

Blue Ridge LEADER & Loudoun Today

December 2011

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Christmas in Horse Country!

– Middleburg Will Trot Out Its Finest ... Towns & Villages Will Sparkle –

Located in the heart of Virginia horse country, Middleburg Virginia has been extolled as being one of the quaintest destinations on the east coast. The traditional Christmas festivities with the backdrop of a classic Hunt Country Village have become an essential part of the spirit of Christmas for small children, world travelers and citizens far and wide. Christmas in Middleburg is a wonderful community event. But, towns and villages all over the county also plan great events!

In Middleburg ...

Festivities begin at 8:30 AM, Saturday December 3 with breakfast with Santa and a silent auction at Middleburg Elementary.

Starting at 11 AM the Middleburg Hunt Review takes to the streets creating a spectacular site as approximately 100 horses, riders in red coats and dozens of hounds come through the town. The day will also

bring hayrides, choir performances, the Garden Club's Christmas Flower & Greens Show and the Craft Show as well as shopping and dining. A wonderful addition to this year's festivities is a wine crawl featuring Virginia wines at Middleburg Country Inn, Boxwood Tasting Room, Barrel Oak Tasting Room and Gallery, the French Hound, Julien's, Red Fox Inn, Philip Carter Winery, and Market Salamander.

The Middleburg Christmas Parade begins at 2 PM. New this year, the Redskins Alumni, the Redskins Alumni and the Hortense will join the parade. The parade includes horses, llamas, alpacas and dogs. Not to be missed are the antique fire trucks and of course, Santa brings up the rear riding on a beautiful horse drawn coach.

In Hillsboro ...

Start your holiday season with three wonderful events at Hillsboro's Old Stone

School: the Hillsboro Community Association's (HCA) Greens Workshop and the Hillsboro Town Tree Lighting & Potluck, both on Sunday, December 4; and annual Holiday Craft Fair on Saturday, December 10.

Greens Workshop on Sunday, December 4 from 2-4 PM. – Learn how to make traditional holiday wreaths and arrangements using fresh greens, like those featured on the Christmas in Hillsboro Historic Homes Tour. You purchase what you make to

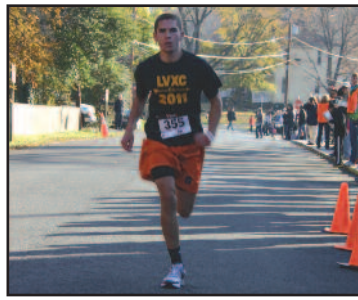
decorate your own home. Small arrangements and wreaths are \$15; large arrangements and wreaths are \$20. Remember to bring your own gloves and clippers.

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Another Successful Turkey Trot

The seventh annual Purcellville Turkey Trot 5k took place at the Loudoun Valley Community Center Sunday morning November 13th, 2011 at 8am. The money raised from this event goes to benefit the community center and its numerous programs. The 5k began at the community center and traversed through neighborhoods, and Main Street, finishing at the community center. Runners of all ages were part of the event.



Matthew Wienstein, above, took first place.



Loudouner Jason Reaves Wins TV Food Network Challenge

– A One-On-One Interview With the Chef –

– By Molly Pinson Simoneau

Local Pastry Chef, Jason Reaves competed in and won the nationally televised Food Network Challenge "Lego Cakes" episode which aired on November 6.

Homeschooled as a child, Reaves began baking at an early age, and frequently made entries into the Loudoun County Fair. "I was winning in breads, but I was getting beat in cakes," said Reaves in our interview.

But that didn't stop him from continuing to perfect his craft, enrolling in the culinary arts program at Monroe Technology Center, while working at restaurants. "I was flipping steaks," said Reaves, "but I knew that wasn't what I really wanted to do."

Eventually he began working full time at Lansdowne Resort's pastry kitchen where he was able to hone his baking and dessert making skills. After graduating from Loudoun Valley High School, Reaves enrolled in the Culinary Institutes of America in New York.



Reaves is currently the Pastry Chef at Market Salamander in Middleburg, where he takes pride in being an artist as much as he is a chef, "but it's neat that you can eat it," he said. "If I wasn't doing cake, I'd be doing some kind of art form."

Sculptural cakes are something of a specialty for

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Special Report on Uranium Mining in Virginia, page 5

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Ask Dr. Mike

Dr. Mike, I've noticed that I tend to get down this time of year, and I also tend to eat more and need more sleep during the late Fall and Winter months. My husband has joked for years that I'm like a bear in hibernation from November through March. Our kids are now 3 and 6, and I don't want them to see their mom as being depressed during the holiday season. My brother-in-law is a physician, and he thinks I have Seasonal Affective Disorder but that condition just seems absurd to me. What do you think? – I in Loudoun County

I, Many of my clients suffer from Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD) and often they just expect it is a part of the season that will pass, but there are treatments that can alleviate or lessen the symptoms. While your brother-in-law may be correct in his informal diagnosis of SAD for you, I think you should contact your own physician or a mental health professional to more formally determine diagnosis and treatment. Keeping an accurate log of your mood, energy, eating and sleeping habits over time will be helpful for determining whether any changes are in fact seasonal.

SAD, while it may seem absurd to you, is indeed a legitimate mood disorder associated with depression and related to seasonal variations of light. SAD has been linked to melatonin, a sleep-related hormone secreted by the brain's pineal gland.

This hormone, which can cause symptoms of depression, is produced at increased levels in the dark. So, as the days become shorter, these effects are felt by an estimated 6% of Americans. Eighty percent of those who suffer from SAD are estimated to be women, though the reasons for increased depression in women are not yet understood.

According to the National Institute for Mental Health, SAD symptoms include: regularly occurring symptoms of depression (e.g., excessive eating and sleeping and weight gain) during the fall or winter months; full remission from depression occur in the spring and summer months as well as a craving for sugary and/or starchy foods. Just as sunlight affects the seasonal activities of animals, such as reproductive cycles and hibernation, SAD may be an effect of seasonal light variations in humans. As seasons change, there is a shift in our "internal clocks" or circadian rhythm, due partly to these changes in sunlight patterns. This can cause our biological clocks to be out of step with our daily schedules. The most difficult months for



SAD sufferers are January and February.

Phototherapy or bright light therapy is a treatment that has been shown to suppress the brain's secretion of melatonin. Although, there have been no research findings to definitively link this therapy with an antidepressant effect, many people with SAD respond to the treatment. The device most often used today is a bank of white fluorescent lights on a metal reflector and a shield with a plastic screen. For mild symptoms, spending time outdoors or arranging homes and workplaces during the day to receive more sunlight may be helpful. One study found that an hour's walk in winter sunlight was as effective as two and a half hours under bright light. If phototherapy doesn't work, an antidepressant medication may prove effective in reducing or eliminating SAD symptoms, but there may be unwanted side effects to consider with medication. Short-term cognitive-behavior therapy can also prove helpful in teaching you strategies and coping skills to manage your mood.

Remember that small things like a walk on a fall or winter day can be a boost both physical and mentally. And spring is only a few months away!

Dr. Mike, our son wants to apply to Penn State next year, but after the child sexual abuse scandal there we've decided against it. Our son remains adamant that he still wants to attend Penn State and this has caused quite a bit of upset in our home. How can we trust entrust the care

of our adolescent son to an institution that not only employes pedophiles, but also turns a blind eye and does nothing when abuse child sexual abuse occurs? We've tried to explain our very valid points to our son but with no success. Help! – O in Loudoun County

O, I certainly understand your strong, negative feelings on the topic, however, I would encourage you to think through things a little more before forbidding your son to apply to Penn State. It's true that Mr. Jerry Sandusky, Penn State's celebrated assistant Coach, was indicted on 40 counts of sex crimes against young boys. It's also true that while the accusations and charges are very upsetting, Mr. Sandusky remains an innocent man until proven guilty. Aside from Mr. Sandusky's guilt or innocence, Penn State is currently not the same university or campus it was prior to the scandal and indictments. In addition to the indictments, the recent news has led to the firings of the university's legendary head coach and president. And, the administration, the students and alumni, as well as the nation as a whole, are still reeling from the horrific recent news. With enough time though, I imagine that things will improve and get back to normal at Penn State, but with more alleged victims coming forward, forthcoming trials and the outcomes of those trials, it's hard to say when that will be. I think Virginia Tech is a good example for you to consider when contemplating how best to proceed with your son. You likely recall the 2007 shooting massacre that occurred at Tech that took the lives of

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Schools Cleared to Give Excess Food to Local Food Banks and Pantries

In an effort to help food banks and food pantries across the country collect more food, language specifically allowing public schools to donate unused food has been included in the annual spending bill that funds the Department of Agriculture, Rep. Frank Wolf's (R-VA) office reports.



Wolf pushed for the language after learning many school districts are not donating excess food out of concern they were not covered under the Good Samaritan Act, which protects donors who give to food banks in good faith from all liability. Wolf's language amends the law that created national school lunch program that provides free or low-cost lunches to needy children.

"This language clarifies once and for all that schools are covered from liability under

"The problem is after January 1. The food banks and pantries operate year round and need donations year round. Come spring and summer, the shelves can get pretty bare. It would be ideal if businesses and schools would do food drives in the spring."

the Good Samaritan Act," Wolf said. "It is a commonsense change that is long overdue."

The language was included in the package of annual spending bills approved in Congress earlier this month and signed into law on November 18.

Wolf meets regularly with representatives from area food banks and pantries to discuss ideas and their needs. The idea behind clarifying the law stemmed from one of the meetings. He pointed to the temporary closure of a pantry in Prince William as an example of the struggle many pantries are having in trying to keep up with the growing

demand.

"Families that used to donate food are now coming to get food," Wolf said.

Wolf is encouraging local schools and businesses to hold more food drives, especially after the start of the new year when donations drop off dramatically. Wolf also worked with the Office of Personnel Management (OPM) to create the successful Feds Feed Families program that over the last three years has collected more than 8 million pounds of food from federal employees across the country.

"Donations are always up at this time of year because of the spirit of the season," Wolf said. "The problem is after January 1. The food banks and pantries operate year round and need donations year round. Come spring and summer, the shelves can get pretty bare. It would be ideal if businesses and schools would do food drives in the spring."

Upper Loudoun Little League Registration

Upper Loudoun Little League will begin on-line registration for their Spring 2012 youth baseball season on December 15, 2011. All players ages 5 – 12 years old as of April 30, 2012 are eligible to register. This spring season we are also beginning a Challenger division. For more information and to begin the registration process, please access the ULLL website at www.ulll.org.

Continued from page 1

Registration is free but required.

Hillsboro Town Tree Lighting & Potluck on Sunday, Dec. 4 from 5-7 p.m. Friends and neighbors will light up the Hillsboro Town Tree in front of the Old Stone School. Bring finger foods to share.

Annual Holiday Craft Fair – Saturday, December 10 from 9 AM to 5 PM. This year's craft fair will include alpaca clothing and products, jewelry, pottery, holiday decorations, home décor, and artwork such as sculpture, replica miniatures of Loudoun landmarks, and illustrations.

For details visit www.HillsboroVa.org.

In Neersville ...

Company 16 of the Neersville Fire & Rescue Auxiliary will be hosting "Dinner with Santa" on Saturday, December 3, 4 PM to 7 PM. Santa will arrive at 5 PM. Menu includes turkey with stuffing, ham, mashed potatoes and gravy, bean beans, macaroni and cheese, salad, cranberry relish, hot cider and hot dogs for the kids. Dessert buffet too! Free photos with Santa!

11762 Harpers Ferry Rd., (Rt.671). Free Will Offering. Contact Val for details: (540) 668-7005.

In Purcellville ...

The Town of Purcellville will be celebrating its 8th Annual "Christmas in Purcellville" on Saturday, December 10th.

The day starts with "Breakfast with Santa," a Lego Train Display, face painting,

ornament making, pictures with Santa and Mrs. Claus and many other activities.

The Christmas Parade will start at Noon from the Train Station and end at Loudoun Valley High School, with marching bands, acrobats, horses of all sizes, local businesses, sports teams and clubs and, of course, an appearance by Santa and Mrs. Claus.

It's also likely to be raining Christmas candy so don't miss this parade.

Part of the weekend's events will include the 4th Annual Christmas Light Trolley Tour on Friday, December 9th and Sunday, December 11th from 5:30 PM to 8:30 PM. (Trolley leaves from the Town Gazebo on 21st Street.)

The Blue Ridge Middle School Choir will entertain the crowd with Christmas songs and the Loudoun Valley High School Tuba Ensemble will perform.

In Round Hill ...

The Round Hill community will celebrate "Holidays in Round Hill" on Saturday, December 3.

The day begins with a breakfast with Santa from 9 AM to 11 AM. at the Bluemont Community Center, located in the Round Hill Center at 20 High Street. The breakfast is \$8 per person and free for those 2 and under. Register by Nov. 30 by calling 540-338-4485.

The Round Hill Arts Center will be offering three special workshops, all with

great gift-making potential. From 10:30 AM to 12:30 PM potter Gloria Eshelman will help students ages 4 and up paint their own pottery. The cost is \$12 per person plus the cost of the pottery item(s) chosen. Later that afternoon, Kelli Tatem will begin a two-day Intro to Spinning workshop. This class is geared to ages 14 and up and runs from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. The cost is \$120 plus a \$40 supply fee. From 1:30 PM to 3:30 PM. Mimi Harris will guide students ages 4 and up through the process of creating special stamped pendants and earrings. The cost of the pendants is \$12 each and earrings are \$18 a pair.

As night begins to fall, the community is invited to gather in the Round Hill Town Park for the annual Tree Lighting. The Round Hill Junior Women's Group will offer hot chocolate from Savoir Fare, baked goods and crafts from 4:00 PM to 5:30 PM. A special guest will arrive at dusk by fire truck to greet youngsters and the young at heart and then help magically light the town Christmas tree. Donations of new, unwrapped toys will be collected for Toys for Tots, and non-perishable food items will be donated to Loudoun Interfaith Relief.

From the Town Park, the community is invited to cross the street to the Fire Hall where members of the Round Hill Volunteer Fire Department and Round Hill Business Association will be serving up a hot

spaghetti dinner from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM. The dinner, complete with garlic bread, salad, dessert and beverage will cost \$5 for adults and \$3 for children under 12. Cash and check only, please. All proceeds go to the RHVFD. Santa will be on-hand for photos and donations for Toys for Tots will be accepted.

For those who are looking for additional holiday activities, the Round Hill Arts Center will host two additional special events later in December. On Saturday, December 10, from 1 PM to 4 PM., Jill Evans Kavaljian will lead a Holiday Card Printmaking Workshop for ages 8 and up. The workshop costs \$40 plus a \$10 materials fee that includes 20 cards.

On the following Friday, December 16, Liz Mutschler of Round Hill's Sugardust Cookies & Cakes will share tips and techniques of Holiday Cookie Decorating from 7:30 PM to 9:30 PM. during the Center's regular Ladies' Night. Come at 6:30 PM. for a social hour at Bogati Bodega. Bring two dozen cookies to swap for an assortment of others as part of a cookie exchange. The cost for the cookie decorating is \$25/person.

More Holiday Event Details on Our Community Page (page 18)

Chef Reaves, continued from page 1

Reaves who has produced creations in all kinds of shapes, from customers' pet dogs to favorite cars, to a huge replica of the Virginia Tech football stadium. He was the perfect candidate for the Food Network Challenge's Lego Cakes competition.

When Reaves first submitted his entry to be considered for the Food Network Challenge, it was only on the request of his friend Terry Tuttle, who had planned on entering and had asked Reaves to be his assistant for the competition. The two chefs agreed to be a team, and Reaves submitted an audition video of his own with the idea that either Reaves or Tuttle might be chosen.

After a long selection process, the Food

Network chose Reaves to compete with Tuttle as his assistant. They were to create a 3-foot tall cake in the theme of a Lego "world." "A couple weeks before the taping, we knew what the theme would be," said Jason, "and we each got to pick a 'world.' After losing out on his first choice, "Lego Kingdoms," to another competitor, Reaves and Tuttle chose "Lego City."

Reaves and Tuttle spent as much time as they could preparing for the Challenge. Their initial design which was "a lot bigger," according to Reaves, had to be pared down after a practice run. The two chefs also planned exactly how they would execute the design. "We made lists and timelines," said Reaves, "we had a timeline of

exactly what part [of the cake] we'd be working on during each hour [of the competition]." Reaves also said that he had prepared a list of which elements of the design to forgo in case the two ran out of time.

When the time came to compete, all of their preparation paid off. "Waiting to start, it's the most nervous you've ever been," said Reaves; but once they got to work on their cake, "It was like, I do this every day."

At the end of the eight-hour time limit, Reaves and his fellow contestants presented their creations to the judges. At that point, Reaves wasn't sure what the outcome would be. "I thought it was a toss-up between me and [fellow competitor] Ashley." But after the judges had nothing but praise for

Reaves' final cake, he breathed a sigh of relief. "I came out [of the judging] feeling a lot better than I did going in," said Reaves.

When the judges declared Reaves the winner of the Challenge, there was only one thing left for him to do: get down on one knee and offer a ring to his girlfriend Nicole. Reaves agreed to split the \$10,000 prize with his assistant, Terry Tuttle, and plans to use his half for the wedding which is planned for the spring of 2013. As for the wedding cake? Reaves might decorate a "dummy" cake of Styrofoam for show, providing simpler sheet cakes for guests to enjoy. Until then, Jason Reaves continues to create cakes, desserts, and an annual holiday gingerbread display at Market Salamander.

Grants & Awards: A Conspiracy of Paper

By Andrea Gaines

In a town, city or county's race for government grants funds and awards for all kinds of "good deeds," there is only one criterion that matters: whether one has the time and staff to fill out the paperwork, pass an ordinance and, if necessary, the money and/or influence to hire the relevant specialist. But most of all, time to get through the endless amount of paperwork.

This applies whether the town, city or county is trying to get a new park ... build a road or sidewalk ... "improve" citizen services ... or be recognized as a leader in a particular category.

However, there is no real investigation on the part of the grantmaker as to whether or not a particular project is really needed, or whether the same outcome could not have been accomplished through means other than money proffers that will eventually shift the burden to taxpayers. The actual "public" may be against the project. But, that's irrelevant. The paperwork says it all.

One example: Leesburg is in the "Tree City" award program and has received thousands of dollars to maintain its beneficial tree cover. But, during the twenty years it has been in this program, Leesburg has lost over seventy percent of its tree canopy. Having a committee on "trees," an arborist, an ordinance and an Arbor Day "celebration" are more important than actually maintaining tree cover! (see April 2011 coverage, Leesburg Today).

Purcellville, likewise participates in Tree City USA ... but it has the same genuineness gap as Leesburg. The trees taken down by the Gateway Developers in Purcellville (which Purcellville falsely claimed VDOT required), as well as those destroyed at the Bush Tabernacle/Fireman's Field site can never be replaced or enjoyed in the

lifetimes of anyone living here now – Tree City USA notwithstanding.

Another perfect example of the disconnect between the actual grant/award and the good works is Purcellville's recent "Distinguished Budget Award." Here it would appear that the award is for the actual budget. In fact it is for the presentation of the material, not the substance. (As this paper has argued on numerous occasions, the town budget is at the breaking point.)

VDOT hands out enormous sums of (essentially) taxpayer money for roads that often make the quality of life for the taxpayer worse by increasing traffic and accidents, and spurring more growth.

Some of the money being spent on certain stretches of downtown "sidewalk improvement" in commercial areas (which required four quick-takes by the Town) is being paid for by government grants. Had this Town Council been a good financial steward, it would have requested that the developers standing to benefit from all this "prepping" pay for these downtown improvements.

The Town of Purcellville is constantly cruising for grants and awards. And, the Virginia Municipal League is constantly trolling for recipients. When Purcellville receives grant money, it behaves as though the money was "free" and protects the public purse. But, not only is the grant money not free, neither is all the staff time spent to prepare the papers, set up the committees, etc.

This conspiracy of paper is a rouse, paved with fallen trees and the loss of small town character.

For, yet again, it is the hardworking taxpayer, not the developer, who absorbs the costs behind the tens of millions of dollars worth of commercial development that will ultimately wind its way back to those with the deepest pockets.

View From the Ridge – by Valerie Joyner



What Makes Western Loudoun So Special? And, Will Citizens Work to Protect It?

One day you may find yourself cruising down a western Loudoun road free of work deadlines, worries and runs to the grocery store. You might look around and marvel at just how beautiful it is.

The photo above was taken at just such a moment. Driving down Lincoln Road one day a member of our staff looked up to see a hot air balloon floating quietly above the barns, horses and fences of a nearby farm.

Such scenes like this are fairly commonplace here, but for how long?

In last month's elections, the Republican Party swept in enough new members of the Board of Supervisors to establish a firm "pro-growth" 9-0 majority. Their donors were largely developers and developer Political Action Committees.

But it wasn't so much a victory for the Republican Party as it was for an agenda that, many say, is actually decidedly NOT conservative. An agenda that is not only pro growth, but is promoting an approach to planning that gives out special exceptions and other developer tools of the trade with the potential to wildly increase zoning densities, thus creating enormous future tax burdens. Is that "Conservative?"

In November the Board of Supervisors voted on an application involving the development of almost 500 housing units (quadruplexes) near the Town of Purcellville, based on a motion led by Blue Ridge Supervisor Jim Burton (I), who has consistently supported zoning decisions which preserve a community's

character while keeping tax rates low. The applicant (Brookfield Autumn Hill, LLC) was challenging the County Zoning Administrator's ruling on their interpretation of its proffers ... an opinion which said that Autumn Hill's development can only happen if public utilities are granted by the Town of Purcellville.

The developer's challenge was denied, and developers might have filed out of the meeting somewhat empty handed. But, a developer with an interest in Autumn Hill came up to a representative of this newspaper (The BRL was in the press box) and said: "We know we aren't going to get anything from this board." "I guess you will from the next board ..." the BRL then said, to which the developer responded: "Oh Yeah, in the blink of an eye."

The new Board of Supervisors super majority – a majority that flies under the banner of lower taxes but actually threatens a continued explosion in taxes through massive rezonings – needs to be held accountable by Republicans, Democrats and Independents, alike; people who not only favor lower tax rates, but a preservation of our rural and agricultural heritage

The decidedly rural western Loudoun vista above is not only what makes this a great place to live and raise a family; it is a landscape that moderates tax rates by controlling residential development and the new roads, schools and demand for services that come along with it.

Will citizens work to protect it?

Blue Ridge LEADER & Loudoun Today

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Like Meatloaf Ice Cream – By Tim Jon

As a direct sign that we're living in the Loudoun County vortex in the 21st Century, it's time, once again, for the annual smörgasbord of holiday displays on the Courthouse lawn in Downtown Leesburg. In the fallout of last year's debacle-precipitating rulings to prohibit, then allow said manifestations of human creativity, we can look forward to quite a variety of expression: messages from Atheist groups,

traditional Christian nativities, a crucified Santa, a letter from Jesus, and ventings from the Flying Spaghetti Monster.

If ever there was an opportunity to at least try to learn to embrace our differences, I'd say that the planned 'erectifications' in the Loudoun County Courthouse Square for 2011 should prove quite instrumental.

– By Molly Pinson Simoneau

uranium [yoo-rey-nee-uhm]

Noun: The chemical element of atomic number 92, a gray, dense radioactive metal used as a fuel in nuclear reactors.

The issue of whether to allow the mining of uranium in Virginia has been revisited. Virginia Uranium, Inc. is pressuring the Virginia legislature to allow mining at Coles Hill in Pittsylvania County. If you open up uranium mining at Coles Hill, is Loudoun County next?

A study conducted by the National Academy of Sciences exploring the safety of mining and milling uranium in Virginia is expected in December, and the General Assembly is expected to decide whether to lift the moratorium in the upcoming legislative session.

Sustainable Loudoun and the Piedmont Environmental Council presented a forum on November 11 on the topic Uranium Mining in Virginia: Should We Lift the Ban? The forum was held at the Virginia Campus of George Washington University in Ashburn. Speakers presented arguments against lifting the 1982 moratorium against all uranium mining in Virginia.

With high unemployment in Pittsylvania County, Virginia Uranium is gaining support by promising to create hundreds of new jobs. "Virginia Uranium will employ 325 people who will earn an average salary of \$65,000 per year and the company will generate up to 350 temporary construction jobs," according to their website (www.virginiauranium.com).

Virginia Governor Bob McDonnell said in a July radio interview with WNIS, "The obvious challenge is can it be mined safely so it doesn't create public safety issues for the people around the mining site, or worse, contamination of groundwater that could impact Virginia Beach?" McDonnell sounded hopeful about mining prospects, stating that it could mean "a tremendous number of jobs, tax revenues and opportunities to support the nuclear industry."

The speakers at the November 11 forum argued that the mining of uranium cannot be done safely. Uranium is a natural radioactive and toxic metal. Uranium and its decay products emit ionizing radiation.

Dr. Janet Sherman, medical doctor and expert in the field of toxicology who has researched the health and environmental consequences of Russia's Chernobyl disaster at length, pointed out the risks to uranium mine workers as well as those living in proximity to the mine. Health risks of ionizing radiation include increased risk of cancer.

"Workers at a potential mine at Coles

Hill would be exposed to less than 17 millirem of radiation each year," according to the Virginia Uranium website, "population in the immediate area would be exposed to less than 7 millirem." (A dental x-ray would expose a patient to 2-10 millirem.)

Dr. Sherman refuted that claim, saying, "All radiation exposure is cumulative." Sherman also expressed concern that the risk of a Chernobyl-like accident at any nuclear facility is too great. "Natural disasters have a beginning, middle, and end," she said, "but radiation disasters have no end." Speaker Rob Marmet, pointed out that, "If a uranium mine had been started when the settlers first came to Virginia, it would still be 'hot' today."

Another risk that was highlighted during the forum was how the mining and milling of uranium can disperse radiation into the environment. Speaker Linda Pentz Gunter, founder of Beyond Nuclear, referenced a study by the Commission de Recherche et d'Information Indépendantes sur la Radioactivité, or CRIIRAD, which performed radiological surveys at French uranium

mines. According to the study, "radioactive dust is transferred to the atmosphere by mining operations, extracting and crushing of ore, uranium milling, management of waste rocks and tailings." This dust can be "very radiotoxic when inhaled."

Surface and groundwater can also be contaminated, according to CRIIRAD, and is radiotoxic to ingest. Contaminated water is also harmful to the environment. CRIIRAD discovered that "sediments, aquatic plants, and soil from riverbanks downstream from former uranium mines have such contamination that they deserve in many cases the terminology: 'radioactive waste.'"

In addition to the CRIIRAD study, Gunter cited the 1979 accident at Church Rock uranium mill in New Mexico, which resulted in the spilling of 1,100 tons of milled uranium ore and 94 million gallons of heavy metal effluent into the Puerco River. "That could be the Roanoke River," said Gunter.

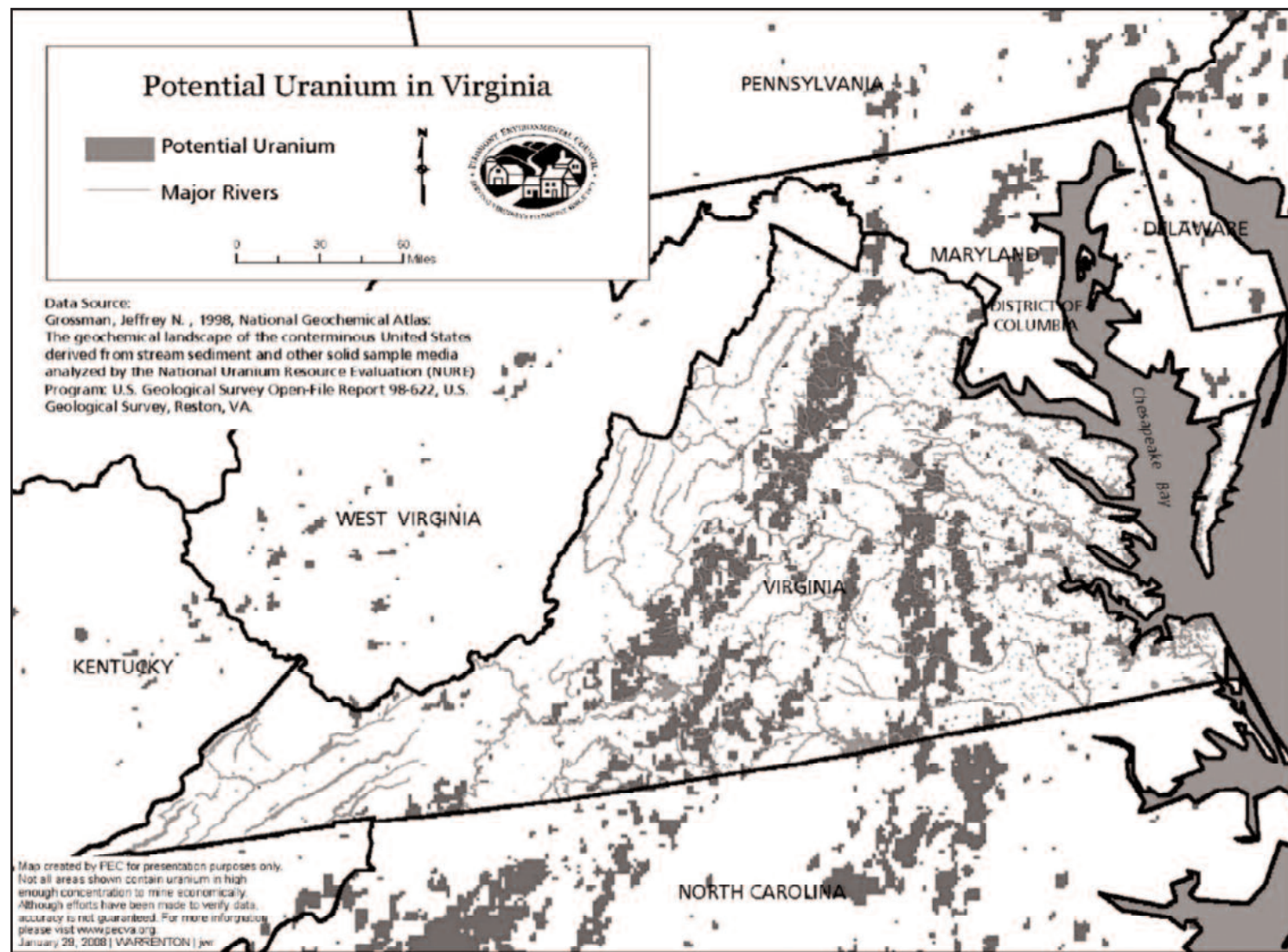
Virginia Uranium claims that, "no negative impact to local agriculture is anticipated," mentioning that the Limousin region of

"If a uranium mine had been started when the settlers first came to Virginia, it would still be 'hot' today."

France, known for Limousin beef cattle "is in an area of France where extensive uranium mining has taken place historically."

Rob Marmet, senior energy policy analyst for the Piedmont Environmental Council, discussed economic implications of mining uranium in Virginia. In the last five years, commodity prices for uranium have reached new highs, and the value of the Coles Hill uranium deposit is estimated to be billions of dollars. But, Marmet pointed out, the threat or even the perceived threat of radiation contamination could impact other branches of the Virginian economy, including agriculture, tourism, and property values. He also explained that while Virginia Uranium has expressed the intent of mining uranium in Virginia to be used in Virginia

Continued on page 13



More Taxes? ... Really?

Over the years, various candidates for Purcellville Mayor have argued against the imposition of the dreaded BPOL Tax (Business Professional Occupational License Tax). Others have argued that if the Town of Purcellville didn't impose the tax ... the County would.

However, according to an employee at the County Commissioner of the Revenue's office, it is the choice of the town to impose this tax (and Purcellville takes full

advantage of this). Purcellville now imposes a tax of 17 cents per hundred dollars of gross profits on most businesses in Town, except for building contractors who pay 14 cents per hundred. State Code gives towns the right to impose a business tax but it does not compel them to do so. And, a town must pass a local ordinance before it can impose this tax.

Loudoun County will tax any business that operates outside the Town, whether

that's from home or office, and will tax that part of any operation that may be operating in the County, even if the business has an office in town. But it will not tax any business that resides in town and does not build or operate outside that town.

There is also the RBO or Rental By Owner tax. The person who rents out offices to, say, a doctor, a lawyer and a building contractor is going to pay BPOL taxes on rent collected from those

businesses. Of course, there will also be taxes collected on those businesses directly. The BPOL tax on RBO is 16 cents per hundred gross. Leesburg does not collect this tax. Purcellville does.

The town is now considering an audit of businesses to see if they are paying what they owe the town. Should there be discrepancies the town may do a town-wide audit. Do Purcellville businesses really need another tax?

What's That?



This unusual object was submitted by Babette Bennett. Babette lives in an old Quaker farm house in the village of Lincoln, built in the late 1700s.

When we first looked at it we thought that the partial ring might have been a full circle at one time, and had just rusted away.

Maybe it had something to do with animals – a harness attachment maybe?

After a little research we identified it as

Making Sense of the Stuff We Find in Our Back Yards

– By Bob Shuey & Mike Clem



half of what's known as a Dexter ring bit, typically used for race horses! We'll do further research and see if we can determine if the property was once a horse farm.

Keep those "What's That?" submissions coming.

Send a photo and brief description of your unusual backyard finds to carolbrleader@yahoo.com or mail it to the Blue Ridge Leader, PO Box 325, Purcellville, VA 20134-0325.

Mike Clem is a member of the Banshee Reeks Chapter of the Archeology Society of Virginia (BRASV.org) and the Loudoun County Archaeologist.

Bob Shuey is an archeologist active in local historic preservation efforts.



Mike Clem



Bob Shuey

Alicia's Big Pink Garbage Truck

– By Carol Morris Duker

Alicia Leith climbs confidently up into her big pink garbage truck and waves goodbye. Off she goes, a petite thing, peering over the steering wheel, resuming her trash route. As she turns the corner, a banner stretched along the side of her truck comes into view bearing her company logo – a curvy cartoon feline pushing a trash can – and her sign: "AlleyCat Waste Management."

This is not your everyday garbage company.

Arguably one of the greenest businesses around, AlleyCat is in the pink. In fact, Alicia paints her whole world pink, and her truck is no exception. "Pink is positive. It's cheerful and bright. How can you feel bad if you're surrounded by pink?" she explains. She has a point.

Started two years ago, AlleyCat Waste Management was conceived before Alicia was laid off from her job with AOL.

Layoffs happen in her line of work, and as a single mom with two boys, she always kept one step ahead of the game.

One night, after venting with a friend about the financial woes of divorce and impending layoffs, she expressed a desire for a flexible schedule so she could allow



her boys to be in as many activities as they chose. That night, she brainstormed until she had an idea ...

Alicia lived off the beaten track and was used to driving her trash to the county land-fill every couple of weeks.

She didn't like her prior trash service because they didn't recycle all the things she wanted recycled. Keeping stuff out of landfills is important to Alicia, and she meticulously sorted her trash into piles: cardboard and various paper products, bottles and cans, ink cartridges, batteries, tires, electronics, etc. They all were hauled to various places for proper recycling on trash day. Old appliances, clothes, furniture and toys were never thrown away. These were donated to various charities that distributed the items for reuse.

Why not start her own trash company and

Continued on page 29

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Blue Ridge District School Board Representative Priscilla Godfrey

As the year 2011 comes to a close, the Loudoun County School Board is finishing its two year review and update of all 200 school board policies. Policies were assigned to related committees, i.e., policies on personnel went to the personnel committee where they were reviewed by committee members and then sent on to the full Board as an information item; followed by inclusion on the next meeting's consent agenda or listed as an action item at the next meeting.



ing of 200 students to schools outside their current attendance area in Leesburg. Community interest in this issue has been high with many subdivisions and groups of residents taking part in the creation of boundary maps that the School Board is studying. New boundaries are to be adopted at the School Board's last official meeting of the year, Tuesday, December 13, 2011.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the over 3,400 people who supported my re-election by voting. I also appreciate the many friends I have made in administration and among our teachers, guidance counselors, custodians, cafeteria staff and bus drivers. We have a lot of be thankful for in this county, especially among those who work in the field of public education. I know they will carry on to provide their very best for our students.

Priscilla B. Godfrey, Member of Loudoun County School Board 2004 to the present; resident of Philomont, VA for 32 years; mother of 3; member of Rotary Club of Purcellville, Loudoun Volunteer Financial Council and Philomont Ladies Auxiliary.

The School Board is also working on revisions to the school attendance boundaries at all existing Leesburg elementary schools (7) as we get ready for the opening of Frederick Douglass Elementary on Plaza Street in downtown Leesburg next fall. In this boundary process, the School Board hopes to stabilize special education services at each school, arrange each school attendance to reflect the diversity of Leesburg's current student population, relieve overcrowding and the overflow-

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<p>4 BR, 4 BA, 3712 sqft, 16.44 acres Purcellville \$699,000 LO7633637</p>	<p>4 BR, 5.5 BA, 5670 sqft, 3.20 acres Lovettsville \$695,000 LO7601460</p>	<p>ALSO FOR RENT 5 BR, 4.5 BA, 6000 sqft, 5.67 acres Waterford \$749,990 LO7646369</p>
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<p>UNDER CONTRACT 4 BR, 2.5 BA, 3320 sqft, 3.61 acres Lovettsville \$499,900 LO7648635</p>	<p>5 BR, 5.5 BA, 5385 sqft, 1.02 acres Ashburn \$875,000 LO7543760</p>	<p>UNDER CONTRACT 4 BR, 2 BA, 2592 sqft, 3.07 acres Purcellville \$449,900 LO7594540</p>
<p>SOLD 5 BR, 4.5 BA, 5931 sqft, 3.32 acres Hamilton \$745,000 LO7600641</p>	<p>FOR SALE COMMERCIAL 1700 sqft Currently Used as Retail, .30 acres Leesburg \$599,000 LO7503462</p>	<p>SOLD 4 BR, 3.5 BA, 3412 sqft, .89 acres Lovettsville \$424,900 LO7647469</p>

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Historic Scavenger Hunt

– By Leah Carlson

It's all around us so you can't have missed that it is the sesquicentennial anniversary of the start of the Civil War, and a large part of this war took place in our own back-yard, Loudoun County. The sobering and ugly thought of this country at war with itself is not something any of us want to repeat. Our country's history is important for children to understand so they can take it forward and learn from our past. Though it is not always easy to get children excited about past events or get them to relate to what happened here on our soil a century and a half ago, one thing that made it come alive for my three boys was the Historic Loudoun County Scavenger Hunt. This consists of three scavenger hunt tours through Loudoun County that follow the Civil War soldier, John S. Mosby. A fact-packed booklet gives you directions to each site and then offers a question that can only be answered by observing your surroundings once you arrive. When you've completed at least two of the hunts, you send in the booklet with your answers and receive a t-shirt for your accomplishment.

My family took all three of these tours over the summer. These hunts not only made local Civil War events come alive, but they showed us parts of Loudoun County that I had never seen in the 19 years I've lived here. Aside from the history and beautiful Loudoun countryside, highlights of our tours were the people we met. The knowledgeable docent at the

Continued on page 30



Amy V. Smith's Money Talks

– Let's Start Thinking About Year-End Tax Planning –

– By Amy Smith

As 2011 draws to a close, you may want to consider your tax-planning options for next year. Now is a great time to review your long-term financial plans and to take advantage of year-end opportunities, such as maximizing retirement plan contributions or tax-loss harvesting.

At this time last year, income tax planning was particularly challenging. Several tax deductions had already expired and significant changes, including new, higher income tax rates, were scheduled to take effect at the end of the year. Legislation passed in mid-December last year, however, hit the "reset" button, reinstating already-expired deductions and extending major tax provisions, including lower rates for an additional one to two years.

As a result of the December legislation, 2011 takes place in an environment characterized by something that was missing last year – a relative degree of certainty. That being said, here are a few things to keep in mind as you consider your tax situation.

Federal income tax rates: The same six federal income tax rates that applied in 2010 will continue to apply in 2011 and 2012. So, depending on your taxable income, you'll fall into the 10%, 15%, 25%, 28%, 33% or 35% bracket.

Remember, though, that all of your taxable income is not necessarily taxed at that rate – instead, the rate at which you pay tax generally increases as your income increases. For example, if you're a single individual with 2011 taxable income of \$100,000, you fall into the 28% tax bracket. However, your first \$8,500 of taxable income is taxed at 10%, your next \$26,000 of taxable income is taxed at 15%, and your next \$49,100 in taxable income is taxed at 25%. Only \$16,400 of your taxable income is actually taxed at 28%.

Rates for long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends: As in 2010, long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends continue to be taxed at a maximum rate of 15% through 2012; if your income (including any long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends) puts you in the 10%

or 15% income tax brackets in 2011 and 2012, a special 0% rate will generally continue to apply.

Alternative minimum tax (AMT): While regular income tax rates and the maximum rates that apply to long-term capital gains and qualifying dividends were extended through 2012, the latest AMT "fix" (in the form of increased AMT exemption amounts) is effective only through 2011. So, if you think you may be subject to the AMT this year, the good news is that you know ahead of time what the relevant exemption amounts are (\$74,450 for married individuals filing jointly, \$48,450 for unmarried individuals, \$37,225 for married individuals filing separately); the bad news is that the AMT situation for 2012 remains up in the air. As it stands now, AMT exemption amounts will drop significantly in 2012, dramatically increasing the number of taxpayers ensnared by this parallel tax system. Visit IRS.Gov for more information.

I welcome your comments. Just send me an email at amy.v.smith@raymond-james.com. All names and identifying information will be kept strictly confidential unless written permission is given for their use.

© Amy V. Smith Wealth Management, LLC, is an independent firm. Amy is a Certified Financial Planner (CFP) and Certified Investment Management Analyst (CIMA) and offers securities through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Her office is located at 161 Fort Evans Road, NE, Ste 345, Leesburg, VA 20176. www.amysmithwealthmanagement.com. Please note: changes in tax laws or regulations may occur at any time and could substantially impact your situation. While we are familiar with the tax provisions of the issues presented herein, as Financial Advisors of RJFS we are not qualified to render advice on tax or legal matters. The opinions and recommendations here are those of the columnist.



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– An Endless Summer in Purcellville – Fighting the Winter Blues –

It's getting cold outside. The days are getting shorter, the skies are darker, and we still have a long winter ahead of us. Brrrrrrrr.

For many people, the cold winter can be depressing – especially for those unable to get out and enjoy activities like sledding, skiing or skating. For those who are limited by physical reasons, or those who can't afford ski trips or mid-winter vacations, the days ahead are just – well – cold.

Enter your friendly neighborhood Tanning Salon.

Did you know that even a few minutes in bright sunshiny light can perk you up and



Left to right: Rita Kaseman, Amanda Kaseman, Demet Kiziltas.

put a little pep in your step? The calming effects of strong light make you feel warm, relaxed and refreshed. It doesn't take much to make you feel good.

For many salon customers, the tan is not the thing. An occasional bask in pseudo-sunshine for several minutes can provide just enough warmth and soothing light to

make them feel good for hours on end. Tanning beds today are geared toward comfort and offer a few minutes of quiet meditation for those who just need a burst of sunshine to restart their engines.

In Purcellville, Endless Summer Tanning

Salon's owner, Rita Kaseman observes that her customers vary widely in age – from young to old: some wanting "color" before an important date and others who claim to feel "lifted" by a few minutes under the lights. Her customers pop in at all hours of the day, sometimes on the way to, or from, work. It's inexpensive, and quick. Customers can pay per visit, or by the month, and there are no gimmicks or contracts. Kaseman's salon also doubles as a boutique, where popular Paparazzi jewelry is sold for \$5 per piece, and handbags, clothes and other fashion accessories adorn her shop – for a bargain.

"We do well when it's cold outside. People tell us they come in just to feel warm." And say what you will about tanning salon ... basking in light for a few restful minutes when it's dark and gloomy outside is mighty tempting.

Concerns about skin damage have driven

many whose only motive is obtaining a rich tan to the bottle – the spray bottle, that is – where salons provide a golden glow from automated spray booths instead of under the lights. Endless Summer Tanning Salon in Purcellville has a Mystic UV Free Spray Tan unit that is totally automated and takes as little as 40 seconds to deliver the goods. Customers enter a private booth, undress, and step into the unit, following automated voice instructions. The unit delivers an even spray, top to bottom, back to front. It dries in a minute or two and slowly activates a gorgeous tan over the next 12-24 hours, while you go about your business. Spray tans these days are indistinguishable from natural tans – and provide warm, even color.

Endless Summer Tanning Salon and Boutique is located at 850-C East Main Street, Purcellville. Hours are Monday-Friday, 9am-9pm, Saturday 10am-6pm, and Sunday 12pm-4pm.

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Sam's Market Update This summer's real estate market finished very strong. In September the average days on the market for Loudoun County were only 66 days! In October new listings were down 13.6 percent. There is a real shortage of quality listings on the market. For a complimentary analysis of your home's value I hope you will give me a call. (Source: Real Estate Business Intelligence, LLC. An MRIS company.)

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Faith, Food and Fellowship

– by Sue Thompson



The television sitcom 'Cheers' ran for 11 seasons, earning 27 Emmy awards and ranking number 18 in the top 50 greatest TV shows of all time. Every week a core group of colorful characters made their way to their favorite local bar to commiserate. Perched on wooden stools, nursing a cold one, they shared their troubles, offered bad advice, traded a few good barbs and hoped for an epiphany. The little bar in Boston existed in a season of perpetual advent, expectant of something good that never quite arrived. Cheers fans everywhere fondly remember the words to the show's theme song: "Sometimes you want to go – where everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came. You wanna be where you can see – our troubles are all the same. You wanna be where everybody knows your name."

I recently had the privilege of visiting a 'Cheers' of sorts, out on Harpers Ferry Road in Purcellville, Virginia. Unlike their Hollywood counterpart, there's no bar where you can lose your troubles for a time in a cold one. Instead you'll find a simple fieldstone church building hugging the road in quiet repose. Framed by sprays of wildflowers behind a wrought iron fence, with its cemetery nestled close beside, Christian Community Church at St. Paul's is a place where everybody knows your name.

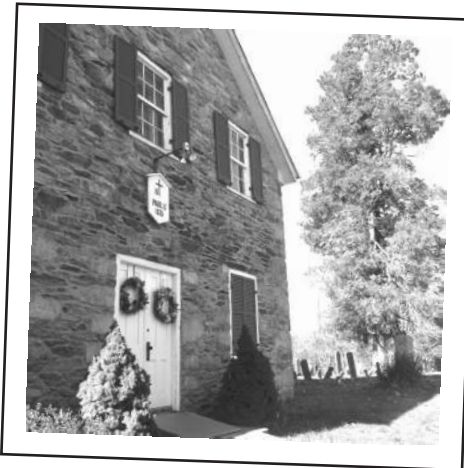
Linda Sutler was there cutting the grass on the day I visited. Linda was born nearby in Lovettsville. Her mother's great uncles did the stonework on the church, and the Mt. Olivette Church in Lovettsville too. Her mom was the organist at Mt. Olivette for 30 years. Linda isn't a member of St. Paul's

but she comes regularly to cut the grass and tend the little cemetery. She knows Pastor Roland England real well. He's been there for her over the years as she struggled with the grief of losing her seven-year-old son to a drunk driver, and he's there for her now in a fresh season of grief for her son Randy who died a few months ago. Linda feels loved at St. Paul's. "There's comfort in tending the grounds here," she says.

The Reverend Roland England has pastured this little flock since 1998. "I just minister to people where I find them. I help with dental work, keep people out of jail and just love on them. These are the kinds of things I like to do. Church isn't just the members. It's the larger community of families connected with the church, he says.

The Reverend explains that he doesn't aspire to a big congregation. "I've always pastured a small church. I like to visit my people. If you have a big church you can't do that. I'm able to share Christ's love and that's what matters," says the Reverend. He works as a security guard full-time but ministering to others is his where his heart is. He's already seen his 70th birthday come and go. "I plan to keep on doing what I'm doing, good Lord willing, for quite some time," he says.

He excuses himself for a few minutes to meet with a family who have come to plan a funeral, leaving me in the cool of the stone sanctuary to take in the simple beauty of this humble building. St. Paul's began to meet here in 2000. The building stood empty for 30 years prior. Reverend England and his congregation approached the Lutheran Synod with an offer and bought the building for \$1.00. Carroll Crim and his wife Doris prayed for 10 years for a new church in the Purcellville area. "This church" Carroll said then, "is the answer to those prayers." Prayer is a big part of the life at St. Paul's. It's in the very walls of the



building.

I'm roused from the quiet of the sanctuary to join the Reverend next door in his office so he can introduce me to the couple he's meeting with. There's talk of Doris Crim's coleslaw and other important 'family' business. Roots go deep in this little church. Relationships are cherished. Everybody knows your name and they're always glad you came. I start to feel a bit like family myself, sitting among these dear folks as they share their joys and sorrows.

Seems there are about 50 people in the congregation, not including all the folks in the community who aren't officially members but make up the 'family' that is St. Paul's. The core group is in Lovettsville and the rest come from Maryland and West Virginia. For three nights in December their numbers swell to over 100 people for their special Christmas services. "We light the oil lamps. It's a traditional service," says Rev. England. "We'll mark the end of Advent with hymns as we welcome the Christ Child. People are drawn to tradition. It helps anchor them."

This little church seems to know a thing or two about anchoring the community. The first Sunday of every month is Communion at St. Paul's followed by a pot-luck dinner

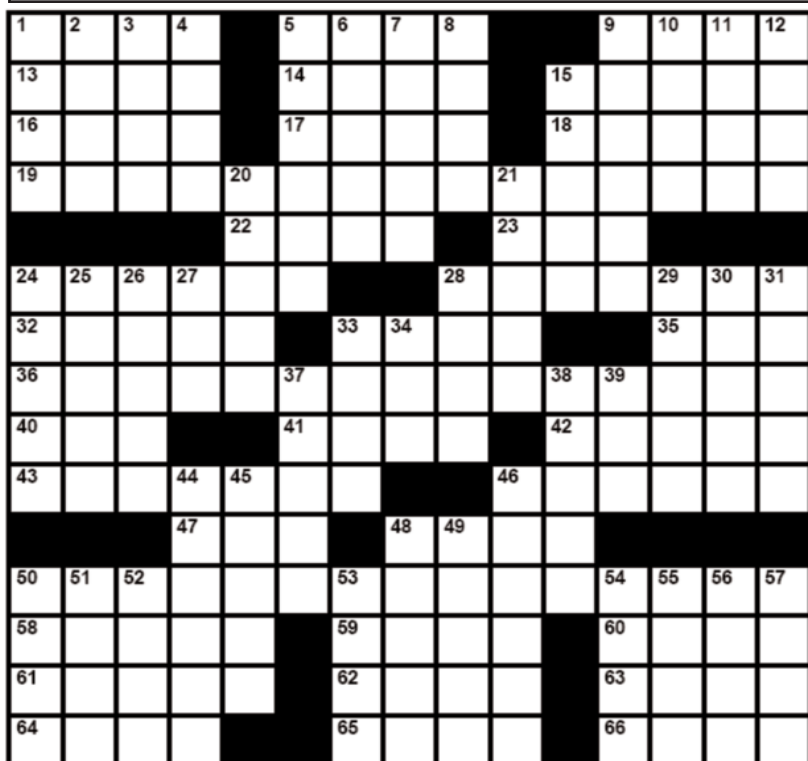
after the service. And breakfast is served every Sunday morning before worship. Then there's the annual Cruise-In - a time of food and fellowship when church families and the community come together. And their "Galilean Service" on the Clatterbuck Farm every spring, when they worship outdoors before enjoying a picnic lunch. Faith, food and fellowship they call it. "Feed the body and the soul," says Reverend England. A person could get used to this.

Eventually it's time for me to take leave of this little family. Linda waves good-bye as I follow the well-worn gravel path through the flowers to my car and head back to town, past the shops and the restaurants with their bars. Unlike the characters in the little Bar in Boston who were always moving through a season of advent, expectant of something good that never quite arrived, the folks at St. Paul's know the One who has come. Linda Sutler knows him in the gentle embrace of the people of St. Paul's as she tends the grounds. Doris Crim knows him as she lovingly adds a heaping bowl of her melt-in-your-mouth coleslaw to a table already groaning with food at the annual Cruise-In. Reverend England knows him as he tends his flock in the midst of the searing grief of death and the soaring joys of life. These folks at St. Paul's know that advent is a place in the heart where life collides with faith every day, and that the expected one always comes.

Christian Community Church at St. Paul's can be found at 12623 Harpers Ferry Road, Purcellville, Virginia. Sunday school and worship begin at 10:00 a.m. every Sunday.

Susan Thompson, a writer and photographer and a native of Virginia, lives in Purcellville with her husband Tim and a Schipperke named Rocket.

It's Wet Out Here – By Myles Mellor



Across

1. Brewski
5. Orange juice factor
9. Bow
13. Certain surgeon's "patient"
14. Celebes beast
15. Anoint
16. Romantic setting
17. Dock
18. Carpentry grooves
19. Come down hard
22. Cleaning cabinet supplies
23. Absorbed, as a cost
24. Yugoslavia, now
28. Plant fuel
32. 86 is a high one
33. Aspersion
35. Not just "a"
36. Pot of gold site?
40. Golf term
41. Quite a stretch (var.)
42. Seize forcibly (old word)
43. Indiana town
46. Finn's friend
47. 1969 Peace Prize.
48. The Amish, e.g.

Down

1. Ado
2. "Major" animal
3. Kosher ____
4. Caught in the act
5. Yellow fruit
6. Bind
7. Fertile soil
8. Legal prefix
9. Wreath for the head
10. Completely fix
11. Blockage
12. Pianist, Dame Myra
15. Build on
20. Precipice
21. Lagos currency
24. Hex
25. "It's a Wonderful Life" role
26. Isuzu model
27. "You stink!"
28. Make, as a CD
29. Cornered
30. Treat rudely, in a way
31. Ratty place
33. Abandon
34. "Seinfeld" uncle
37. Claw
38. About to explode
39. "What's ____?"
44. Pooh's pal
45. Hodgepodges
46. Drag
48. Condescending one
49. Chopin piece
50. Hit
51. "Terrible" czar
52. Canceled
53. Doctrines
54. Dry biscuit
55. Soon, to a bard
56. Doing nothing
57. Central point

Uranium Mining, continued from page 5

power plants, the milled yellow cake would have to be shipped out of state to be enriched; calling the company's talk of homegrown power an "absolutely false argument."

Linda Pentz Gunter echoed that sentiment in her presentation. "It's not about jobs; it's not about getting off foreign oil," she said, "It's about money. It's always about money."

Not to be overlooked when considering the issue of whether to allow uranium mining is the protection of Virginia's natural beauty. Almost every speaker at the forum presented photos of unsightly open pit mines and milling facilities.

If the State lifts the moratorium on uranium mining it is possible they will target other uranium deposits throughout the state, including those in or near Loudoun County.

Will Stewart, principal systems engineer, and contributor to The Oil Drum energy blog, wrapped up the forum by presenting alternative solutions for generating clean energy in Virginia. Stewart explained that the current disposition of energy in Virginia amounts to about 70,000 gigawatt hours

(GWh), which comes mostly from coal and natural gas, along with nuclear, oil, and hydroelectric sources. He argued that wind farms off Virginia's coast along with geothermal energy sourced from West Virginia would be the best solution for providing Virginia with sustainable energy. Stewart calculated that geothermal and wind sources could provide Virginia with over 100,000 GWh of power.

Stewart also argued that while Virginia Uranium promises to provide 325 permanent and 350 temporary jobs to Virginians; an offshore wind farm could employ 10,000 temporary construction workers, and 5000 permanent workers.

The Piedmont Environmental Council encourages Virginians who are concerned about uranium mining to contact their representatives in the General Assembly as well as Governor McDonnell about the issue. Linda Pentz Gunter went one step farther: "Hand them the CRIIRAD study," she said, insisting that legislators need to read the study in order to understand the harmful effects uranium mining can have on the environment.

Vote to Come Soon on Property Tax Relief Changes for the Elderly

Loudoun County has one of the most generous policies in the commonwealth on tax breaks in personal property taxes for the elderly. The Board of Supervisors have been debating about whether or not to amend the current criteria to add an elderly homeowner's spouse an exemption on his or her first \$10,000 of income.

Furthermore, if the homeowner or spouse is disabled, then their entire income would be exempt if the new rules would pass.

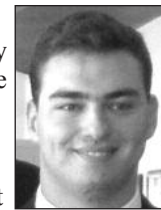
The current policy which has been in place for about thirty nine years allows for a full exemption from real estate taxes on a home (up to three acres) with an income of \$72,000. The number of homes has steadily increased from 2001 (689 properties) to 2010 (1,992).

The vote is expected to take place December 12, 2011, and if passed would go into effect January 1, 2012.

Putting College (and Our Value) in Perspective

— By Samuel Moore-Sobel

During this time of year many young people, mainly seniors in high school, have one major thing on their mind: college. After the applications are submitted, one worries that they might not be accepted and their life will be forever doomed without a college acceptance letter in the spring.



I have submitted college applications already. Of course I wonder if I will be accepted, and I replay every part of my application over and over inside my head. The worst part is that there is absolutely nothing I can do about it.

Human beings don't like being told they don't have control over a situation. We all try to fool ourselves into thinking we do have some control. We tell ourselves that as long as we work hard and are good people that everything will go our way. As film producer Samuel Goldwyn said, "The harder I work, the luckier I get." What if we don't get what we want? What if I don't get into the college of my choice?

I looked over my application one last time before it was submitted. I thought does this accurately represent who I am; my grades, SAT scores, personal statement, resume. Is that all I am? Is our identity based purely upon our accomplishments?

So many people are concerned with their resume and accomplishments. These are great things, but they don't define us, or at least they shouldn't. I realize that I have a great family who is extremely supportive, that I live in a beautiful house and have everything. That alone is more than many can say in other parts of the world. So

"We are human beings with unique personalities and perspectives. Whether someone goes to an Ivy League University or a Community College, nothing can take away from who we are. Sure, who doesn't want to go to a college with a great name that impresses everyone. However, there is more to all of us than the college we attend, or the job we have, or the accomplishments we hold."

what am I so worried about? I don't want to disappoint my parents, or maybe I really don't want to disappoint myself? I realize that I raise a lot of questions, and I know that I definitely don't have all of the answers. I guess what I am trying to say is that we are all more than our test scores, grades and our resumes. We are human beings with unique personalities and perspectives. Whether someone goes to an Ivy League University or a Community College, nothing can take away from who we are. Sure, who doesn't want to go to a college with a great name that impresses everyone. However, there is more to all of us than the college we attend, or the job we have, or the accomplishments we hold. So instead of worrying so much, we all should spend more time helping others, and working on becoming better people. Although I would be lying if didn't say that I may still worry, just a little.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is a senior at Stone Bridge High School and currently serves as a member of The Good Shepherd Alliance Board of Directors.

LVHS's Viking Players Wins First Place



The Loudoun Valley High School one-act play titled *MEDIOCRITY* by Anton Robert Krueger won First Place in the Dulles District II AA competition at Briar Woods High School in Ashburn, VA.

The cast, under direction of Mr. Ike Stoneberger, performed British farce using classic and cockney English accents, and featured Ben Zook as Kenaf, Gemma Davimes as the Wife, Erica Miller as the Doctor, Drew Hare as the Brute, Emily Jackson as the Narrator, and Jacob Gates Smith as Quatro. Four of the cast were rec-

ognized as best actors: Zook, Miller, Jackson, and Hare. The crew included Anna Casserino as Stage Manager, Anna Stratton as Technical Manager, and Amanda Barr as technical crew.

The cast continued their winning ways at the Regional Festival at Tuscarora High School in Leesburg on November 19 where the play took Second Place. The cast will compete again (VHSL AA State Theatre Festival) at Monticello High School on December 6.

Congratulations Purcellville Bandits!



The Purcellville Bandits won the 2011 Upper Loudoun Youth Football League "A League" Championship on November 12th defeating their opponent 13-6. Congratulations to all of the players, cheerleaders, coaches, and parents for a fantastic season!!!

Players include: Charlie Clewis, Leo Cucinell, Austin Downing, Wil Elias, Andrew Fincher, Jordan Haran, Wesley Hoffer, Tanner Kern, Kadin Kightlinger, Scott Knepper, Mikie Kovich, Gus Lanham, Trey McDyre, Janan Owens, Dillon Pitvovrec,

Victor Rucker, Joey Sgarrella, Hunter Smith, Reed Vallee, Jason Yoxthimer

Coaches: Joe Sgarrella, Mike Elias, Mike Kovich, Rich Sabo, Ben Kurzyna, Duffy Mellor, Dylan Mellor.

Hannah Brown, Audrey Bucknor, Saige Hamblin, Emily Hubbard, Teaghan Kilrain, Alyssa Lopez, Casey Lynch, Nelley Olsen, Jasmine Owens, Meghan Russo, Hanna Smith.

Coaches: Colleen Sabo & Beth Partin.

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

Paxon Road

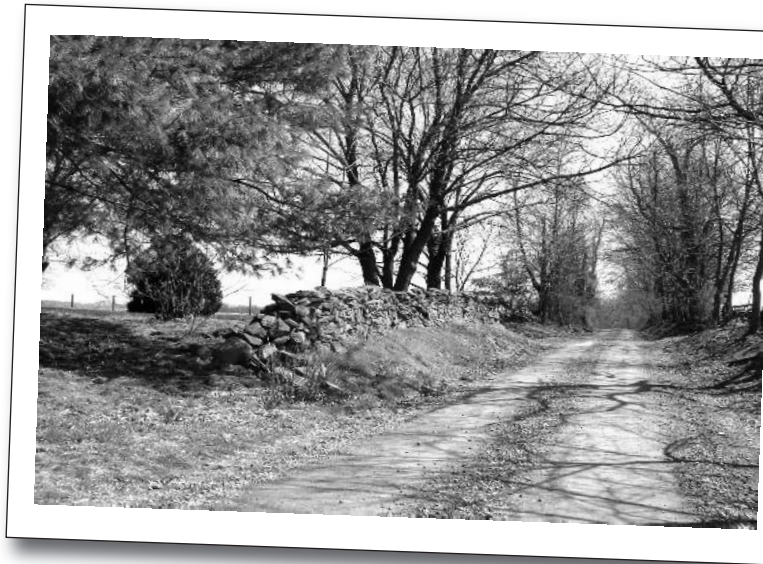
A narrow corkscrew of a gravel road, closely lined by trees, opening up into Loudoun's own Big Sky Country: I guess that's the way I always think of Paxon Road. When I'm not driving it, that is; behind the wheel of a very ungainly delivery truck-say on a waning afternoon in late December when the lane's ice-covered – I try to think of nothing at all – except staying between the ditches, that is. But, for the sunny Sunday afternoon traveler at most times of the year, Paxon's a very inviting – if not intoxicating little road- running for a half-dozen miles or so – from Snickersville Turnpike in the west to the end of State maintenance in the east – a short way's past Silcott Springs Road.

I say this, because the casual visitor to this scenic byway will find many – often surprising – distractions along their journey: historic homes, picturesque farms, open fields, wooded glens and lots of panoramas – not to mention cows and horses, deer, turkey, and the seemingly ubiquitous squirrels. Enjoy 'em when they pop into view – but watch the road – or you may miss the ruts – or that sharp curve before the hill – or the little bridge west of Airmont Road – or you may NOT miss one of the many mature tree trunks studding the roadside. If you're allured by the romance of the bucolic setting, pull over and set for a spell – perform a reality

check - and then move on – slowly – you don't want to run into that tractor coming over the next rise. And be prepared to scrape some shrubbery or force a wheel onto the shoulder if you meet a school bus or other “oversize” vehicle along this little lane.

Now, if you do decide to take a drive along Paxon Road, allow enough time for each direction; I've found such a variety of topography and scenery, that it can almost appear like two different routes – depending on your line of travel – east or west.

I've already told the story – in my weekly news column on our webpage – about getting stuck on the hill just west of Black Oak Road – in about two feet of snow, I might add – in a vehicle without chains or 'posi-traction,' much less four-wheel drive. I knew I was in trouble when I was told the two truck driver didn't want to attempt a rescue, because he didn't want to get stuck. The tow truck driver! Well, one of the truly kind



Probably not the best conditions to take your date out in that new “Beemer.”

Yeah, I would suggest a nice, dry, fall afternoon – maybe an hour or two before Sundown – you should have the road pretty much to yourself (other than the animals) and your own ruminations. First-timers would be advised to start out at the west end – because the eastern part just pretty much ends with nothing but barely enough room for a turn-around: you can't get there from anywhere else.

And don't forget to head back all the way to Snickersville – you'll notice stuff you hadn't even seen on the first leg – especially if you're the one behind the wheel.

And remember: the residents along Paxon like their little rural road – with its very slow speed signs.

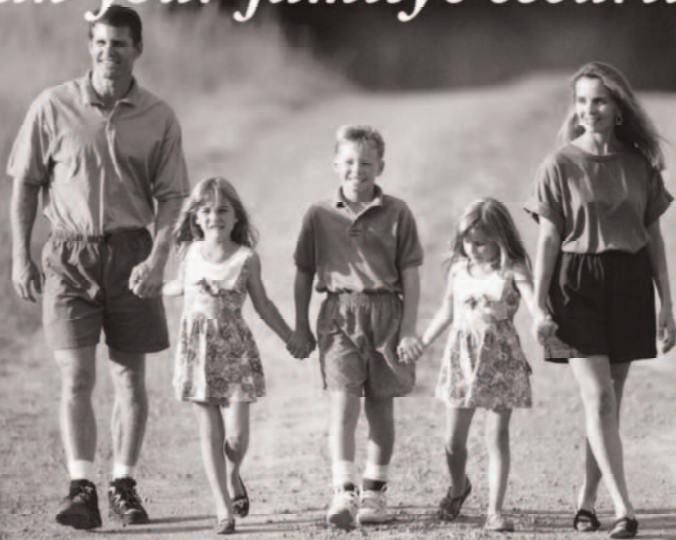
Lots of places in Loudoun County to drive fast: Paxon Road just isn't one of them.

And speaking of that, be careful crossing Silcott Springs Road: drivers like to move on that one.

Other than that, say “Hey” to the horses and you should be OK.



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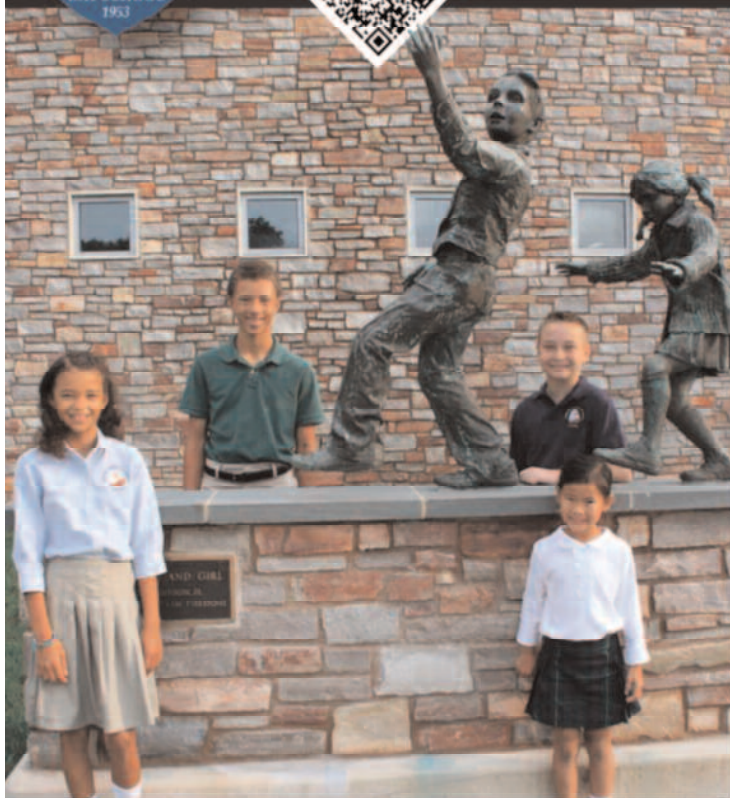
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– Puka Shell, Queen of all farm dogs, Fields of Athenry, Purcellville



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– Sushi ... “Tails” From the Barnyard

Okay – so I am writing this story because it is due today! I just managed to barely get through 500 plus turkey orders and somehow November has flown by. My life has been a little busy to say the least. The most important thing to note is everyone got their turkeys and I believe I managed the “high alert” field, “Turkey Hill”, protection quite well this year!



favorite families; Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth. Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth and their crew provide black rich dirt for Mrs. B.’s vegetable garden by breaking down the compost pile. They should have been preparing themselves for winter wiggling deep into the ground by now but with

this warm weather, they were still hard at work.

Mr. Robin Red Breast was in his finest of feathers after molting and preparing for his flight south for the winter. He needed a solid dinner full of protein to energize him for the long flight. I knew there was no way on this green earth Stretch was going to let Mr. and Mrs. Wigglesworth or any of their hatchlings become this birds dinner!

Stretch’s ears were laid back flat in only the way a Llama can. I could tell from his pose he was getting really mad and preparing for flinging a good solid llama spit! Let me tell you, you absolutely do not want llama spit on yourself. It is all gnarly and tobacco brown and stinks to high heavens! Yuk!

Just as Mr. Wigglesworth poked his head out of the ground – Mr. Robin Red Breast’s keen eye honed in on the little worm. I howled at the top of my lungs to distract the bird – Stretch aimed and spit his gnarly stinky tobacco colored spit all over Mr. Robin Red Breast’s new shiny coat! Stretch laid himself gently back down on top of the compost pile, elongating his neck up toward the trees at a very stunned bird, and, with that aloof look only a llama can give, Stretch simple said to Mr. Robin Red Breast; “The Wigglesworths dear sir, are gone for the winter!” Now please leave!

And, the Wigglesworth’s lived happily ever after, and now with no expectations. I wish you the very best this December and a very Merry Christmas! Love, Sushi

P.S. MY MASTER, ELAINE BOLAND RUNS FIELDS OF ATHENRY FARM. ORDER HER FRESH MEATS AND PRODUCTS AT WWW.FIELDSOFATHENRYFARM.COM AND DO COME SEE US AT THE FARM!

I am sitting on the front porch of the white farm house basking in the sun, resting and taking in this glorious weather. We truly had an “Indian Summer” the last days of November and to think it is now December as you read this!

Back to my front porch, seriously, this may have been the best Thanksgiving yet. I lay here contemplating the string of events. Family and friend’s laughter, joy, sadness, the good, the bad, and this year there was no ugly. Why? I think it was because there were no expectations of anyone by everyone. How cool was that?

Now, this was a group of family that has been through quite a bit together and I know the stories extremely well. For you see, it is the dog that lies quietly by your side through good times and bad. We hear an awful lot you know, but, we never say a word! Trust is earned through worthiness; worthiness is earned through behavior or actions. Gossip is not included in earned behavior! So, hence silence is golden for the dog when he chooses not to howl! Now that is not to say I do not know when to howl, for I can, and will howl when necessary. I noticed from the vantage point of my farm house front porch that Stretch the Llama was acting quite peculiar. He was hovering over the compost pile. As I mentioned, we have had a particularly warm November and I think it confused some of our fine feathered friends as they had hung around longer than usual. Mr. Robin Red Breast was hoping from branch to branch in the pine trees above Stretches head. That bird wanted to get into the compost pile for sure. The compost pile was full of warm moist dirt, the kind of place earth worms love to make their home and this was the home of one of Stretche’s

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December

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☀ **Friday, December 2, 2:00 PM to 5:00 PM - The 63rd Annual Christmas Greens and Flower Show of the Middleburg Garden Club**

is scheduled for the week-end of Christmas in Middleburg. The theme of the show "Christmas Spirit" will showcase a variety of holiday floral interpretations and artistic crafts. Horticultural specimens including container plantings will also be featured. The MGC's Holiday Bazaar will offer flower arrangements, kissing balls, wreaths, homemade baked goods, and other seasonal items. Proceeds will benefit the club's local community projects. The show is open to the public at Emmanuel Church Parish Hall, 105 East Washington Street, Middleburg, VA. Admission is free. For information contact: (540) 364-4170.



☀ **Saturday, December 3, 8:00 AM to 10:30 AM - Middleburg Elementary School's Annual "Breakfast with Santa":** The Middleburg Elementary School Dads will be preparing a wonderful breakfast including Egg Strata, sausage, pancakes, hash browns, fruit salad, cinnamon buns, juice, hot chocolate, tea and Starbucks Coffee. Adults \$7.00, children \$4.00. Reserved seating in the cozy "Fireside Lounge." This is a semi-private buffet breakfast with no waiting or lines. \$14.00 for adults; \$8.00 for children. Reservations: 540-751-2490. Kim Basinger will take photos of the children with Santa. Cookie decorating in Mrs. Claus' kitchen, Secret Santa Shop, Book Fair & Silent Auction. The auction will close at 10:30. 100% of the proceeds from the breakfast benefit the Middleburg Elementary School's Academic & Enrichment Programs sponsored by the PTO.

☀ **Friday, December 3, 10:00 AM to 4:00 PM - The 63rd Annual Christmas Greens and Flower Show of the Middleburg Garden Club continues (see December 2 calendar entry for details).**

☀ **Saturday, December 3, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM & Saturday, December 4, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM - Local Ceramics Artist Open Studio For Holiday Sale,** Monkeytown Pottery, 20603

Bird Watchers Wanted

Bird Watchers are wanted for the Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count on Wednesday, December 28, 2011. The annual count is a wonderful opportunity for beginning bird watchers to team up with more experienced birders to watch birds and to have a lot of fun while making an important contribution to bird studies. This year marks the 112th anniversary of the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, making it the longest-running wildlife census.

The Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count, organized by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, covers 177 square miles of Loudoun's countryside: north to Waterford, south to Aldie, east to Ashburn, and west to Purcellville. Participants can come for the whole day or just part of it, and can sign up online at <http://www.loudounwildlife.org/SignUp.htm> or by contacting Joe Coleman at 540-554-2542 or jcoleman@loudounwildlife.org. For more information about the Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count and other December programs and field trips organized by Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, visit us online at www.loudounwildlife.org.



Airmont Road, Bluemont, Virginia. The place to find beautiful, practical, handcrafted ceramic gifts for your friends and family. Loudoun ceramics artist, Amy Oliver. One-of-a-kind stoneware originals.

☀ **Saturday & Sunday, December 3 & 4, (and 10 & 11, 17 & 18), 6 PM: Christmas Twilight Tours, Historic Long Branch, Millwood, Virginia:** Take a stroll through time at Long Branch Historic House in Millwood, Virginia - 200 years of charm and history. Information: contact Lockett Van Voorhis at 540-837-2327.

☀ **Saturday, December 3, 5:00 PM to 7:30 PM, Annual Tree Lighting and Spaghetti Dinner With Santa, Round Hill Volunteer Fire Department, Round Hill.** Santa will arrive at the ceremony escorted by the Round Hill VFD to help light the tree. Dinner will be offered from 5:30 PM to 7:30 PM at the firehouse (4 Main Street) in conjunction with the Round Hill Business Association and will be spaghetti, garlic bread, salad, dessert and beverage. Cost for an adult is \$5 and children (under 12) \$3. Bring your camera for free photos with Santa!

☀ **Saturday, December 3, music artist Andrew McKnight is playing at 7:30 PM at the new 29 Vines Tasting Room and Winery on East Main Street in Purcellville.**

☀ **Saturday, December 4, 11:00 AM to 4:00 PM - Local Ceramics Artist Open Studio Holiday Sale continues, (see Saturday, December 3 calendar entry for details).**

Wilson New Rector of Our Savior, Oatlands

The Church of Our Saviour at Oatlands has selected the Rev. Dr. William E. Wilson as its new Rector effective November 1.

Dr. Wilson, 55, a native of Louisville, Kentucky, was a stockbroker there and in Charleston, South Carolina, before earning a PhD in Finance at the University of Indiana in 1991. He taught corporate finance and real estate in the Business Schools of the University of Hawaii, George Washington University and Georgetown University.

A member of the Church of Our Saviour since 1996, he left academia to earn a Masters in Theology from Trinity Episcopal School for Ministry near Pittsburgh and has served as Curate at the Oatlands church since 2008. He and his family live in Ashburn.

The Church of Our Saviour is a 133-year-old independent Anglican parish using the 1928 Book of Common Prayer and the 1940 Hymnal at 39918 Oatlands Mill Road, Leesburg.

The Rev. Elijah White, who retired after 34 years as Rector there, will remain an active member of the congregation.

Holiday Open House Bluemont



Sunday, December 4, 10:00 AM to 5:00 PM, Bluemont Train Museum, 18293 Railroad Street, Bluemont, Virginia. Meet Mr. and Mrs. Santa Claus, explore the train station museum featuring an antique train set and miniature Bluemont Village. Crafts, toys, gifts.

News From the Village of Lincoln!

- By Anne Tiffany

The weather at the end of October almost turned the fourth annual pumpkin decorating contest into a chance to design a snowman. Nevertheless, there were twelve participants and their pictures can be seen on our new website: www.lincolncommunityleague.org.

The top winners were Mike Rohrer for Most Traditional; Phillip Bennett for the Funniest; Alex Dukes for the Scariest; Alex Lyons for the Most Original; and Lego White for the Overall Most Wonderful. The Lincoln Community League wishes to thank Warren Watt and his wife, Ann for organizing this event; and thank you to Mike and Lilian Rohrer for lining the Lincoln sidewalks with luminaries for the Halloween trick or treaters.

The next event for Lincoln is the Christmas Caroling which will be held Wednesday evening, December 21. Gather at the Lincoln School at 6 p.m. with mittens, hats and scarves as

well as bells and a flashlight. The caroling will end at the parking lot opposite the Goose Creek Meeting House where there will be a bonfire, cookies and hot chocolate.

After Thanksgiving, our annual Christmas Adopt a Family tree will be set up in the Lincoln post office for Lincoln residents to pull a tag and buy a designated gift. This will later be wrapped and given to a local child in need, courtesy of the Lincoln Community League. Thank you to Monica Wheeler for being in charge of this event.

Mark your calendars for January 22 when Richard Gillespie will be our guest speaker again for our winter lecture series. More on this in next month's news article.

Loudoun's population is having a baby boom!! Four new babies were recently born to the village of Lincoln; and three of them are now living on Brooks Lane. Shiloh and Bryan Field have a new daughter; Chad and Katie Youngman have twin boys; and Kristin and Tim O'Rourke are happy parents of their daughter, Evelyn.

Stirling Rasmussen wrote me to say that his local Marine Corps League detachment had a display in October at the Purcellville library. The display included an array of books related to the Marine Corps and a WWI Marine uniform on loan from the national Museum of the Marine Corps. Stirling has been a docent there since retiring from Dell last April. The detachment, which meets at the American Legion post in Purcellville is also currently collecting for their annual Toys for Tots campaign. Last year they collected 36,000 toys for over 10,000 children of Loudoun, Clark and western Fairfax counties. Their website is www.loudounmarines.org.

Note that Lincoln resident Andrew McKnight is playing at 7:30 p.m. on Saturday, December 3 at the new 29 Vines Tasting Room and Winery on East main Street in Purcellville. Check out his website at www.andrewmcknight.net.

Send Lincoln news to Anne: jtiff70519@aol.com.

- ☉ **Sunday, December 4, 3:00 PM to 5:00 PM:** *A Celebration of Loudoun's Historic and Environmental Heritage* – REHAU, 1501 Edwards Ferry Road NW, Leesburg (approximately opposite Costco and Target stores) Sponsored by the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition. Multiple exhibits. Light refreshments, short talk by Kathleen Kilpatrick, Director of the Virginia Department of Historic Resources. Tour the Fort Evans Civil War site. Free – public invited. Info: Al Van Huyck (avanhuyck@aol.com) or Patty Rogers-Renner (marandder@aol.com). Visit Loudoun Preservation Society on Facebook for updates and last minute info.
- ☉ **Sunday, December 4, 7:00 PM:** *Voices of the Valley, Bethany United Methodist Church in Purcellville.* The western Loudoun Interfaith Youth Christmas Choir will be holding its annual concert on in the sanctuary.
- ☉ **Saturday, December 10th, 11:30 AM to 3:30 PM, Ham and Turkey Dinner, Hillsboro**

- United Methodist Church, 37216 Charles Town Pike, Purcellville.** A free will offering will be accepted for this homemade dinner with all of the trimmings. Goal in providing this dinner is to serve the community, offer fellowship and raise money for our missionary and philanthropic work.
- ☉ **Saturday & Sunday, December 10 & 11, 6 PM:** *Christmas Twilight Tours, Historic Long Branch, Millwood, Virginia continues (see December 3 & 4 calendar entry for details).*
- ☉ **Saturday, December 10 Holiday Spectacular by the Loudoun Symphony, 7:30 PM:** Features the Washington Soloist Emsemble, guest Conductor Dr. Yeong Su Kim, vocalist Jason Labrador and the Loudoun's Got Talent winner Somok Yoo. Virginia Academy in Ashburn.
- ☉ **Saturday & Sunday, December 17 & 18, 6 PM:** *Christmas Twilight Tours, Historic Long Branch, Millwood, Virginia continues (see December 3 & 4 calendar entry for details).*

An Old-Fashioned Christmas at Oatlands November 28–December 30

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SUNDAY, DECEMBER 4
12:00 NOON TO 4:00PM

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Loudoun County Firefighters Participate in 2011 Toys for Tots Campaign

The Loudoun County Fire-Rescue System and the Loudoun Career Fire Fighters Association are pleased to announce their participation in the 64th Annual Toys for Tots Campaign, sponsored by the United States Marine Corps Reserve. "The department is proud to be participating in this wonderful program for the seventh consecutive year," states Fire Chief W. Keith Brower, Jr. "Your generosity will help put smiles on the faces of sick or needy children this holiday season."

The Toys for Tots Campaign began in 1947 when a group of U.S. Marine Reservists collected and distributed 5,000 toys to needy children in the Los Angeles area at Christmas. In 2010, Marines distributed toys to more than 7.2 million children who might not have otherwise experienced the magic of the Christmas holiday season. During our local 2010 Toys for Tots Campaign, roughly 10,000 toys were collected by Loudoun County alone!

From November 29th, 2010 to December 20th, 2011, Fire and Rescue stations across the county will be accepting donations of new, unwrapped toys. Please note that toys resembling weapons or toys that could potentially be used as a weapon (i.e. guns,



Station/Location Contact

ADMIM:	803 Sycolin Rd, #104, Leesburg	703-777-0333
TRAINING:	16600 Courage Ct, Leesburg	703-777-0333
FS02:	500 N. Maple Avenue, Purcellville	540-338-5961
FS03	910 W. Washington St, Middleburg	540-687-3001
FS04	4 Main Street, Round Hill	540-338-7982
FS05	39071 E. Colonial Hwy, Hamilton	540-338-6001
FS06	20688 Ashburn Road, Ashburn	703-729-0006
FS07	39459 John Mosby Hwy, Aldie	703-327-6712
FS08	36560 Jeb Stuart Rd, Philomont	540-338-6506
FS09	24300 Gum Spring Road, Arcola	703-327-2222
FS10	42367 Lucketts Road, Lucketts	703-777-9344
FS11	104 Commerce Street, Sterling	703-430-7010
FS12	12837 Berlin Turnpike, Lovettsville	540-822-5258
RS13	143 Catoctin Circle, Leesburg	703-777-7185
FS16	11762 Harpers Ferry Rd, Purcellville	540-668-6974
FS18/25	46700 Middlefield Dr, Sterling	703-430-4013
FS19	25216 Loudoun Co. Pkwy, Chantilly	571-258-3719
FS20	61 Plaza Street NE, Leesburg	703-771-9103
FS22	19485 Sandridge Way, Leesburg	571-258-3722
FS23	43495 Old Ryan Road	571-258-3723

knives, swords, etc.) will not be accepted. To make a monetary donation online, visit the official website at www.toysfortots.org.

Please see the chart above for a list of collection sites accepting donations from Tuesday, November 29th, 2010 until Tuesday, December 20th, 2010.

For additional information, please contact Loudoun County Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management's Toys for Tots Coordinator Technician Rob Boyer at 571-258-3723, via email rob.boyer@loudoun.gov or visit www.toysfortots.org.



– By Dane Mullins

As you know October ended with a white out. The snow caused poor road conditions and loss of power for many western Loudoun families resulting in the postponement of the Woodgrove Dedication Anniversary Celebration Dance. Not to fret.

We persevered and continued spirit week up to the hometown rivalry between Woodgrove and Loudoun Valley on Nov. 4th. Thanks to the heroic effort by Caleb Welsh and the Varsity Wolverines, Woodgrove had a lot to celebrate at the dance on Saturday night.

The fans were entertained with a half time Extravaganza.

Loudoun Valley Marching Vikes took the field and put on an impressive performance.

The Marching Wolverines and the Color Guard followed with an incredible performance and kept the fans enthusiasm during the game. They ended their season with High Notes and Flags Flying.

Note of Interest ...

On October 17 at the USSBA competition, they placed 2nd in their class and took 1st place for music. WOW.

Our new Dance Team thrilled the crowd with their moves in another fantastic performance.

Fall Sports Finale ...

Woodgrove Athletes are very thankful for all the opportunities and "Wild" supportive fans:

•Freshman football finished the season

undefeated. Fierce Wolverines.

•All three Volleyball teams played hard all season.

•Big congratulations to the Cross Country Team for a stellar season. Senior Evan McCarthy finished 13th overall at the VHSL State Meet on November 13.

•Competition Cheer culminated their season with 6th in the Regional II Championships.

•In golf Daniel Moore topped the Woodgrove leader board earning his place in the Regional II Tournament.

In Basketball ...

Boys season opener against Dominion on Friday December 2nd. Expect a very exciting season.

In Baseball ...

On November 9th Woodgrove held its first college signing with JJ Sarty signing with William and Mary while Mathew Reed signed with Clemson. WOW.

Congratulations to Mrs. Pyle and the Vista yearbook staff. Our first edition won Trophy Class, the highest rating a school can receive from the Virginia High School League. Way to go Wolverines.

First ever Seniors VS Staff Volleyball game packed the house. Staff spiked the score and bumped the seniors off the court.

Upcoming Noteworthy Performances Band Concerts:

The music department would like to invite all of you to come to the Winter Concerts for Bands and Guitar. The Jazz Band and Guitar students will be in concert on November 30th at 7:00 pm. The Symphonic Band and Wind Ensemble students will be in concert on December 1st at 7:00 p.m. Listen to some great music performed by some very talented young people.

Chorus and Orchestra Concerts:

On behalf of the Woodgrove choirs and orchestras, we would like to invite you to our winter concert on December 8th at 7 p.m. in the auditorium. We will be singing

Continued on facing page

Ask Dr. Mike, continued from page 2

32 individuals and wounded 25 others. And, then there was the beheading of a student by another student at Tech in 2009. While it took some time, today, Virginia Tech seems to be back to normal with very strong applications and enrollment. Would you then hesitate to send your son to Tech at this point if that were his desired school for next year? I think you should allow your son to apply to Penn State next year along with his other selected schools. You can always make a decision later as parents and as a family. It doesn't make sense to me to say no to your son now to something so far off, especially with something that means so much to him.

Dr. Mike, my husband was laid-off from his job earlier this year, and we have since struggled financially. It's been difficult for our teenage boys to understand exactly how tight things are. In fact, rather than understanding our situation (which we've explained in full several times now), they have both become more demanding and even entitled with their requests of us. The problem is that our boys have always gotten whatever they've

wanted and so have all of their friends. Northern Virginia is an environment of privilege and over indulgence, and we just can't seem to keep up with the Jones's right now. Any advice on how to handle Christmas gifts with them this year? My husband and I can only give them a portion of what they are wanting. We feel badly since their friends will have so much more than them this year. – A in Loudoun County

A, I agree that Loudoun County as a whole is a unique financial environment to raise children. With the reported mean household income over \$140,000, the County is indeed a place of privilege. I don't, however, agree with your assumption that over indulgence is occurring as a result of their being higher personal resources. We, as parents, are responsible for instilling proper values and morals in our children and for shaping their behaviors – regardless of where we live. You write that your boys have always gotten whatever they've wanted and that you and your husband are now having trouble keeping up with the Jones's. If these sentiments are accurate, then it's no surprise to me that your boys are reacting

to you with such strong negativity. Hey, if I always got my way and then one day all of the sudden I didn't, I too would react negatively. I'd like you to think of the current financial strain in your lives as an opportunity for your boys to become more accountable and responsible. While it very likely won't be easy for them, they need to first accept your current financial situation as involved family members and then begin to redefine their relationship with money and material possessions. I think you should agree on small gifts this year with a focus on teaching your boys that the meaning of Christmas (and life for that matter) isn't about acquiring material things. Maybe you could agree on creating some new holiday traditions as a family for starters – cutting down a tree by hand, going snowboarding or sledding for the day, ringing the bell for the Salvation Army, or serving a meal at a homeless shelter. When buying gifts for your boys, you could teach them the value of a dollar by encouraging them to shop for deals; get them involved in researching their own gifts by finding the best prices and compromising if needed. You might even watch a

couple of Christmas movies as a family that reinforce the true message and spirit of the holiday. To quote Calvin Coolidge, "Christmas is not a time nor a season, but a state of mind. To cherish peace and goodwill, to be plenteous in mercy, is to have the real spirit of Christmas."

Dr. Mike, What sort of tips do you have on managing stress during the holidays? I know I have a month to prepare, but I am already feeling overwhelmed and even a little down – managing my work schedule with my families personal needs is already becoming a problem. HELP! J in Loudoun County

J, A time of festivity, parties, shopping, entertaining and family gatherings, the holiday season can be full of excitement and fun. For many people, however, this time of year is inevitably accompanied by stress, as we find ourselves overscheduled and pressured to create a holiday that meet others' expectations. Often, we may also experience depression, as feelings of sadness and anger are intensified when contrasted with the expected joy of the season.

One key to minimizing holiday stress

Continued on facing page

Continued from facing page

and playing a variety of selections for the season, including Carol of the Bells, Baby, It's Cold Outside, 'March' from the Nutcracker, and ending with the Hallelujah chorus. We hope to see you there!

Project Graduation Fundraiser

Start a family tradition by visiting Shadrack's Christmas Wonderland, a mile long drive-thru musical holiday light display.

Where: Adventure Park USA located at 11113 West Baldwin Road, New Market, MD, 21774 (Just east of Frederick, MD off of I-70.). When: November 18, 2011 – January 8, 2012. Time: 6 pm -10 pm nightly. Tickets can be ordered online at: <https://web-host.corecashless.com/adventurepark/sales/>. Use the promo code: WoodgroveGrad2011 to receive a \$3.00 discount per car and Woodgrove's Project Graduation will receive a donation of \$2.00 per ticket sold.

The Inaugural Project Graduation Event is June 12, 2012 at Adventure Park USA.

The Project Graduation Program began in 1987 and is a celebration across our state committed to promoting a safe, supervised and a memory-filled All Night Graduation Celebration in an alcohol-free and drug-free environment. As a new school with our first

graduating class, there is no existing fund for the event. Woodgrove's Project Graduation Committee is asking for community assistance to help make this event possible.

For more information contact Committee Chair Rhonda Wells. WoodgroveHSProjectGraduation@gmail.com or call Woodgrove at 540-571-2600.

Woodgrove Wolverines have much to be thankful for.

We greatly appreciate continued community support.

- PEER is grateful for those who donated to the Pack a Pickup to help Western Loudoun Food Pantry.

- WMAA appreciates all who recently purchased pies.

- PTSO thanks all who participated in the citrus sale.

- The Drama Department appreciated your patronage for the performance Lady Windermere's Fan.

Dane Mullins is a native of western Loudoun. He attended Loudoun Valley High School and is dual enrolled at Woodgrove High School and Northern Virginia Community College. Dane grew up on a farm and has a passion for tractors. He has been the owner and operator of Dane's Hometown Services since 2008 (estate maintenance, landscaping, farm & welding services, etc.)

Answers to crossword puzzle from page 12

S	U	D	S		P	U	L	P		A	R	C	H
T	R	E	E		A	N	O	A		A	N	E	L
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R	A	I	N	C	A	T	S	A	N	D	D	O	G
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S	E	R	B	I	A			B	I	O	M	A	S
P	R	O	O	F		S	L	U	R		T	H	E
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L	I	E			A	E	O	N		R	E	A	V
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S	I	N	G	I	N	I	N	T	H	E	R	A	I
O	V	O	L	O		S	O	U	L		U	N	D
C	A	G	E	S		M	O	D	E		S	O	L
K	N	O	T			S	T	E	P		K	N	E

Origin of the Phrase: "Lame duck."

The term "lame duck" refers to a person or group that once had power but is now powerless. It is often applied to politicians who are in their final term of office, but the phrase actually had its origins in the London Stock Market of the 1700s and refers to investors who were unable to pay their debts, and would "waddle" out of negotiations with nothing to show – irrelevant, as it were, just like that used up politician.

Lose Some Lawn, Take a Nice Vacation, Give Nature a Chance ...

– By Andrea Gaines

The average lawn in the United States is about 10,000 square feet – about the size of a pretty large house, or, in outdoor terms, a little less than a quarter of an acre.

Homeowners are pretty savvy about what it takes to clean and maintain a home's interior – whether it's the cost of a vacuum bag ... the cost of cleaning products ... or the cost of the housekeeper who stops by once a week.

But, they are far less attuned to what it costs to maintain that pretty emerald green expanse of lawn, and the price that lawn exacts on nature and the environment – whether it's the air pollution produced by their lawnmower, the pesticides and fertilizers that make their way into our water supply, or the lack of biodiversity that robs so much of nature of the food, nesting sites, and shelter it needs to survive – whether it be a hummingbird, a butterfly, beneficial insects such as the praying mantis, or a peeping frog.

So, How Much Do We "Pay" for Our love of the Lawn?

Lawns are so much a part of our home life! What could be better than watching your child run barefoot through the yard, or sitting out on the back deck enjoying the smell of freshly mowed grass? A beautifully manicured lawn makes us feel good about ourselves. And that's ok.

But, the facts behind Americans' love of their lawns are causing many to rethink the whole idea, weighing the affection we feel for tidy green grass against the financial and environmental values we also care about ...

First though, what are we talking about, exactly? How much "lawn" do we have?

Well, believe it or not, every year Americans mow and fertilize and spray and

tend to approximately 30 million acres of cultivated lawn in the United States. That's four times the amount of land dedicated to the production of corn, for example. A lot of real estate!

These 30 million acres do help support some bird and insect life – we've all seen the bumble bees feeding on close-cropped clover, the robin plucking up an earth worm after a rain, and the deer munching on our lawn's grassy edges.

But, because lawns are essentially "monocultures" – huge swaths of earth made up of one species of plant (and usually a non-native grass species) – the plant, animal and insect species that can use them to their advantage is decidedly limited. Look out over a lawn and you see solid green with a few winged creatures flying around – maybe a single rabbit. It is beautiful, but it is also a bit of a blank canvas. Look out at a native species garden or a full fledged meadow area (however small) and you see multiple species of butterflies in season, multiple species of insects, a wide variety of birds flying and pecking about, not to mention burrowing mammals such as foxes.

You see BIODIVERSITY – a rich, relatively cost free and economically valuable landscape.

Economically valuable? That's right.

Consider this: the average cost of maintaining the traditional American lawn is about \$50.00 per week – that adds up to about \$2,400.00 per year (or a very nice family vacation!).

Consider this: In urban areas, lawn care machinery alone accounts for up to 33% of all air pollution. Air pollution that causes all kinds of respiratory disease, including asthma in children and other conditions that cost families and the nation millions of dollars to address.

Continued on page 25

Ask Dr. Mike, continued from facing page

and depression is being cognizant to the fact that the holidays can trigger stress and depression. Personal relationships, finances and time constraints can lead to these feelings. Understanding these three potentially stressful aspects of your life can help you to take steps to prepare for and to prevent the associated negative feelings.

Personal relationships can cause stress at any time, but tensions are often heightened during the holidays. Family togetherness – especially for a length of time – can lead to conflict as arguments arise, personalities clash and planned agendas eliminate personal choice. On the other hand, if you are alone on the holidays and are dealing with the recent loss of a loved one or a break-up, the holidays can bring up many feelings of loneliness.

To cope with these feelings, remember that your family and friends are under the same pressures as you, and try to set aside grievances for a more appropriate time. If you are dealing with a loss of a loved one, understand that your feelings are normal and let yourself grieve. Adjusting your typical holiday routine may help to distract

you from memories associated with your loved one and to create new memories. If you are going through a divorce or a break-up, the holidays can seem particularly lonely. Surround yourself by friends and loved ones who can offer you support and help you through the difficult time.

Like relationships, your financial situation can cause stress at any time of the year, but the demands of the holidays usually exacerbate that stress. Overspending on gifts, travel and entertainment may help to make your season bright, but will lead to months of stress as you struggle to pay the credit card bills and to make ends meet. In the short term, it may stress you out during the festivities of the holiday, as you anticipate the bills that will be coming.

To help manage your spending, resolve to make a budget and stick with it in advance of shopping. Additionally, try not to fall victim to your children's request for the "it" present; remind them that getting isn't what the holidays are about. Be creative with your gifts to help you manage your spending- make your own gifts, bake, use the internet to try to find the best value

to stretch your dollar further- you can show someone you love them by giving them something personal and special, not necessarily expensive.

Time is one of the leading stressors of the holiday season as we are faced with so many demands – shopping, baking, parties, wrapping – and very limited time to fit it all in. Because we have so many additional demands on our time, sleep and exercise are usually the first to suffer as we try to squeeze more into our day. Add to this the fact that you will be exposed to more sweets and alcohol due to holiday parties and it is clear that your health can certainly suffer this time of year. Unfortunately, alcohol consumption can also increase symptoms of depression, while lack of sleep and an unhealthy diet can add to your stress.

To manage your schedule, plan ahead and do not be afraid to say no to invitations. Everyone is busy this time of year and people understand when you cannot attend an event. Prioritize what you need to do and do not be afraid to take shortcuts if needed. Home baked cookies are nice,

but store-bought will be just as appreciated. Try not to let the holidays impact your normal routine of diet, sleep and exercise. Adjusting these habits can leave you feeling run down and more susceptible to illness, which will certainly add to your stress.

Try to simplify your holiday experience, manage your expectations and know your limits. Life isn't always like the movies and things don't always have to be picture-perfect. Roll with the punches and plan ahead to make the most of the season while taking active steps to avoid undue stress and pressure. If you are unable to shake the "holiday blues," do not be afraid to ask for help and consider consulting a mental health professional.

Michael Oberschneider "Dr. Mike" is the Founder and Director of Ashburn Psychological Services (APS), a private mental health clinic comprised of 12 MD and PhD level mental health clinicians. He and his team are here to serve our Loudoun children, teens and adults. To learn more about Dr. Mike and the APS team, please visit: www.ashburnpsych.com or call (703) 723-2999.

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Wild Loudoun!

Same Cat?

Sharyl Thompson's alarm went off at 6:45 a.m. over the weekend – just like it always does.

Shortly thereafter, she saw a large "cat" passing through her backyard. She recognized it as a mountain lion – very similar to a cat she'd



Stock Photo

seen while attending college in Florida.

According to Sharyl, "I figured I should report it, and called the fish and game number the Loudoun County Sheriff's Department gave me.

The woman told me the experts say there are no lions here, though they do get reports of them from time to time. I told her 'well, they're here now.' ... I got a really clear look at it and there is no doubt."

Sharyl's e-mail to the Blue Ridge Leader follows the tip our newspaper got several months ago from a woman in Round Hill who saw a mountain lion in her backyard in the early morning hours ... two mornings in a row.

This latest mountain lion sighting took place off of Watson Road, which is not far from Gilbert's Corner.

King Ebenezer

Local landscape artist Jessica Wilson is busy preparing for an early 2012 art show where she will display her Loudoun County landscapes and other paintings.

Jessica frequents some pretty beautiful areas in her search for the perfect subject. One is the wonderful farm landscape surrounding Ebenezer Church Cemetery, off of Airmont Road.

After visiting the spot a few times Jessica realized she wasn't alone ... presiding over the cemetery was a very stately groundhog, surveying its domain by climbing atop the gravestones to get the best view possible.



Photo by Jessica Wilson

Eagles of the Glebe

Another one of Jessica's favorite spots is the large pond below Mount Gilead near the historic home known as The Glebe.

The pond is frequented by Bald Eagles like the one shown here ... perched high above the pond in fishing mode.

Other Bald Eagles frequent Banshee Reeks Nature Preserve and the Dulles Wetland.



Photo by Jessica Wilson

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Hunt Country Gourmet's RESTAURANT REVIEW – Tuscarora Mill

Nostalgia Rides Again! Tuskie's is as good as ever!

– By George Humphries

“Our goal is to tell you where good food can be found ...”

Visiting Tuscarora Mill restaurant for us is a trip down a very pleasant memory lane: an enjoyable recherche du temps perdu. Vagrant memory holds a visit on opening night – maybe wishful recall, but surely a visit in the restaurant in the first week after it opened in 1985, a year or so after we moved to Loudoun County. It soon became our favorite restaurant of that era and we visited it often in our forays into reviewing local eateries.

Tuskie's was the start of a now prosperous chain consisting of five eateries of various sizes, styles, and locations. Calling Tuskie's a restaurant is a little deceiving, since the Leesburg complex also comprises a spacious bar and café area almost separate from the main dining room, plus a lower-level South Street Under café and bakery. All of these operate in the historic old mill that anchors the cluster of shops and eating establishments at Leesburg's Market Station. Over the years, owner Kevin Malone and his crew also have expanded their horizons to create Magnolia's at the Mill in Purcellville and two Fire Works Pizza establishments – one in the old train station at Market Station and a second in Arlington.

The entrance to the restaurant proper is off Harrison Street. The front door opens on the enormously popular café and bar that in the evening presents a veritable obstacle course to the dining room. Fortunately, there is a passageway to the right and around the enthusiastic crowd in the bar/café. Once circumnavigating the hilarity of the nearly

always crowded bar, one comes to the host station at the entrance to the restaurant itself. There, serenity rules, though the boisterous scene remains partially visible if blessedly not audible.

The restaurant consists of a main room under relics of the old mill machinery in the cavernous ceiling. Adding to this space are tables in narrow closed porch-like spaces along two walls ideally suitable for discreet tete-a-tetes. At the rear is a large additional dining space beyond the wall of the old mill – airier and less cloistered than the main room of the mill – where we have attended a wedding reception and other events.

Aside from the architectural interest, the menu, food, and service have been excellent at our every visit over these past 25+ years, thanks to Malone's inspired and steady leadership and longtime chef Patrick Dinh.

The current menu contains so many items that it's a wonder that the kitchen can contain them all. The bar/café has a separate menu with “Small Things” suitable for accompanying a drink, or “Bigger Things” that can serve as a casual meal. South Street Down Under has a wonderful selection of



TUSCARORA MILL

soups, salads, and sandwiches prepared on fresh-baked bread.

“Dinner First Courses” in the main dining room feature fresh oysters prepared several ways, beef fondue, spring rolls, Maine lobster, mussels, the always excellent house salad, and a Caesar which we highly recommend.

The Entrée menu is varied and extensive, with something for everyone. Grilled duck breast, pork chop saltimbocca, Mexican chicken, trout, salmon, and three cuts of steak. The rack of lamb had four ribs, lightly seasoned, tender, and cooked rare to my order. My wife pronounced the salmon to be delicious, and our guests said the steaks

were tender and excellent. All of these include appropriate accompaniments, but there are special sides that can be added. Mouth-watering desserts prepared by sous chef Sue Porter and a trio of artisan cheeses round out an impressive menu.

Malone pioneered in building a fine restaurant using local purveyors wherever possible. While other establishments have followed suit over the years, Tuskie's record of finding fresh local ingredients and supporting the local economy is unexcelled. He extended this practice to

build a formidable wine collection that features Loudoun County wines alongside the best from other states and countries. Ask for a copy of the Tuskie's Wine Trail map, which features all of the wineries and tasting rooms in the County along with some of the best from northern Fauquier and western Prince William counties. The atmosphere and service add to the food itself to make a visit to Tuscarora Mill a memorable experience. We have more than 25 years of good memories to prove.

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 County since 1984.



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It is a week before Christmas inside Santa's North Pole toy workshop and the elves have noticed that Santa seems sad. One energetic elf convinces the others that the best way to cheer up Santa is to put on a show for him. With the help of the audience, deputized as elf assistants, the elves sets out to put together the perfect show to make Santa smile again. Will they??

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Gifts For The Gardeners In Your Life

– By Donna Williamson

As a long-time gardener and a seriously middle-aged woman, I find that good tools and resources are important. Fooling around with little trowels with posies painted on them that tend to bend backwards when your need to go forward is a nuisance. Looking all over for a special plant is time wasting. Here are some of the tools and sources I find efficient, effective, and no-nonsense:

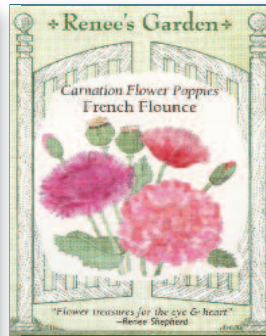
Felco hand pruners for smaller hands (#6) and with the rotating handle (#6) are much easier to use for those little jobs. (www.felcostore.com) - less than \$60.

For the bigger jobs, especially taller jobs, look for a long pole pruner – the best one for me is the Nishigaki Brand Futomaru Heavy Duty Lopper that extends my reach to about 10 feet high without getting on a ladder. Sells for about \$82 from www.hidatool.com and mine has been in use about 13 years without rust or mishap.

Wilcox trowel – 22” model is good for digging holes, prying rocks, and holding back the rose bush while you weed. Available from a variety of sources. Around \$25.

Cobrahead weeder – makes short work of weeding by snagging roots from the soil with ease. This sturdy tool can make small holes for seedlings and small plants. (www.cobraheadllc.com) Around \$25.

Gift certificates for anything from Abernethy & Spencer, dahlias and other goodies from Plants Delight Nursery, delicious baby lettuces from Renee’s Seeds, for a nice heirloom apple tree from Edible



Landscaping in Afton, an array of great tomato and pepper seeds from Totally Tomatoes, wild arugula seeds from Seeds of Italy, and finally, of course, Amazon for gardening books.

You can give a gift of learning. Register your favorite gardener for the April conference at Shenandoah University in nearby Winchester – Tomorrow’s Landscapes: More Birds, Butterflies, and Bees for YOUR Yard. \$99.00 (www.tomorrowlandscapes.org) A gift of leaf compost from your local mill or sand/gravel supplier to be delivered in the spring will warm the gardener’s heart all winter.

Good chocolate - no explanation is required. Happy holidays!

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.

Author, The Virginia Gardener's Companion: An Insider's Guide to Low-Maintenance Gardening in Virginia, dwfinegardening.com, 540-877-2002.

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Blue Ridge Leader “Picks” for Area Restaurants Open Over the Holidays

Do you ever secretly wish for a break from the holiday cooking experience? While many of us look forward to the warm holiday tradition of family mealtimes and merriment, there are a few closet hosts and hostesses who would give their right eye for a chance to relax and leave the preparation (and clean up!) to someone else.

Well, put away your aprons and dust off your dress shoes! The Blue Ridge Leader has compiled a list of cozy restaurants that will put a smile on your face and create a holiday memory without the holiday headache.

A few restaurants in our area offer full holiday meals with all the trimmings to go, but are not open for dining in. We have not included those establishments on our list, however.

The following restaurants, in random order, are open for dine-in for one or more holidays this season. Most of these establishments have altered their hours and menus for the holidays, so be sure to call ahead for reservations and other details.

Open Christmas Eve:

Anthony's Restaurant, Purcellville:
www.anthonysva.com, 540-338-7072

Battletown Inn, Berryville: www.thebattle-towninn.com, 540-955-4100

Beautiful South Restaurant, Hamilton:
www.beautifulsouthdining.com, 540-338-7335

Blackthorne Inn, Upperville: www.blackthorne-inn.com, 540-592-3848

Blue Ridge Grill, Leesburg:
www.brgrill.com, 703-669-5505

Eiffel Tower Café: www.eiffel-towercafe.com, 703-777-5142

French Hound, Middleburg:
www.thefrenchhound.com, 540-687-3018

Goodstone Inn, Middleburg: www.goodstone.com, 877-219-4663

Grandale Farm Restaurant, Purcellville:
www.grandalefarm.com, 540-668-6000

Hunters Head Tavern, Upperville:
www.huntersheadtavern.com, 540-592-9020

Lightfoot Restaurant, Leesburg: www.lightfootrestaurant.com, 703-771-2233

Pen Oriental Kitchen, Purcellville: 540-338-1894



Red Fox Inn, Middleburg: www.redfox.com, 540-687-6301

Vintage 50, Leesburg: www.vintage50.com, 703.777.2169

Open Christmas Day:

Goodstone Inn, Middleburg: www.goodstone.com, 877-219-4663

Pen's Oriental Kitchen, Purcellville: 540-338-1894

Lawn, continued from page 21

Consider this: In the United States, 50% to 70% of residential water usage – which we pay for dearly via municipal taxes – is taken up by lawn care. That's an average of 200 gallons per person per day in the United States.

Consider this: The average trip of a lawn mower over your lawn emits the same pollution as if you had driven 20 to 30 miles in your car. More air pollution we pay for.

Consider this: Americans apply 70 million pounds of chemical fertilizers, pesticides, herbicides and fungicides to their lawns annually. This chemical load builds up in our soils and “washes away” only to find its way back into our water supply.

Consider this: Plants and trees, including grasses sequester or store Carbon Dioxide (CO2) – which is a good thing. But between the mowing and chemical applications it takes to maintain that pretty green surface, lawns end up emitting four times the CO2 they capture.

So, If We Still Love Our Lawns, But Are Open To Change, What Should We Do??

This might be the easiest and most painless part! It's all about seeing how the land occupied by your lawn can serve the values important to you – whether it be saving money, providing more for nature to take advantage of, or saving critical resources such as water.

First: Look at your lawn space. If you did

“rethink” the whole thing, where is the opportunity to mow, fertilize, water, control and apply pesticides, herbicides and fungicides ... less? What areas could be converted from lawn to other kinds of outdoor areas, be it another flower bed, an area that you might allow to grow up and fill out with whatever takes hold there – seeded at the appropriate time with native wildflowers, a small vegetable garden?

Next: If you do use fertilizer, weed suppressants and other lawn products, convert all of them to more natural alternatives and organics. It's a trend that even the larger lawn product companies have latched onto.

After that: For the lawn areas that you do retain, let naturally occurring plants mix in with grass – plants like clover is a good example of this. They look just as tidy as grass when mowed and provide a more insect and bird-friendly environment.

When You Do Mow: Trim off only the top third of the grass and let the clippings biodegrade in place. This reduces the need for watering and adds nitrogen back into your soil.

Mulch Trees and Flower Beds and Seek Out Native Plants: Both strategies reduce water usage and the need for chemicals.

And finally, take that vacation!

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“It was one of the most meaningful holiday gifts I ever received!”

This holiday season, *The Blue Ridge Leader* is helping nonprofits reach out to our readers for holiday donations. Consider making a donation in a loved one's name, giving a membership, or just showing your support! These nonprofits can use your gift to make the future brighter for all!

Support the *Arts!*

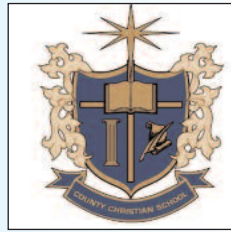
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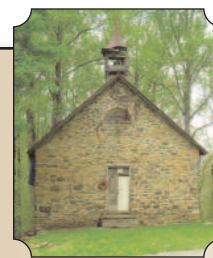
For information on membership benefits and discounts go to www.FranklinParkArtsCenter.org & click on "Support."

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Loudoun County Christmas in April

Donations can be mailed to: Rebuilding Together
PO Box is 4381 Leesburg 20177

Loudoun County residents with a dry, safe or warm need can get an application by calling and leaving name/address on the voice mail at 703-771-7186. Deadline for applications is 1/30/2012.

Please consider helping local residents in need.

The Loudoun Community Health Center provides medical, dental and mental health care to anyone in need, regardless of your age or ability to pay, whether you have insurance or not.

Loudoun Community Health Center
www.loudounCHC.org



Black History /Lincoln Preservation Foundation

... Help restore one of the first legal African American churches in Virginia!

Send donation to "LPF", PO Box 44, Lincoln, Va 20160
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Join us in giving a Hand Up, NOT a Hand Out to our Partner Families who are seeking safe affordable housing in Loudoun County.

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Oh, go take a hike! – By Molly Pinson Simoneau

A Winter Hike in Sky Meadows



December is a busy time for everyone.

To me, that's all the more reason to take time out and connect with nature.

If you have relatives visiting for the holidays, why not take everyone out for a stroll through the woods?

My very favorite place to hike during the winter months is Sky Meadows State Park near Paris, Virginia. This historic farmstead features open meadows which are far more enjoyable in cold weather than in our hot summers; it is stunning in the snow; and there are often fun activities at the visitor center.

This month, Sky Meadows is offering holiday hay rides and caroling. You and your family can enjoy a hike on the park grounds before joining the hay ride: "Then [as advertised], back at the visitor center, enjoy hot refreshments and a rendition of the classic holiday story, 'Twas the Night

Before Christmas.'" This activity is being offered on December 9, 10, 16, 17, and 23, and reservations are required. Call (540) 663-3861.

To get to the park, head west on Rt. 50, continuing past Upperville. Turn left onto Rt. 17, and look for signs for Sky Meadows State Park on the right.

Sky Meadows has a web of inter-connecting trails, including the Appalachian Trail which follows the spine of the park. Because of this, hikers can create the perfect hike for their own preference. For a trail map, visit the Sky Meadows website: dcr.virginia.gov/state.parks/sky.shtml

Here's the route I usually take:

All trails are accessed from an old dirt road set about 50 yards from the parking area. It's pretty easy to find. Go left on that road until you come to a set of stairs on the right that will take you up into the meadow. Follow the trail uphill into the meadow, and be sure to turn around



frequently to take in the view. Eventually the trail makes its way into the woods.

You'll come to an intersection. Turn right onto the Ambassador Whitehouse trail which will intersect with the Appalachian Trail after about a mile. Turn left and follow the AT along the ridge until the North Ridge Trail intersects from the left. Follow the North Ridge Trail back into the meadow and finally arrive back at the old dirt road. This route is around 6 miles.

If you're fortunate enough to see Sky Meadows covered in snow, keep an eye out for animal tracks. During warm months, it's easy to forget how many creatures inhabit our wildernesses, but in the snow there's no denying the hundreds of animals we rarely get to lay eyes on.

Remember that days are shortest in December, so plan your hike so that you'll be back at the parking lot before 4:30 pm or so; and it's always a good idea to bring a flashlight just in case.

If you're not going to be joining one of the Park-sponsored activities after your hike, but still need a victory meal, a favorite spot is the Hunter's Head Tavern in Upperville. Enjoying a serving of shepherd's pie by the fireplace at this rustic English-style pub is the perfect way to warm up after a chilly day on the trail.

Molly Pinson Simoneau grew up in western Loudoun and enjoys hiking most weekends.

On the web with daily updates at www.brleader.com

10 Steps for a Deliciously Less Wasteful Holiday Season

Americans generate an extra 5 million tons of household waste each year between Thanksgiving and New Year's ... and three times as much food waste

Our total food waste adds up to 34 million tons each year, so the amount generated over the holidays is, WOW!, a lot of food!

All in all, roughly one-third of all food produced for human consumption – approximately 1.3 billion tons – is lost or wasted each year, and consumers in developed countries like ours are responsible for 222 million tons of it!

Here are 10 tips to help reduce the amount of food we throw away, nourishing the earth while we nourish our bodies over the holidays:

1. Worry more about cooking too much rather than too little: The fear of not providing enough to eat can cause you to prepare too much perishable food. Think about how much food you threw out last year at this time, imagine smaller portions, plan out how much food you and your guests/family will really need, and then prepare only that amount. If this makes you nervous, set aside extra food that won't go bad or need to be thrown away if it's not served right away – salads that can be quickly assembled, vegetables that can be quickly steamed, cheese and crackers, fruit.

2. Plan ahead, always shop with a shopping list, and include how much you'll need of what on your list: Having a list reduces impulse buying, and, when you've planned ahead and know how much to buy of which items, you're also less likely to over-buy ... and succumb to the "\$10 for \$10" offers that are so prevalent over the holidays.

3. Control the amount of food you put on your plate, and/or your guest's plate. It's so easy ... during the season of indulgence ... to load up our plates with food that will go uneaten and end up in the garbage. Smaller servings = less waste. You can always get a second helping if you want!

4. On that same point, let guests serve themselves. You are probably more likely

"Americans generate an extra 5 million tons of household waste each year between Thanksgiving and New Year's ..."

to overload than underload a guests plate – they're your guest, after all! So, let people serve themselves.

5. Decide, before you serve your meal, what you're going to do with the leftovers and how you're going to store them.

You're more likely to serve only what your guests are interested in eating if you have plans for the leftovers, AND, storing them safely and conveniently will make them more useable and create less waste.

6. Improvise new meals and uses for your "food scraps": Citrus scrapes such as orange and lemon rinds can be used to flavor water or other beverages ... the remains of your turkey or chicken can be used to make stock (or feed pets, as long as you're careful with the bones!) ... vegetable peels can be added to the stockpot or saved for slaws and salads ... leftover bread can be turned into croutons, bread crumbs, even croustini! And, don't just toss out those salty nuts left in the bottom of the bowl ... add them to tomorrow's salad.

7. Send food scraps you can't use to the compost bin ... not the garbage: Instead of throwing out the vegetable ends, apple cores, eggshells and other food scraps while making your dishes, compost them. Composted vegetable matter turns what you don't eat into nutrients that can be used to replenish soils.

8. Donate the excess food you can't use: Food banks and shelters gladly welcome donations of canned and dried foods, especially during the holiday season and colder months.

9. Send your guests home with the extra food you won't be able to use: Doggie bags aren't only for restaurants!

10. Back to #1 ... worry more about cooking too much rather than too little: It's all in the mindset!

Heating Your Home Safely: Helpful Reminders

Loudoun County Department of Fire, Rescue and Emergency Management reminds everyone that home fires are more prevalent in winter than in any other season. With the falling temperatures comes the necessity to heat your home and heating equipment is the leading cause of home fires during the months of December, January and February. Winter storms can also interrupt electrical service, causing people to turn to alternative heating sources and further increasing the risk of fire.

To reduce the risk of fire in your home and enjoy a safe winter season:

Fireplaces, Furnaces, Portable Heaters:

- Keep all children and combustible objects at least three feet away from all heating equipment, stoves and fireplaces.
- If you use an electric heater do not overload the circuit. Choose an extension cord the same size or larger than the appliance electrical cord.
- Always remember to turn portable heaters off when leaving the room or going to bed.
- Make sure your fireplace has a sturdy screen to stop sparks from flying into the room.
- Before going to sleep, ensure the fire

in your fireplace is completely extinguished. NEVER close the fireplace damper if hot ashes remain in the fireplace. The fire may reheat and force toxic carbon monoxide into your house.

– Always let ashes cool before putting them in a metal container. Keep the container outside, a safe distance away from your home.

– If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. NEVER break a synthetic log apart or use more than one log at a time.

– Have heating equipment and chimneys cleaned and inspected every year by a qualified professional.

– If you do not have one already, install a carbon monoxide detector. Carbon monoxide is a tasteless, odorless, invisible gas, which is produced by gas fireplaces, furnaces and stoves, barbecues, vehicles, propane appliances and any other device that produces a flame.

Properly working smoke alarms save lives! Make certain every level of your home has a working smoke alarm and be sure to check and clean them monthly. To schedule a free home safety inspection or obtain information regarding our "Put A Finger On It!" smoke alarm program, visit www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms.

Start 2012 With A New Family Tradition



Looking for a fun New Year's tradition for your family? Come to Leesburg on January 1st, and join hundreds of your friends and neighbors at the annual REHAU Rotary Resolution Race – a 10K race and 4K "fun run" with live music, great food, awards for top finishers and lots of random prizes. It's a great event with something for everyone: runners or walkers, families and friends, the serious and the active, or folks who just want to have fun!

Now in its 15th year, the REHAU Rotary Resolution Race is one of the largest New Year's Day races in the Washington Metro area. Probably the biggest attraction to runners is its unique course. Unlike most other area races, the course is not confined to neighborhood or city streets. It starts at the top of a grass-covered hill in Ida Lee Park, wanders through the lovely rolling hills of the pristine 1000 acre Morven Park Estate and Equestrian Center and ends up back in Ida Lee Park.

This year for the first time the race will include a 10K Teams Competition, open to any group that wants to form a team (corporate or high school teams, youth groups, running clubs, families, etc.). The competition will have two awards: 1) the team with the most registered participants will receive a \$500 check made out to their chosen charity. 2) The fastest team will win a team trophy and smaller trophies for the 4 "scoring" members of the team. Teams are encouraged to "dress up" to identify themselves and add to the fun.

For those who love their creature comforts, this is the race for you! There is plenty of free and convenient parking. You can stay warm and stretch in the Ida Lee Recreation Center gym before the race, or do a hilarious outdoor pre-race warm-up with Ida Lee personal trainer, Lynne Stevenson. In addition to the usual cluster of portable restrooms at the starting line, participants can use the bathrooms, coin-operated lockers and changing rooms in the Ida Lee Recreation Center. Afterwards participants, friends and family gather in the gym again to enjoy a tasty buffet, the live music of popular singer/songwriter Dave Berry, an awards ceremony, and the chance of winning random prizes.

All proceeds go to local charities. The Rotary Club of Leesburg started the race 1998 as a fundraiser to support the local community. To date it has raised and donated over \$211,000 to local charities. This year's Race Beneficiaries are ARC of Loudoun, Blue Ridge Hospice, Capital Hospice (Capital Caring), ECHO, Interfaith Relief, Loudoun Abused Women's Shelter, Loudoun County Volunteer Rescue Squad, Loudoun Free Clinic, Loudoun Literacy Council, Michael J. Fox Foundation for Parkinsons Research and the Rotary Club of Leesburg's Perry Winston Scholarship Fund. To register or learn more, go to www.resolutionrace.com or call Carole Maloney at 1-703-304-5440. (www.facebook.com/rotaryrace).

Local First Purcellville Christmas Bingo Blast 2011

Local Purcellville independent businesses have rolled out a "Loyal Local" program to reward their regular shoppers. In addition, these 24 unique businesses hope to attract new customers.

Between November 25 and December 20, 2011 a shopper can pick up a FREE Bingo card at any of the participating businesses listed below. Purchases will be validated by the merchant with a unique stamp in the business's space on the card. Wild spaces allow a shopper to go back to a favorite shop. When the shopper gets Bingo in any direction, they bring their card to Purcellville Tropical Smoothie, Little GREENe Dress, or 29 Vines Winery Tasting Room to be validated and have their name entered into the drawings to be held on December 21, 2011. The more BINGO entries made the more chances of winning \$100 and \$150 Gift Certificates.

If Blackout Bingo is achieved, those participants will be entered into the Grand Prize drawing for \$250 of Gift Certificates. (All Gift Certificates will be valid in the

participating stores of the winner's choice) The goal of these business owners is to say thank you in a meaningful way the customers that make it a point to keep their money local. By choosing to patronize locally owned establishments, there is a positive impact on the Community in many ways.

Participating Businesses: Haute Dogs and Fries, Pen's Oriental Restaurant, Purcellville Tropical Smoothie, 900 Degree Brick Oven, Little GREENe Dress, Twigs, Purcellville Dragon Yong-In, American Chimney, Reflections of You Salon, 29 Vines Winery Tasting Room, Heart's Delight Gift Boutique, Doggie Wash at Purcellville Pets, Shamrock Music Shoppe, Re-Love-It Consignment, Purcellville Marketplace, It's Bazaar on 21st, Shave And A Haircut, Around The Block Books, The Christian Shoppe, Everyday Elegance, Mr. Print, Mickey's Barber Shoppe, Main Street Wings, Salon Alure and Belle Maison.

Contact Kelli Grim at 703-881-8411 or WestLoudounLocalFirst@yahoo.com

► REAL ESTATE TICKER ► "THE TIMES THEY ARE A CHANGIN' ..." – BY CARL FISCHER

– By Carl Fischer

"The times they are a changin' ..." That's what singer-songwriter Bob Dylan named his third studio album, released in January 1964 by Columbia Records.



And that phrase holds real significance in looking at our real estate market here in Northern Virginia today. With these "changing times", our industry is experiencing a sea-change in how properties are marketed and sold these days.

The October 2011 Real Estate Market Statistics for the Mid-Atlantic Region (MRIS) appear above. As you can see, the region continues to be challenged. In the month of October, dollar volume in the Washington-Baltimore region declined 13.22% year-over-year! And historically, the next two months tend to be some of the most sluggish months of the year. That said, I've personally just logged the busiest two months of my twenty-three years, and am on track for an equally active remaining two months ... for reasons that are not entirely clear to me. Residential listings and sales are well up, and commercial leases and closings are setting new records. What I do know is this: With the continued decline of print media and direct mail in our society, agents need to do something different to get

their sellers the most visibility in the market today, so that those properties stand out above all the others when real buyers began to seriously consider a purchase. How the real estate market has changed: It is no longer possible to "put a sign in the yard and wait for the phone to ring", which was the rap on the real estate industry during the boom years. Now, the only thing that gets you is a chance to "tread water" and hope for an offer, any offer ... and if one comes, it's not usually one you're going to like. What's the alternative? In a word: VISIBILITY Your property has to be visible to the real buyers who will pay a fair price for your home. And to do that, you need to be seen by those buyers in the best possible light, when THEY (the buyers) are ready to make a buying decision. "Well, my agent promised me a web page ..." That's good, but at any given time there are over 15 million web pages advertising real estate on the web today. If your page isn't showing up on the first, or at worst, 2nd page of your "organic" Google search (i.e. use Google on your browser, and type in the words that reflect what your searching for ...), then you, and your property, are invisible to the buying public. The only way anyone will ever see it is if you give them the URL for that page. But a buyer will NEVER find you that way. How important is that? In an age where we, as consumers, shop for EVERYTHING on the web before we buy,

Statistic	Values	YoY	MoM
Total Sold Dollar Volume	\$2,119,902,088	-13.22%	-15.1%
Closed Sales	6,865	-6.23%	-10.31%
Median Sold Price	\$249,000	-6.04%	-2.35%
Avg Sold Price	\$308,799	-7.45%	-5.34%
Avg Days on Market	99 days	+16.47%	+1.02%
Avg Sold to Orig List Ratio	91.83%	-0.52%	+0.23

you need to do whatever it takes to get that kind of visibility. And that includes using social media websites like Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter, YouTube, Viddler, etc. When you decide to sell you home, you need to reach your buyers WHEREVER they may be, be it locally, nationally, or internationally. How about QR (Quick Response) codes? No longer a novelty, today's tech-savvy buyers don't want to wait to have their interest in your property satisfied. If they can't snap you yard sign or newspaper ad with their iPhone or Android and immediately get what they want, they simply move on ... You may not agree with their demands, but that's who's writing

checks for home purchases in our area today! As tough as our market has been over the past three years, it is still head-and-shoulders above most other areas of the country, and we should be very thankful for that. Don't put your life on hold while the "market sorts things out". Failure to act right now may deprive you of one of the best opportunities you will ever have to get the home of your dreams at a price you can afford.

Carl Fischer has lived in Loudoun since 1969. Formerly in residential construction management and land development, he has been in real estate since 1989.

Pink Garbage Truck, continued from page 6

offer deep recycling to all her customers? She knew lots of people who lived "green" and carried their trash and recyclables out. Why not offer to do it for them? She crunched numbers until the wee hours of the morning, bought the truck the next day off Craigslist, and suddenly, her future was right in her lap.

When AOL finally dropped the ball., Alicia was ready. Armed with a nice severance package, she used her free time to hammer out the details of her next move. To keep her chin up, she wore bright pink – a color that always made her smile. It was her "go to" color whenever she started to worry about her finances and her future.

A logo came next, found on an online data base. She hired someone to tweak it a bit and add her new company title and services. They collaborated to create a flyer, make a banner and start a website. She had her truck painted her favorite color, and started pitching her trash business to neighbors and friends. Her new business was off the ground in 3 days.

Today Alley Cat Waste Management provides regular service to 120 customers and employs a small team. The first of its kind in our area, they provide full service weekly trash pickup and recycling – *real recycling*. And unlike other trash companies, Alley Cat doesn't require that you move your trash cans to the road, though curbside service is still the norm. They will retrieve your trash from the side of your house, or from your garage, or your back porch if you like – a real bonus for the elderly and those with limited mobility.

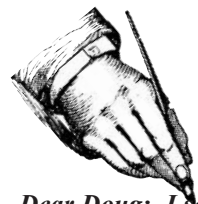
To take it a step further, Alley Cat also offers junk removal services and will clean out clutter from your home, barn or business; they will recycle your junk, and leave the premises swept clean.

Today Alicia is excited about the prospects for further growth of her business. She wants to expand on her efforts to reduce waste, with a dream to make recycling more universal and mainstream. "Almost everything can be recycled. We need to do more," Alicia says. And it's not just about trash – it's about lifestyle. Surrounded in pink, Alicia is thinking a lot about ways to encourage others to consume less. She has an interest in healthy living as well, and is trying to figure out how to bring fresh, local garden produce to schools in her area – but that's another story.

Meanwhile, waving goodbye from the cab of her colorful truck, I'm sure we'll be hearing a lot more from this perky entrepreneur.

Alley Cat Waste Management is located in Bluemont, and services Loudoun, Clarke and Frederick Counties. Their regular trash service rates are low – starting at only \$20 a month. For more information, call 540-955-2484 or visit them online at www.alleycatwaste.com.

From now until the end of January, AlleyCat Waste Management is sponsoring a recycling fundraiser to raise money for Alicia's son, Austin, to attend a Science field trip. Each appliance will be picked up and recycled for between five and thirty five dollars. Call or email for more information.



Dear Doug

– Real Estate Q&A –



Dear Doug: I see the shows on TV that show how easy it is to "flip this house" and make tons of money. Is that something I can do around here, and is it as easy as it looks on the cable shows? Those guys drive around, find a house, and turn it over in weeks. I can't imagine that you can do it that fast. Do you have any experience with "flipping"? – Thanks, Ben in Loudoun

Dear Ben: Flipping" can be fun and profitable, and then again, it can be a nightmare. Can it be done around here? Yes, every day there are investors out in our market (and by our market, I mean the northern Virginia area) who are buying, fixing, and selling houses, condos and townhouses 7 days a week. The challenge is finding the deals in this market. There are very few low-priced homes around here. If you move into the higher dollar ranges, then your carrying costs go up, too. And, since many of these homes need a lot of work, you must have a deep credit line, or a wad of cash to buy them. Lenders shy away from lending money on fixer-uppers. They want to lend money on homes in good shape. That way, their borrowers won't have to constantly dig into their pockets for repair costs, and if the bank has to foreclose for whatever reason, they hope to get the home back in relatively decent shape.

As for flips around here, I saw a great "flip" two years ago, when a guy found a deal on Craigslist, in a neighborhood just south of Manassas. It was a total wreck. The roof was caving in and covered with plastic, and the termites had eaten a sizable portion of the wood. But, to spend

\$25,000 on a house that sold for \$185k back in 2005, how could he go wrong? When the contractor told him he could fix it all for \$25,000, he sealed the deal. The sellers were an outfit out of South Carolina, who actually held financing for him for \$5000 down. After fix up, well test, septic work, etc. (and carrying costs), he was into the house for \$80,000. He then turned around and flipped it for \$160,000 by listing with a Realtor and offering FHA financing on it. He walked away from the deal with approximately \$80,000.

So, yes, Ben, it can be done around here, but it is not easy. Today there is a house in Berryville, on the market for \$39,000. Can you flip that? As with all flips, you have to do your "due diligence" and reduce risk by inspecting, studying, calling the local authorities, and making sure you estimate the time, material, labor, and all expenses (including carrying costs) that are involved with it. Too often the novice investor ends up in over his head pouring more money into the house than he can get out of it.

Good luck Ben, and happy investing. Just proceed with caution!

Douglas Frank holds a BA degree in English from Rutgers University and is a licensed realtor with over 20 years experience. Doug works with Prudential Carruthers Realtors in Fairfax, Virginia. He also has his Home Improvement License and owns a number of investment properties including houses, townhomes, and condos. Doug and his wife and two sons live in Fairfax, Virginia. (Opinions expressed here are ... only opinion!)




A Newspaper Activity Page for Young People

Kid Scoop.com

This Week: Christmas Around the World

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CHRISTMAS AROUND THE WORLD!

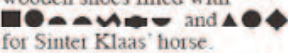
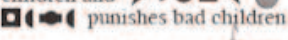


Nearly everyone celebrates some sort of holiday in the winter. For many people it is Christmas. Today's Kid Scoop page takes you on a trip to celebrate with children all around the world.

Zelig Kerstfeest

Merry Christmas from Holland

In Holland the Christmas celebration begins before December 5th. Saint Nicholas, or Sinter Klaas, as the children call him, comes with his white horse and his companion called .

The children get ready for this visit by putting out their wooden shoes filled with  for Sinter Klaas' horse. Surprises are left for good children and  punishes bad children.

A = ●	N = ◆
B = >	O = <
C = ■	P = □
E = ◁	R = ◃
H = ▲	S = ◕
K = <	T = ◉
L = ▸	Y = ◆

Use the code to find the missing words.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions to locate information.

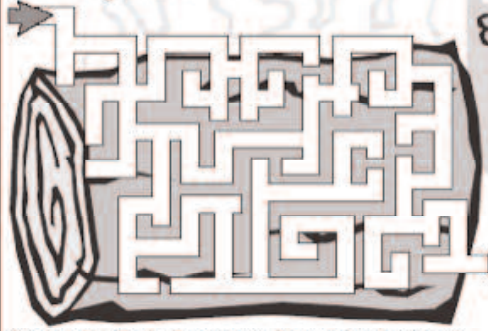
Joyeux Noël

Merry Christmas from France

In France, families find a large log to burn. They call it the Yule Log and light it on Christmas Eve using a piece of unburned log from the year before. Some people save the ashes from the Yule Log. They believe these ashes can ward off sickness and other misfortunes.

Today many French people do not burn a Yule Log. Instead they make and eat a beautiful cake in the shape of a log.

Can you find your way through the Yule Log maze?




Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions.

Š Rozhdestvom Khristovym

Merry Christmas from Russia

On New Year's Eve, children in Russia wait eagerly for a visit from Grandfather Frost and Snowgirl. They give presents and wish everyone a good New Year. In Moscow there is a big party where actors dress up as dancing bears.

There are 8 or more differences between these two dancing bears. Can you find them all?




How many ornaments can you find on this page?

Glädtyg Jul

Merry Christmas from Sweden

On December 13th, the eldest daughter plays the role of St. Lucia and serves coffee and sweet rolls to the family. She wears a lighted wreath on her head and sings carols.




Find the two identical piñatas.

Standards Link: Students compare the beliefs, customs, traditions and social practices of varied cultures around the world; compare and contrast.

Feliz Navidad

Merry Christmas from Mexico

On Christmas Eve children celebrate with a piñata. The children are blindfolded and take turns trying to break it with a stick. When it breaks there are goodies for everyone!



Extra! Extra!

Gifts from the Heart

Can you find examples, in your local paper, of gifts people have given that don't cost money?

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Follow simple written directions; informational text: Use the features of newspapers to locate information (eg. pictures, headlines, illustrations).

BEYOND Kid Scoop

Explore the World

Look through the newspaper to find examples of foods, products, words, names, etc., that show a connection between our community and the rest of the world. Clip the items and attach them to the correct region on a map.

Standards Link: Social Science: Students recognize ways in which they are all part of the same community; compare everyday life in different places around the world.

Write On!

Your Family Tradition

What is your favorite family holiday tradition?

Deadline: _____ Published: _____

Please include your school and grade.

Kid Scoop Together: FAMILY TIME

Solstice and Christmas

Find which words go in the blanks in the story below.

parts _____ color _____
 darkness _____ example _____
 decorated _____ lit _____
 symbols _____ berries _____
 remind _____ burned _____
 withstand _____ summer _____

Many Christmas _____ have their roots in ancient solstice celebrations.

For _____ the Yule log came from a _____ Scandinavian festival. The log was _____ on the eve of the solstice to conquer the _____, protect against evil spirits and bring luck. It _____ for 12 hours.

In some _____ of Northern Europe, people _____ trees with apples to _____ themselves that _____ would return again one day.

Holly, with its bright _____ and rich foliage, was an important solstice symbol because it could _____ the harshness of winter and maintain its _____ and life, as could mistletoe and evergreens.

Standards Link: Reading Comprehension: Use reading skills and strategies to understand text.

Double Double Word Search

Find the words in the puzzle, then in this week's Kid Scoop stories and activities.

M	E	R	N	F	H	R	R	Y	C
N	H	O	R	R	R	E	I	N	W
S	E	O	T	E	B	C	A	E	H
L	S	D	T	M	A	Y	B	R	I
T	M	N	E	R	A	S	U	D	T
S	I	C	O	W	T	T	R	L	E
S	E	L	O	W	S	F	N	I	E
D	S	A	M	T	S	I	R	H	C
D	A	N	C	I	N	G	A	C	L

Standards Link: Letter sequencing; Recognizing identical words; Skim and scan reading; Recall spelling patterns.

Kid Scoop VOCABULARY BUILDERS

This week's word: **REPRESENT**

The verb **represent** means to stand for or be a sign of.

The skull and crossbones symbol on a label **represents** danger.

Try to use the word **represent** in a sentence today when talking with your friends and family members.

Scavenger Hunt, continued from page 8

Aldie Mill spent a lot of time with us explaining what boys my sons' ages would be doing in the mill in the 19th century. The friendly ladies at Oatlands were excited we were visiting and welcomed us to the grounds to find the answer to our scavenger question. A passerby on the streets of Leesburg recognized we were doing the tour and gave us a bit of history behind it. Most memorable of all was the gracious woman in Waterford whose windows we peeked in by mistake thinking it was a

museum house, and instead of running us off, she gave us an informative talk on the Quaker home she lived in. I recommend these scavenger hunts to anyone looking for something to do that is different, free and educational. Take some water and snacks, pile into the car and be ready to learn some interesting things about your county and your country. We did it and we have the T-shirts to prove it! For information contact info@mosbyheritagearea.org and discover something new about our past.

– By Christina VanDerHurst, D.C.
 Perry J. VanDerHurst, D.C., F.A.S.A.

While the holidays can be a joyful, wonderful time, it can also be downright stressful for some. When a body is in a prolonged state of stress, it is more susceptible to injury, colds, and illness in general. There are a million things on your to do list, so how are you supposed to remain calm in the midst of all this chaos?!? Here's a few ideas to keep everything under control and manage those stress levels.

Keep it simple! As Americans, we have a need to do everything bigger and better. In reality, the holidays are about enjoying time with friends and family, while reflecting on what it is you're truly celebrating. Try eliminating things that stray from this idea and you may just cut your to do list in half.

Keep your body healthy! With more things on our plates, we tend to let taking care of ourselves slide through this season. Now, more than ever, it's important to exercise,

get quality rest, and drink plenty of water. Boost your immune system with chiropractic or acupuncture, and relieve muscle tension with a therapeutic massage.

Keep your mind healthy! Take at least five minutes each day for yourself. Do something that is relaxing to you like meditation, listening to your favorite music, or just reflecting on what you're thankful for. Put a dab of lavender essential oil just under your nose for some calming aromatherapy. Just a quick time out can recharge your batteries in a big way!

Keep your soul fed! The best way to make your soul sing is to do something kind for someone else. If you see someone struggling with something awkward in a store, offer to help. If you have a few extra dollars, buy coffee for the person waiting in line behind you. Whatever the gesture, perhaps it will inspire others to be kind. In a community where everyone is focused on helping others, the stress would just melt away. The VanDerHurst's have a chiropractic practice in Purcellville.

Happy Holidays From Your New Local Sports Store



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