top Priorities included the 690 Interchange. For example, in 2005 number seven of the Town Council's priorities was "Complete Engineering /Design for Route 690 Interchange." In 2006, when then Councilman Robert Lazaro was elected Mayor of Purcellville, the 690 Interchange was taken off the Purcellville Town Council's Top Priorities. It has remained off of the priority list since then.

Although building roads, bridges, and interchanges is a state responsibility, Virginia in recent years has not fulfilled its fiscal obligation, and the situation is not getting better. For example, only three years ago, the VDOT six-year budget for road projects in Loudoun County was \$43 million. In 2010, VDOT informed the Board of Supervisors that the six-year budget had been reduced to \$1,024 (no, that is not a misprint).

In 2006, the County, for the first time in its history, asked the voters to approve local debt to fund transportation projects. In November, two local bond questions were presented to the voters. One dealt with the design and construction of the

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VIEW FROM THE RIDGE

The Land We Story

The population of this country is increasingly in a state of flux. There is a constant shifting of people from places of their birth to places across the country. The college of their choice or acceptance is far from home. Employment requires a long commute. Mother, who has been living in another city, now requires intensive care. Has anyone measured the waste of time this traveling and commuting entails? The pollution, the isolation, the frustration it creates? We move. We shift around. We keep looking for that perfect place or we keep looking for a place that can get us to the perfect place. We call this progress or opportunity when it is increasingly becoming desperation and the American work force is becoming an itinerant one, deprived of permanency and attachment to the land. In all those places in between we try to live our lives and make meaning of our existence.

Over fifty percent of the American population moves within a five year period. Can any town keep its binding and cohesive force when over half of its population changes in such a short time? Over ten percent of the population is moving out every year, replaced by people who have no sense of deep attachment in their new homes. It takes time to story the land because, as Robert Frost said, we need to give everything we have into it. And we won't do that if we know the stretch we are spending here will be short. So we withhold ourselves. And we give less. And we love less. And the stories we tell are more superficial and sentimental stories. We are not putting down roots, we are sending out feelers. Our communities become plastic and artificial. A community of parades but no permanence. We wave a flag whose meaning becomes more and more obscure, and whose ownership belongs more and more to symbols and the distant past. No one is accountable because everyone will be leaving soon.

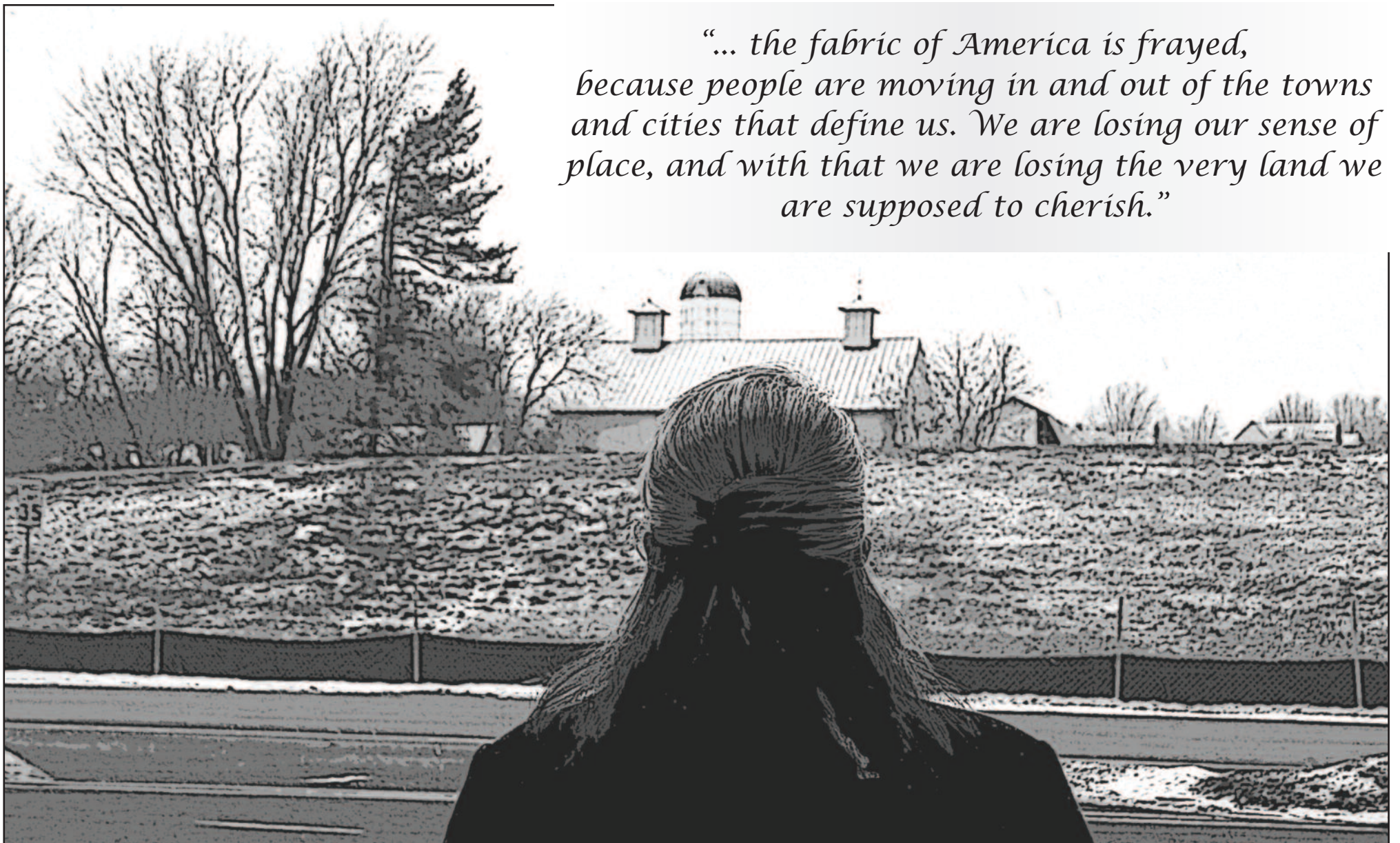
And nothing breeds corruption more than indifference.

The Nichols family storied the land. They gave the place its meaning. And they kept it as a sacred trust. In doing so they drew in many of us who came to them for our little and small needs, our garden seeds and paint, the bolts and nuts that make our shelves stay in place or our doors open and shut, and our daily endeavors connected to our community at large. The Nichols were a staying force. A binding and enduring presence. They were an essential part of the landscape and the meaning of this place. They were what gave America its strength. And they are dying out. And now the fabric of America is frayed, because people are moving in and out of the towns and cities that define us. We are losing our sense of place, and with that we are losing the very land we are supposed to cherish.

In the Harris Teeter appeal Judge Chamblin said essentially that citizens have no rights to determine what happens on the site plan for the Purcellville Gateway Development. The time for protest is over – whether by the residents of adjacent neighborhoods or others who pass by the Color Farm daily and probably hoped it would not be replaced by another shopping center. But it could have been otherwise. These people could have protested and forced the current Town Council to honor its Big Box Ordinance – the very ordinance then Town Council member (now Mayor) Robert Lazaro himself initiated when he served as a member of that body. Neighbors are going to take the brunt of the loss of their quality of life, and perhaps a lowering of their house values. But, we'll all lose.

We fight wars at home and abroad. They are different wars. But we can't be the land of the free and the home of the brave if we won't even control our own town councils, our rate and pattern of growth, the land we are supposed to story, but which is increasingly becoming an alien landscape from which we flee to greener pastures. Pastures that will be bulldozed in their turn.

“... the fabric of America is frayed, because people are moving in and out of the towns and cities that define us. We are losing our sense of place, and with that we are losing the very land we are supposed to cherish.”



General Assembly Update – January 2011

– By State Senator Jill H. Vogel



The House and Senate of Virginia will convene for the 2011 General Assembly session this January 12th. It is an historic year as the Legislature addresses budget challenges unprecedented in the modern history of the Commonwealth and undertakes the monumental process of redistricting. Amidst that backdrop, the Legislature will also consider several thousand pieces of legislation.

Despite signs of recovery, revenue shortages dominate pre-session discussions. Billions of dollars were cut from the budget already, however more cuts are inevitable. Recently, Governor McDonnell asked the Legislature to adopt \$191.6 million in cuts and adjustments to the current two-year budget.

The rationale for spending adjustments is to redirect money for certain education, transportation and job expansion programs. The Governor's education proposal includes more money for higher education with a goal of 100,000 more degrees awarded in the next 15 years. His transportation plan includes \$4 billion in new transportation money over the next ten years. This comes on the heels of the remarkable VDOT audit that uncovered \$1.5 billion in unspent transportation money sitting at VDOT. Countless other money issues exist, but perhaps none as important as the Virginia Retirement System crisis. The state

retirement fund is nearly \$18 billion short and we owe it to every state employee to make system-wide solutions a priority and keep VRS solvent.

It is not all grim, however. New industries continue to locate in the Commonwealth as we provide an example of what conservative budget choices yield. States that decided to raise taxes and spend their way to recovery are bankrupt with the best jobs fleeing their borders. Meanwhile, the Virginia Legislature balanced the budget with painful but necessary cuts, keeping taxes the same, attracting new jobs and generating some of the lowest unemployment numbers in the country.

The Legislature will also undertake the complex process of redistricting this session. Redistricting occurs every ten years when the boundaries of each Congressional and state legislative district are redrawn to accommodate new population figures. Two weeks ago, we received the first official 2010 census numbers. Virginia's population grew by 11.4%, with substantial growth in our region.

In the 27th senate district, Frederick County grew 26.7%, Fauquier 23.2%, Clarke 15%, Winchester 11.6% and Loudoun a whopping 77.6%. To maintain proportional districts, higher population districts will have to shrink accordingly.

It is worthwhile to mention that redistricting is also significant because of the impact on the 2011 elections. All 140 members of the House and Senate are up for election this November. Because the redistricting process will not be complete until the summer, the election calendar will be compressed with party primaries pushed to the fall.

This year, I continue to serve on the Rehabilitation and Social Services Committee, the Committee on General Laws and Technology, and the Privileges and Elections Committee. Recently, I was appointed to the Governor's Transportation Workgroup and the Prison Re-Entry Commission and our efforts have produced meaningful proposals for 2011.

I take the thoughts and opinions of my constituents seriously and hope citizens will get in touch with our office if they have questions or concerns. Over the next few weeks, I will provide updates via email, facebook and my website www.senatorjillvogel.com. I can be reached during the General Assembly session at 804-698-7527, P.O. Box 397, Richmond, VA 23218 or you can email me at jillvogel@senate27.com.

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BRL: *When did Historic Districts get started? What prompted the idea?*

Jean Brown: I found some old files from 1976. My husband was speaking before the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, and stated the case succinctly, thinking back to that Dirt Roads Tour: “We had been open for a house tour the previous year where many guests came from DC and the closer in suburbs. Over and over, they asked ‘How have you managed to preserve all these rural landscapes and character?’”

My husband went on to say: “It put in the minds of us and many others that we needed to preserve what we had.” So the idea of the Goose Creek Rural Historic District was born. It already had the authorization from the state and county governments. But the Board of Supervisors had to give its blessing before it could be established. *The Washington Post* even wrote an editorial in support!

BRL: *How many Historic Districts are there, and how do they operate?*

Jean Brown: There are nine Historic Districts in Loudoun County, with others scattered across Virginia. Historic Districts are identified and administered through a locality’s zoning ordinances. If you were looking at a map of Loudoun County, for example, you’d see outlines reserving specific areas for residential use, for commercial use or for mixed use. You’d also see something called “overlay districts,” a second layer of zoning that relates to the preservation of history, the environment, and other things.

The zoning regulations of our Historic Districts have rules and guidelines about what kind of architectural style is appropriate in a particular area, where new structures can be sited, whether or not a particular old stone fence, or a viewshed needed to be preserved – that kind of thing.

BRL: So, if I look at a map of Loudoun and see that my property is within the Goose Creek Historic District, I need to check in with the zoning folks before I do anything?

Jean Brown: Not necessarily. When our Historic Districts were first created, people who owned land or homes within the District’s boundaries were given the opportunity to “opt out.” Generally, if you are the current owner of one of these opt out properties, you are not required to abide by Historic District zoning.

If the property owner at the time did not opt out, you are required to go through a process whereby the Historic District Review Committee (HDRC) issues you a “Certificate of Appropriateness” (CAPP) if you are building a new home, putting on an addition, tearing something down – major changes and construction.

BRL: Specifically what protections does this CAPP process offer?

Jean Brown: Historic Districts are not without their “requirements,” but they offer significant benefits to both individual landowners and the community at large. They advise a homebuilder on how to site a new structure so that the rural/agricultural quality of the surrounding landscape is preserved ... instead of seeing a line of rooftops as you drive down a country road, you see rolling hills and open pastures. They generally don’t prevent new subdivisions from being built, but they do speak to whether or not, for example, a new subdivision should make an historic stone wall part of its vision, rather than knock it down.

In other cases they help to preserve our villages’ historic feel (and property values!) by addressing the architectural style of a homeowner’s new addition. Someone in the Goose Creek Historic District once proclaimed that she did not want concrete block structures in her old village neighborhood.

On the other hand, she had objected to the Historic District requirements of her own home renovation. Owners who come before the HDRC for approval of new construction have mostly been grateful for the suggestions and recommendations of the HDRC staff.

BRL: So, sometimes history loses, but the process produces results.

Jean Brown: Yes. I see the results of homeowners and the HDRC coming to agreement on certain architectural and siting features. On the other hand, I see what happened to a property that did not benefit from this process – the old Frazer Farm. Had that property been in the District, it would look quite different. It was zoned for fairly dense residential development, so that part was a given.

But the whole subdivision would probably look quite different – and have benefited



“[Historic Districts] advise a homebuilder on how to site a new structure so that the rural/agricultural quality of the surrounding landscape is preserved ... speak to whether or not, for example, a new subdivision should make an historic stone wall part of its vision, rather than knock it down ... [and] preserve our villages’ historic feel (and property values!) by addressing the architectural style of a homeowner’s new addition.”



more from its agricultural surroundings – if more consideration had been

given to how it was laid upon on the land. It’s a learning process.

BRL: Over all, it seems historic districts offer residents a real opportunity – but I’m sure they are not without controversy.

Jean Brown: That is certainly true!

People have an idea about what they want to do with their property, and no government body should restrict their ideas, however inappropriate by Historic District standards. But, in many cases they regret that they forged ahead and did what they wanted to do. For example, many houses in the District have been “perched” on the top of a hill, compromising the viewshed for all their neighbors (and making the exposed structure very expensive to heat and cool!). Guidelines now require that new homes be put in the “saddle” of the landscape, which is the old way of protecting the house from the weather, both cold and hot.

Jean Brown is exceptionally active in her community. Over the years she has served on the Board of Directors of many organizations and has also received numerous awards. Awards include the Clean Water Farm Award, Centennial Farm, and 2004 Conservation Farmer of the Year, among others. Jean also served as the 2004 Chairman of GCV Conservation Forum, President of the Leesburg Garden Club, Chairman of Historic Garden Week for the Leesburg Country Club, Chairman of the Conservation Committee – Leesburg Garden Club, and Board of Conservations at Oatlands.

A Tale of Two Food Pantries

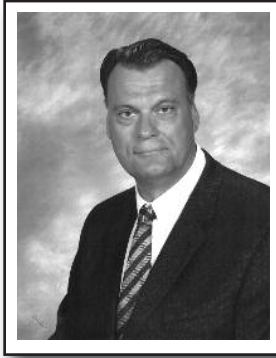
— By Mark Gunderman

According to the Associated Press, more than one in seven American households struggled to put enough food on the table in 2008, the highest rate since the Agriculture Department began tracking food security levels in 1995.

I attended my first LINK Board Meeting in the early winter of 1999. I had heard about LINK at my Church, Community Lutheran, and was intrigued by the fact that churches from various denominations networked and shared their resources to support this independent, all volunteer, Christian non-profit.

About fifteen members convened that night, and for two hours, quietly and meticulously,

they went through the agenda, focusing on how many people LINK could serve based on monies available in each applicable account. Every board member's motivation appeared to be rooted in spirit, mercy and responsibility to others. They and the guests of LINK services would most likely never know each other. That night I felt like I was sitting with Apostles whose



sole purpose was to humbly perform the Lord's work. I left the meeting pondering if I really did have the discipline and fortitude to serve with LINK. Little did I know then that after this night I would begin to meet with various church ministries and establish relationships with organizations that covered a thirty mile area. LINK, established in 1972, delivers emergency food directly to the homes of needy people by request on a daily basis and coordinates huge holiday food programs for Thanksgiving and Christmas. The ministry comprises 18 member churches in Herndon, Chantilly, Sterling, Potomac Falls and Ashburn united in a common cause to provide food, grocery gift certificates and financial assistance to qualified people in need 52 weeks a year. LINK retains no paid employees and owns no vehicles. Volunteers do all the work, and most goods are received from

local donations. LINK spends about \$4,000 annually on operating expenses. Similar to the Gospel story of the loaves and fish, LINK touches the lives of thousands of needy people administering an annual budget of less than \$50,000. LINK's food pantry is located on Dranesville Road on the Fairfax/Loudoun County line and delivers to families in the Herndon, Sterling and Ashburn communities. For more info visit www.linkagainsthunger.org.

A colleague of mine, Brian Becker of Round Hill, approached me in April 2009 with the idea of establishing a food pantry that delivered directly to people's homes similar to LINK's services. For many years we at LINK wanted to network with western Loudoun churches to build a LINK West. We never found the folks with the traction to make it happen. I jumped at the opportunity to work with Brian. Brian's Church, Purcellville Baptist, was in the planning stages of creating a food pantry ministry in downtown Purcellville. I contacted the LINK Executive Board and requested that Brian use our LINK model as a baseline to build a Western Loudoun non-profit. Brian studied our organizational structure and bylaws and researched the manufacturers of our commercial freezers and refrigerators.

Continued on page 17

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New Town Hall Update – Following the Money Line – *By Kelli Grim*



The old Purcellville Baptist Church building under construction.

The Blue Ridge Leader has reported extensively on the Town’s purchase of an old church building for conversion to the new Town Hall. We recently finished compiling a chronology of Town actions as well as what has been spent to date – a “Money Line” detailing what has transpired:

TOWN ACTIONS:

- ⇒ February 2007 a Letter of Intent – between town of Purcellville and Purcellville Baptist Church with 90 days to inspect
- ⇒ January 2008 Lease with option to purchase contract – between Town of Purcellville and Blue Ridge Realty
- ⇒ January 2009 – town hires attorney at Akerman Senterfitt, LLP to negotiate out of the lease option contract with Blue Ridge Realty (to purchase the building outright)
- ⇒ July 2009 town closes on building

MONEY LINE:

- \$ 2006 Tax Assessment (for Purcellville Baptist Church building): \$683,200
- \$ 2007 Tax Assessment: \$776,600 – February 2007, Town signs letter of intent with Purcellville Baptist church for \$1,950,000
- \$ 2008 Tax Assessment: \$783,200
- \$ January 2008, Town signs lease purchase contract for \$1,950,000 with Blue Ridge Realty (Mayor did not recuse himself from the vote nor the signing of the contract as a member of the church)

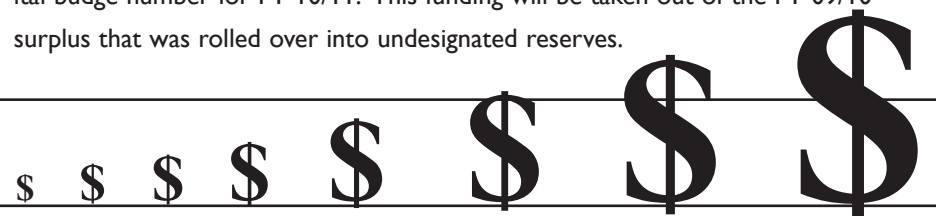
- \$ 2009 Tax assessment: \$1,202,500
- \$ January 2009 town hires attorney from Akerman Senterfitt to negotiate out of lease purchase contract from Blue Ridge Realty for \$1,950,000, and \$296,653 for landlord work
- \$ \$41,267 to Beese Quest Designs
- \$ \$10,000 to cancel Beese Quest Designs’ \$100,00 contract with Blue Ridge Realty
- \$ \$88,274 for bond and financing
- \$ \$79,051 for legal services
- \$ \$537,791 for engineering/architectural design/environmental remediation/parking lot design/construction monitoring
- \$ \$154,900 for waterproofing
- \$ \$2,700,000 for paving Fireman’s Field (most recent bid) with a loss of 20% of parking spaces in (67 parking spaces are required for the new Town Hall at Fireman’s Field)
- \$ \$2,100,000 to \$2,400,000 are the bids for the new Town Hall renovations to be awarded in January 2011
- \$ There are no bids available to date for furnishings, equipment and moving expenses

PROPOSED TOWN BONUSSES ...

On Monday, January 3, 2011 at the Ways & Means Committee meeting the following motion was presented and the Town Manager was given direction to move it forward with small revisions:

"I move that we authorize the Town Manager to implement a mid-year bonus program for Town Staff as outlined. This program will be funded through a transfer of \$61,289 from General Fund Reserves, a transfer of \$10,474 from Water Fund Reserves, and a transfer of \$9,879 from Wastewater Fund Reserves through the appropriate compensation account established in each of the three funds. The aggregate transfer will not exceed \$81,642."

Note: Funding for this project will result in a "budget amendment" which does not require a public hearing since it is less than 1% of the aggregate operating and capital budget number for FY 10/11. This funding will be taken out of the FY 09/10 surplus that was rolled over into undesignated reserves.



Closed Executive Sessions Mark \$175,000 Town Purchase – *By Kelli Grim*

Private Executive Sessions, where the public is excluded from participating and commenting, are becoming one of the hallmarks of Robert Lazaro’s term as Mayor (this despite the Mayor’s opposition to such tactics as a private citizen).

On December 6, 2010 following the Ways & Means Committee meeting, three residents present were notified by Councilwoman Joan Lehr that the Town Council would have a special meeting the following morning at 8 am (as the public later found out, the meeting would deal with the acquisition of property). Later that evening, a notice went out to members of the press (bypassing normal procedures that would also have alerted the general public). The 8 am meeting produced a resolution to initiate negotiations for the acquisition of an historic 1930s home for “public use” (which was defined as “public space, parking, parks, open space, office, whatever it is to be used for”).

At the December 14, 2010 Town Council meeting there was another executive session for the purpose of acquiring real property and the disposition of public property. The Town Council then called another special emergency meeting, this time notifying everyone, adopting a resolution (10.12.03) to approve and finalize the purchase of properties located at 301 20th Street. (The property was listed on November 30, 2010 for \$175,000. The Town

paid full price for the property on December 17, 2010.)

Since the new Town Hall building requires 67 parking spaces at Fireman’s Field, and the Purcellville Baptist Church building came with only 6 parking spaces (set aside for handicapped use), it appears that the historic property was purchased for more parking. (Councilwoman Joan Lehr said that her vote in favor of the property purchase was intended to provide more parking for the new Town Hall ... although it is uncertain it would be permissible to convert an historic property for this use.)

At the September 2002 Town Council meeting, then new Town resident Robert Lazaro stated in citizen comments: “I would like to echo the comments of previous speakers about the Council going into Executive Session to discuss the item of Fields property and extending town utilities. I believe that the Council is grossly misreading the law, Section 2.2-3711, Subsection 7 where the last paragraph of that article of law states ‘nothing in the subdivision shall be construed to permit the closure of a meeting merely because an attorney representing the public body is in attendance or is consulted on a matter.’” According to the Virginia Municipal League Handbook for Virginia Mayors and Council members regarding open meetings ... “deliberative bodies must deliberate in public.”

Garden Accidents – By Donna Williamson

Developing a pleasing garden or landscape is the most wonderful work. We plan, design, rethink, move, restore, deliberate, brighten, edit, sort, and juggle. Plants are considered for one location or another, one function – like developing a hedge for privacy – or another, softening a stone building. It's more fun than I can usually contain because the gardens/landscapes are even more wonderful than you expected!

Sometimes, accidents occur. Typically at the end of the growing season, I have two of these and one of these and that plant that I bought for that client and then reconsidered. I jam them into any open spot in my garden to winter over, thinking I will remember in the spring to move this or pot it up again.

Mostly I forget. Late winter and spring are busy. I teach classes in design and do some pruning work on shrubs - then before I know it the weather improves. Virginia gets warm, trees need planting before the end of April, and new garden designs and new plantings for clients take over.

Two lovely accidents have taken place in my yard. I planted the clematis 'Josephine' next to the fence I share with my neighbor. Thought it would fill in with a green and pink tapestry over the growing season and please us both. I didn't remember the colors of the shrubs on her side of the fence. It turned out there was a beautiful pink weigela that harmonizes perfectly with 'Josephine'. Lovely accident.

"We'll cover a lot of ground, including soils, gardening with deer, native and ornamental plants, perennials for seasonal color, and design for the home landscape."

– Donna Williamson

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This summer I noticed another exquisite combination that I can't take credit for. Several pots of the 'Goldflame' honeysuckle were left over one year. This is a lovely native *Lonicera sempervirens*, not the rampaging Japanese honeysuckle. I popped them into the ground wherever I could and forgot them. This year, the meandering vine of blue green leaves and simple yet beautiful flowers scrambled over my fothergilla. The honeysuckle is semi-evergreen so its leaves are still bright green. The fothergilla is a well-behaved and elegant shrub for white bottlebrush flowers scented with honey in spring, clean blue green summer foliage, and fantastic fall color.

These lovely accidents remind me of that phrase from Jeff Goldblum in *Jurassic Park*: "Nature finds a way." I can listen and learn, do my best design work, and then nature will come in and teach me more.

Donna Williamson is a master gardener, garden designer, and garden coach. She has taught gardening and design classes at the State Arboretum of Virginia, Oatlands in Leesburg, and Shenandoah University.

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We will keep things fresh and fun for our shoppers. There will be designated kids crafting tables on Saturday afternoons (check store for details), and our dealers will be offering classes and demonstrations onsite (sign up sheets to be posted so overbooking will not occur). Some of these classes will be free, however others may require a nominal supplies fee.

There is a book swap/book donation area next to our coffee shop that we encourage our patrons to visit and bring in their unused books. We would like to see monetary donations, however swapping is just fine.

100% of our donations will go to Loudoun Literacy Council or to a local family in need monthly. We do reserve the right to change the charity monthly as the local need arises.

We look forward to seeing you and hope that you, your family, and friends continue to shop and drink coffee with us.

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... the Purcellville Community Market has teamed up with It's Bazaar over the winter and will set up inside the building every Saturday from 10 – 1.

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Hunt Country Gourmet

Reviews Market Table Bistro in Lovettsville

– By George Humphries



About 20 years ago, I had the privilege of starting the Hunt Country Gourmet column for the Blue Ridge Leader. At that time, there weren't all that many restaurants in Loudoun County, and only a handful of fine restaurants. What a change today! Some of our restaurants deserve widespread public recognition and acclaim, and it is with pleasure that I report the founding of a truly gourmet establishment in the little village of Lovettsville.

Market Table Bistro, recently opened in the former location of another notable eating establishment, Talk of the Town, which although quite different than its predecessor is in every way its equal in quality and distinction. Like Catherine Buck's "Talk," the "Bistro" has created a warm and friendly atmosphere that makes one feel like a guest rather than a customer.

Bistro chef and proprietor Jason Lage has held the position of Executive Chef at the Jefferson Hotel and the Oval Room in Washington, DC, and most recently at Lansdowne Resort. Lage rejoices in returning to the direct personal creation of fine cuisine in the establishment he now operates together with his partner, Rebecca Dudley.

Reflecting Chef Lage's time spent in France (in 3-star restaurants), the word "bistro" is defined in Larousse Gastronomique as "a small restaurant serving local dishes along with wine and cheese." The Chef may be a little modest in his choice of a term since Market Table is well above a humble bistro.

Chef Lage's establishment prides itself on using locally produced ingredients fresh from nearby farms and producers – from farm to table in the shortest route possible. His experience and contacts are quite evident in his ability to supplement local offerings and secure high quality meats and fresh seafood. Bistro has quickly developed a reputation for its excellent filet mignon and pan-roasted salmon.

Bringing with him kitchen and serving associates from his former locations, Chef Lage has been able to quickly bypass the usual shakedown process of new restaurants.

The menu, surprisingly large, changes daily. For instance, the menu for lunch on Tuesday, 28 December, contains five first course selections: two soups, two salads and a "Liver and Onions" appetizer described as composed of organic chicken liver pate', red onion marmalade, and Sous Chef Jason Brusky's homemade bread. The "Organic Field Greens" salad boasts "spiced apples, candied pecans, Obergood Farm goat cheese, with balsamic vinegar." The entrée selections number 10, ranging from a certified Angus Bacon Cheddar Burger (with house green tomato jam) through Pan-Roasted Breast of Chicken to Farm-Raised Rainbow Trout. Luncheon prices range from \$9-16 with nine of them at \$12 or less. Five house-made desserts round out the luncheon menu.

Outstanding were the Pork Bolognese and the Jambalaya-Style Rice (pork loin, Andouille sausage, chicken, shrimp, tomatoes, bell peppers, and onions). The Pan-Roasted Salmon also stars, as does the Pork Tenderloin (braised cabbage, Granny Smith apples, rosemary jus, and apple butter) and the pan-seared Black Angus Filet Mignon. Prices range from \$16 to \$22, with four below \$20 and only one, the filet, at \$26.

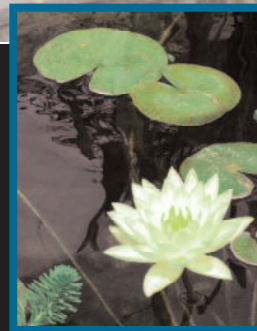
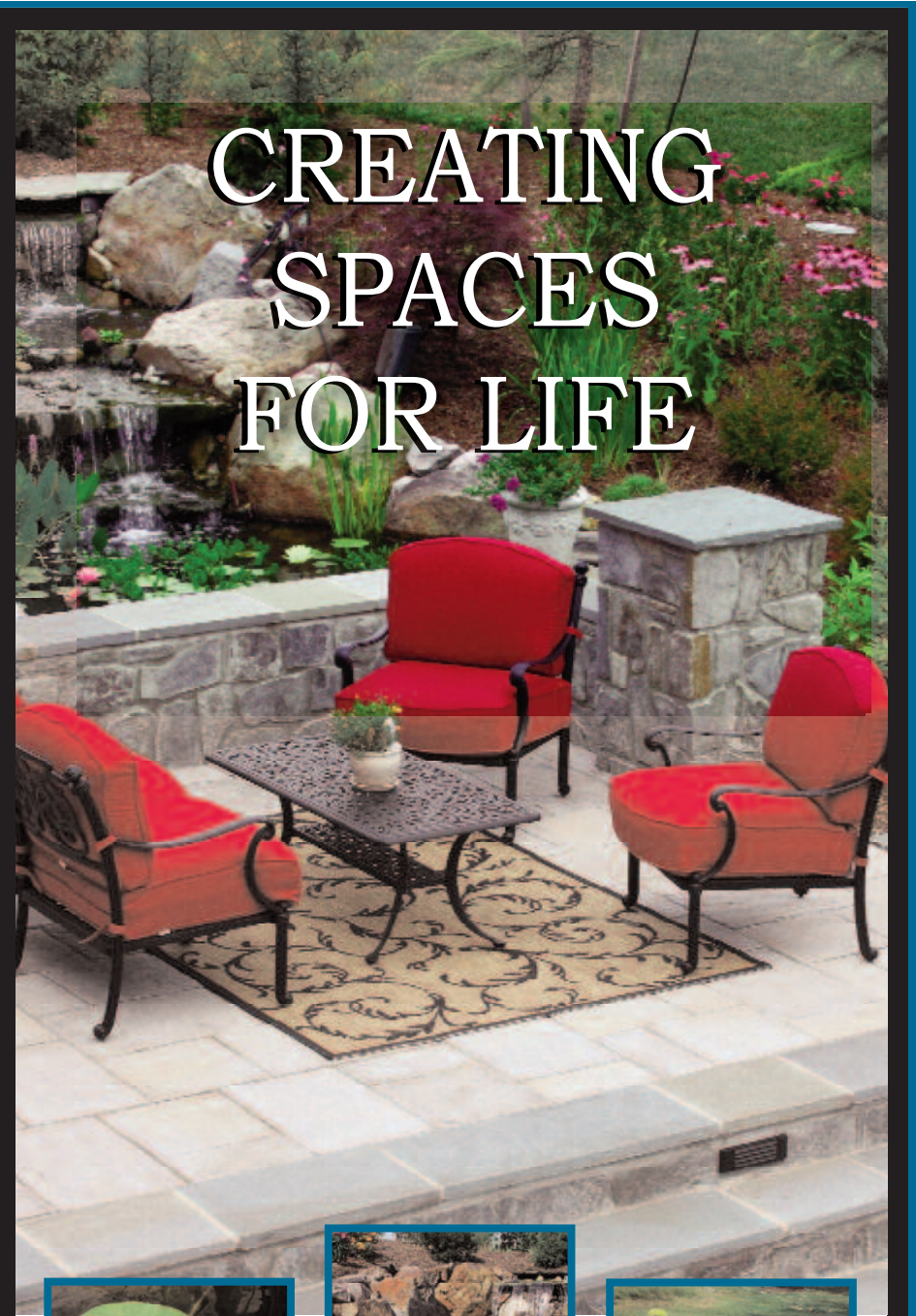
The Sunday brunch feast starts with a cran-orange mimosa or a spicy Bloody Mary, two soups, two salads, and pate'. Entrees include sausage and gravy, eggs Benedict, steak and eggs, rainbow trout (with grits!), pork Bolognese, venison chorizo fajitas plus five desserts. A brunch at Market Table should last you until Monday lunch.

In keeping with Chef Lage's practice of buying from local farmers, recent menu ingredients came from Obergood Farm and Fire Fly Farm (both goat cheese); Tyson Farm (apples); Niman Ranch (pork); Eberly Farms (free range chicken); Clear Springs Farm (trout); Sterling Farms (salmon); Quarter Branch Farms (salad greens, tomatoes, root vegetables and other produce); Tiny Acre Farm (Swiss chard); Ah Ha Ranch (eggs); Mocks Green House (lettuce); and South Mountain Creamery (dairy products).

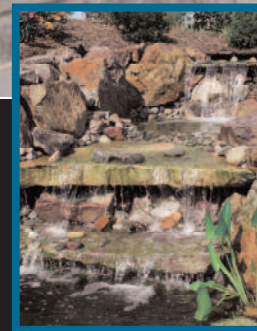
The service, directed by Rebecca Dudley, is friendly and exemplary. The "Bistro's" only fault is that it is almost too inviting for one's girth and weight.

But menus only tease. The proof is in the tasting, and in our five or more visits, that has exceeded anticipation.

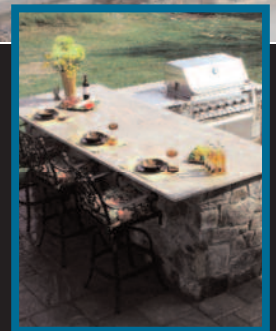
George Humphries is a retired Navy aviator who began cooking at the age of 10 and has managed several large restaurants. He has lived in Loudoun Country since 1984.



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Controlling Deer Populations and Lyme Disease

– By Valerie Joyner

“Lyme Disease is a serious problem throughout Loudoun County, as much in the east as the west. Solving the problem is going to take multiple approaches, and reducing the deer population is one of them,” said Blue Ridge Supervisor Jim Burton.

Supervisor Burton will be meeting in the near future with Loudoun County staff, Fairfax County staff, and Virginia Department of Game and Inland Fisheries staff, for the purpose of working on an overall Lyme Disease Control Program for the county.

Managed hunts are extremely effective in controlling deer populations – one of the main carriers of the Black Legged Tick, which transmits the disease.

There will be a managed hunt at Banshee Reeks, which is located east of Route 15 near Oatlands Plantation. Banshee Reeks has a very high population of deer, which has caused a significant decline in the understory by browsing. The decline in the understory has enabled invasive plant species to come in. These invasive species, because they are not eaten by the deer, provide shelter and habitat for the ticks.

The lottery system randomly selected 25 hunters and 5 alternates out of 190 people who registered. The managed hunt will take place in January, in various assigned areas.

What Makes a Really Great School – By Randall Hollister, Ph.D.

Civilization today stands at a crossroads. The daunting challenges before us economically, politically, socially, in health care, energy and food production, our ability as a species to get along despite cultural, ethnic, religious, and racial differences, and, the very condition of our planet itself, are enough to either discourage us into a state of paralysis or inspire us to reach deep within ourselves for a solution. But where does that solution lie? The answer, in large measure, is found in a truly outstanding education, where cultures are established and where our youth can learn the foundational knowledge, skills, and values they need to become happy, healthy and productive adults who will live good lives and will contribute positively to humanity and the enormous challenges of today and tomorrow.



But what makes an outstanding school? What qualities must it possess? What principles should guide curriculum and instruction in exceptional schools? What standards do exemplary schools embrace and uphold? These are weighty questions, but great schools continually ask these questions of themselves, and the leadership and faculty of great schools work together for the answers. To begin, excellent schools have a clear mission, and they renew their commitment to it regularly.

Second, great schools have an inspiring educational philosophy that flows from its mission and reflects convictions about human nature, human potential, and the manner in which children best learn. Great schools are places of affirmation, where teachers demonstrate an unwavering belief in the enormous capabilities that exists in every child. Such schools believe that every child is capable of learning, that not all children learn at the same pace or through the same methods, and that children possess varying areas of strengths. Above all, exceptional places of learning believe that every child is unique, endowed with gifts worthy of celebration and development. Outstanding schools not only promote individual growth, but develop in their students a commitment to service to others and a desire to improve our world.

The key to all great schools is exceptional teaching. Premier schools have exemplary teachers in every classroom, grade level, and in every subject area – teachers who approach their work not as a job but as a calling for which they feel a true devotion. Teachers of this caliber exude enthusiasm for their subject matter and the art of teaching and inspire in their students a profound love of learning for its own sake. Such inspiring teachers motivate students to continually challenge and surpass themselves for the sake of continued growth.

An educational philosophy, no matter how profound, can only be as effective as its supporting cast, namely the classroom environment, the center of which is the teacher. Even the most talented teachers, however, need support to ensure that their educational mission can be achieved each day. Much has been said and written about the importance of the number of students per teacher in any given classroom situation. Nothing could be truer. When one considers the crowded classrooms and range of student abilities that many elementary and middle schools face, it is no wonder that teachers become discouraged and students lose interest in learning.

Schools that are committed to excellence demonstrate that dedication by creating environments that are conducive to learning. In addition to the qualifications, skill, and passion of the teacher, the next most important detail is the number of students per classroom.

Highly effective elementary and middle schools adhere to a student/teacher ratio per class to ensure that each child has the opportunity for abundant individual attention for support and stimulation. Qualified teacher assistants help schools achieve the goal of providing individual attention to support the daily management of the classroom environment, the instructional process, and special projects, events, and field trips.

The centerpiece of an extraordinary educational program is the curriculum. What should the subject matter be? What skills does every child need to learn? The curriculum must be comprehensive and robust. It should immerse students into the depths and richness of language arts, literature, mathematics, science, foreign languages, art, music, and physical education. In addition, an exceptional educational program provides field trip experiences that complement and extend classroom learning. Finally, the curriculum must teach and celebrate service to others and to one's community.

The curriculum and pedagogy of excellent schools mirror an understanding of cognitive development. And here the wisdom of the ancients still offers much conceptual guidance to the process. In the classical trivium, the early years of instruction emphasize mastery of basic skills and information, the foundation of all learning to follow. In ancient terms this was called “grammar.” As the foundational skills are mastered and the minds mature, students then progress to the more sophisticated skills of analysis and critical thinking, otherwise known as “logic.” Here, among other skills, students learn to deduce conclusions from known facts and to see connections between cause and effect. In the final stage of cognitive development, students are taught to move beyond analysis to their own, creative formulations, synthesis, and understanding. In the ancient trivium, this was called “rhetoric.” The curriculum and pedagogy of great schools reflect this important understanding of cognitive development.

In addition to the significance of the teacher, the curriculum, and classroom environment is the important role of parental involvement. Outstanding schools not only allow but rely on parent participation and involvement in their educational program. Schools that encourage parents to be involved in their child's educational experience to help with projects, and to participate in special activities, performances, and field trips send an important message not only to the parents of its students, but to the students as well. No aspect is more important to a student's experience or success in education than the involvement of the persons she most loves, depends on, and from whom she looks for guidance and affirmation – her parents. Simply put, children of parents who are highly involved in their education feel a greater commitment towards and enthusiasm about their experience in schools.

Schools that have the autonomy to shape and control the aspects discussed above have the potential to create truly exceptional places of learning. Great facilities do much to support the good feeling parents and students have about their child's school, but the true measure of a school is the quality of experience that happens inside the classroom every day. Schools in which teachers receive sufficient direction about the curriculum, but are given flexibility in terms of its daily execution do much to inspire excellence in teaching, and schools that inspire their children to love learning have accomplished a lot of what it means to be excellent. Such schools are sacred because they are making a contribution not only to their students' immediate lives, but to the lives of future students and indeed to society. Every child deserves an education with such a high calling, and our world needs it.

Randall Hollister is the Headmaster at Loudoun Country Day School.

UPCOMING LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS ACTIVITIES

– An Update From Blue Ridge District School Board Representative Priscilla Godfrey

The month of January will be a busy one for the LCPS School Board as we determine our Capital Improvement Plan for the next six years and decide on the school system operating budget for FY12. The growth of students at 3,000 per year and the debt cap on school construction have combined to result in a shortage of seats. In addition to growing student population from new residents, Loudoun County has the highest birth rate in the state with 5,000 births per year. Public input is encouraged at the 7 school board meetings in January.

February is the month we lobby the federal legislature for changes to No Child Left Behind, followed by our State Legislature Day Friday, February 11, in Richmond. I continue to serve on the Virginia School Board Association Board of Directors as Chair of the Finance and Audit Committees.

Locally, we are so proud that the Loudoun Valley Vikings football team got to regional playoffs for the first time in a long time and Loudoun Valley won the first semester Scholastic Challenge. Woodgrove will host a regional SCA student government workshop in January and has been selected as the site for the 2011 Loudoun County Science Fair this spring. Both Harmony and Blue Ridge are adjusting well to their conversion to traditional middle schools of three grades.

All four secondary schools are working on spring play/musical productions and band competitions taking place this spring.

LCPS's full calendar of events can be found at: www.loudoun.k12.va.us/loudoun/site/default.asp



– PRISCILLA B. GODFREY –
VICE CHAIRMAN
BLUE RIDGE DISTRICT
540-687-5689

FROM THE 2009–2010 LOUDOUN COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS FACT SHEET

- n LOUDOUN COUNTY'S 76 PUBLIC SCHOOLS WELCOMED 59,490 STUDENTS ON SEPTEMBER 8, 2009.
- n AVERAGE COST OF EDUCATING AN LCPS PUPIL DURING 2009-2010 WAS \$11,997.
- n 2009-2010 SCHOOL OPERATING BUDGET: \$732,598,9600

- n LOUDOUN'S STUDENTS EXCEL WITH A 2009 AVERAGE SAT SCORE OF 1593 – SUBSTANTIALLY HIGHER THAN THE VIRGINIA STATE AVERAGE, AND EVEN HIGHER THAN THE NATIONAL AVERAGE.
- n LOUDOUN'S 2009-2010 TEACHER SALARIES ARE SLIGHTLY LOWER THAN THE SURROUNDING COUNTIES.

MORE AT
WWW.LOUDOUN.K12.VA.US

Loudoun Valley's Class of 2011 Preparing for Graduation Ceremony

– By Lauren Pichon

In the midst of the holiday season arrived a seemingly odd holiday card, a little different than those sent out by most friends and family. The card was from Herff Jones, the provider of Loudoun Valley students' graduation announcements, caps and gowns, and variety of other graduation-related accessories. It is time for Loudoun Valley's graduating Class of 2011 to begin preparing for their graduation ceremony.

Just days after families received the reminder card from Herff Jones, students began to purchase their graduation announcements, caps and gowns, and various other accessories, such as class mugs, senior t-shirts and sweatshirts, key chains, and memory books, on their lunch shifts.

With seniors' college acceptances rolling in and graduation inching closer and closer, anticipation for June 18, 2011 – graduation day – is rising. The event will take place outside at Loudoun Valley's Leonard Stadium if weather permits. If there is inclement weather, the event will be moved inside to the gym.

This year, instead of having an after graduation party, the Parent Teacher Organization (PTO), has organized a Potomac River cruise for the evening of June 16th. In past years, the graduating class has traveled to Adventure Park in Maryland on the evening of graduation; however, this school year's Student Council

Association (SCA) hopes to begin a new tradition with the Potomac River Cruise. Tickets to the river cruise were on sale for \$75 for most of November. The \$75 fee includes a picture with the classmates of your choice as you board the ship, a formal dinner and dessert buffet, a DJ to provide music for dancing, a "casino room," as well as transportation back and forth to Washington D.C. and the school.

According to the PTF's brochure on the senior cruise "Our Student Council Association (SCA) determined that, Thursday, JUNE 16th 2011, rather than Saturday the 18th was the best day for this event as it would probably avoid conflicts with schedules of families coming in for Graduation, and for family Graduation gatherings."

As this school year approaches, seniors are looking forward to graduation and all of its festivities. The Class of 2011 will be Loudoun Valley's largest ever graduating class with over 530 students graduating.

"With seniors' college acceptances rolling in and graduation inching closer and closer, anticipation for June 18, 2011 – graduation day – is rising."



– Sushi ... “Tails” from the Barn Yard –

Bidding Adieu to My Greatest Adventures & Most Savory Moments of 2010

Oh my goodness what a year what a year and what better way to commemorate it than to take a look back at my greatest adventures (... AKA all the trouble I got into between January 17 December 31, 2010?) You may have favorite Sushi “Tails” of your own. So, I’ll try not to mix it up and not disappoint!

Rain Baby Rain!

(Setting the scene: the summer had been long and hot but change was in the air...)

“While the soft breeze seems cooler, it is different somehow this year as the drought is really taking its toll on all that surrounds me. The ground is hard as a rock.

I come down to the edge of the creek bed and the water sits, almost stagnant from lack of rain and movement ... when who do I see peeking out from underneath the rock ledge where the water is still drifting in and out of a little cove but my old friend Tommy Toad!

“Top of the Morning to you Tommy,” I said in my happiest voice and flashed my best brilliant white tooth grin. Tommy croaked back in his deepest toady voice, “Good Morning Sushi – you brightened my morning as I was beginning to get down in the dumps about this lack of creek water.

“You know Sushi,” [Tommy went on] “I think it high time we do something about this rain dilemma ... meet me down at the creek right before dusk and bring everyone you can think of.”

As I meandered down the creek bed I came across Freddy Frog, who assured me he would have all the big and little froggies at Tommy’s rock ledge. I next came to the Barn Yard where I gave word to those two ornery barn cats Hokie and Mountie. And then, before long, with Hokie and Mountie leading the way, Gnarly Gander and the Goose gang, Mr. and Mrs. Bourbon Red Turkey, the farm ponies, Sadie, Toby and Tink, and a herd of sheep, all made our way down towards the creek.

What a sight it was – toads and frogs, deer and raccoons, squirrels on turtle’s backs, possums hanging by their tails from the trees and even the sly ones – Mr. and Mrs. Red Fox – had come to hear Tommy’s master plan to make it rain.

Tommy cleared his toady throat and croaked “Now it is high time we praise the Lord and give thanks for all we have. I believe the Gods might think we have forgotten in our busy lives just how lucky we are to have roofs over our heads provided by the old sycamore, oak and poplar trees, to have shade and warmth provided by our ancient evergreen trees. Food and water created by our beloved Beaver Dam Creek.” “Hear! Hear!” Freddy Frog cheered.

Tommy continued. “All you young ones gather ‘round together by family. Look each other in the eye and give thanks first for the family you love. Next, gather paws, hoofs, tails and snails, and start thumping the ground with your feet. Turn in a circle around one another like this and lift your heads towards the heavens and cry out in your prettiest croaks the song of old – ‘Rain, Rain, Rain! Oh Rain, Baby Rain! When the honey is slow – and bees don’t know where to go – we need rain baby

rain! When the creeks are low and the water can’t flow, we need rain baby rain!”

On they all chanted well into the night – dancing and thumping the ground to the depths below until dark cloud cover started moving in and the heavens rumbled in a croak deeper than Tommy’s. Tommy Toad’s rain dance rang throughout the night and more and more animals gathered in great hopes of thanking the Gods above that rain would come and replenish their quickly dying woods ... “(The rain clouds are here ... but what’s that other dark shape in the sky?)

Watch Out for The Witches’ Brew

(Setting the scene: Moments away from the rain the animals had been waiting for a new evil enters the picture ...)

“It was just about this time that Ol’ Mr. Moon was shining his brightest when suddenly a shrieking cackle could be heard high above the treetops and a black silhouette could be seen on a broomstick crossing Mr. Moon. A deathly silence quickly came across the joys of the rain dance – just as Hattie the Witch, cackling at her best, streaked across the moon, as the sky thundered and roared and the rains came pouring down.

All but the Frogs and Toads quickly gathered the young ones and headed for the shelter of their homes to hunker down and wait out the storm.

You see, Frogs and Toads love the rain and often when it is raining, you can see them leaping for joy along the roads as the wet weather brings a watery playground for them to dance in. And now, all the big and little Froggies and Toads cheered and chirped and croaked until the woods rang loud in amphibious song. “Oh now the witch is gone, the witch is gone, the witch is gone. Oh now the witch is gone – and we can sing and play.”

Now, all Froggies and Toads know all too well about Hattie the Witch’s Toad and Frog Stew! But ... they all also knew Hattie the Witch would not be out hunting while it rained. Old wrinkly Hattie with her ratty silvery hair and big wart on her crooked nose would melt away ...

So, for now, all were safe, and it was time for me to call it a night and off I trotted up the long farm drive to my home.”

(One more weather-related adventure ... then I’ll move on to the “most pesky” adventure of 2010)

Storm’n on Through!

(Setting the scene: As the girls on the farm prepare for the Loudoun County Fair, the unexpected happens ...)

“... The 75th Annual Loudoun County Fair is here and it was “Kick Started” on Sunday, July 25 by the Loudoun County 4-H Cantelopers. That’s the 4-H horse club for you non-horsetypes.

My master, Elaine Boland lives with her husband and five daughters in Purcellville, Virginia at Fields of Athenry Farm. She cherishes farm life and the joy of providing her customers with fine fresh meats and products. You can order our fine meats and products at www.fieldsofathenryfarm.com ...
Love – Sushi



“A deathly silence quickly came across the joys of the rain dance – just as Hattie the Witch, cackling at her best, streaked across the moon, as the sky thundered and roared and the rains came pouring down.”

All year long the work and excitement had been building. Young and old pitched in for one whole week of good old fashion togetherness.

The Cantelopers had worked so hard. They had painted jumps with the names of the neighborhood business sponsoring many of the young riders. They helped the other 4-H clubs groom the fairgrounds, tidy up livestock barns and the horse and rodeo arena, scrub bleachers, mend broken fences and knock down a year’s worth of cob webs – cleaning the grounds until they looked their very best.

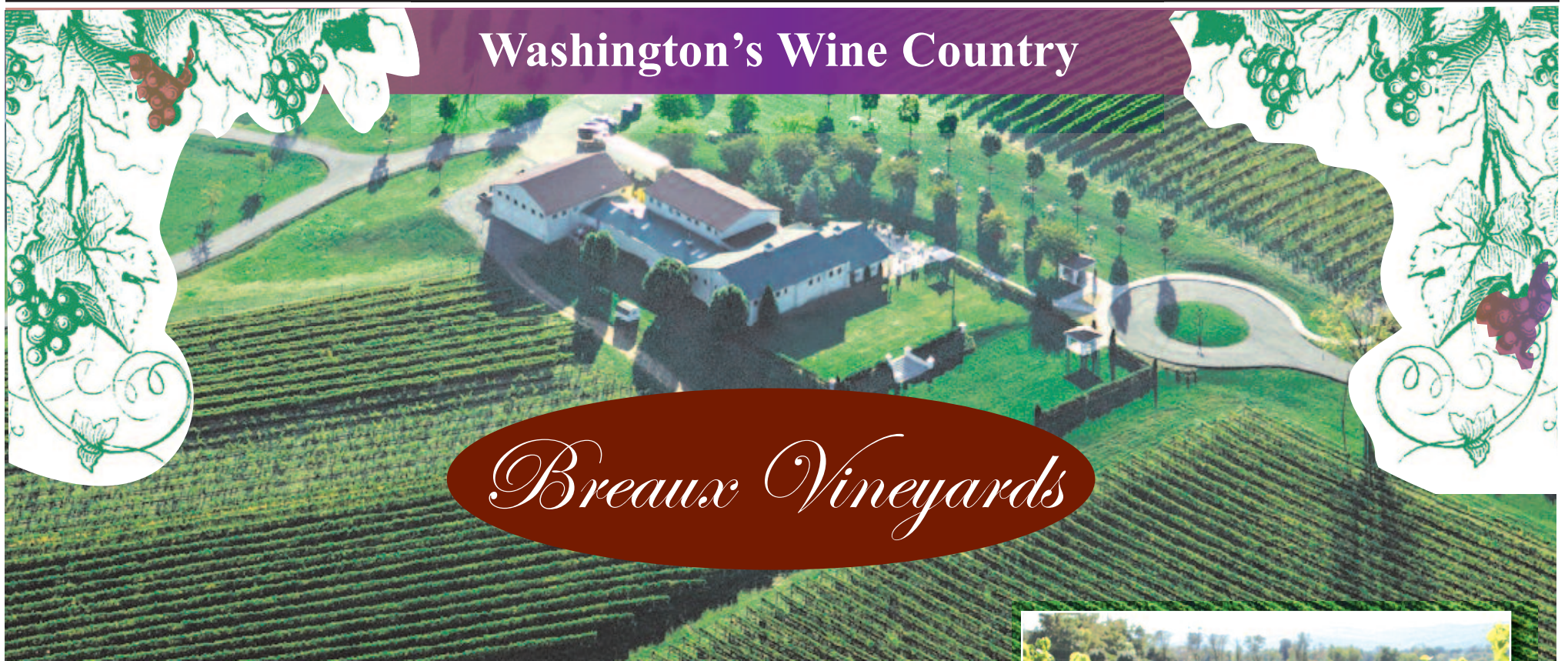
Then came the kick-off night! The start of the Great Fair!

I could feel the excitement here at the farm, when the clouds quickly became dark and ominous, wind whipping and howling ferociously, louder and more commanding than my best Cairn Terrier growl. Uh oh, sensing concern that the show might not go on – our departure for the fairgrounds delayed – I quickly gave Bernie and Laino my very best encouraging brilliant white toothy grin and wagged my tail.

Taking my cue, in short order the trailers were hooked up and ready to roll, the horses quickly loaded, and last minute items stowed in the back up the farm truck. Timing the tremendous storms perfectly – as all cowboys and cowgirls just seemed to know how to do – the Cantelopers managed to dodge their trailers and animals lickety split to the fairgrounds.” (The storms passed ... the fair was a great success ... and I was on to my next adventure ...)

Continued on page 19

Washington's Wine Country



Breaux Vineyards

Breaux Vineyards, a 404 acre vineyard (formerly Grand Oak Farm), was purchased in 1994 by Paul Breaux, and is a family-owned and -run business in Purcellville. When the vineyard was purchased there were only three acres of grapes. The total vineyard acreage now is 105 acres and the first commercial vintage was in 1997. Breaux has 18 varieties with a portfolio consisting of Merlot, Cabernet Sauvignon, Cabernet Franc, Syrah, Petit Verdot, Nebbiolo, Barbera Seyval Blanc, Vidal Blanc, Viognier, Chardonnay, Semillon, Sauvignon Blanc, Muscat and Chamborcin

From the Patio Madeline guests can taste the varieties of award-winning wines and at the same time view the beautiful Blue Ridge Mountains and the vineyard plantings which extend to Short Hill Mountain. February 12-13 Breaux is offering hand rolled truffles/imported chocolates in the barrel room paired with Cabernet Sauvignon.



Breaux wines have won countless national and international awards. They won "Best In Class" at the L.A. County Wine Competition for their 2001 Merlot. Dave Collins, master winemaker, works with his team to produce some of the finest wines. The vineyard is managed and operated by Jennifer Breaux Blosser and Chris Blosser serves as General Manager.

Other awards include Marquis de Lafayette, Cabernet Franc, Double Gold: 2010 International Eastern Wine Competition 2008 Viognier Gold: 2010 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition ... 2008 Nebbiolo Ice Gold 2010 Tasters Guild International Wine Competition, ... Bronze: 2010 Decanter World Wine Awards 2005 Nebbiolo Bronze: 2010 Los Angeles International Wine Competition.

Breaux Vineyards is open daily 11 am-5 pm, October – April, and 11 am – 6 pm, from May through September. The vineyard hosts an Annual Cajun Fest in June, a Harvest Fest in September and many culturally diverse events. It is available for weddings, private gatherings and corporate events. Breaux Vineyards is located at 36888 Breaux Vineyards Lane, Purcellville, Virginia and their website is www.breauxvineyards.com.



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Just Like Nothing (Else) On Earth – by Tim Jon

– Dry Mill Road/Business Route 7

I've had this one brewing for quite some time; it wasn't until I actually drove the length of Dry Mill Road/Business Route Seven (they're the same road as far as I'm concerned) for this project (on Thanksgiving Morning, appropriately enough) that it struck me how much of my life has been spent either on, or just off, that little two-lane blacktop. I've literally lived, worked and played along that route from its beginning – at Loudoun Street in Leesburg (at the cow pasture sliding hill) – to its perhaps less aesthetic ending at Route Seven on the west side of Round Hill. The fact that some may consider the starting and finishing points of this road different from my perspective has never entered my mind.

The first nine years and nine months of my working life in Loudoun County were spent at the former Wage Radio location- on Wage Drive in Leesburg- a block north of Dry Mill Road as it heads into and out of Town. The mere fact that morning traffic had grown increasingly troublesome for this overburdened route meant that I gave it a lot of attention during the morning commute hours. The placement of Loudoun County High School- right there at the Catoctin Circle intersection- made mornings and afternoons even more interesting for the little thoroughfare.

I've had other jobs along Dry Mill Road/Business Route Seven, too. I currently work at the Purcellville Post Office (just up the street at North Hatcher), which causes me to drive the stretch more or less – sometimes a great deal more – pretty much six days a week. I've delivered mail along the road (even on the eastern portion near Leesburg, when working out of that office) and used it as a conduit to get to other mail routes. It's a far different professional assignment than being stationed in a newsroom a block from the action, but it's been nice to have the familiarity of this quaint, sometimes quiet and peaceful street as a literal workplace.

I've also had some real labor of love experiences on the Purcellville portion of Business Route Seven. I taught a Shakespeare class right off this stretch, quite a few years back- on the eastern edge of Purcellville – just up Pickwick – across from the professional medical offices. Even though this didn't even feel like work, it was a professional assignment, so I mark it down. I've also given quite a few contracted readings at the Purcellville Library (most under the One Book, One Community Project), which lies a literal stone's throw from the main drag as it passes through downtown.

This makes a natural point to transition into all of the volunteer work in the local theatre scene I've done- not in the street, of course- but pretty darn close to the asphalt, for all of that. My Shakespeare Workshop spent the first seven years of its life in the conference room of Wage Radio- usually on Saturday mornings during Jim Purks' beloved old-time radio show- Jim's Jukebox. There was always something copesetic about how Jim would try to inconspicuously pass through a group of actors- performing vocal exercises, or reading a play, or perhaps lying flat on their backs trying to imagine themselves getting in touch with a five-hundred-year-old character. Jim couldn't make coffee to save his life, but he more than made up for it in personality. He had scads of listeners scattered across the County – a good number of them within shouting distance of Dry Mill Road.

It took a long time to finish, but the place which put Loudoun County community theatre on the map – the Franklin Park Performing Arts Center (still affectionately called 'The Barns' by its long-time supporters) finally opened up (just off Business Route Seven, of course) in the fall of 2008. I directed the first fully produced Shakespeare play there the following winter. Although I'm proud of the achievement, I don't recommend trying to direct Macbeth at a professional facility in the winter while delivering mail for the Post Office as a day job. I was cutting things pretty close to the edge during that time, but I still have images of my beloved highway/street which carried me to and from my lengthy assignments.

My furthest trips west on my personal road usually took me to the old Round Hill Elementary School- temporarily used by the Franklin Park Performing Arts Center. I did two shows there for a genuine local Shakespeare guru: Founder of the Globe Shakespeare Center Australia- Diana Denley. Her productions (in partnership with the FPPAC) of Twelfth Night and The Tempest



(in 2004 and 2005) were not to be missed. I felt lucky to just be on the team for those. My drives to and from rehearsal during those times stick out quite vividly; I was generally either warming up or rehearsing, or going over my mental notes in the car. The small auditorium in the little Elementary School also served my local company: Not Just

Shakespeare; we produced about a half-dozen full-length productions at this venue, and I led workshops- on a temporary basis- there, as well.

I said that I lived, worked and played along Dry Mill Road/Business Route Seven; my first couple of years in Loudoun County, I stayed just off this local conduit. I first set up shop in a shared town-home along Davis Avenue in Leesburg- about a hundred yards south of Dry Mill Road as it passes the athletic fields at Loudoun County High School; I next took an apartment in Hamilton- in that old, off-white, Edward Hopper-esque structure on King Street- behind the fire station. My drives to and from Wage Radio in Leesburg stand out during this latter time, as I'd be coming and going at all hours and in all types of weather conditions. I still remember a deer running into my car as I crawled along at about 15 miles an hour during an unusually heavy snowstorm. He kinda slid off the road on his fanny and got up and headed into the woods. I hoped that he learned his lesson. That's the closest I've ever come to a real collision with a deer, knock on wood.

Speaking of accidents, though, I do have to mention an incident that occurred along Dry Mill Road less than a week prior to this writing, which could have prevented me from finishing this article- or any others. I was returning from an assignment on a Sunday afternoon and decided to use Dry Mill in lieu of Route Seven, it being a more enjoyable, relaxing ride. As I topped the little hill at the old farmplace just west of Leesburg – the one that's bisected by the road – I was confronted by a slate grey BMW driven by a silver-haired gentleman, who was passing a bicyclist as they ascended the incline. I only had time to swerve to the right; thankfully, no one was standing at the side of the road, and I had both hands on the wheel and was paying attention. I went off the road as far as I could, and

I hope the other driver realized how close we'd come – entirely due to his rash decision to pass on a hill. Now, my usual preaching aside, I would think (bear with me here) that if you're smart enough to have amassed enough wealth to purchase a BMW, you're smart enough to know that you shouldn't pass on a hill, whether it's a bike or a truck or whatever. We would've been just as crumpled. Enough said.

I still take Dry Mill when given the chance, and I still enjoy it just as much, perhaps more as time passes. I pay strict attention and keep both hands on the wheel, as anyone can see that all of our roadways keep turning more and more traffic-ridden each passing year. I try not to notice the huge electrical pylons along the first mile just west of Leesburg, and I also attempt to ignore some of the more intrusive construction along my favorite road. My best advice is: please drive this road only if you really enjoy it, and if you're really careful. I think we should pass a law requiring all motorists on Dry Mill Road to pass a dance class. You've gotta be willing to share your space with others.

You know, I do have one individual to thank for my love affair with this little roadway. You may remember the name of the Former General Manager at Wage Radio- Chuck Thornton? Well, Chuck could talk the ears off a jackrabbit, but he was thoughtful enough to take me out to show me the sights in Loudoun County a few days after I took the job as News Director at Wage. The first place we headed was along Dry Mill – then some other highlights out in the West. I was hooked: line, sinker, rod, reel, boat, you name it. Still am.



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FROM THE EDITOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

The Truth About the 690 Interchange, continued from page 4

Route 7/Loudoun County Parkway Interchange, an intersection through which 82,000 cars per day passed. The other dealt with six preliminary design projects, five in Eastern Loudoun and one in Western Loudoun, at Route 690.

The Route 7/Loudoun County Parkway Interchange has been completed. Of the six design projects, VDOT later found the money to pay for three of them, all in Eastern Loudoun. Local bond money was issued for only one of the six projects – the preliminary design of the Route 7/Belmont Ridge (Route 659) Interchange in Eastern Loudoun – through which 75,000 cars pass per day, and for which there is a vague hope of eventually finding state construction money. Neither of the remaining two preliminary design projects, one in Eastern Loudoun at the Route 50/606 interchange at South Riding (\$3.3 million) and the other 690 Interchange (\$500,000), was pursued since there was little or no possibility that funding for even the completion of the design work could be found within

a reasonable time frame. (When funds for the remaining design work and construction of these two projects eventually do become available, any preliminary design work done now would be outdated, and the work would need to be repeated.)

Mayor Lazaro has continued to argue that the County's funding for the 690 Interchange preliminary study was removed so they could use the funds to redesign Evergreen Mills Road leading to the landfill, an inaccurate statement as explained by Blue Ridge Supervisor Jim Burton: "When a project is funded by a bond referendum, the money can only be used on the project that is specified on that referendum and cannot be spent on any other project. As an elected official I would expect Mr. Lazaro to understand that. Mr. Lazaro's statement is absolutely not true. The County made no such decision." The BRL contacted the Mayor for clarification about his comment but he did not respond.

A Tale of Two Pantries, continued from page 8


He met with our design engineer to review pantry floor space and shelving requirements. Later he invited LINK reps to visit with Purcellville Baptist Leaders.

The Tree of Life (TOL) Food Pantry in Purcellville was founded in November 2009. ministry of Purcellville Baptist Church, TOL is a community outreach organization staffed by volunteers, helping needy people throughout Western Loudoun. The most active ministry to date within TOL has been the food pantry which now serves almost a dozen families each week with non-perishable food items. In addition, the Food Branch provides meals to the Salvation Army homeless center in Winchester. TOL welcomes the participation of other church groups within the community. Due to the slow economic recovery, steps have been taken to roll out additional "Branches" of outreach including Lifeskills, Shelter, Healthcare and Relief. Lifeskills launches in January 2011 and focuses on helping those seeking employment. Shelter concentrates on the provision of clothing and basic shelter, Healthcare helps subsidize medical needs and Relief offers a financial helping hand in certain circumstances. The Purpose of TOL is simply to reach out to the poor and needy in our community with the message of Jesus Christ: "I have come that they may have life, and have it to the full." Complete details are available at www.TOLministries.org. TOL Ministries can be contacted at 703-554-3595 or e-mailed at treeoflife@purbap.org.

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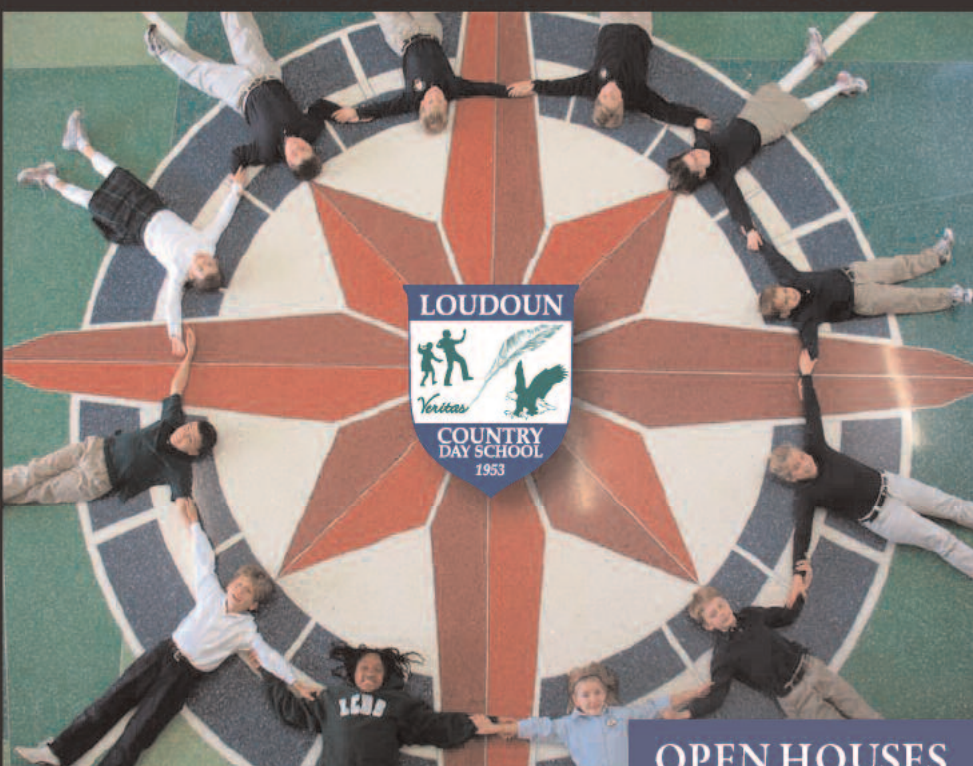
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From Elaine's Kitchen ...



Elaine Boland is the owner of Fields of Athenry Farm. Located on Snickersville Turnpike, the farm sells naturally raised pork, poultry, beef and lamb, as well as local cheeses, wines and honey. For more information go to www.fieldsofathenryfarm.com.

From the cookbook "Nourishing Traditions" Kitchen Tips and Hints ... The Secret to a Good Night's Sleep

A good rule is to start your evening meal with a dish containing enzymes – either a salad with homemade dressing, raw meat or fish, or soup containing cultured cream. If your next course includes a sauce made from gelatin-rich stock, easy digestion and a peaceful night's sleep will be assured.

High Enzyme Salad – from *Nourishing Traditions*, Serves 4

- 1 cup sprouted sunflower seeds*
- 4 carrots peeled and grated
- 1 cucumber, peeled and finely chopped
- 1 red pepper, seeded and finely chopped
- 1 bunch green onions, finely chopped
- 2 ounces grated raw cheddar cheese – optional
- 3/4 cup basic dressing**
- 1 avocado, sliced
- radicchio or red lettuce leaves

The salad is a meal in itself. Mix sprouted seeds, carrots and cucumber, pepper, onions, and cheese with dressing. Serve on radicchio or red lettuce leaves and garnish with avocado slices.

***Sprouted Sunflower seeds from *Nourishing Traditions*:** These are among the most satisfactory seeds for sprouting. Sunflower sprouts are just delicious in salads, but they must be eaten shortly after sprouting is accomplished or they soon go black. Use hulled sunflower seeds purchased in air-

tight packages. Rinse 2 times per day. Sprouts are ready in 12 – 18 hours, when the sprout is just barely showing.

**Basic Dressing – from *Nourishing Traditions*

- 1 teaspoon Dijon - type mustard, smooth or grainy
- 2 tablespoons plus 1 teaspoon raw wine vinegar
- 1/2 cup extra virgin olive oil
- 1 tablespoon expeller-expressed flax oil

Dip fork into the jar of mustard and transfer about 1 teaspoon to a small bowl. Add vinegar and mix around. Add olive oil in a thin stream, stirring all the while with the fork, until oil is well mixed or emulsified. Add flax oil and use immediately.

Fields of Athenry Beef Tenderloin Marinade:

- 1/2 cup Organic Soy Sauce
- 1/2 cup homemade Worcestershire sauce***
- 1/2 cup wet mustard
- 1/2 cup red wine
- Heavy Sea Salt (1/2 teaspoon) & loads of fresh cracked pepper

Mix with whisk in pan and soak Black Angus Whole Beef Tenderloin for 2 hours, turning in the marinade every thirty minutes. Grill over medium warm (not high heat) charcoal – basting as you grill to perfection! YUM... Tenderloin is best with a bright pink center – Bon Appetit!

"Nourishing Traditions" by Sally Fallon is what I would call the "Kitchen Bible" – every family kitchen should own one and read it – just pick it up and keep reading, a little at a time – then reference it again and again and again – a little at a time – until you are hooked. Why? Because it just works!"

*** Fields of Athenry Worcestershire Sauce

- 1/4 cup apple cider vinegar
- 1/4 cup blackstrap molasses
- 1 can anchovies
- 4 cloves of garlic
- 1 tablespoon sea salt
- 6 cloves
- 1 red Chile finely diced
- 1 tablespoon onion powder
- mix well in high speed blender

A gelatin rich sauce can be made from Fields of Athenry Beef and Lamb stock. We call it "Bernadette's Stock" (see below).

The *Nourishing Traditions* Cookbook is available through Fields of Athenry farm shop. Ingredients mentioned here that are also available through Fields of Athenry Farm and our farm shop and website include Raw cheddar Cheese, Black Angus Beef, Bernadette's Stock and Blackstrap Molasses.

Sushi Adieu to 2010, continued from page 14

Bye-Bye Stinking Stink Bug!

(Setting the scene: Foxes are one thing, but now I was facing a really clever enemy ...)

"... these stink bugs. They are everywhere! I for one am quite tired of them in my bed, on the ceiling, on the windows you name it and they will be on it!

I think I am going to trot on down the long farm drive to the woods and see if I can't stir up some kind of birds that would be willing to have a few stink bugs for lunch! I doubt I will find any since there seem to be so many stinking stink bugs! My sniffer started sniffing and I seemed to be picking up the notorious stink bug smell. My ears started lifting; I turned them up to super radar hearing level. Crunch, Crunch.

Turning the bend toward the Beavercreek what do I see sitting perched on an overhanging tree branch but Mr. Preying Mantis, his long green arms caressing his lunch – a stinking stink bug! Just as I was creeping in for a better look my wiry Caim Terrier hair bristled as I was brushed aside by Mr. Crow swooping in on Mr. Preying Mantis for the steal!

Crow with his steely black beak plucked that stink bug right out of Preying Mantis's long green arms and flew off with poor Praying Mantis's lunch!" (Speaking of delicious meals ...)

MMMM. MMMM. MMMM.

(It is morning in the kitchen of the big white farmhouse and Mrs. B. is up bright and early ...)

"Before the sun has even started to rise she is hustling and bustling, opening a cabinet here and a cabinet there. I watch curiously as she puts a little of this and a little of that in the huge pots that sit on top of the gas stoves. I lay diligently at my master's feet in hopes of any morsels that might fall my way.

MMMM. MMMMM. MMMM. Oh, those smells. I'd know them anywhere. My taste buds are starting to tingle. My tongue is starting to drool. It is kind of an embarrassing dog thing – drooling. I try my best to lick my lips and show I am not too anxious, but oh, oh, oh, that lamb sausage gets me every time! I want to hug myself and float right up to the pot and snatch some of the good stuff right out of Mrs. B.'s chili!

Mrs. B. continues to sprinkle a little of this and a little of

"I want to hug myself and float right up to the pot and snatch some of the good stuff right out of Mrs. B.'s chili!"

that into the large pots. I know her stirring is bound to bring me a splash of something good, right to the very floor where I lay my obedient head.

Sure enough, Mrs. B. starts to stir the big pots mixing her special blend of seasonings to get her concoction just right. As she stirs away, she yelps in mock surprise as she drops a little lamb sausage right in front of my very nose! I just love it when she 'treats' me! Quickly I snatch up every morsel and lick the floor clean."

2010 brought much needed rain, witches, county fairs, trials to overcome (as in stick bugs), and now, a good meal. I love to end on a good meal. And so, Adieu 2010 ... Love, Sushi P.S. I'm saying Adieu to 2010, but to you? – NEVER! See you here in the next issue of the Blue Ridge Leader and also at www.BRLeader.com.

P.P.S. There is a new darling-but-not-as-darling-as-me Border Collie named Nelly here on the farm. Imagine the trouble we can get into together in 2011!

What a Loudoun farm boy would give his Valentine ... if she hadn't gotten it for him, first.



Photo credit: Mouncey Ferguson

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