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Purcellville Poised To Add 257 Homes Autumn Hill Development Largest In Town's History

- By Mary M. Bathory Vidaver

After almost a quarter-century and three different owners, it appears that the Purcellville Town Council is finally prepared to provide public water and sewer to the Autumn Hill / Mayfair development north of the town. The first step occurred on November 12, when the town council voted unanimously to initiate a boundary line adjustment with Loudoun County to incorporate the property into the town limits. The county board of supervisors passed a similar motion at its meeting on November 6.

According to county documents, the board's action was taken "at the request

of the Town, with the concurrence of the landowner, and in resolution of outstanding litigation between the County and the landowner." This litigation, initiated by the landowner, Brookfield Autumn Hills, LLC, in December 2011, seeks to invalidate a proffer requiring that the property be served by Purcellville water and sewer.

Purcellville Mayor Bob Lazaro and other members of the town council explained their support for a settlement, saying this action preempts the possibility of a victory in court allowing Brookfield to construct 492 residential units on a communal well and alternative septic system or package

plant. Board of Supervisors Chairman Scott York (R-At-Large), who attended the town council meeting, concurred. Afterward, York told citizens that he didn't want the case to go to court because the judge likes to "split the baby." Instead, he said the county and the landowner are compromising on 257 houses.

Members of the town council and York expressed concerns about the environmental safety of a package plant, given failure rates of alternative septic systems. According to one town council member, "The by-right ability of Mayfair to

Continued on page 5

Excerpt From The Permit To Construct -

The Autumn Hill Communal Wastewater Treatment System

"This permit does not constitute, and should not be construed as, permission to develop or subdivide the property, and the issuance of this permit does not insure that other permits can or will be issued. This permit is issued without regard to the zoning regulations, proffers, or other conditions or regulations which may be applicable to the property, and the issuance of this permit does not guarantee that a zoning permit or building permit will be issued either for construction of a system or for any use proposed to be served by served by such system. Any proposed construction or other action in furtherance of or pursuant to this permit shall be subject to and must comply with all applicable state and local ordinances or regulations, including, without limitation, any applicable zoning regulations, proffers, or conditions any applicable comprehensive plan conformance review requirements and applicable inter-jurisdictional agreements."

Board Of Architectural Review Holds Second Vineyard Square Review Developer's Architect Defends Six Stories And Widespread Demolition

- By Andrea Gaines

At the Town of Purcellville Board of Architectural Review meeting in November, developer/owners Mark Nelis and John Chapman presented arguments in favor of a virtually unchanged design for Vineyard Square's 21st Street project. As first proposed, Vineyard Square reached

heights of 5-6 stories, with one part up to 7 stories. The meeting was attended by many local residents, including business owners and 21st Street tenants that will be directly impacted by the approximately 30,000 sq. ft. of commercial - and 45 condominium - residential project.

Following Vineyard Square's first attempt at approval, the board requested

new designs from Nelis and Chapman that more seriously considered the current building proportions and styles of the historic downtown area, the highest current building being the restored mill (Magnolia's restaurant at approximately 50 feet). The BAR also addressed the issue of incorporating rather than demolishing

Continued on page 4

Ida Lee Flag Football Teams Make Run At NFL Regional Championship

The Leesburg NFL Flag Football league was represented by two teams at the New York Jets NFL Regional Tournament held in Lincoln Park, New Jersey, on Nov. 16.



The 12-and-under "Ida Lee Fast and Furious," coached by Eric Johnson and Dave Sorrell, had an outstanding tournament, and were undefeated - allowing zero points in pool play, earning them the number

three seed out of 28 teams. Despite a valiant

two seed out of 36 teams. Ultimately, they fell just short in the semifinals in a hard fought game. The 10-and-under "Ida Lee

effort, they lost in the second round of playoffs against a tough Boston team.

Both teams were comprised of players from the Leesburg NFL Flag Football League. This spring season, the Leesburg Parks & Recreation Department will offer a "House League" for ages 6-14 and an "Elite League" with four divisions for 10-and-under, 12-and-under, 14-and-under and 18-and-under. Registration is open, go to www.idalee.org or contact Greg Anselene, at 703-737-6051.



Detangle and let go the stress of the holidays with our cookie recipe on page 21!



Reindeer

Wild Loudoun, page 20

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Ask Dr. Mike

– By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.



Dr. Mike

Dr. Mike, I was recently at a work related social gathering where someone jokingly called another coworker in our group, "Aspie." As you probably know, Aspie is a term for Asperger's Disorder, and the person who was joked about is admittedly socially awkward. However, my son has Asperger's Disorder, and I was deeply offended by the comment. A part of me wants to confront this individual for a lesson in sensitivity training but he will likely not get it. While I don't want to upset my co-workers, I also don't want to carry around resentment and anger everyday. Thoughts?

Concerned in Loudoun County

At the end of the day, I think it's more important for you to correct things internally for yourself than to teach your co-worker a lesson. If you do choose to speak to your coworker about the verbal misstep, I would caution you to not confront him but rather to let him know how you feel about the comment and what it means to you on a personal level having a son with Asperger's Disorder. Ideally, you would want your coworker

to leave that conversation having learned something about you and himself so that he might be more careful with statements in the future.

Depending on your relationship with the co-worker in question, letting the issue go and moving on without a conversation may also be a good idea. Keep in mind that people sometimes say and do stupid things, and you may not get the response you'd like from your co-worker. The term Aspie, like many other terms, has entered our colloquial speak and may be considered by some to be OK to voice. "Retarded," "gay," "ADHD," and "OCD" are other terms that are freely and offensively used without care these days.

Dr. Mike,

My husband and I just returned from a wedding where he was obliterated by drinking for three days straight. He made a buffoon of himself, and we left the weekend in shame. This is common for him (and us) whenever we go on vacation or away for a few days. He'll consume outrageous amounts of alcohol, be the life of the party, and then things get bad. Oddly, he comes home and is a tea tottler for months at a time without a single drink. Can someone be a part-time alcoholic?

Concerned in Loudoun County

Continued on page 30

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The Ben Belrose I Knew

- By Joseph LaFiandra

Ben Belrose of Purcellville passed away on October 30, at the age of 69. He left Dale, his wife of 47 years, four daughters and ten grandchildren. I had the privilege to know Ben as a close friend, neighbor and fellow conservative.

I know that if he had the choice, he would have liked to live just a little bit longer so that he could have voted in the November 6 election. What a strange thing to say, live to vote in an election? If you knew the guy like I did, you would understand. He was an activist in local, state and national politics and worked very hard in this and every election cycle to get conservative Republicans elected. Above all, he was a political and social conservative. He attended every fund raiser and monthly political meeting he could, walked with the candidates, donated time and money and recently attended this year's Republican nominating convention in Richmond with his wife. If there was a job the party needed to be done and no one else volunteered, he did it. He was the one who put up almost all of the large political signs in Loudoun County for the local and national elections. In this election alone, he set over 200 signs. He never bragged about it, you had to ask. Last year I offered to help him put up signs and went with him for two days. I then understood the physical labor was needed to pound three iron stakes two feet into the ground for each sign. I was exhausted after



Ben Belrose

that experience. Only this year he purchased a motorized stake driver (with his own money) to help him put signs up faster. When the signs had to be removed after the election, the volunteers claimed that they knew that Ben put them up because they couldn't get the stakes out of the ground.

I really got to know Ben because of an unusual situation. I first met him casually at one the Purcellville Town Hall Council meetings. After the meeting, I wrote a piece for the local newspaper about a town issue that must have really irritated the former mayor and the mayor attacked me in the next issue of the paper. The attack was bogus and I didn't respond, but Ben did. He carefully analyzed the mayor's argument and defended me even though I didn't ask him to and I really didn't know him. That got my attention and we were good friends from then on.

Ben was also one of the original local Tea Partiers. Ben and Dale along with my wife and I attended events in Washington, D.C. in 2008 and over the years in other locations in Virginia. He believed in limited responsible government, lower taxes, all the amendments (including the 2nd) to the Constitution, individual rights and freedom,

Continued on page 13

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Vineyard Square/21st Street Review, continued from page 1

several historic buildings.

Project architect James O'Brien (O'Brien & Keene) presented visuals that the board regarded as basically unchanged, including heights and façade styles. After the presentation the BAR asked why O'Brien had ignored the downtown façade styles. O'Brien replied that they wanted a new and fresh idea. "It's important to set your work apart ... it's not a good idea to do what you [the BAR] are suggesting." Vice Chairman Dan Piper said that "maybe it calls for a redesign," to which O'Brien responded "It looks good as it is ... one of our goals is to foster individuality."

Piper also noted that it was important to create harmony with existing buildings. Another BAR member noted that new

developments are not supposed to create abrupt changes, but, rather, need to be in keeping with current streetscapes. BAR members noted that the proposed design is out of proportion with the streetscape. The Dillon bicycle shop building, for example, is 40 feet in height and the tallest in the area is 50 feet. Downtown Leesburg only has one 5-story building – the county office. The height and scale is not in character and will continue to be an issue. O'Brien simply replied, "These buildings will be the tallest and the best." O'Brien also said that the design wants to broaden the sidewalk to get more space.

BAR member Jim Gloeckner noted that we are not trying to build "a Reston Town Center." Nelis spoke and said that the height



requirements were put in place just for his development, and that the 2005 design charette wanted a dense compact downtown. He wanted taller buildings because his property is underutilized. He did not want to displace his tenants until necessary, however "A two story building does not work for him" and his tenants are "marginal." (The 2005 charette focused on

making 21st street one-way and adding angled parking, and never addressed four, five and six-story buildings on 21st Street.)

The BAR voted to preserve the main building at 130 North 21st Street, and 138 North 21st Street. A series of other buildings were approved for demolition.

The next meeting of the BAR is Wednesday, Dec. 18 at 7:30 at the Purcellville Town Hall.

Letters To The Editor

The Good, The Bad, And The Ugly

Dear Editor:

The good citizens of the Town of Purcellville and the surrounding neighbors have seen few good things happen in and around Purcellville over the past several years. Many people moved here from areas of rapid growth to get away from it all. They liked the small unique character of the town and surrounding community. Now these same people feel the need to move away: Purcellville is becoming "Any town USA."

Here are some of the reasons: 50 acres of proposed residential and commercial on 287 north of Hirst Road. Travel further south on 287 towards the traffic circle and you have another planned retail area including a gas station, travel south around the traffic circle along the Southern Collector Road, and yet another soon to be planned commercial development. There may be plans to build across from Blue Ridge Middle School, also.

The plans to grow Purcellville do not stop here. There is an annexation proposal to add an amusement/entertainment type area, retail and 180-unit apartment complex along Maple Avenue and the Hirst Road corridor. Then you have the new six story proposed condo, retail and underground parking in the Historic District (an area on the National Register of Historic Places). I am sure there are many more plans we know nothing about. How could we possibly know - with all the closed session, off record, short notice, 30 second council decisions with no discussion – just unanimous yes votes on the same night of the public hearing?

When you do go to a town council meeting and speak out, you are given two minutes to express your opinions, facts, and concerns. This is in front of an expressionless, unknowledgeable, disinterested council, along with a mayor that has an incredible ability to be rude and disrespectful during your two minutes.

Now, we get to the ugly. The largest development in the history of Purcellville is coming soon. A housing and business park development larger than Hirst Farm. How soon you ask? The county made a motion during a closed session, 7 days later the town of Purcellville voted to consider an annexation via boundary line adjustment. The Town of Purcellville has a

public hearing December 10 less than 30 days after the first vote. The name of this development, formerly Autumn Hill, is now called Mayfair. The plan is for 257 houses on less than 51 acres; a mix of single family attached and detached homes. No public input for this one. The decision was made prior to it becoming public knowledge, and the two "public hearings" are being held after the fact.

During the past few weeks many articles have been published touting the marketing done by both the town and the county. I've heard the scare tactic over and over, "We have to bring Mayfair into the town at 257 units or they will do a complete build out of their property at 492 units." The truth can be found in the Loudoun County Health Department permit. Reference pin number 487365498 permit for Mayfair expired 10 days prior to the county going to court, and it was never for 492 units. Quite the contrary, the permit was based on bedrooms – and would have worked out to be approximately 130 homes, without a business park. William Baker
Purcellville

Preserve Our Unique Old Town

Dear Editor:

A comment on the proposed 21st Street Project in the historic Purcellville town:

This ghastly, tacky, multi-story monstrosity has no place in Purcellville unless the sole object of the development is the generation of maximum revenue for the developers at the prohibitive cost of replacing our charming and unique old town with yet another slice of generic, cookie-cutter suburbia. If this development is permitted, what is left of historic Purcellville will be swallowed whole, leaving little motive to preserve the small remnant that would be left. To add insult to injury, some taxpayer funding will no doubt be required to force us to assist in the destruction of our historic district. This project should be rejected.

D.L. Bell
Purcellville

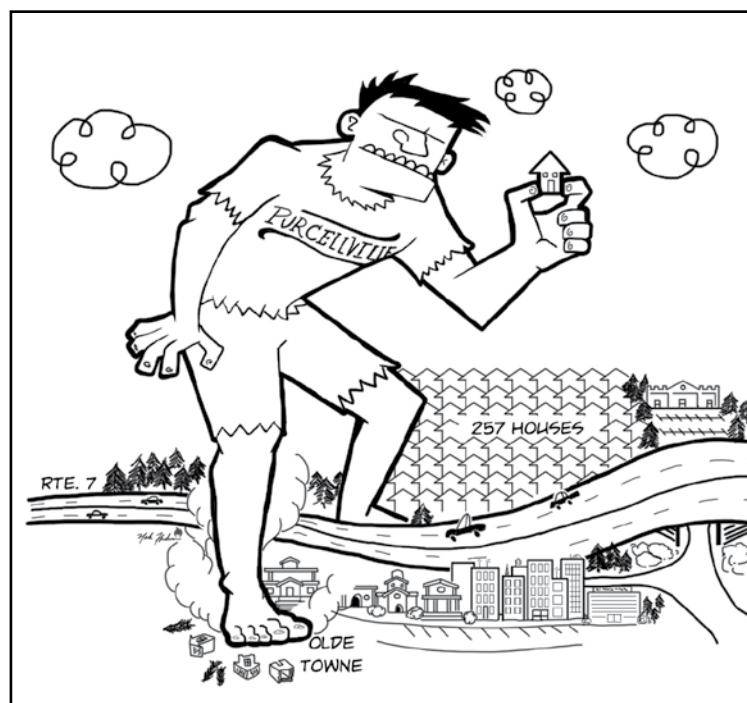
Thank You From Delegate-Elect, Dave LaRock

Dear Residents of the 33rd District:

I'm writing this letter to express my sincere thanks to the good people of the 33rd District for making me your Delegate-elect. This is a great honor, and a humbling one; I look forward to building on the accomplishments of the other leaders who have served in this position with dedication and distinction.

To all of the folks that turned out and voted for me on Election Day, worked at

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We Welcome Your Letters To The Editor!

Submissions may be sent to Editor@BRLeader.com, or via mail to PO Box 325, Purcellville, VA 20134-0325. Please include your name, address and telephone number.

We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary. Deadline for print edition is the third week of each month, or, online any time.

Autumn Hill – Timeline

1990	Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiates a competition to stimulate the development of affordable housing. Winning projects are promised expedited review of their land use applications. Autumn Hill is one of two winning proposals. Purcellville Town Council endorses the Autumn Hill project. The project's owners, John Andrews and HR Purcellville, initiate negotiations with the Town for the extension of Town water and sewer.
1991	The Board of Supervisors approves the Autumn Hill development application to develop 492 quadplex town homes. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 123 units (25%) are deemed Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs), reserved for those whose incomes are 50-70% of the Area Median Income (AMI); • Preference is given to Purcellville and County residents, their lineal descendants, or those who work in the town or the county; • The County and the developer agree to a proffer requiring that the project be served by Town of Purcellville water and sewer. The Town Council and the Board of Supervisors endorse an effort to develop a comprehensive annexation agreement for the Town's Urban Growth Area (UGA, later known as the Joint Land Management Area or JLMA).
1994	After two years of negotiations the Town Council and the Board of Supervisors adopt an Annexation Agreement to guide the Town's expansion into the UGA. The agreement includes special accommodation for the Town's annexation of Autumn Hill. The accommodation allows the Town Council to annex the property at any time by ordinance. <i>Work begins on the Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan (PUGAMP).</i>
1995	After four years of fruitless negotiations for annexation and the extension of water and sewer to the Autumn Hill property, John Andrews and HR Purcellville sells the property to Autumn Hill Associates, LP, a publicly supported, non-profit organization. The Town Council and the Board of Supervisors adopt PUGAMP.
1996	The Town Council undertakes a study of its water and wastewater utilities facilities. The study indicates severe limitations on the Town's ability to provide water to both the Town and the UGA after 2002. The Town Council endorses a Water and Wastewater Master Plan to ensure sufficient capacity for existing property owners and planned growth. The Town Council denies the annexation request of Autumn Hill Associates, LP, citing insufficient water and sewer capacity.
1997-1999	<i>The Town annexes 164.45 acres (Valley Industrial Park, Valley Springs, Patrick Henry College, Valley Discount Fuel, Hirst Farm, and two small properties owned by Nicholas Balagurchik and Lewis Leigh, respectively).</i>
1999	The Town Council and the Board of Supervisors adopt PUGAMP Phasing Guidelines to address renewed concerns about town water and water capacities .
2000	The Town Council undertakes a water resources study. The study, finalized in March 2000, forecasts that at current development rates capacity will be exceeded by 2006 and offers a variety of long- and short-term options. The Board of Supervisors initiates a complete overhaul of the County's Comprehensive Plan.
2000-2003	<i>The Town Council annexes 219.25 acres (Village Case / Catocin Meadows / Case Farm; Twin Oaks Subdivision; Hirst Farm).</i>
2002	Unable to reach an agreement with the Town Council for annexation Autumn Hill Associates, LP sells the property to Brookfield Homes for \$124,000 less than it had paid.
2003	<i>The Purcellville Joint Policies Review Committee (JPRC), established by the Annexation Agreement and consisting of representatives from the Town Council, the Board of Supervisors, and the two Planning Commissions, initiates a review of PUGAMP.</i>
2007	Brookfield Autumn Hill submits a Zoning Concept Plan Amendment (ZCPA) to the County, requesting a change to the proffer that requires the use of Town utilities. County staff begin processing the application.
2009-2011	Brookfield Autumn Hill submits a request for annexation to the Town. Brookfield Autumn Hill participates in a charette process at the Purcellville Train Station. The Town Council denies Brookfield Autumn Hill's annexation request.
2011	Brookfield Autumn Hill begins drilling test wells and undertaking the necessary soil studies required for a state permit to develop the property with communal well and septic. After several years of inactivity Brookfield Autumn Hill withdraws its ZCPA application and submits a letter to the County Zoning Administrator asking whether it is "the County's position that the Proffer requires Brookfield to obtain municipal/public water and sewer service from the Town?" The county's proffer manager, responding for the Zoning Administrator, responds that "Brookfield... has already stated and acknowledged that, in accordance with this said Proffer 5A, in order to develop the Autumn Hill project, the developer is required to enter into an agreement with the Town of Purcellville for provision of utilities, and that the Town has no obligation to provide utility service. I agree with this interpretation of the proffers." The Board of Supervisors upholds the proffer manager's interpretation. Brookfield Autumn Hill files a lawsuit against the County.
2012	New Blue Ridge Supervisor Janet Clarke (R) begins meeting with representatives of Brookfield Autumn Hill. Later in the year she is joined by Board Chairman Scott York (R-At-Large). Clarke sends out a letter to the Chestnut Hills homeowners and other property owners adjacent to the Autumn Hills property, alerted recipients to the lawsuit, the "worst case scenario" of 492 homes served by a communal water and septic system, and the discussion of Clarke, York and the County Attorney with representatives of Brookfield to negotiate an out-of-court settlement "with less density as well as with proffered improvements that will benefit the community." Clarke and Autumn Hill representatives meet with the community at the Purcellville Train Station to discuss a proposed settlement. Clarke, York, County Attorney Jack Roberts, Purcellville Mayor Bob Lazaro, Purcellville Town Council member Tom Priscilla, Town Attorney Sally Gillette Hankins and a representative from Brookfield Autumn Hill meet prior to another meeting with the Chestnut Hill community. Clarke accedes to community opposition to the project and the proposed settlement.
2013	The Circuit Court rules on a motion by the County that the facts described in Brookfield Autumn Hill's lawsuit does entitle it to legal redress, granting the County's request on three of the four counts. It allows the fourth count to go forward to trial. The Town Council and the Board of Supervisors annul PUGAMP and the Annexation Agreement. The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, emerging from closed session, announces a public hearing for a Boundary Line Adjustment to bring the Autumn Hill property into the corporate limits of the Town of Purcellville. The following week, the Town of Purcellville votes to hold its own Public Hearing.

Autumn Hill/Mayfair – The Real Reason Behind Annexation

– By Jim Burton

In 1991 the County approved the Autumn Hill rezoning request that would allow the development of 492 multi-family residential units just north of Purcellville. The proffers or legal agreements that were approved required that the development be served by town water and sewer service which could only occur if the property were annexed into the town. Since the town refused to annex and provide the utilities, the current landowner sought and received a permit from the Loudoun County Health Department (which is a state agency) to construct an on-site alternative sewage system rather than use town utilities.

The Health Department's permit expired November 15. The permit stated explicitly that "Any proposed construction or other action in furtherance of or pursuant to this permit

shall be subject to and must comply with all applicable state and local ordinances or regulations, including without limitation, any applicable zoning regulations, proffers, or conditions, any applicable comprehensive plan conformance review requirements, and applicable inter-jurisdictional agreements."

In other words, the Health Department approval to build an on-site system ceased to exist on November 15; and even if it had not expired, by its own language, the 1991 proffer requiring hookup to the town utilities would take precedence.

The county objected to the developer's plans, leading to the developer suing the county to allow it to proceed with the on-site system. The case was to go to trial November 26.

The county, for some strange reason, voted on November 13 to settle the

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So What Is A Proffer?

– By Mary M. Bathory Vidaver

What is a proffer?

Proffers are the mechanism by which the Virginia General Assembly allows localities to partially offset the capital costs, (schools, playing fields, roads, etc.) and other impacts associated with residential development. Under this mechanism developers can offer voluntary contributions to local governments for the approval of additional density over the base density allowed by a county's zoning. Under state law proffer agreements run with the land and remain binding on the County and future landowners unless modified through a public land use process. In Loudoun County, this process is known as a Zoning Concept Plan Amendment (ZCPA).

Is a proffer the same as a contract?

No, proffers are conditional zoning, a legal concept unique to Virginia. According to Virginia land

use attorney, John Farrell, writing for www.McCandlaw.com, they "are essentially identical to other provisions of a zoning ordinance," such as setbacks, lot coverage requirements, and height limitations. They are enforced and enforceable in the same manner that other aspects of a county's zoning ordinance are enforced.

What happens when the General Assembly passes a law that conflicts with an existing proffer?

This is the crux of Autumn Hill / Mayfair's lawsuit against the County. In 1991 the owners of Autumn Hill / Mayfair included in its proffers that it would use Town of Purcellville water and sewer for its development. The agreement with the county read, "The Applicant shall be responsible for entering into an agreement with the Town of Purcellville with regard to the provision of utilities to Autumn Hill / Mayfair. The agreement shall include,

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257 Homes, continued from page 1

build nearly 500 units and their intention to install an alternative treatment spray field is too great to ignore. The risk to the town's water supply due to a possible environmental disaster is real and requires action." Likewise, York told citizens that he did not want "492 homes built with a package plant which was approved by the health department... You have a health department approval to go forward with a poop plant... we had to get rid of the threat of 492 homes with an approved poop plant."

However, documents received by The Blue Ridge Leader from the Loudoun County office of the Virginia Department

of Health, show that the health department only approved a package plant for 531 bedrooms – not homes. A concept plan filed by Brookfield with the town on October 25, 2013 shows a mix of 106 single-family homes, 151 town homes, and an unplatted area in the parcel's northwest corner marked for rezoning to PDH-8, which under the Purcellville zoning ordinance equates to 8 residential units per acre. An unverified source indicated that the single-family homes would have 4 bedrooms and the town homes three bedrooms. This calculates to 877 bedrooms, 346 more

Continued on page 6

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bedrooms than allowed under the health department permit. Thus, even before any rezoning of a portion of the property to PDH-8, the proposed settlement agreement grants Brookfield Homes 80 to 125 more homes than it would be allowed under the health department permit.

Neither Lazaro nor York responded to requests for comments about this discrepancy. An email to Purcellville Councilman Patrick McConville II likewise met with silence. Town Councilman Keith Melton indicated in his response that the numbers are not the issue, just "I'm not comfortable with a huge alternative septic system on the town's border." What no one has mentioned is that the health department permit expired on November 15 (11 days prior to the court date).

The Autumn Hill saga began in 1990 when the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiated a competition to stimulate the development of affordable housing in the county. Autumn Hill was one of two winning proposals, promising that 123 of the 492 units proposed would be reserved as affordable housing units for town and county residents, their descendants, or town and county government employees.

After an expedited review the BOS approved the property's rezoning in 1991 with a number of conditions, known as proffers (see the sidebars for a complete history of the project and information about proffers). Given the size and density of the project, a key proffer was a requirement that the development be served by Town of Purcellville water and sewer. Acknowledging that the county had no authority over the town in this matter, the proffer agreement explicitly states that it "does not obligate the Town to enter into an agreement with the applicant or guarantee the provision of the Town of Purcellville utilities." As the Town Council had endorsed the project in 1990, this language did not appear to be problematic.

However, no such agreement was forthcoming. For 22 years three different property owners have attempted to negotiate an agreement with different town councils that would allow the development to move forward. In December 2011 the current owner, Brookfield Autumn Hill, LLC, filed a lawsuit against the county, claiming that the proffer violated a 2009 state law prohibiting localities from banning the use of alternative on-site septic systems (also known as alternative systems) approved by the Virginia Department of Health when other sewer or sewerage disposal facilities are unavailable. This is the lawsuit that county supervisors and members of the town council say the boundary line adjustment will settle.

Efforts to settle the lawsuit began in January 2012 when newly elected Blue Ridge Supervisor Janet Clarke (R) began meeting with representatives from Brookfield. These meetings continued through the spring and summer and ultimately included York,

Lazaro and Purcellville Town Councilman Tom Priscilla. The developer presented a compromise of 240 homes to neighboring landowners that summer. The surrounding community, preferring a development more in keeping with their own 3 - acre zoning, soundly rejected this proposal. Based on their opposition, Clarke suggested to constituents that she would support their position and reject any settlement agreement that allowed a higher number of residences. She reiterated this position in emails and letters to the community on November 6 and 7, stating "My position is in support of what the community majority wants ... The community has consistently stated their desire for the Brookfield property to be in keeping with the existing JLMA-3 zoning of the adjacent parcels." Clarke was the lone no vote against the board's motion to initiate a boundary line adjustment with the town.

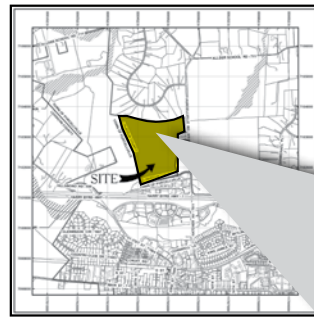
In an email to a constituent received by *The Blue Ridge Leader* through a public records request, Clarke expanded on her official position. "I conveyed the community sentiment to the Board, but the builder approached the Town and the Town worked with Chairman York. The town asked the Board to approve the annexation process for this property and I did not agree and asked that everyone wait until the case was played out in court before considering a settlement. The Board and apparently the Town disagreed and although not one of them conducted the outreach I did they chose to not listen and voted against my recommendation."

Clarke's calendar for 2013 shows at least one meeting with the Autumn Hills' attorney in February. It is not clear whether the county attorney accompanied her to that meeting. Traditional board protocol frowns on board members meeting alone with plaintiffs or their attorneys.

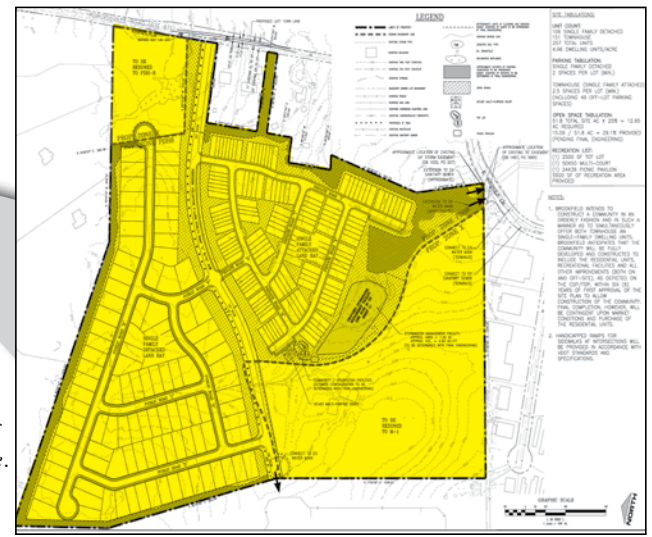
York also took far less credit for the negotiations, saying, "Last year, Ms. Clarke approached both myself and Mr. Lazaro and asked if there was a way to settle out of court and we have been working on this." Chairman York told a Purcellville area resident in front of a reporter from *The Blue Ridge Leader*, "Your supervisor, Janet Clarke, is the one who wanted this." Off-the-record conversations with other board members or their aides indicated agreement with this point of view. Clarke did not respond to a phone message asking for comment.

Still, based on comments made to a county resident whose property abuts the Autumn Hill property, it appears that Autumn Hill employees believe Clarke is on board with the agreement. During a property tour, representatives of Autumn Hill told this resident that they had been working with the town and county in closed sessions for quite some time. The resident told *The Blue Ridge Leader*, "When I asked him about Janet he stated, 'Janet the county supervisor supported them 100 percent.'"

Whether a written settlement agreement actually exists is unknown. Queries to both



257 homes + 17 acres of commercial Autumn Hill development is located north of Rt. 7; with Town of Purcellville shown on the south side.



Autumn Hill development schematics enlarged.

the county and the town went unanswered. Similarly, whether the town can incorporate Autumn Hill into the town limits at a lower housing density without the landowner first downzoning through the county process is also unknown. In the past, town staff has always told the town council that it could not rezone land parcels as a prerequisite of incorporation into town boundaries. The town attorney did not respond to an email regarding how this situation might differ from that earlier advice.

The town council will hold a public hearing on the proposed boundary line adjustment on December 10. According to Patrick Sullivan, the town's director of community

Development, project files are available for public view at the Purcellville Town Hall. However, Sullivan wrote in an email obtained by *The Blue Ridge Leader* that under town policy for this particular project, "Planning staff members will not be meeting with members of the public to debate/discuss the upcoming annexation and development of the project know as Mayfair."

The next evening (December 11), the board of supervisors will also hold a public hearing on the proposed boundary line adjustment. Staff reports and other relevant materials are usually posted on-line or available for review at the county office building two weeks beforehand.

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Amy V. Smith's Money Talks

Understanding 2014 Retirement Plan Limits

– By Amy Smith

The IRS released updated 2014 limits for contributions—also known as elective deferrals—to pension plans and other retirement-related accounts. Many of the limitations stayed the same with minor increases in the Modified Adjusted Gross Income limits because of the slight increase in the cost-of-living index.



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TOTAL CONTRIBUTION LIMITS FOR THOSE COVERED BY EMPLOYER RETIREMENT PLANS

	2014	2013
Participating employees in 401(k), 403(b), GOVT. 457(b)s, SAR-SEP	\$17,500	\$17,500
Catch-up contribution for those Age 50 or over	\$5,500	\$5,500
Traditional IRA's contribution	\$5,500	\$5,500
Catch-up contribution for those Age 50 or over	\$1,000	\$1,000
Roth IRA's		
Individuals	\$5,500	\$5,500
(if MAGI is less than <\$114,000)		(if MAGI is <\$112,000)
Married filing jointly	\$5,500	\$5,500
(if MAGI is <\$181,000)		(if MAGI <\$178,000)
SIMPLE IRA or SIMPLE 401(k)		
Individuals	\$12,000	\$12,000
Catch-up contribution for those age 50 and over	\$2,500	\$2,500

Keep in mind that contributions can't exceed 100 percent of your earned income.

WHAT IS MODIFIED ADJUSTED GROSS INCOME? (MAGI)?

Your modified adjusted gross income is the amount of income that determines how much of your IRA contribution is tax-deductible. It is calculated by taking adjusted gross income and adding back certain items such as tax-exempt interest, foreign income, student loan deductions and deductions for higher education costs.

Saver's credit limits for low-income and moderate-income workers increased.

The AGI limit for the retirement savings contributions credit has increased across the board and is now \$60,000 for married couples filing jointly; \$45,050 for heads of household; and \$30,000 for married individuals filing separately and for singles.

Total deferrals

If you participate in more than one retirement plan, your total elective deferrals can't exceed the annual limit (\$17,500 in 2014, plus any applicable catch-up contribution). Deferrals to 401(k) plans, 403(b) plans, SIMPLE plans and SAR-SEPs are included in this limit, but deferrals to Section 457(b) plans are not.

Finally, the maximum amount that can be allocated to your account in a defined contribution plan—for example a 401(k) plan or profit-sharing plan—in 2014 is \$52,000 (up from \$51,000 in 2013), plus age-50 catch-up contributions. This includes both your contributions and your employer's contributions. Special rules apply if your employer sponsors more than one retirement plan.

Please note changes in tax law 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 Raymond James, we are not qualified to render advice on tax or legal matters. You should discuss any tax or legal matters with the appropriate professional. Amy V. Smith Wealth Management, LLC, is an independent firm. Amy V. Smith, CFP, CIMA offers securities through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/ SIPC. Her office is located at 161 Fort Evans Road, NE, Suite 345, Leesburg, VA 20176. (Tel: 703-669-5022). www.amysmithwealthmanagement.com. Any opinions are those of Amy V. Smith and not necessarily those of RJFS or Raymond James. Expressions of opinion are as of this date and are subject to change without notice. The information contained in this report does not purport to be a complete description of the securities, markets or developments referred to in this material. The information has been obtained from sources considered to be reliable but we do not guarantee that the foregoing material is accurate or complete. Any information is not a complete summary or statement of all available data necessary for making an investment decision and does not constitute a recommendation. You should discuss any tax or legal issues with the appropriate professional.

Gardening Tips ... December 2013

– By Andrea Gaines

Don't give up on the pleasures of gardening just because it's December. Let your mind wander and dream about what you'll plant in the spring, and play around with some showy and fragrant indoor plants.



Brazilian Amaryllis

- Amaryllis and other forcing bulbs should be started now – keep them in a cool shaded place until the buds open.
- Trim those leggy geranium plants you might have brought inside to encourage

thicker growth over the winter.

- Watch for spider mites on your houseplants – the warmer indoor temperatures can make it easy for them to take over.
- Poinsettias like it cool, as do cyclamen. Keep them away from the south-facing windows that can heat up during the day.
- Christmas cactuses like a little dryness to bud and bloom – don't overwater.
- Start some fresh and fragrant herbs for those savory soups you'll make this winter. Parsley, oregano, sage, chives and basil are great choices. They also add a lovely scent when combined with fresh flowers on the dinner table.



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The Real Reason, continued from page 5

lawsuit and avoid the trial even though the Health Department permit would expire only two days later. The settlement allows the development to be annexed into the town and permits the building of 257 residential units served by town utilities. The Health Department's permit was for 531 bedrooms, regardless of the number of units. Assuming four bedrooms per house means the developer could only build 133 residences under that permit, a far cry from the 257 the town and county settled for. Mayor Lazaro's public comments that settling was a good deal because the county and town could have been saddled with 492 units if the developer won the lawsuit is absolute nonsense. Quite to the contrary, the Health Department permit would not allow anywhere near 492 units. One could argue that the county's position in the lawsuit was extremely strong and that settling was a gross mistake – unless there was something else going on.

In September, Purcellville's financial advisors, Davenport LLC, advised the town council that if the town did not restructure its long-term debt for its new water and sewage treatment plants, the average homeowner's utility bills would increase another 68 percent over the next five years (increasing from an average of \$114 per month currently to \$191 per month). Davenport presented a restructuring option that would reduce that increase to merely 25 percent. This is in addition to the already significant increases made in recent years.

Why have the utility bills increased so much? There are two reasons:

New State regulatory requirements on the level of treatment required; and,

Unfortunately, as pointed out by Davenport, the town has not grown as much as planned when the facilities were designed and built. Thus, there are fewer hookups than anticipated over which the debt and operating costs can be spread.

As Mayor Lazaro pointed out at the ribbon cutting ceremony for the new sewage treatment plant, "This was done for future growth." In other words, it was a conscious choice to enlarge a plant that was already operating well below capacity. With these thoughts in mind, it is easier to understand why the town council, after opposing the annexation of Autumn Hill for 22 years, has suddenly reversed its position. It needs the 257 hookups to slow the rate of future increases in utility bills. And so, at the town's request, the county settled the lawsuit brought by Autumn Hill/Mayfair who wanted to develop the land with an on-site sewage system rather than continue to be denied annexation by the town and access to the town's water and sewage treatment facilities.

On its face, annexation of Autumn Hill/Mayfair with 257 homes (including 17 acres of commercial/industrial development) would appear to be a benefit to current town residents in that their water and sewage rates would not increase as rapidly. Unfortunately, however, the decision to

annex has other consequences as well, the most serious of which deal with overcrowded schools, traffic congestion, and upward pressure on homeowners' property taxes.

The 257 new residential units projected will generate approximately 159 new students for the Purcellville area schools. Although there will be an impact, its extent is uncertain, but it will not be trivial. The new units will also generate an additional 2,570 vehicle trips per day on the already inadequate road system north of town, taxing it to the breaking point. And finally, to provide the services and possible infrastructure necessary to accommodate the new residents, there will be upward pressure on homeowners' property taxes for both town and county residents. Residential units are expensive

to taxpayers: According to a study of the county's tax base between 2006 and 2011 conducted by the Economic Development Commission, the average residential unit requires \$1.62 in services for every \$1.00 of tax revenue it contributes. The 17 acres of planned commercial/industrial next to the houses will help soften the tax burden impact somewhat, but presents possibly serious compatibility issues for the neighboring residents.

By submitting a rezoning that the county probably would have approved in a heartbeat, the developer could have chosen to develop this area at the same density as its neighbors to the north and east, Chestnut Hills and Wright Farm. This would have resulted in little need for possible additional infrastructure and its attendant costs. Unfortunately, lower density development would not have served the town's need for a massive

infusion of cash in the form of hookups to pay for its water and sewage overbuilding. And the developer, of course, would not have made as much profit. And so the residents of Purcellville and the county are going to pay – big time – while once again, a developer pockets the profits and leaves town.

And this may be only the beginning. The two Bane properties (across from Blue Ridge Middle School and on the west end of town) and a couple of other properties on the northeast edge of town are all waiting in the wings. And the once charming, unique, rural town of Purcellville will be gone forever.

Jim Burton lives in Aldie. He served on the Board of Supervisors for 16 years as an Independent representing the Mercer and Blue Ridge Districts.



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Endless Summer Harvest Introduces Salad Dressing

Mary Ellen Taylor, president of Endless Summer Harvest and Kelly Moorman, president of Endless Summer Friends & Food are pleased to announce the availability of a line of salad dressing to compliment Endless Summer Harvest's salad greens. The new dressings are made from all natural ingredients, no preservatives and local honey with herbs grown on the farm. The current varieties include The Mama's Balsamic and Opa! Greek Vinaigrette and are being offered for sale locally at: Purcellville Marketplace, Catoctin Creek Distillery and Butterfly Gourmet in Purcellville and Home Farm Store in Middleburg.

Bugatti Aerolithe Wins Car Of The Year

Owner Chris Ohrstrom's Bugatti Aerolithe was selected "Car of the Year" at the 2013 International Historic Motoring Awards ceremony in London in November. Shown are Ohrstrom (left) and David Grainger of the Guild of Automotive Restorers. Grainger collaborated with Ohrstrom on the project. Car lovers are invited to learn more about the Bugatti at the Youngblood Art Studio in the Plains on Dec. 6. youngbloodartstudio.wordpress.com



Pictured from left to right front row: Dr. Scott Dilzer, Julie, Vanessa, Monica, Karen, Jenn, BACK ROW: Nicki, Jen, Lynda

Dilzer Eye Care Visits Patients

The staff of Dilzer Eye Care Associates in Purcellville is so thankful for the wonderful community they serve and their incredible patients. Knowing many of their guests spend the holidays alone; the staff spent the afternoon surprising patients with visits and small tokens of caring at their home. "We value all of our patients but we know the holidays are hard for some" says office manager Nicki Brown. "We wanted to take the opportunity to spread some holiday cheer and let some of our patients know we truly care about them."

Ben Belrose, continued from page 3

American exceptionalism, a strong military, free markets and personal achievement. He was tolerant of all religions and all races. He didn't believe in man-made global warming, abortion, and redistributing the wealth. Being a Purcellville resident, he could have run for election to the local town council but health issues intervened. But that didn't stop him from being the town's "Gadfly". Wikipedia defines Gadfly as follows:

'In modern politics, a gadfly is someone who persistently challenges people in positions of power, the status quo or a popular position. For example, Morris Kline wrote "There is a function for the gadfly who poses questions that many specialists would like to overlook. Polemics are healthy." The word may be uttered in a pejorative sense, while at the same time be accepted as a description of honorable work or civic duty.'

This definition fits Ben to a tee. He was tireless in his pursuit of fiscal responsibility and honesty from the officials in the Purcellville town government. He was one of the first to point out that the town spent more than \$8 million to turn an old church into the town hall while a new one built from scratch would cost less than \$2 million. Ben was persistent about financial matters concerning the town and county because he had the knowledge to decipher the volumes of arcane and technical data found in budget reports. He had three engineering degrees, was a retired naval officer and supervised massive programs in private business. He consistently stated that the town had over built their new sewage treatment plant and ran up more than \$60 million in debt. At the time, he gave a presentation at the local library

outlining what he found, but few came. He wrote many letters to editor about town business, some were printed, some were not.

At one town council meeting he pointed out to the members that they were holding closed meetings in violation of the state code, they subsequently took his advice and more clearly defined the reasons for holding closed meetings. When they seemed to relapse recently, he took the town council to court (at his own expense). The judge in question was a former town attorney, he lost the case.

During the 2010 mayoral election Ben saw that the current mayor was running unopposed. He decided to enter the name Mickey Mouse on the ballot. After the famous cartoon figure got a sizable percentage of the vote, Ben was slapped with an election rules complaint by the winning candidate. He was forced to go to Richmond (at his expense) and testify to the State Election Commission. They found no wrongdoing.

In his personal manners, he never asked for help but was always ready to help. Ben suffered adversity in silence, he never complained. At one time during a medical procedure, he was literally dead on the operating table but survived with extraordinary medical intervention. He was very religious but never wore his religion on his sleeve even though he went to church very often and attended a weekly bible study class. He was impeccably honest and always stuck to the commitments he made. Yes, Ben believed in truth, justice and the American way. That may be a factitious American hero's motto but, he lived that way. He was a hero to those who knew him and will be sorely missed by his family, friends and fellow conservatives.

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Just Like Nothing (Else) On Earth: Neer Lane

– By Tim Jon

No, not much happens out here – as far as I can tell; and it's not very conveniently located for easy access during your commute from home to work. And, no – this spot's probably not the most exciting intersection of latitude and longitude that you'll ever (or never) visit, and even if you grow to love it dearly (as I have) you'll probably never hang around for very long at any one time. Having said all this (probably at least partially to discourage the less intrepid traveler), I've come to realize that I always feel awfully good whenever I come to this little, neglected dirt road called Neer Lane.

And, the sardonic in me often asks: "So, just where is Neer?" Well, Neer's nowhere special – but it is in a very specific spot – out in Western Loudoun, of course – just off Cider Mill Road, south of Harpers Ferry Road on the frontier side of Hillsboro. And that's enough information for anyone with the least bit of adventurousness in their system. But – there're no whitewater rapids to test your kayaking skills, no hiking trails



JON



to exhaust your overspilling energies, not even much of a roadway itself to exercise your driving ability.

And, having said all this other stuff about poor little old Neer Lane, just what does it possess to satisfy at least parts of my soul upon each visit? Here I have to chuckle, because I think that part of its charm (for me) is the very nothingness on its list of amenities. Sure, there are views of surrounding hillsides and palatial residences tucked back in the woods, and the sight of the road itself, gently curving along the stands of trees has a definite aesthetic appeal – but right at the visitor's fingertips, there's little tangible to take home with you. And, speaking of this narrow, no-outlet roadway,

there's even scant accommodations to get your vehicle turned around at the 'End of State Maintenance' (especially if it's muddy – or even worse – icy or snowbound). But I've lived to tell the tale, so I must have made it out OK on each of my previous visits (knock on wood).

And, once again, I may have let the counterbalances tip the scales of relative worth into the disfavor column; in other words, I've admitted so many 'detriments' of Neer Lane that I've little chance of salvaging its reputation.

Or, have I?

The utter sublimity of total peace and quiet cannot be overrated – at least in my personal notebook. The sensations of solitude and privacy while at the same time feeling a part of one's world (however big or small) is not to be discounted. And, for this writer (or at least, 'typist') this chemical and emotional swirl of circumstances is just about all I ask of 'poor little old Neer Lane.'

So – when you have a yearning for peace, silence and the opportunity for contemplation – and you haven't chucked

away enough cash to take one of those private space trips for the rich and shameless – I suggest a simple drive out on Neer Lane (it's only a mile or so from its beginning at Cider Mill to the end), and maybe even stop out at the turn-around spot to let your breath and heartbeat find you again (isn't one of Loudoun's slogans 'Catch Your Breath?') and you may return fortified in ways you never imagined. Talk to the sky – or just let it read your thoughts – there's certainly enough in the heavenward out here. Whatever it is out there may even creep into your veins and hang around awhile.

So – just where is Neer Lane? Well, I guess at least part of it – right now – is sort of humming along somewhere inside me. And, I've still got other places reserved for more little discoveries that I haven't even made yet. Because, having weathered (or suffered – or even enjoyed) some pretty severe storms in this life, it's of great comfort to possess even just a little bit of inner peace and quiet – and to maintain the hope for more of the same in the face of future climates.

What Is A Proffer?, continued from page 5

but not be limited to, payment of tap fees, improvements to the pump station and sanitary sewer lines serving Autumn Hill / Mayfair, and construction and utility easements. This Proffer does not obligate the Town to enter into an agreement with the applicant or guarantee the provision of the Town of Purcellville utilities."

In 2009 the General Assembly passed a law prohibiting a locality from banning the use of Alternative On-site Septic Systems (also known as alternative systems) approved by the Virginia Department of Health when other sewer or sewerage disposal facilities are unavailable. Autumn Hill / Mayfair argues that this law invalidates the earlier proffer.

What did the developer of Autumn Hill / Mayfair request from the County?

In 1991 the owner of the Autumn Hill / Mayfair property requested that the Board of Supervisors amend the property's zoning from one house per three acres to 9.5 units per acre, a 2,750 percent increase in density, according to court documents filed by the County. In order to mitigate the proposed zoning change's impact on the community and the environment, the landowner and the county agreed on certain proffers. Construction of the project requires the landowner to undertake the agreed upon actions.

What did Autumn Hill / Mayfair proffer?

- A commitment to use Town of Purcellville public water and sewer;
- 123 affordable dwelling units for Purcellville and county residents; Road improvements or cash contributions in lieu of the improvement valued at \$435,000 in 1991 dollars.
- Widening Route 611 from Nichols Lane

to the entrance of the Autumn Hill / Mayfair development;

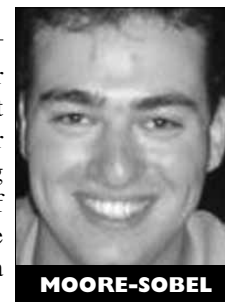
- Two right hand turn lanes from southbound Route 287 onto westbound F962; from westbound Route F962 onto northbound Route 611;
- Cash contribution towards the improvement of Route 611 at or near the intersection of Route 611 and Route F962;
- Cash contribution towards the construction of a left-hand turn lane from the northbound Route 611 into the Autumn Hill / Mayfair development;
- Cash contribution towards the installation of a traffic signal at the intersection of Route 287 and Route F962;
- A curb-side transit pick-up/drop-off station at the intersection of the East-West public connector road and the secondary entrance off East Nichols Lane.
- Cash contribution for transportation systems management measures in the Purcellville area
- \$60 per unit for fire and rescue companies;
- \$30 per unit to the Town of Purcellville for construction of the new town hall.
- A promise to submit a rezoning application on the remaining portion of the parcel for a transitional use with a one-acre area for a day care facility, an area for a recycling collection center, and an area for a large vehicles parking lot.

Is the Town of Purcellville subject to the proffers?

No. The proffer agreement explicitly states that it is not binding on the town. The town is not a party to the proffers and is not required to provide water and sewer to the Autumn Hill / Mayfair property unless the town council voluntarily expands the town's boundaries to include the property.

Christmas Is Overrated

–By Samuel Moore-Sobel



MOORE-SOBEL

It seems Christmas starts earlier and earlier each year. We start hearing about Christmas soon after Halloween, race past Thanksgiving and spend the whole month of December counting down to the big day. Why are we in such a hurry to get to Christmas?

This year many stores such as Kohl's and Macy's decided it was time to open their doors on Thanksgiving, while Wal-Mart and K-Mart opened earlier since they had already started their Thanksgiving tradition of opening up on this holiday last year. Apparently more stores are deciding to open their doors because they want to beat out the competition. Why is Thanksgiving the day to win?

How is this fair to the employees who want to celebrate Thanksgiving instead of being forced to work? In addition, why do people choose to go shopping for Christmas presents on Thanksgiving? Stores wouldn't be opening if people hadn't shown up last year to shop. Is shopping for Christmas presents really more important than celebrating Thanksgiving? When did Christmas become the only holiday we celebrate?

Thanksgiving is about giving thanks for the things we have, but not just material things. It's about celebrating the friends and family that we hold dear and for living in America, the greatest country on Earth. Why can't we as Americans ever slow down long enough to enjoy what we have instead of looking ahead to the next big thing? We should be content with what we have instead of longing for more on Thanksgiving.

The Christmas that we have created is overrated. Most of us run around trying to find the perfect gifts for our loved ones. Once that occurs, we stress over sending out the perfect Christmas card, bragging about all of our own and our family's accomplishments. Then it is off to cooking a large dinner and spending time with extended family that we often don't even really get along with. The holiday ends with much stress and exhaustion, while missing the whole point of the holiday's purpose. The month and a half sprint leading up to Christmas is exhausting and counterproductive.

The message sent by these stores opening on Thanksgiving is that brand new material things are most important. Yet how often do we really use the gifts that we are given? How often does this stuff just end up in a closet, never seeing the light of day? So you go through all that to give the perfect gift and it just sits in a closet?

Instead of buying into the holiday hype, it's time to take one day at a time, being grateful for the blessings we have and hopeful for what lies ahead in the future. Christmas is a time to spend with people we love, not just people that we feel obligated to see. Don't people hold more value than things anyway? What would happen if we forgot about the rat-race that Christmas has come to represent and just simply relaxed during the holiday season? Would anyone truly miss what Christmas has become?

Samuel Moore-Sobel is a student at George Mason University.

Fire Marshal's Office Lifts Open Burning Ban

Effective 12 a.m., Friday Nov. 22, the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office lifted the temporary open burning ban for Loudoun County as the fire danger level has dropped for the next several days. We will now be operating under the Fall/Winter Open Burning Guidelines through Feb. 14, unless otherwise dictated by the Loudoun County FMO.

To determine the fire danger level, weather data from National Weather Service stations and local forestry offices is analyzed every morning. This analysis results in a predicted fire danger level and a class of day assigned. This may drive the need for a local burn ban to be enacted when the fire danger is high or a class 3 day. The fire danger level is predicted to be a class 1 up to a class 2 for the next several days; hence the local burn ban is being lifted.

For a detailed explanation of the Fall/Winter Open Burning Guidelines, visit www.loudoun.gov/firemarshal. For additional questions or information, contact the Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office at 703-737-8600.

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Partlow Takes The Reins At It's Bazaar

– By Andrea Gaines

With an attitude just as enthusiastic as the spirit of the place itself, Kelley Partlow has become the new owner of the popular antiques and consignment market It's Bazaar, in historic downtown Purcellville.

Started several years ago under original owner Rebecca Cote, with its wonderful selection of antiques and vintage items, jewelry, local crafts, collectables, gifts and fun household accents, It's Bazaar has always complimented beautifully this special part of town. Some say that It's Bazaar has the largest collection of vintage records in northern Virginia. Its style and selection of merchandise has made it a destination for all kinds of treasure seekers. Partlow said she intends to build on this very successful foundation.

It's Bazaar features interesting and beautiful things from dozens of individual vendors. Partlow has a good ear for the business. Based on feedback from her customers and those who sell their merchandise here, she plans to expand the number of vendors at It's Bazaar even further.

"In retail, fresh and new is good," she

said. She welcomes inquiries from new vendors looking for venues that can increase the visibility and the sales of their goods.

Greater community outreach – and customer pampering – is another idea Partlow says has been buzzing around in her head.

She wants It's Bazaar to continue its family friendly tradition – to be a place where moms can come in with their children to shop, chat and relax.

"I want it to be a place, not where kids are told 'don't touch' but a place where a youngster can be free to explore," said Partlow. Future plans also call for making It's Bazaar a place where schools, non-profits and other organizations might hold a fundraising event – perhaps in partnership with vendors or with donated items.

The store's coffee shop will continue with a bit of a change up in what is sold. Folks will still be able to get great coffee, tea, sodas and pre-made sandwiches. And, Partlow is thinking about adding more snacks and candy.

"A business is only as strong as the community it serves and visa-versa," Partlow said. "I want to make sure each supports the other."



Kelly Partlow

Holiday Happenings In Historic Hillsboro

There are two weekends of holiday festivities coming up in Hillsboro. These festivities are sponsored by the Hillsboro Community Association and Friends of the Old Stone School, the non-profit organization dedicated to maintaining and managing the Old Stone School, 37098 Charles Town Pike.

Sunday, Dec. 8, Holiday Greens Workshop, 2 to 5 p.m. Learn how to make holiday decorations with fresh greens and take the decorations you make home with you. Instructors will show you how to make table arrangements and more. There is a \$20 workshop fee (\$15 for members of the Hillsboro Community Association) and \$10 charge per item you make. Forms to make apple trees and apple fans will also be sold during the workshop. Register online before Dec. 2 at www.HillsboroVa.org.

Sunday, Dec. 8, annual Hillsboro Tree Lighting and Potluck, 6 to 8 p.m. Start the holiday season and gather to light the Christmas tree in front of the Old Stone School. Enjoy holiday songs performed by The Pickwick Players.



Craft Fair, Pottery

Saturday, Dec. 14, Holiday Craft Fair from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. Find unique, hand-crafted gifts for friends and family at the annual Holiday Craft Fair at the Old Stone School. The more than 25 artisans at this year's craft fair will have jewelry, pottery, holiday decorations, home décor and more. See the list of artisans and their wares at www.HillsboroVa.org.

Saturday, Dec. 14, other festivities in Hillsboro. Enjoy a freewill offering dinner at the Hillsboro United Methodist Church starting at 11:30 a.m., and holiday open houses at two Hillsboro area Bed and Breakfasts that opened this year: Fieldstone Farm: A Country Retreat located at 36906 Charles Town Pike, and Hillsborough Bed and Breakfast located at 36847 Stony Point Road. Both will be decorated for the holidays and will have refreshments for visitors from noon to 4 p.m. on Dec. 14.

Learn more about the events at the Old Stone School at the Hillsboro Community Association and Friends of the Old Stone website at www.HillsboroVa.org.



– By Shirley Volberg

Christmas 2013: Let Traditions Endure And Give Birth To New Ones

Last month I shared my hopes that my daughter would have a successful first Thanksgiving. It was the first time she hosted the family at her home, and, although there was a bit of flurry about serving pieces, etc., she did a fabulous job.

From the start, she happily delegated several of the more complicated side dishes to me, so she could focus on the turkey and the table.

Her table was lovely, decorated with a blue and yellow French tablecloth, flowers in complementary colors and a scattering of yellow paper leaves to give everything a beautiful fall theme.

I'd suggested she brine the turkey, so she purchased a kosher variety – which is already brined. She also had her turkey "spatchcocked" – butterflied and with the breastbone removed so the bird cooks evenly and more quickly. And, the bird was cooked to perfection. It came to the table beautifully carved and garnished with rosemary and sage leaves.

For her first Thanksgiving the pies were store-bought ... but delicious. She also kept appetizers to a minimum, so we could all save room for the bird. In the end, all tummies were full and everyone was more than satisfied.

On To The Big Job Of Trimming The Tree

I have a tree trimming party every year.

It's much more informal than Thanksgiving – and that makes it goofy and fun. Plus, my friends, family and neighbors do most of the work!

With respect to decorating the table, I dress it with things I've collected over the years. This includes a favorite holiday runner and etched hurricane lamps with big red candles. I add some fresh greenery, and then load some large Italian platters with antipasti, various cured meats, cheeses and nice crusty breads.

I'll make a roasted artichoke spread and steamed mussels with saffron mayo and make sure there are lots of beverage choices – including sparkling water, hot mulled cider, wine and (this year) cranberry martinis. I also love to add some simple but really creative sweets to my table. One I'm particularly looking forward to is a classic brownie with caramel and sea salt on top.

I've already hauled boxes of ornaments down from the attic, and my tree is huge and fresh. The lights go on first and there are always lots of silly critiques on both that subject and the ornament placements ("Bob ... you missed a spot ... again!").

I'm no Martha Stewart, but since not everyone goes to the trouble of having a tree-trimming party anymore, we seem to all enjoy the finished product. The haphazard style of each person's contribution always results in a magical tree.

We cap off the activities by memorializing

one of our favorite family dogs. Our "Bozzie Angel" as we call it, which features a whippet dressed as an angel, goes on the top of the tree.

Christmas Day

On Christmas Day I quite enjoy the calm before the storm. In the morning, my husband Frank and I enjoy a relaxing, leisurely breakfast. Since my Christmas Day party is basically an extended open house – with "the hordes" dropping by whenever they want, starting around midday – it's important to start the day on a mellow note.

As the time draws near for the guests to arrive I put a heating tray on the buffet with a hearty soup and a ploughman's lunch – cheese, meat, pickles, assorted breads, poached fruit, cakes and pies. The buffet is easy to refresh as the afternoon goes on, and most food is gone by dusk. I serve eggnog – spiked or virgin, sparkling wines, and more hot mulled cider for non-drinkers and children. People can enjoy a meal, a nibble, or just come by for dessert.

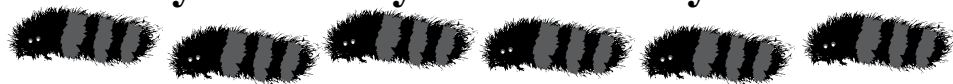
When the weather is nice we sometimes traipse though the woods behind our house and enjoy some winter exercise.

I like to take a casual approach to Christmas Day. It's a great way to finish up December and look forward to the New Year ahead.

With that, Happy Holidays and Happy New Year!

Sushi – “Tails” From The Barnyard

They Are Everywhere – Everywhere –



- By Sushi

“Be afraid of the Black Woolly Bear’s – winter is here.”

By now you all must be familiar with my new wing man Murphy? He may appear to be one big meat head – but in reality he has a heart of gold, smart as a whip and loyal to a fault.

Murphy has a coat made for this cold winter weather, deep, dense, thick and warm as a true Saint Bernard’s coat should be. In fact, his coat puts a Woolly Bear’s coat to shame.

Have you ever seen a Woolly Bear? Do you even know what a Woolly Bear is? What? You don’t know? Well, I am here to tell you the wooliest of Woolly Bear stories, because it is my bred and born duty to tell you the greatest “Tails” from the barnyard at Fields of Athenry Farm.

Over Thanksgiving week the weather was beginning to turn, cold, rainy, and even flurries of snow, the hint of Christmas to come. Murphy took his spot and laid down to rest himself under the story tree. The story tree is a beautiful sycamore tree right dab center in front of the big white farm house at Fields of Athenry Farm. Many a good times have been had under this tree and another one was just about to take place.

Murphy’s brilliant white coat tri colored with black and brown made him a magnificent dog to behold. Soon Murphy was snoring, snoring deeply away into doggy slumber land. By the way his paws were curling and his snores turned into snorting and the swishing of his massive tail, I could tell he was on some great hunt. Day was turning to dusk, dusk turning to night and he was still in slumber land. Murphy loves the cold weather and he can sleep forever. I think he gets his exercise in his dreams. I’ve never seen a chap sleep as much as he does.

I was ready to go and take my post up in the hay loft to watch over the Turkey Palace down near the barn yard, when I noticed some small furry creatures climbing into Murphy’s coat. I looked, and looked again in disbelief. What? What was going on?

I looked again, I had to trot closer but not too close as to scare away whatever was climbing onto Murphy. No, no it couldn’t be, not the weather predicting woolly bears finding their winter nest in Murphy’s coat? But yes, yes, there they were, one, two, three, four, five, and six of them burrowing into his coat before the fall nights turned into long cold winter nights.

What did they think? Murphy was one of them? I thought woolly bears went for leaf piles and rocks for perfect hibernation areas. Now you see, the significance of what was taking place was six little woolly bear caterpillars were finding their winter nesting grounds in the coat of a great big Saint Bernard dog. Poor little guys –

would they survive?

I watched and Murphy snored and snored and slept and slept all through the night. I never did go down to take my place and watch guard over the turkey palace that night. I had to stay until Murphy woke to tell him he had precious cargo on board and he would have to take great care not to roll or rub his massive body as all dogs like to do, for fear of hurting the Woolly Bears. For you see, as they bedded into Murphy’s coat in their caterpillar form, the woolly bear, to stay alive would need to freeze and freeze solid. First their heart stops beating, then their gut and blood freezes along with the rest of their bodies, to hibernate through the winter months. Murphy would have to sleep outside all winter for these little fellows to survive.

Now the woolly bears that climbed on Murphy were mostly black with very little brown banding toward the front of their bodies. Do you know what this means? A long cold snowy winter. Well, if any dog were up for the job of staying outside all winter to protect these little fellows it would be my wing man Murphy – he had no idea what he was going to wake up to.

That winter Murphy slept and slept and slept, I waited and waited and waited. Spring started to come, Murphy still slept away. Soon his body was covered in a silk like cocoon – he looked like a massive silk egg. It was just about Easter morning and still Murphy slept. Spring was ready to turn into summer and one bright morning before the sun rose on the Blue Ridge Mountains the miracle of all miracles took place – Murphy wiggled his big black nose – slowly ever so slowly. He lifted his head out of a deeper than deep slumber. His body was covered in wings, angel wings made of the most beautiful golden yellow color, spotted with black dots – the woolly bears made it. They survived their larvae stage, they survived their pupa stage and now they were ready to take flight from the safety of Murphy the Great. They were now officially woolly bears turned into Isabella tiger moths ready to take their next flight into the world of nature.

May God Bless you and all creatures great and small this Christmas, and remember there is always a seat for you under the story tree at Fields of Athenry Farm.

Love, Sushi



My master, Elaine Boland lives with her husband and five daughters in Purcellville at Fields of Athenry Farm. She cherishes farm life and the joy of providing her customers with fine fresh meats and products. She can be reached at www.fieldsofathenryfarm.com or 703 926 8444.

Wild Loudoun

Reindeer. Here. But Neither By Day Nor By Night. By Dreams.

- By Andrea Gaines

On one of those quiet cold Loudoun nights to come – a night when the winter storm has blown through and you have stepped out for a few minutes to sweep the snow off the front steps before going to bed – you might have imagined a deer-like creature looking at you through the dark.

The softly glowing eyes – a pale blue – are there for a moment and then they are gone. So, you set your broom aside, take a last look into the dark and head inside and up the stairs to bed. Climbing under the covers you bury your face into the pillow ... still seeing those softly glowing eyes. And, while you sleep soundly, you wake in the morning wondering why all of the more wild lore associated with Christmas – including flying reindeer – are dancing in your head.

Reindeer, also known as caribou in our continent of North America, live in and are built for extremely cold climates – arctic and subarctic regions. You will not see them in our woods today. But, they were here millennia ago, and, you will see a related animal, the beautiful white-tailed deer, thriving due to our love of expansive green lawns and their lack of natural predators.

Before the ice and glaciers and subzero cold that once typified the environment of our area pulled its way back north, reindeer, or at least reindeer-like creatures, were here.

Reindeer were once part of the environment in Scandinavia, eastern Europe, Greenland, Russia, Mongolia, and northern China; and in North America, in Canada, Alaska and our own northern areas from Washington to Maine. Some reports from the 1800s site them in southern Idaho ... on the move depending upon what nature did or did not afford them.

Many Americans, and Virginians, have lost the sense of the multitude of large mammals that were once here and that they were on the move, depending upon the season. While studying wildlife corridors in southern Colorado many years ago, I remember the head wildlife biologist in our group stopping our research vehicle along a now well-travelled road in a ski area, remarking that just 50 years before huge elk populations would have been crossing our path – migrating – on their way to more sheltered wintering grounds in the valley below.

But, back to reindeer, and how they are so well suited for were they still exist today, as well as a cherished part of our holiday dreams.

The world’s reindeer populations include both migratory and non-migratory populations. Some species of reindeer are numerous, while others are rare, or extinct. Like our country’s deer populations – mule deer out west, for example, and white tailed deer here – they vary in size and color. In most reindeer populations both male and female reindeer grow antlers – something our resident deer populations do not do. Reindeer, in fact, are the only “cervid” species in which both males and females can grow antlers.



The world’s reindeer live in tundra and boreal forest areas (known as taiga), managing to survive and raise their young under difficult circumstances. These environments are amongst the most common on earth, but also the harshest, and so the animals have adapted.

Reindeer hooves – believe it or not – change with the season. In the summer, when the ground they walk is soft and wet, their footpads act as a sort of sponge, pulling water in so as not to get mired in the mud. In colder weather the footpads shrink to a smaller size exposing a hoof, which gives the animal an edge with which to navigate snow and ice. The hoof also helps the animal dig down to expose food, including, yes, “reindeer moss.” There is such a thing. A reindeer’s body produces special enzymes in order to utilize it. And, it is their favorite food. Reindeer also eat willow and birch leaves, and grasses. Some evidence suggests that when no other food is available they eat fish, small mammals and bird eggs ... whatever nutritious gift their environment produces.

Reindeer in the arctic have eyes that change color from gold to blue to help them better detect potential predators. The blue has a reflective quality that improves the animal’s sight in the lower light of the arctic winter. *However, there is no real evidence to suggest that select reindeer sport a reddish nose.* And, an interesting fact that turned up in my research: a one-day old reindeer newborn can outrun an Olympic sprinter. They are built for flight. *Maybe even flight by air?*

No wonder reindeer have become a part of our holiday dreams ... even if they are today a mirage; glowing eyes staring back at us from the dark.

Maybe that is what inspired the 1823 poem by Clement C. Moore known as “The Night Before Christmas”:

When, what to my wondering eyes should appear, but a miniature sleigh, and eight tiny reindeer, with a little old driver, so lively and quick, I knew in a moment it must be St. Nick.

More rapid than eagles his coursers they came, And he whistled, and shouted, and call’d them by name: “Now, Dasher! Now, Dancer! Now, Prancer, and Vixen! “On, Comet! On, Cupid! On, Dunder and Blitzen! ... “

Happy Holidays – from the Blue Ridge Leader and all parts of Wild Loudoun, past and present.



Holiday Cookie Recipe – Snowy Chocolate Crackles



Courtesy of Debra Randazzo at Butterfly Gourmet in Purcellville

“For me, the holidays must contain chocolate. A little snow is nice too ... and, these cookies really fit the bill. The coffee in these helps intensify the chocolate flavor. They’re the perfect cookie for enjoying in front of a fire after an afternoon of shoveling snow.”
– Debra Randazzo, Butterfly Gourmet



Ingredients

- | | |
|---|----------------------------------|
| 1/2-cup all-purpose flour | 1/4 cup unsweetened cocoa powder |
| 4 teaspoons instant espresso | 1-teaspoon baking powder |
| 1/8-teaspoon salt | 4 tablespoons unsalted butter |
| 2/3 cup packed light brown sugar | 1 large egg |
| 4 oz. bittersweet (or semisweet) chocolate, melted and cooled | 1-tablespoon milk |
| Confectioners sugar for coating | |

Directions

In a medium bowl, sift together flour, cocoa, espresso, baking powder and salt. With an electric mixer, cream butter and brown sugar until light and fluffy. Beat in egg until well combined; mix in cooled chocolate. With mixer at low speed, gradually add flour mixture; beat in milk until just combined. Flatten dough into a disk; wrap well in plastic. Freeze until firm, about 45 minutes. Preheat oven to 350 degrees. Line two baking sheets with parchment. Shape dough into 1-inch balls. Pour confectioners sugar into a medium bowl; working in batches, roll balls in sugar two times. Place on prepared baking sheets 2 inches apart. Bake until cookies have spread and coating is cracked, 12-14 minutes. Cookies will be soft to the touch. Cool cookies on a wire rack. Yields: 1-1/2 dozen.

Butterfly Gourmet is located at 148 N. 21st Street in Purcellville, 540-441-7094.

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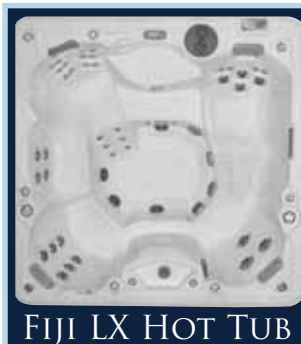
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Purcellville Community Raises Over \$600 For Boulder Crest Retreat - In Honor Of Veteran's Day



A group of Lincoln Elementary students sell lemonade to raise money for Boulder Crest, a local retreat for wounded servicemen.

Local businesses and residents worked together over the week of Veteran's Day to raise more than \$600 for Boulder Crest Retreat in Bluemont. A series of small fundraisers were held throughout the week, giving residents and businesses many opportunities to make small donations for big change. A group of students from Lincoln Elementary School set up a lemonade stand at the Purcellville Community Market. They handed out Boulder Crest flyers and bracelets and raised over \$150 in lemonade sales. Middleburg Bank hosted a change collection in their lobby for the entire week. Smokin Willy donated a portion of lunch proceeds from two days. Tropical

Smoothie donated a portion of dinner proceeds on Veteran's Day. Haute Dogs and Fries donated a portion of all proceeds from both the Purcellville and Alexandria stores all day on Veteran's Day.

Boulder Crest is a rural sanctuary for wounded military warriors and their families to enjoy non-clinical, recreational therapeutic activities aimed at assisting with their physical, mental, financial and spiritual recovery. The retreat is being developed on 37 acres of land, with funding and volunteer contributions coming from local and national corporations, non-profit organizations, and private citizens.

Carver Center December Events

Ken's Excursion— Holy Cross Abbey
12:30 a.m. -2 p.m. Wednesday, Dec. 11
(Ages 55 & Up)

Join Ken for a trip to Holy Cross Abbey's gift shop and Bakery. Holy Cross Abbey is a Cistercian monastery, located in the Shenandoah Valley (Clark County Virginia) and founded in the late 1950's. The monastery is a working farm, and the Monks operate a bakery, famous for delicious fruit cakes.

The monastery store is filled with books on Cistercian and monastic spirituality, original Icons, greeting cards, candies, preserves, cheese, and coffee from other monasteries.

Miracle on 21st Street
10:30 a.m.-1:20 p.m. Friday, Dec. 13
(Ages 55 & Up)

Spend the morning with Carver Center members exploring the unique specialty shops of historic downtown Purcellville. With the Holidays just around the corner, malls and shopping centers will be crowded. Skip those lines and crowds and spend some time with friends exploring more these intimate spaces. Merchants will be ready to greet you with special treats and/or discounts for senior shoppers.

Plan to meet at 10 a.m. Friday morning at Carver Center. Take the Carver bus or drive yourself. Please Pre-register by Wednesday, Dec. 11 - call 571-258-3400.

Holiday Party
12 -1:30 p.m. Friday, Dec. 20
(Ages 55 & Up)

Carver's annual Holiday Party is a celebration of community. We gather together to share a festive meal in our historic Grand Hall, then enjoy some lively entertainment. Carver's Drama group, under the direction of Mary Long and Lisa Moen, will be performing Don Zolidis' short comedy *Santa-Napped..* Lunch is by donation for those 60 and older. Cost for 55-59 year olds is \$4.

Jerry's Jukebox
7:15 p.m. -8:30 p.m. Tuesday, Dec. 10

Non-members pay a \$2 facility drop-in fee

Are you looking for an opportunity to practice your dancing? Come to Carver on the 2 and 4 Tuesday of each month. Pay a \$2 drop-in fee (or nothing at all if you are a Senior Center member) and get a little bit of help with your moves from volunteer instructor Jerry Smith.

Beginner Line Dance (Ages 55 & up)
Mondays from 1-2 p.m.

Non-members pay a \$2 facility drop-in fee

DECEMBER

☉ **Thursday to Saturday Dec. 5-7 and Dec. 13-14 Loudoun Centre Theatre presents "A Christmas Carol"** at Ticonderoga Farms in South Riding at 7:30 p.m. with matinees on Dec. 7 and 14 at 3:30 p.m. Patrons will need to dress casual and warm for a true Dickensian experience. Tickets can be purchased online at www.thelct.org.

☉ **Friday Dec. 6 and Saturday Dec. 7, Middleburg Garden Club presents "An Old Fashioned Christmas,"** the theme for the holiday standard flower show, greens sale and bazaar. Friday from 2-5 p.m. and Saturday from 10-2 p.m. at Emmanuel Episcopal Church parish hall, 105 E Washington Street.

☉ **Saturday, Dec. 14, Ebenezer United Methodist Church country breakfast with Mr. and Mrs. Claus.** Time is 8-10 a.m. or until they run out of food. Biscuits and sausage gravy, scrambled eggs, sausage patties, home fried potatoes, pancakes, fruit and more. At the firehouse located at 11762 Harpers Ferry Rd., (Rt.671) Purcellville. Free will offering.

☉ **Saturday, Dec. 14, The Oatlands Gingerbread House Contest.** Judging will take place in the Carriage House at noon. Entry is free, but contestants must pre-register by Dec. 9. Please visit www.oatlands.org for rules. Saturday, Dec. 14, turkey and country ham dinner, 11:30 a.m. at Hillsboro United Methodist Church, 37216 Charlestown Pike, Purcellville. Dinner is all you can eat

and there is a free will offering.

☉ **Saturday, Dec. 14 Christmas tree, greens and baked good sale** from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. at Church of Our Saviour on the grounds of the church's farm adjacent to Oatlands on the north side, at 20324 James Monroe Highway 5 miles south of Leesburg right off of Route 15. Fresh Christmas trees right from the farm will be available in all sizes as well as wreathes and other Christmas decorations.

☉ **Saturday, Dec. 14, Forrest Pritchard, author of "Gaining Ground, A Story of Farmers' Markets, Local Food and Saving the Family Farm,"** will speak at 2 p.m. at Middleburg Library, 101 Reed Street in Middleburg. His book will be for sale and signing following the presentation. The program is free and open to the public.

☉ **Dec. 15, 20, 21, and 22, Oatlands candlelight tours** between 5 and 7 p.m. Select evenings will feature live music in the mansion, echoing the sounds of Christmases past at Oatlands, 20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane in Leesburg. Candlelight tours are \$12 for adults, \$10 for seniors and \$8 for children 6 - 16. Go to www.oatlands.org.

☉ **Friday, Dec. 20 at 6:30 p.m., Saturday Dec. 21 and Sunday Dec. 22 at 5:30 p.m., StageCoach Theatre Company presents "Jingle in the Jungle"** at Oatlands, 20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane in Leesburg. The event will feature holiday refreshments and pictures with Santa. Tickets are \$12 for adults and \$10 for children ages 2-12. Tickets are available for purchase at www.stagecoachtc.com.

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Microsoft Awards Blue Ridge Teacher

Blue Ridge Middle School teacher Laura Rahn has been selected to take part in Microsoft's Expert Educator program, created to recognize educators and schools globally who are using technology to transform education.

Rahn was selected by Microsoft for her use of technology to drive student attainment. Having taught for 23 years, she was at a transitional time period in her career. She was trying to challenge herself yet also provide opportunities for her students to become 21st century learners and develop technology skills that will empower them in the future. Through a pilot program with Microsoft and Dell, she was able to create that climate for her 4th grade students during the 2012-13 academic year. Each student in the classroom had a Windows 8 device on their desk and had access to it at any time during the school day.

"Microsoft expert educators and mentor schools are inspiring examples of how individuals and schools are using technology to prepare their students for the 21st Century," said Anthony Salcito, vice president, Worldwide Education, Microsoft Corp. "Not only are they doing innovative work in the classroom, but they are actively mentoring others and creating change within their own education systems. They set an outstanding example for their peers and we are confident that they will benefit from the access to technology they receive as part of Microsoft's ongoing programs."



Laura Rahn is pictured with (right) Andrew Ko – General Manager, Microsoft Partners in Learning, US and (left) Gianni Chryssomitis – Account Executive, US Education for Microsoft.

This year, the Expert Educator program selected 250 educators to be part of an exclusive global community of education leaders who use technology to positively impact learning and student outcomes. Expert Educators receive a range of benefits including an invitation to attend the Microsoft in Education Global Forum in Barcelona, Spain, and free surface devices for their schools.

"I am absolutely thrilled to have been selected as one of Microsoft's Expert Educators," Rahn said. "I look forward to making the most of the mentoring and learning opportunities that are now available to me, as well as being able to connect with like-minded educators at the Microsoft in Education Global Forum. Being a Microsoft Expert Educator will help me to increase learning outcomes for my students, as well as drive technology in education on a global stage."

An Evening Of Folk And Fairy Tales –

Presented By The Loudoun Valley High School Drama Department

The Loudoun Valley High School Drama Department will present an evening of folk and fairy tales on Dec. 6 and 7 at 7 p.m. and Dec. 8 at 2 p.m. Tickets are \$7 and will be sold at the door.

Loudoun Valley's production, titled "The Crane Wife & Other Tales," includes three tales familiar to audiences worldwide. "The Crane Wife," by Barbara Carlisle and directed by Loudoun Valley's new Director of Theater, Russ Staggs, is the story of a young farmer in a small Japanese village who saves a beautiful crane from death and is rewarded with a beautiful bride. When the young farmer discovers his new wife's ability to weave otherworldly cloth to sell at market, his greed overtakes him. Too late, the

young farmer learns his wife's true identity and the secret of her weaving...and loses everything he holds dear. This Japanese tale is followed by two of the Grimm Brother's most famous stories: "Little Red Riding Hood" and "Rumpelstiltskin," adapted by Laura Agudelo and directed by LVHS seniors Amanda Barr and Emily Jackson, respectively. All three stories incorporate direction, costumes, and design influenced by the Kabuki theatre of Japan.

This production is a fun-filled evening for the whole family. Each production will take place in the Loudoun Valley High School Auditorium, and tickets will be sold at the door. Please contact Russ Staggs at 540-751-2400 for further information.

Christmas Market In Lovettsville

The Loudoun Valley German Society is sponsoring the sixth annual Christkindmarkt (traditional European Christmas market) on Dec. 7 and 8 at the Lovettsville Game Protective Association, 16 S. Berlin Turnpike in Lovettsville. Hours are Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and Sunday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Five musical ensembles will be playing traditional German, Austrian, Celtic and Appalachian holiday music. Also featured will be warm typical German Christmas market foods, sweets, Glühwein (mulled wine) and local Microbrews. There will be 25 local artists, crafters and vendors and free children's face and hair painting and German Christmas storytelling by the Harmony Middle School German Language students and two German puppet theatre presentations.

Entrance to the market is \$3 for 13 and older and free for all others and is good for both days. Net proceeds benefit the local Cub Scout pack that the LVGS charters and other local nonprofits.



December will fill your holidays with comedy, theater and song!



Hansel & Gretel: A Loudoun Lyric Opera Production
Fri & Sat, Dec 6 & 7 7PM
Sun, Dec 8 3PM

The familiar fairy tale — set to music by composer Engelbert Humperdink and filled with humor, magic and mayhem — is a perfect way to introduce children and families to the art of opera!
Tickets: \$22 Adult, \$17 Senior, \$12 Children 18 and under
Purchase tickets online and save \$2. www.LoudounLyricOpera.com



Annie: A Main Street Theater Production
Fri, Dec 13 & 20 8PM
Sat, Dec 14 & 21 2PM and 8PM
Sun, Dec 15 & 22 2PM

With equal measures of pluck and positivity, little orphan Annie charms everyone's hearts, despite a next-to-nothing start in 1930s New York City.
Tickets: \$20 Adult, \$15 Student/Senior.
karlahlouis@aol.com or visit www.mainstreettheaterproductions.org



Last Ham Standing:
Friday, Dec. 27 at 8 p.m.

Last Ham Standing. A group of performers take suggestions from the audience to create wacky scenes and funny improv games.

If you like Whose Line Is It Anyway?, you'll love Last Ham Standing. Tickets: \$12 adult, \$10 student, \$8 child.

Visit www.lasham.com to buy tickets online.

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– ARTIST'S PROFILE –

Brown Shop Bears

– The Thing Of Holiday Dreams

– By Andrea Gaines

As West Virginia “teddy bear artist” Treva Blackford describes it, “My inspiration comes from a piece of mohair, vintage clothing or accessories.



Some times a customer will ask for a certain color or style. Sometimes a family member will make a suggestion. I am always trying to come up with new ideas to keep my work interesting.”

But, it is hard to look at Blackford's work – her handcrafted teddy bears, bunnies and foxes – and not believe that her inspiration comes from anything less than heaven itself.

Blackford has been making her creations for 20 years. “What got you started?” I asked. To which she replied, “I had always loved quilts but when I tried to make one I wasn't very good at it so I started making cloth bunnies and other animals. I gradually progressed to mohair teddy bears, bunnies, foxes, etc. Raccoons will be my new animal for 2014!

Most of Blackford's pieces – works of art, really – are made from mohair, which is sheared from the angora goat. The mohair is then woven into a fabric backing, and, after cutting and sewing, she stuffs them with poly-fill. The moveable joints, limbs and head are created using hardboard disks, bolts, washers and locknuts. Eyes are made with antique shoe buttons and/or glass. Ears are hand sewn to the head and the nose and mouth are applied with pearled cotton. Just lovely!



Franklin Park Visual & Performing Arts Center, Dec. 2013 Events

For reservations/tickets call 540-338-7973 or visit www.franklinparkartscenter.org.

In the Franklin Park Gallery, through Monday, Jan. 6, 2014 is the 12th annual Barns & Farms Exhibit. See website for schedule.

Friday, Dec. 6 and Saturday, Dec. 7 at 7 p.m. and Sunday, Dec. 8 at 3 p.m. – Loudoun Lyric Opera: “Hansel and Gretel.” The familiar fairy tale is set to music by composer Englebert Humperdink and filled with humor, magic and mayhem. Tickets: \$22 adult, \$17 senior, \$12 children 18 and under. Purchase tickets online and save \$2. www.LoudounLyricOpera.com.

Friday, Dec. 13 at 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 14 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 15 at 2 p.m., Friday, Dec. 20 at 8 p.m., Saturday, Dec. 21 at 2 p.m. and 8 p.m., Sunday, Dec. 22 at 2 p.m. – Main Street Theater presents “Annie.” See Annie's journey from the orphanage to a happy new home. Tickets: \$20 adult, \$15 student/senior. For tickets go to www.mainstreettheaterproductions.org.

Friday, Dec. 27 at 8 p.m. – Last Ham Standing. A group of performers take suggestions from the audience to create wacky scenes and funny improv games. If you like Whose Line Is It Anyway?, you'll love Last Ham Standing. Tickets: \$12 adult, \$10 student, \$8 child. Visit www.lastham.com to buy tickets online.

Annie, Daddy Warbucks And Sandy Are Coming – Gee Whiskers! Leapin' Lizards!

– By Andrea Gaines

“Annie” the classic, all-ages story based on Harold Gray's Little Orphan Annie comic strip is coming to Franklin Park Visual & Performing Arts Center Dec. 13-22 (Fridays at 8 p.m., Saturdays at 8 p.m. and 2 p.m., and Sundays at 2 p.m.).

The play – as charming as the original comic strip, which came on the scene in 1924 – is a cultural icon. It follows the life and adventures of a young girl named Annie, abandoned by her parents in front of a 1930s orphanage in New York City.

Known for her positive personality – and her sunny and upbeat phrases “Gee Whiskers!” and “Leaping Lizards!” – Annie's story is interesting in that the comic strip's author used his main character to express his opinions on the politics of the day, weaving in plotlines having to do with communism, the Great Depression, the New Deal and others. Annie combats what Grey saw as the negative forces of his times, while helping others to do the same.

Self-reliance, hard work, kindness and other virtues are just three of the common themes Annie comes to represent. Daddy



Talented young actors help make the Main Street Theater's production of Annie – shine.

Warbucks is the wealthy benefactor who takes Annie in. Sandy is the sweet homeless dog she rescues from a gang of boys who had set upon him. Other characters include the nasty Miss Hannigan, who ran the orphanage, and a tall and mysterious East Indian man named Punjab.

This Annie production is by Main Street Theater Productions and features The Songbirds, a local vocal group. Main Street Theater Productions is managed by Karlah Louis. Louis has toured with seven Broadway shows and is also a recipient of the Helen Hayes Award.

Tickets can be reserved by email at karlahlouis@aol.com or by calling 540 751-9588.

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From The Woodgrove High School Student Council Association

The Woodgrove High School Student Council Association has been very busy in the last month with several large and successful events under its belt.

On Oct. 26, it hosted Woodgrove's annual Homecoming Dance. The theme that was chosen by the school was Decades, with each class choosing a different decade. Seniors chose the 1990s, juniors chose the 1970s, sophomores chose the 1980s, and freshmen chose the 2000s. Leading up to the dance, there was an exciting spirit week to pump up the student body. The spirit week included SCA-planned events, such as a stairwell decorating competition between the classes and spirit days. Although every grade did a remarkable

job with their stairwells, the freshmen won the competition with their depiction of the 2000s, earning them Spirit Plate points. The spirit days included decades day (where each class dressed as their respective decade), wacky tacky day, dress like a celebrity day, twin day, and pajama day.

"Spirit week is awesome," said senior Sierra McLaughlin. "I loved being able to see all the cool things people were wearing."

A pep rally was held on Friday, Oct. 25, in order to close the week out with a bang and to excite the student body about that night's football game. The SCA planned several activities that engaged all the students and

celebrated them as a whole.

Senior Destyn Harrison-Phillips said, "Pep rallies are the freaking best because I get to hang out with my friends and laugh at all the activities."

The Homecoming Dance was a success. It raised more than \$10,000 for the school, with more than 800 WHS students and guests in attendance. "The Homecoming Dance was really packed," said senior Tim Murphy. "The music was great and it was fun hanging out my friends."

After the homecoming week, the spirit throughout the school continued to rise. The short school week of Nov. 6 to 8 was

leading up to the football game between the Woodgrove Wolverines and the Loudoun Valley Vikings. The SCA plastered the hallways with noticeable and spirited signs and banners as a way to pump up the school.

"The beat Valley signs really made me excited for the game," said sophomore Leah Onderdonk. "I also loved seeing all the tweets about it too."

On Nov. 8, the day of the game, the SCA held a pep rally. There were several activities that involved the students, including a sweater race and Viking-Wolverine duel. That night, at the game, the Wolverines won, due in part (we'd like to think) to the school's amazing spirit.

FIBER ART

EARTH WIND AND FLEECE

One-of-a-kind alpaca felted silk scarves, from the farm and fiber art studio in Lovettsville. See them at the Ida Lee Holiday Fine Arts and Craft Show, Dec. 7th and 8th or visit website for other info. 703-946-7759

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www.artsinthevillage.com

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Pastor Dave and his wife, Ann with their three children

Children Only Shopping - At Farm Museum

Children are invited to shop at the Loudoun Heritage Farm Museum during the holiday season in the museum's Santa's Secret Shoppe.

The fourth annual Santa's Secret Shoppe will offer a selection of gifts priced under \$10. Children can browse Virginia's products, varieties of toys and stuffed animals, specialty soaps, holiday decorations, and other gifts for the entire family. Santa's helpers will be available to help children wrap purchases with special bags and ribbons. Santa's Secret Shoppe is for children only! Adults are welcome to shop in the museum's regular gift shop.

The shop will be open on Saturdays and Sundays, Nov. 30-Dec. 1, Dec. 7-8, Dec. 14-15 and Dec. 21-22. Hours are Saturdays 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. and Sundays 12-4 p.m.

Once kids have finished shopping in the Museum's Santa's Secret Shoppe, they can mail postcards to Santa at the North Pole from the Waxpool General Store's Post Office.

For more information, go to www.heritagefarmmuseum.org.

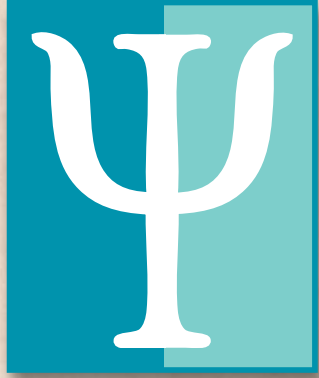
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Holiday Gifts For The Garden

- By Donna Williamson

By now, all the outdoor plants have a nice base of oak leaves snuggled around their feet and the salamanders and solitary bees have found homes out of the weather.

Time to catch up on all those articles and books and think about what worked this past growing season and what to try next year.

In meandering around the internet, I sometimes find a little seed company with a charming seed variety or two that I would love to grow. Last year I found the most delightful 3-foot tall marigolds with big fluffy heads. I used the winter-sowing technique I shared with you earlier this year and germinated half of the seeds. They bloomed well into November and were spectacular.

Glass Gem corn was another new plant I grew this year. Even my small plot of corn grew some beautifully colored ears of this popcorn variety. Unfortunately, it's a very tall grower and I let my plot shade my fish peppers – the most amazing little spicy peppers with variegated foliage and peppers. As a result, my yield of peppers was small. I will remedy that oversight next spring.

So here are a few seed sources that I have had good luck with...some seed packages or gift certificates might make a great holiday gift for your favorite gardener. Native Seeds/SEARCH - Native_SeedSEARCH@mail.vresp.com (Glass Gem) Vermont Bean Seed Company – www.vermontbean.com



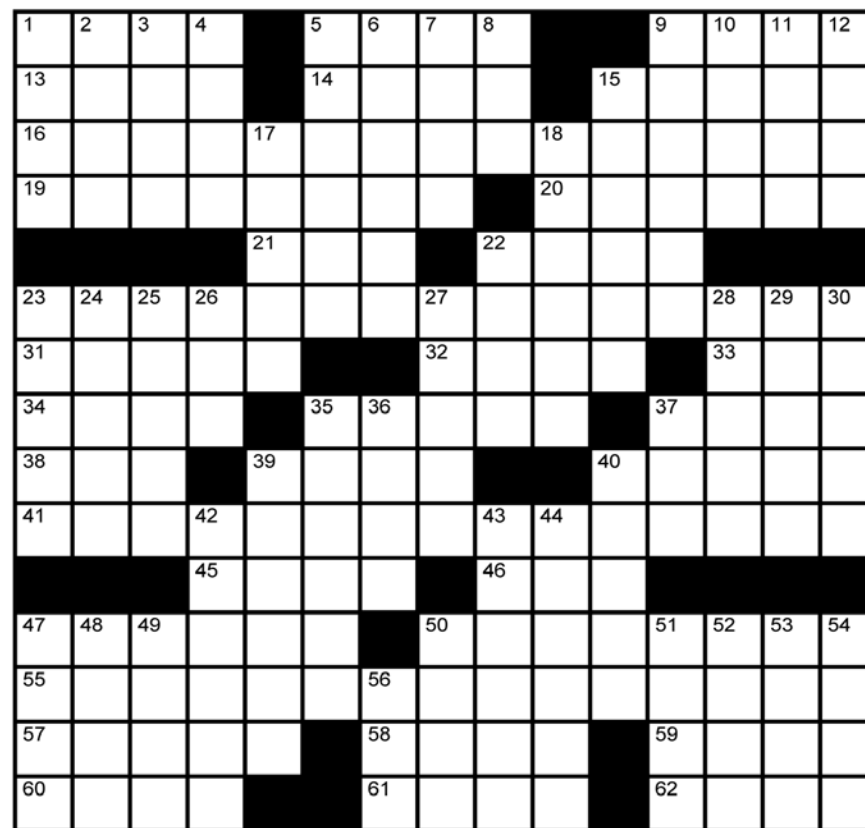
OrangeMarigold

- Pinetree Garden Seeds – www.superseeds.com
- Le Jardin du Gourmet Seed Catalog – ArtisticGardens.com
- Seeds of Italy- www.growitalian.com (Great seeds)
- Seed Savers Exchange – www.seed savers.org
- Wood Prairie Farm – www.woodprairie.com
- Southern Exposure Seed Exchange – SouthernExposure.com
- Daggawalla Seeds and Herbs – daggawalla.com (Aztec marigold)

Hope your holidays are warm and full of laughter and joy.

Donna Williamson is a garden designer and coach. She has taught gardening and design classes at the State Arboretum of Virginia, Oatlands, and Shenandoah University; she continues to hold classes in Waterford each winter. She is working on a revision of her book The Virginia Gardener's Companion. Email donnawilliamson2002@earthlink.net or call her at 540-877-2002. The Waterford class fills quickly and begins on February 5, 2014. Call or email to reserve a space.

Agressive Acts – By Myles Mellor and Sally York



ACROSS

- 1. Like some columns
- 5. Strike
- 9. Cheerless
- 13. Paella pot
- 14. Maintain
- 15. Not fine
- 16. Acquisition method
- 19. Ones at the helm
- 20. "You don't say!"
- 21. "___ time"
- 22. Old Icelandic literary work
- 23. Snubbing
- 31. West Indian folk magic
- 32. Catch
- 33. Farm call
- 34. Fabric
- 35. Acadia National Park locale
- 37. Bakery buy
- 38. Extreme suffix
- 39. Foofaraw
- 40. Ism
- 41. Eluding an officer
- 45. Feeder filler
- 46. Legal org.
- 47. Catalog
- 50. Eccentric
- 55. Kamikaze run?
- 57. X-Men villain, and namesakes
- 58. Place
- 59. Big name in pineapples
- 60. Eyelid woe
- 61. Leavings
- 62. Abreast of

Down

- 1. Cries at fireworks
- 2. Map
- 3. Further
- 4. Watch feature, perhaps
- 5. Fourth letter of Hebrew alphabet
- 6. Exceedingly
- 7. "___ go!"
- 8. Bygone polit. cause
- 9. Tree type
- 10. **** review
- 11. Sheltered
- 12. Maryland stadium
- 15. Gregor Johann ___
- 17. Dander
- 18. Certain federal tax
- 22. Distinctive flair
- 23. Show fear
- 24. Having a lot to lose?
- 25. Boxing blows
- 26. Not dis
- 27. Kind of jack
- 28. Candidate's concern
- 29. Standards
- 30. Reached
- 35. Unaccompanied compositions
- 36. Passage
- 37. Lookout point
- 39. Aggravation
- 40. Harsh Athenian lawgiver
- 42. King Mark's bride
- 43. January's birthstone
- 44. Old calculator
- 47. Does something
- 48. Dirty coat
- 49. Cut down
- 50. Coconut fiber
- 51. African antelope
- 52. Play thing
- 53. Capital near the 60th parallel
- 54. Adult-in-waiting?
- 56. U.N. workers' grp.

answers on page 31

Kitchen Science Kids: Bend-y Bones

- By Leah Enright

Many of us love a fragrant, roasted chicken, and I especially love them because I know a great science activity using a part we often throw away-the bones. So, head to the grocery store and grab a roaster, (and some sweet potatoes if you're hungry), because this is going to be fun.

You'll need:

- 2 jars or glasses that can be used for three days
- Enough white vinegar to fill one of the glasses
- 2 chicken bones of similar size, (the thinner the better)

Clean the meat off of the bones and put one in a glass of water, the other in the glass of vinegar (labeling the water jar 1, and the vinegar jar 2). Wait three days, pull them both out, and try to bend them. What happens? If all went according to plan, the bone in jar 1 stayed the same, while the bone in jar 2 that was stiff and rigid three days ago, is soft and pliable now. Wow. How did that happen? Well, our bones are made of both hard and soft materials. Bones have to be soft enough to heal and grow, yet hard enough to stay sturdy when we fall. What makes them hard - minerals, such as calcium. The chicken bone had plenty



of minerals in it a few days ago, but the vinegar, which is an acid, dissolved it. This applies to you and your body, too. Minerals keep your bones and teeth hard, and acids dissolve those minerals - so be sure to brush your teeth after drinking acidic beverages like soda or orange juice, and eat plenty of calcium rich foods like yogurt and green leafy vegetables.

So, minerals make bones hard, and that is important for all of the bones in your body.

Leah Enright lives in Round Hill, works as a hair stylist at Hair Cuttery in Purcellville, and loves kids and science. She welcomes suggestions and feedback at mizbeytac@yahoo.com

Caring For Our Seniors:

Creating Safe And Memorable Holidays



Introduction: As families gather together over the holidays and begin to plan the year ahead, a topic that often comes up is how to ensure parents and other seniors get the right care and live as independently as possible as they age. This is part two of a three-part series that will discuss various topics that might come up as a family gathers around the holiday table and look at the issue of how to care for their loved ones.

Last month we discussed the practical side of how to care for our seniors. Specifically, how to protect our seniors from accidental falls, the number one reason why seniors require hospitalization.

This month, as the December and New Years holidays approach, consider the softer side of caring for our seniors; the emotional side.

Experts in senior medicine from the University of California at San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine offer the following advice to help ensure that older adults enjoy the best of the holidays while minimizing the stress, confusion and depression that can sneak up on them in this emotionally-charged time of year.*

- 1. Create and preserve memories.** "Leading authorities have observed that memory and 'life review' are important parts of the aging process," says Barry Lebowitz, Ph.D., deputy director of UCSD's Stein Institute for Research on Aging. "Older people whose memories are impaired may have difficulty remembering recent events, but they are often able to share stories and observations from the past. These shared memories are important for the young as well – children enjoy hearing about how it was 'when your parents were your age ...'." He suggests using picture albums, family videos and music, even theme songs from old radio or TV programs, to help stimulate memories and encourage older seniors to share their stories and experiences. In addition to memories, seniors need new things to anticipate. Add something new to the holiday celebration, or volunteer for your family to help others. Enjoy activities that are free, such as taking a drive to look at holiday decorations, or window-shopping at the mall or along a festive downtown street.

- 2. Plan some downtime.** If older family

members tire easily or are vulnerable to over-stimulation, limit the number of activities they are involved in or the length of time they are included. The noise and confusion of a large family gathering can lead to irritability or exhaustion, so schedule time for a nap, if necessary, and consider designating a "quiet room" where an older person can take a break.

- 3. Avoid embarrassing moments.** Try to avoid making comments that could inadvertently embarrass an older friend or family member who may be experiencing short-term memory problems. If an older person forgets a recent conversation, for example, don't make it worse by saying, "Don't you remember?"

- 4. Reach out.** Social connectedness is especially important at holiday times. "Reaching out to older relatives and friends who are alone is something all of us should do," Lebowitz says. "Loneliness is a difficult emotion for anyone. Recent research with older people has documented that loneliness is associated with major depression and with suicidal thoughts and impulses."

- 5. Beat the blues.** "Holiday blues" are feelings of profound sadness that can be provoked by all the activities of the holiday season. Seasonal blues can have a particular impact in the lives of older people, according to Lebowitz. "In some people, the 'holiday blues' represent the exacerbation of an ongoing depressive illness," he says. "Depression is a dangerous and life-threatening illness in older people. Tragically, suicide rates increase with age, specifically for older men. Depression is not a normal part of aging and should never be ignored or written off."

- 6. Keep on the sunny side.** Seasonal affective disorder (SAD) or winter depression is an illness that can be provoked by reductions in sunlight during the short days of winter. It is important for people confined indoors, especially those at risk for winter depression, to make time for activities that will increase exposure to daylight, according to Lebowitz.

- 7. Monitor medications and alcohol.** If you have senior family members, be sure to help them adhere to their regular schedule of medications during the frenzy of the holidays. Also, pay attention to their alcohol consumption during holiday parties and family gatherings. Alcohol can provoke inappropriate behavior or interfere with medications.

**Excerpted and summarized from the University of California, San Diego (UCSD) School of Medicine website.*

Dr. Mike, continued from page 2

Individuals who binge drink experience physical, social, emotional and financial hardships at a higher rate than those who don't binge drink. Binge drinking is also associated with higher rates of strokes and sudden death, as well as fetal alcoholism, mental retardation and stillbirths for pregnant women. The Center for Disease Control and Prevention offers a helpful on-line fact sheet on binge drinking at: <http://www.cdc.gov/alcohol/fact-sheets/binge-drinking.htm>.

The description you give of your husband's drinking is more consistent with alcohol abuse rather than alcohol dependence. Unlike a true alcoholic, your husband appears to be able to go for long stretches of time without any alcohol, but his impulse control and judgment becomes compromised at those times when he does consume alcohol. In my opinion, the distinction between alcohol abuse and alcohol dependence is not that important here. What is important is that your husband's drinking is causing both of you problems, and he needs help.

I recommend that your husband see a therapist or psychologist trained in addiction and substance abuse counseling to better understand his drinking behaviors (including his motivations) and to learn better coping strategies for himself. That therapist may also wish to include you in your husband's treatment, as your husband will very likely need your support in making changes.

Dr. Mike,

After nearly 30 years of marriage, my husband has approached me with the request to see other people romantically. He reported that he hasn't been happy with me for some time and that he met someone

who does make him happy. I have to admit none of this should come as a surprise to me since we haven't slept in the same bed for years and nor have we been intimate in years. Somewhere in there with raising kids and having busy careers we seemed to have grown very far apart. Part of me is of course hurt and angry, but part of me is OK with his request. I can't imagine getting divorced, but I suppose that is an option as well. Any help you can offer is appreciated.

Concerned in Loudoun County

Out of respect to yourselves individually and to your marriage, I think both you and your husband should seek the assistance of a therapist credentialed in your area of need. What's at stake here is far too great for either of you to make any sort of change or decision without careful thought and planning. While it seems that your husband has been tempted to find happiness outside of your marriage, he has also come to you to discuss things first. You don't mention children in your letter, but if children are involved (even adult children) you also should consider the ramifications that an open marriage would have on them. A well-credentialed and experienced therapist should be able to help the two of you figure out why the "somewhere in there" happened and what the next best steps are for your marriage. That professional will either respectfully help the two of you come together again or redefine your future apart.

Michael Oberschneider "Dr. Mike" is founder and director of Ashburn Psychological Services, a private mental health clinic comprised of 12 MD and PhD level mental health clinicians. To learn more go to www.ashburnpsych.com or call 703 723-2999.

Letters To The Editor, continued from page 4

the polls, organized behind the scenes, endorsed me, wrote letters on my behalf, and otherwise gave of your effort, time, and treasure, I am very grateful. Many of you gave very much, and many could only help in small ways, but all of you played an essential part in our campaign. Congratulations on a job well done!

I would also like to take a moment to thank a good friend of mine, Ben Belrose, who passed away shortly before the election. Ben wasn't just a reliable and faithful hand on the campaign trail; he was an outstanding neighbor, citizen, and friend. Our prayers are with his family.

To everyone who worked just as hard to elect my opponent in the race; I respect your effort, and your opinions. I know we all want to see Virginia and our district prosper, and I am committed to serving you with the same dedication that I give every constituent.

My job as Delegate gives me the opportunity to serve all the people in the district regardless of whether we agree on everything or not. I am excited about that opportunity.

I met with thousands of you over the last few months, and appreciate your advice and concerns. Please be part of the ongoing collaborative effort that I know will bring forth truly great ideas. Please contact me if there is any issue that I can assist you with. My number is 540-751-8043. Sincerely,
Dave LaRock

21st Street Is Charming And Authentic

Dear Editor:

Purcellville's old-town business district on 21st Street is charming and appealing because it is authentic. Many of the businesses have changed over the years, but the exteriors of the buildings have remained essentially the same.

A drugstore becomes a restaurant. A car dealership becomes a furniture store, then a gift store, then a distillery. Part of another auto dealership becomes a storage facility and then a bazaar. A grain mill becomes a restaurant and another mill becomes a bicycle shop and bookstore. On and on, the buildings are adapted and modified in a natural progression to accommodate new enterprises without destroying the basic architectural character of the old town.

Why demolish low-key, human-scaled authentic buildings to construct over-scaled, faux structures touted, of all things, as Vineyard Square? Why replace the real with the fake?

What would be next - tear down the wonderful houses along the west end of Main Street and replace them with high-rise condominiums?

Bruce Hopkins
Purcellville


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Answers to crossword puzzle from page 29

1	O	P	E	D	5	D	E	L	E	9	D	R	A	B											
13	O	L	L	A	14	A	V	E	R	15	M	E	A	L	Y										
16	H	O	S	T	17	I	L	E	T	18	K	E	O	V	E	R									
19	S	T	E	E	R	E	R	S	20	I	N	D	E	E	D										
21	I	T	S	22	E	D	D	A	23	C	O	L	D	S	H	O	U	L	D	E	R	I	N	G	
31	O	B	E	A	H	32	N	A	I	L	33	M	O	O											
34	W	E	F	T	35	M	A	I	N	E	37	T	A	R	T										
38	E	S	T	39	T	O	D	O	40	D	O	G	M	A											
41	R	E	S	42	I	S	T	I	N	43	G	A	R	R	E	S	T								
45	S	U	E	T	46	A	B	A	47	A	S	S	O	R	T	50	C	R	A	C	51	S	2	53	54
55	C	O	L	L	I	S	56	I	O	N	C	O	U	R	S	E									
57	T	O	A	D	S	58	L	I	E	U	59	D	O	L	E										
60	S	T	Y	E	61	O	R	T	S	62	U	P	O	N											



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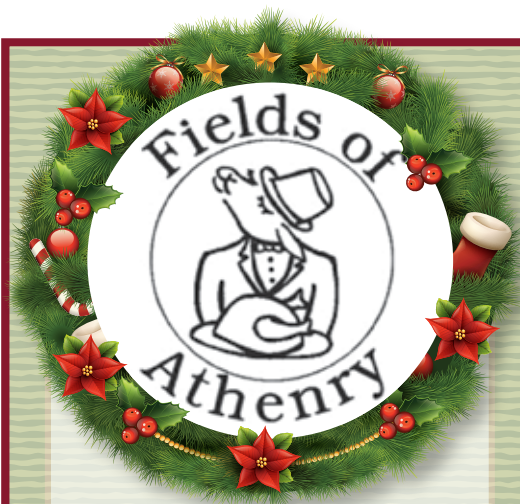
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