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Finding The West's Economic Sweet Spot



Envision Loudoun Update

– By Andrea Gaines

As the County's Comprehensive Plan rewrite enters its six month, fiscal conservatives, preservationists and leaders on the Rural Economic Development Council are working overtime to spur economic innovation in the rural west – spark some change that while a bit surprising, will also have a feel that is quintessential Loudoun.

Board of Supervisors' Chair Phyllis Randall said in a recent interview, that the key to saving the west is to "monetize" – or increase the economic value of land

– "without putting houses on it," giving investors and people who make a living off the land more opportunities to participate in the rural economy.

From a planning perspective, this means stepping back and taking the long view – a concept identified in what planners know as *The Long View* book. And, a concept that also serves as the framework for the REDC's detailed working document, *The Long View – A Business Development Plan for Loudoun County's Rural Economy*.

Continued on page 18

**Sadie's Race
5K & Fun Run**

May 21st 2017

8:30am

SmileTrain

Cannons In the Batter's Box For Second Season



– By Andrea Gaines

This year marks the Purcellville Cannons' 2nd season in Purcellville. Baseball fans, rejoice.

"If I could identify one thing that I hope to accomplish this year," said General Manager Ridge Fuller, "it would be to sustain the level of community support we got in 2016. To come in new to town and be almost instantly known and recognized, was just amazing."

Purcellville loves its baseball ... and the honeymoon isn't even over yet. During the 2016 season, the Cannons attracted a record 500 to 700 fans per game, and hit it out of the park by attracting 1,200 guests on opening night. One-thousand two-hundred cheering

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Town Manager Retires Amid Controversy

– By Valerie Cury

At the April 25 Purcellville Town Council Meeting, Robert W. Lohr, Jr., who has served as Town Manager for nearly 25 years, announced his retirement, effective July 1, 2017. His letter to the Council stated, "It has been an honor and privilege to serve the wonderful Town of Purcellville since 1993 but I now need to explore the next chapter in my life so I am announcing my retirement ...". He continued, "I can assure you that this has been one of my family's toughest decisions in our lives, but I am blessed with a loving wife and children that have encouraged me to take this leap of faith into the next chapter of my life, much like I did when I came here almost 25 years ago."

After Lohr's announcement, Mayor Kwasi Fraser shared a statement thanking Lohr for his long service. Said Fraser, "It has been a privilege working with you."

The April 25 meeting was largely attended by pro-growth advocates including



developers, pro-development associations and support businesses, and former council members who pursued pro-growth policies and their local supporters as well as current and former Town staff members.

Following the comments from Lohr and Fraser, Council Member Doug McCollum, who was not up for reelection last May but has a voting record that closely resembles that of former pro-growth council members, made allegations that sharply diverged from the tenor of Lohr and Fraser's public comments. McCollum claimed that in the Town Council's closed session meetings, he attempted to change the course of the

Council with respect to Lohr's retirement. McCollum then accused the majority of Council stating, "Little did I know that a majority of the Council had already decided to separate the Town Manager from his position and to negotiate a buyout. I heard the Town Manager indicate repeatedly at the April 11 closed session that he had ideas for addressing issues raised in the evaluations. None of those council members who had critical evaluations extended him the courtesy of hearing his ideas."

The Blue Ridge Leader contacted Mr. Lohr on April 26, 2017 to verify or otherwise explain conflicting statements made by Council Member McCollum. Refuting McCollum's account, Lohr stated, "I retired. It was my decision."

Council Member Kelli Grim said, "As I listened to the accusations, I am not going to violate the closed session and the employment exemptions that exist. It clearly states that Mr. Lohr gave us his intention to retire for reasons that are

Continued on page 22

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ASK DR. MIKE

– By Michael Oberschneider,
Psy.D.



Dr. Mike

Dr. Mike, Our daughter, who is a sophomore in high school, is furious with us for not allowing her to go to beach week this year with her boyfriend who is graduating from high school in June. While we trust our daughter and really like her boyfriend, we're not comfortable with her being at the beach with a large group of unsupervised rowdy teenagers where drinking and drugs will be present. Her position is that she's super responsible at home with chores and helping out, she gets excellent grades and doesn't drink alcohol or do drugs. Her other point is that she will be in college in two years anyway where there will be alcohol and drugs so why be so controlling. All of her points are valid, so are we being overly controlling?

– Concerned Parents

Dear Concerned Parents,

As a sophomore, I agree with you that your daughter is too young to be away

from home and unsupervised in this sort of environment. I recommend that you let her know that you are proud of her for the choices she's made for herself in life thus far as a teenager; that it's really the situation you don't trust and not her.

You can point out that research has consistently shown that teens who drink are vulnerable to exercising poor judgement and impulse control and to acting-out physically, sexually and/or aggressively. And teens who drink are also more likely to be the victim of sexual or physical assault.

Perhaps you could also let her know that graduating from high school is a rite of passage moment, and senior beach week is a time to celebrate that accomplishment with peers – and that in two years you are confident that she will be ready when it's her senior beach week.

We all remember things we wanted to do when we were younger that our parents denied us. But sometimes parents need to make the hard decisions, even if it doesn't win us points with our children.

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MOTHER'S DAY Open House

Friday, May 12th and Saturday, May 13th
10:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

Please join Waltonwood Ashburn for a "Waltini" – our signature sparkling wine drink – mimosas, and light brunch.

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Sponsor A Painted Bench Or Planter

Discover Purcellville is proud to announce that the 3rd community art project "Painted Benches & Planters Around Purcellville" is under way. Fifty local Artist have volunteered their creative talents to paint 30 custom made wood benches and 20



local art are going to make a huge artistic impact around Purcellville this summer according to Michael Oaks, Vice President of Discover Purcellville. "Last year we had the "Painted Barrels around Purcellville" and the "Painted Holiday Decorations Downtown Purcellville" which were both tremendously popular," said Oaks. To sponsor a bench or planter, contact Michael Oaks or Kim Patterson at 540 751-0707.



Join Us

At the 6th Annual Sadie's Race 5K and Kids Fun Run Fundraiser for Smile Train!

Sunday May 21st 2017

Purcellville Train Station
200 N 21st Street, Purcellville, VA

7am - Packet pick-up and Registration

8am - Kids' Fun Run

8:30am - 5K

Learn more about Smile Train and register for Sadie's Race at sadiesmilefoundation.org



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Photo by Almond Photography

Sarah Ablard

Honoring Sadie's Endless Smile

— By Andrea Gaines

"I remember meeting a 63-year-old man who had just had the surgery," said Sara Ablard. "He had been held back by his cleft palate all of his life. He never knew that it could be fixed."

This man's story is now part of the legacy of five-year-old Sadie Grace Ablard, Sara's daughter, who, as her mom writes, "joined her angel friends in heaven" on August 9, 2011, after sustaining a head injury at the Purcellville Roller Rink.

The Blue Ridge Leader caught up with Sara as she prepared for the 6th Annual Sadie's Race 5K & Kids Fun Run for Smile Train, which will

be held in the early morning hours of May 21, at the Purcellville Train Station.

As a five-year-old, Sadie saw posters about the thousands of children worldwide being helped by The Smile Train, an organization that funds the \$250 surgery needed to repair the birth defect known as cleft lip or cleft palate. When Sadie died, Ablard jumped on that train, and she's been raising money for the organization in Sadie's honor ever since.


Said Ablard, "I was afraid that people would be sympathetic at the beginning, but fade into the background as the years went by. But, it hasn't happened that way. People donate year

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· loudoun county, va ·

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KITCHEN REMODELING DESIGN TIP: *Finding Focal Points*

Avoid confusing and visually busy patterns in your kitchen space by selecting one or two focal points. Invest in items that will make the strongest impact. A backsplash, accent countertops, furniture, textured walls, and fixtures can all act as the foundation of your focal point.



BASEMENT REMODELING DESIGN TIP: *Endless Possibilities*

Basements are ideal for entertaining adults and children. Incorporating good lighting and maximizing space along with adding built-in shelving and storage areas are few things to consider when you're planning the layout and design.



BATHROOM REMODELING DESIGN TIP: *Capturing the Resort Feel*

Plan on a variety of shower heads like a ceiling mounted rain shower and a body sprayer for a spa-resort like feel. Free standing or pedestal bathtubs make a nice focal point in a bathroom. Ceiling-mounted light fixtures add style and sparkle, while additional wall-mounted lights positioned at eye level illuminate your face from both sides.



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Transportation: Problem Solving And Promises Kept

– By Delegate Dave LaRock (R-33)

Four years ago I came before the voters of the 33rd District, challenging the status quo transportation funding policies that sent our taxes to other parts of the state while leaving us sitting in traffic. I called out projects like the Dulles Rail Project, Coalfields Expressway, and Rt. 460 which would spend billions of dollars without fixing congestion. Here we are four years later, and where do we stand? We are seeing big progress.

My first session in Richmond the legislature completely transformed transportation spending by passing House Bill 2, now known as “SmartScale,” which rates all projects through an objective cost-benefit system. I was one of the dozen co-patrons of this key legislation and moved it forward to fulfill my campaign promise. Aubrey Layne is secretary of transportation for the Commonwealth of Virginia and chairman of the Commonwealth Transportation Board. In a recent news article, he hit the nail on the head saying, “...we have worked with the General Assembly to radically change, for the better, the delivery and funding of transportation projects. These changes have resulted in the most significant improvements to major urban corridors in more than 30 years.”



**Del.
Dave LaRock**

The next year, 2015, I introduced legislation (HB 1470) which passed unanimously to make transit (commuter trains and buses) projects go through the same objective congestion relief analysis as road projects, removing a loophole that favored transit projects inside the beltway. But a rating system loses its value if weighting of the different factors gets out of whack. For example, if development is weighted too high, congestion relief loses out. So later in 2015, I fought to get the HB2/SmartScale congestion relief factor in project rating increased from 35 to 45 percent, making traffic-reduction a stronger priority.

In 2016, my legislation to protect kids getting on and off school buses (HB168) passed, as did legislation (HB1069) to protect drivers from unreasonable fees and penalties for unpaid tolls; another bill (HB181) increased Loudoun County’s representation on the Northern Virginia Transportation Commission.

This year I introduced a “Transportation Lockbox” resolution which proposes amending the Virginia Constitution to restrict use of monies appropriated for transportation - to be used for transportation. In spite of

warnings based on prior failed attempts that this was just too difficult to get through the legislature without being ruined by amendments, with help from the business community and AAA, we did pass a clean resolution with solid bi-partisan support.

That brings us to the present and what I’m working on going forward. First, the Transportation Lockbox job isn’t done – it needs to pass the legislature again in the 2018 session and then be approved by voters in Nov. 2018. Secondly, there is a huge transportation funding issue facing Northern Virginia, including Loudoun County: The dire need for improvements to the Washington Metro. Many leaders are saying a regional sales tax to fund improvements to Metro is necessary. That is not the way to go. It would burden my constituents with a new Metro tax even when they don’t use or benefit from the system. When Loudoun opted into extending Metro, station-area property tax districts were formed to offset costs. That same approach is the way to make those businesses and developers who are profiting pay whatever is not covered by fares.

Finally, I am excited to see these landmark reforms paying off. With support from local governments, we are making real progress in improving transportation here in the 33rd District. Upcoming projects in Loudoun include the Rt. 7/Rt. 690 interchange in

Purcellville, the Route 7/Williams Gap Road turn lane, Battlefield Parkway between the Greenway and Rt. 15, Route 15 Interchange at Edwards Ferry/Fort Evans Road, paving a few high-volume gravel roads, replacing structurally deficient bridges, and more. VDOT is also studying the need to improve Eastbound Rt. 7 between Purcellville and Leesburg, and Rt. 15 North of Leesburg. Upcoming Rt. 7 interchanges at Battlefield Pkwy, Belmont Ridge Rd, and Ashburn Village Blvd will also help my constituents who travel to the east.

While there is still much to do, I’ve been working hard to get traffic moving with smart planning and careful use of funds, without raising taxes. We are seeing the good results.

Delegate Dave LaRock represents the 33rd House District, including parts of Loudoun, Clarke and Frederick Counties, and the towns of Leesburg (partial), Purcellville, Berryville, Lovettsville, Round Hill, Hamilton and Hillsboro. LaRock serves on the Transportation Committee, the Science and Technology Committee and the Education Committee. Dave and his wife, Joanne, have lived in Loudoun for 29 years, building a successful family-owned general contracting business. The LaRocks reside near Hamilton with Laura, Abby, and John, the youngest of their seven children.

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We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary.
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each month, or, online any time.

Letters To The Editor

Council Moving Forward With People’s Values

Dear Editor:

After two years serving with Mayor Kwasi Fraser in a minority position on the Purcellville Town Council, voters went to the polls in May 2016 to express their desire for continued change and allow us a platform to create meaningful change.

More importantly, voters said it was time for new council dynamics. The public had witnessed a hostile council that for two years attempted to marginalize new ideas, usurp the Mayor’s authority, and took every opportunity to disparage us in the public sphere. The promise of delivering a positive way of doing business and reasonably handling the challenges that face the town prevailed with the 2016 election.

This Council has been told by some that it needs to “move beyond the fruitless effort to lay blame” toward previous Councils. It is necessary to acknowledge that we are limited by the enormous debt incurred by previous councils because we have to explain to the public why we can’t build them sidewalks, bike paths or parks, or improve road intersections they request. When a resident or business complains about their high water/sewer rates it is important to give background as to why they are charged those amounts.

The public has been clear to us about their values. They voted in those they felt

would be more creative and find simpler solutions to our complex problems. The overwhelming majority of people in Purcellville are open to strategies and creativity in an effort to lower our tax burden and utility rates, as well as keeping our Town unique and full of character.

On April 11 and 18th, what the Council did new was give the Town Manager his annual review as required in his employment agreement. During his decades long career, all seven members of a council have never completed his review at once, until this year. What should have been a routine process became perverted by innuendo and reckless rumors.

This Council has challenged the status quo and engaged in constructive confrontation. We are determined to impose the people’s values with fundamental and strategic resolutions. Simply put, we will continue to repair the damage caused by a bad values agenda. This Council has devoted time and energy in pushing forward the people’s values and I feel confident in the direction Purcellville is headed.

*Karen Jimmerson
Purcellville Vice-Mayor*

Cluster Development: The Worst Of The Worst

Dear Editor:

Under the Revised Zoning Ordinance, residential lots can be as small as about one

acre if they are “clustered.” Regular zoning in AR-1 districts limits developers to 20 acres per house; but by using the cluster option, developers are able to build new houses with only five acres per house. This has turned into a disaster.

The cluster option came from a meritorious idea: Re-create little groupings of houses surrounded a good bit of open space (think Philomont, Bloomfield or Morrisonville), and the rural experience is protected. The idea failed. Clusters, are poison to country life.

The first problem is obvious: cluster zoning enables developers to quadruple density; with an unholy effect on our pocketbooks and our quality of life.

The second problem is execution. Developers pour over the zoning regulations, looking for loopholes to slide their project through with the least hassle. Developers work hard and spread around a lot of money to get their way. A classic example was the Short Hill Mountain imbroglio, where AT&T tried to define a data center as a “utility substation.” Housing developers work hard to find loopholes, inconsistencies and ambiguities, as well – to justify dense development. They love clusters.

While the RZO does say that clusters should not look like typical subdivision streets, developers have been allowed to build long rows of cookie-cutter houses – like any generic subdivision – and call it a “cluster.”

Our RZO is woefully deficient. Here are a

April 11 Town Council Meeting

– By Valerie Cury

The Purcellville Town Council discussed a variety of topics at its April 11 meeting, including taxes and revenues from property sales.

No Tax Increases

The Purcellville Town Council set the property tax rate of \$0.22 (rate is per \$100 of assessed value) for the FY18 budget, keeping the rate the same as last year. There was likewise no change in the Fireman's Field Service Tax District rate, as well as the personal property tax for vehicles, and for the business tax.

Council Member Nedim Ogelman said that he was in favor of not raising any of the rates, saying, "I look at all of these taxes, and the water and sewer rates, and what we heard from the citizens during the election season. What we are trying to do is to manage the debt, what we have inherited from the previous council under Mayor Lazaro. So, we are trying to be able to manage that debt, and also trying to keep peoples' rates as low as possible." Ogelman also said that with all the taxes, and water and sewer rates, the main goal is to "figure out how we can service the debt, manage our government's size, and not put any additional burdens on our citizens."

Vice Mayor Karen Jimmerson said she considered lowering the rate by a half a cent from the current and proposed \$0.22 rate,

"It is my hope that all \$300,000 will go to servicing the Wastewater debt. This is exactly the kind of effort we should be pursuing to keep the water and sewer rates low."

– Council Member Nedim Ogelman

as personal property tax assessments on the average person's property went up five to seven percent. Said Jimmerson, "If we take a flat-line approach, everybody's taxes will go up roughly that amount of money. That's a big change for a lot of people ... taking off a half penny would ... lead to a two to three percent rise instead of a five to seven percent rise. We would still get more tax revenues, and it might soften the blow for our citizens."

Mayor Kwasi Fraser said his preference would have been to lower the property tax rate. But, there was a need to make sure the General Fund is "self-sufficient and self-supporting" – so he would like the rates to remain where they are. "As we look at chargebacks, I see them as a way over the past 10 years – to fund the General Fund by taking money from the Utility Fund." Fraser continued, "I believe with these taxes, we can continue to fund the General Fund without relying on chargebacks. I say that, because my recommendation on the budget that I will be proposing to this Council is to reduce chargebacks. My focus is on the reduction

of chargebacks in the Utility Fund, so our businesses and our citizens can benefit from lower water and sewer rates."

A chargeback is an accounting mechanism by which the Town pays staff from other funds. For example, if the finance team, which falls under the General Fund, provides a financial report or services for the sewer or water department – the cost of that report or services is paid for from the Utility Fund – which is a chargeback. This practice puts stress on the Utility Fund, resulting in pressure to either raise utility rates or grow. However, eliminating chargebacks would alleviate pressure to increase the utility rates. Currently, the 2018 proposed budget calls for \$1.2 million in chargebacks.

Mary's House Of Hope Funds

Council voted to move \$300,000 from the sale of Mary's House of Hope – at 781 South 20th Street – from the General Fund to the Town's Wastewater Fund.

Fraser said that this was Council's first green box initiative (ideas for generating revenue), and that the entire proceeds will

be used to reduce the Wastewater Fund.

Ogelman said, "It is my hope that all \$300,000 will go to servicing the Wastewater debt. This is exactly the kind of effort we should be pursuing to keep the water and sewer rates low." He said that this was just the kind of project "we need to ease the debt burden we have inherited."

Reservoir Property Timber Harvest And Watershed Access Committee

The Town will be doing selective timbering on a portion of the 1,272-acre watershed property it owns. The contract went to Blue Triangle Hardwoods, which was the highest bidder – for \$205,522.25. The selective cut will be at the northern part of the property.

Said Fraser, "We are not in the business of indiscriminately cutting our trees down. This will be all selective cutting. Selective cutting keeps in mind the environmental benefits of the cut, it is not a flash cut."

On a side note concerning the watershed property, the Town Council moved forward with Mayor Fraser's proposal to form a subcommittee to look into an equitable policy for citizen recreational access to the reservoir property. Currently, only staff, guests, and council can access the property. Mayor Fraser and Council Member Ogelman will represent Council on the Watershed Access Committee.

Letters To The Editor continued ...

few examples of requirements that would help:

- Permit no more than three houses in a row before there is a side street; long enough to accommodate two houses. Side streets should be mandatory – they create a true cluster.
- The zoning ordinance should use drawings to illustrate cluster requirements.
- Large properties can have multiple clusters, but each should have a maximum of 20 houses with at least 700 feet between clusters.
- The road into the subdivision should not be paved unless it intersects an already-paved road, to better fit into the environment.
- There should be significant setbacks for the first houses, perhaps 700 feet.

Finally, any new development should blend into rural Loudoun, not assault it aesthetically. Apply effective design standards; like those required in nearby historic districts.

Charles Houston
Paeonian Springs

Is The Loudoun County Planning Department Listening?

Dear Editor:

The Northern Virginia development industry is conducting a well-funded effort to justify a new onslaught of development in

Loudoun County that citizens don't want and the county can't afford, as the county revises its Comprehensive Plan. This campaign appears to be warmly welcomed by Loudoun County's Planning Department.

Industry members have sponsored and promoted spurious "surveys" and "research" in the past few years that first say how wonderful it is to live in Loudoun and how happy everyone is (as a campaign to create "demand"), and then produced an "analysis" that says there is a huge demand for new housing.

It is a much more sophisticated approach than the one citizens experienced during the 2004-07 Board of Supervisors, with Supervisor Steve Snow telling citizens to move to Canada if they didn't like the Board's votes to approve thousands more houses, as massive numbers of citizens protested against the onslaught of overdevelopment. (Snow and other supervisors were later investigated by the FBI, and were voted out at the next election.)

Here are some of the recent "surveys" and "studies."

A 2012 survey of "Best Counties in America," which also put Loudoun at the top, was a "survey" that rated such few things as "new housing starts" as the definition of "best." The survey was produced and promoted by a real estate blog.

The SmartAsset.com website, which

promotes the interests of housing developers, repeatedly has "ranked" Loudoun as happiest county for about three years—based on a slender and selective list of criteria (it's primarily an assessment of wealth; it doesn't include, for example, traffic congestion or citizen concerns about overdevelopment).

The housing need study that the Planning Department has embraced was produced by the George Mason University Center for Regional Analysis, which has received more than \$10 million from real estate/mortgage executive Dwight Schar (there is even an endowed chair named after him). Schar's company, NVR Inc., is the parent company of Ryan Homes. The parent and its child have massive interests in Loudoun, with at least 14 large housing developments (many near the Transition Area).

The study's methodology is deeply flawed. It contains major technical errors and the Planning Department has not validated the inputs, checked the forecast for reasonableness, or examined its implications. It calls for total "build-out" of the Transition Area (which separates the suburban East from the rural West) – as a preliminary move to complete development of Loudoun's rural area.

Citizens have forcefully expressed their opposition to this scenario. A scientific poll conducted recently by the University of Virginia shows that Loudoun's citizens

consider overdevelopment and traffic congestion their greatest concerns. That also was citizen's overwhelming message during the Envision Loudoun public input sessions in 2016 and early this year.

If you are one of thousands of citizens who took the time to tell the planning department about Loudoun's future, you will be dismayed to know how little regard was given to your input. Here's what happened: The comments were sorted robotically according to keywords (often perversely), and the first 144 characters of each were put into a spreadsheet. The Comprehensive Plan Stakeholders Committee (which has an overwhelming majority of development industry representatives), spent a total of 75 minutes in a perfunctory review of the thousands of partial comments and providing the county's planners with several-word "ideas" that "captured" them. That's it.

On May 3, the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce, which is closely aligned and funded by the development industry, hosted an event promoting the GMU study's call for tens of thousands more houses in the Transition Area.

If you are concerned about overdevelopment and congestion in Loudoun, and do not want its quality of life and beauty destroyed, it is time to sit up and pay attention.

Martha Polkey
Lucketts



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Community Information Meeting For O'Toole Property

There will be a community information meeting at the Carver Center, 200 Willie Palmer Way, Purcellville, Thursday, May 18 from 6:30-7:30 p.m. to discuss the O'Toole Property project.

The O'Toole property is located at the southeast corner of Rt. 287 and Business Rt. 7, near the traffic circle on Main Street, and the property consists of two lots totaling 12.46 acres. The property is zoned Transition X – and located within the Historic Corridor Overlay District. A portion of the site is also located within the minor flood plain – a Federal Emergency Management Agency flood zone.

The owner of the property is asking for one of the most dense zonings – MC – Mixed Use Commercial, to consist of 72,000 square feet of commercial, to include restaurants, retail offices, an assisted living facility, and a three-story hotel.

Sadie's Endless Smile, continued from page 4

after year after year, and new people come in. It puts the wind in our sails. They come out in the rain. It keeps us thankful.”

“You must have seen a lot of really extraordinary things doing this work,” I said, referring back to the 63-year old. “Yes,” said Ablard. “We have travelled to Tanzania, to the very remote areas of the Maasai.” She continued, “Their culture fears that a cleft palette is the work of the devil, and those born with the defect live hard lives. Many don't marry, and have trouble eating, speaking, even breathing. When I showed them a picture of an infant born with a cleft palette, and a picture of the child as a young boy – the cleft palette gone

– they were amazed.”

Smile Train, and people like Ablard are spreading that message ... and more. Said Sara Ablard, “When we go into communities, we teach local doctors how to perform the surgery. Our work is sustainable. We're building medical capacity as we change the lives of these children.”

To get involved with the Smile Train and Ablard's efforts, go to www.sadiesmilefoundatin.org. Registration for the Purcellville race opens at 7 a.m., and the fun run kicks off at 7:30 a.m.

Editor's note: Many thanks to Caitlin Roarke of Smile Train who helped set up our interview with Sara Ablard.

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Creek Hollow Farm, A Lesson In Going Back To The Basics

— By Hannah Hager

If it's true in life that "all you need in love," then prepare your heart to fall for this historic homestead in Lovettsville. Built in 1850, Creek Hollow Farm is a lesson in going back to the basics of family life; togetherness, peacefulness and serenity. Situated on more than 20 acres of land in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains, your family will experience the best Loudoun has to offer.

This home was built both within and amongst its surroundings. Upon arrival, you'll spot a year-round stream and pond -- no doubt the farm's namesake -- as well as a log springhouse and a two-stall, red-roof barn next to rolling hills perfect for grazing. Old stone ruins dot the property, including nearby to the oversized three-car garage, which is perfect for work shoppers.

Once inside, you'll find this old house is young at heart. The high ceilings in the spacious foyer capture the sunlight beaming in through the large windows. Details adorn many nooks and crannies throughout, including medallions at the corners of the windows, wainscoting trimming the walls and gleaming hardwood floors, to name a few.

The past meets the present with the trim around the fireplaces and the tin patterned ceiling in the kitchen. You'll be hard-pressed to not spend many hours in this upgraded cook's delight. Make sure to marvel at the stainless steel appliances, recessed lighting and marble countertops offsetting the updated cabinets made of richly-appointed hardwood.



Address: 38570 Cassia Lane, Lovettsville

Bedrooms: Three bedrooms

Bathrooms: Three full and one half baths

Acreage: 20 acres

List Price: \$799,000

Agent: Jane Hensley & Kim Hurst, Middleburg

Real Estate: Atoka Properties

Phone: 703-932-9651

Nevertheless, when the day is done, you'll easily relax in the master bedroom with large windows, cozy fireplace, walk-in closet and ensuite bath. The kids will enjoy their own bedrooms, too, one with its own fireplace and the other with a private staircase. They'll also share the second full bathroom upstairs, no doubt having a blast splashing around in the footed bathtub.

Leave no stone unturned when you visit Creek Hollow Farm - you'll find it has all you'll ever need.



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Developer Has Big Plans For Route 50 Gem

– By Andrea Gaines

Easton Porter Group, LLC has submitted a plan to Fauquier County to convert the modest Blackthorne Inn & Resort to a significantly larger resort and spa.

If approved, by this fall the approximately 60-acre Rt. 50 property will be under construction with a 13,700-sq. ft. events center, 20 new cottages with 38 bedrooms accommodating 70 people, a 2,400-sq. ft. spa, four-acre vineyard, and a restaurant/pub. The new owners will host 34 weddings a year, winter weekend retreats, and other events. The background:

- **In 1984**, the owners got a special exception to operate the historic home as restaurant known as the 1763 Inn. A second special exception approved limited accommodations.
- **In 2007**, that special exception was amended to operate the property as the Blackthorne Inn & Resort – and could now accommodate 28 guests.
- **By 2013**, Blackthorne was holding regular, unauthorized special events. A series of public hearings



and proceedings added resort and restaurant capacity, and authorized specific events.

Extensive, agreed-to restrictions related to noise, hours, lighting, guest numbers, traffic, etc. accompanied the 2013 approval. Neighbors and Blackthorne – everyone – seemed happy.

Enter the Easton Porter Group – with an even larger vision for the property and the historic house. Now, a much, much larger resort complex with potentially non-conforming structures, alterations to the historic house, huge septic and parking

requirements, and more is planned. This challenges the criteria designed to protect the rural nature of a place, while accommodating the new.

This new proposal requires special exception approvals in no less than five categories: adapting reuse of an historic structure, using the site as a resort, holding Class C events, building an above ground sewer and water pumping station, and operating a sewage treatment system.

The property's new owners want to break ground in September, and to meet that date they are asking Fauquier County to do everything it needs to do – including engage the public – on a scant two-month schedule. But neighbors, the PEC, and preservationists in nearby Unison will be demanding answers and clarifications on a whole range of issues between now and when, and if, the project is approved. An April Fauquier County Planning memo raises serious issues with respect to the early application materials submitted, including:

- **Protecting Greystone House.** Adaptive reuses of such structures

cannot increase the size of the building by more than 30 percent. According to the memo, the “footprint on the Concept Development Plan appears to far exceed the expansion allowed ...”

- **Traffic, entrance/exit, levels of activity, setbacks, and noise problems** related to the new 13,000 sq. ft. events building abound – details are missing, numbers are inconsistent.
- **Parking.** The applicant provides only 25 employee parking spaces for a resort that may employ up to 120 people; just 34 spaces for a 147-seat pub/restaurant/wine cellar; and just 54 spaces for overnight guests.
- **Wastewater and sewage.** The applicant estimates a total property usage of approximately 9,000 gallons per day. Planning estimates that the actual usage will be 2-1/2 times that.

The Easton Porter Group planned to hold a community meeting at Buchanan Hall in Upperville at the end of April. Next stop, the Fauquier County planning department.



TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE, VA

REQUEST FOR INFORMATION (RFI)

OPERATION, MANAGEMENT AND PRESERVATION OF
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RFI# TC-2017-17

The Town of Purcellville is considering contracting for the operation and management of the Bush Tabernacle and the Fireman's Field complex. To help determine the level of interest for such an endeavor, and to understand existing business models that will (1) generate and maximize public revenue for Purcellville citizens; and (2) permanently preserve the character and feel of the property as a historic town asset and key component of Purcellville's community identity, the Town has issued an RFI.

The RFI describes the properties and their current uses and further details the Councils submittal expectations. It is available on the Town's Bid Board <http://purcellvilleva.gov/bids.aspx>.

Questions must be in writing and emailed to Ryan Cool, Council Member at rcool@purcellvilleva.gov and Kathy Elgin, Procurement Specialist at kelgin@purcellvilleva.gov. Questions must be received by April 21, 2017.

Information is due by 11:00 AM, Friday, May 19, 2017.

This RFI does not guarantee the release of a Request for Proposal (RFP).



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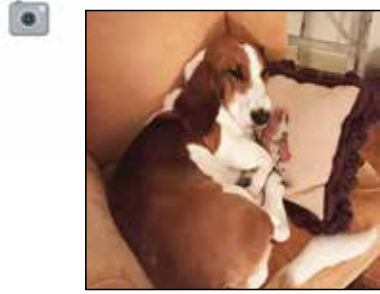
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What People
Are Sharing
In Cyberspace

Status Darling Dog



This is Bassett Hound Marge, who came all the way from Owl's Head, Maine to live with her Bassett-sister, Midge and human parents Holly and John

Raymond in the village of Lincoln. Sister Midge had to pay a visit to the Vet recently, so here is Marge, holding down the fort ... on a pillow of her new sister's likeness.

Status Current Events



Cyberspace is filled with posts about innovative solutions to vexing problems. For

communities looking for ways to enrich the lives of seniors – while providing quality daycare for pre-kindergarten children – here's a post about a nursing home in Seattle, Washington that shares space, and an "Intergenerational Learning Center" with a daycare center. (Highlighted recently by the PBS NewsHour, People Magazine, CNN and other media channels. Photo from promotions for the upcoming film, Present Perfect.)

Status Serious Fun



404 people participated in a recent Guinness Book of World Records event for the "largest gathering of people dressed as Albert Einstein." Why not? (Photo credit: Canadian Friends of the Hebrew University via REUTERS.)

Post your *Darling Dog*, *Current Events* and *Serious Fun* photos and stories (35 words or less + your name) on our Facebook page: www.facebook.com/BlueRidgeLeader/. Deadline for submissions for our June issue is Monday, May 29.

Envision Loudoun Update, continued from page 1

Said Randall, "I don't want to see runaway development in western Loudoun County. We've begun to figure it out in agricultural sectors such as wineries and breweries and to some extent the equine industry. But, there's much more opportunity out there."

The BOS recently voted to apply \$25,000 in already-budgeted funds to explore the development of a business incubator or accelerator for the County, providing startups and businesses seeking to diversify the expertise, financing and connections they need to compete in the local and regional market of which Loudoun is a part

Randall has met with western Loudoun municipal leaders such as Hillsboro Mayor Roger Vance, business leaders like Doug Fabboli (Fabboli Cellars), and farming innovator Donnie Virts to posture what a more robust western Loudoun might look like. What if ...

- What if ... the excess crops of one farmer could supply another business with something they could use to create a totally new product? It happened, right here, recently, when a winemaker turned a farmer's unexpectedly large berry harvest into strawberry wine.
- What if ... more hydroponic produce could be grown right here – with far less water and far less pesticides – and sold directly to consumers? That's what Virts – a traditional-row-crop-turned-hydroponic-farmer – wants to do with warehouse space in the east; grow hydroponic tomatoes and sell directly to consumers, while creating a secondary market for the beef grown on his western Loudoun farm.
- What if ... Loudoun set up an east coast equine quarantine facility at Dulles Airport, that could interact economically with equine businesses all over western Loudoun. The idea, is in the works.
- What if ... we were able to double the "eco"-nomic value of our bee businesses – with benefits such as crop

Loudoun's Rural Economy – By The Numbers*

- Art sector sales – \$13.7 million
- Wedding Services – \$25 million
- Tourism (unrelated to weddings) – \$27.7 million
- Service providers, traditional agriculture including equine – \$121.3 million
- Equine businesses (as a separate category) – \$70 million in total sales
- Equine, value added sales including in tourism – \$44 million
- Grape harvest and wine production – \$2 million and \$36 million respectively
- Agricultural support (from veterinarians to tractor sales to feed dealers) – \$43 million

*Annual and other estimates, source, REDC

pollination, honey, beeswax and honey wine production, sales to beekeeper-hobbyists. Bees ... thrive here.

- What if ... there were farm supply chains in place that turned the county's dozens and dozens of unique B&Bs into distribution points for farm products?

To some, the idea that bees will win out over western Loudoun's hot real-estate market as Envision Loudoun proceeds, shows real ignorance of how things really work.

But, as supporters of the rural economy note, it's not just about "bees," it's about all twelve rural business sectors – agriculture, service and supply; arts and recreation; professional, technical and management services; real estate; transportation and utilities; finance, information technology, food, accommodations and services; construction, retail and education.

Said Waterford resident and former Atlanta-based developer Charlie Houston, "We need to start by questioning the initial premise of Envision Loudoun. Its process

Silence On Short Hill

In recent months County planning officials put a total information blackout on activities atop the Short Hill Mountain ridge, citing directives from Homeland Security.

Despite ongoing use of floodlights and heavy construction equipment, AT&T has denied that Short Hill is being prepped as a data center site. And, with national security eclipsing the public notice requirements built into Loudoun's zoning ordinances, County officials are silent on what is going on behind the scenes – whether they will approve a data center for the fragile peak.

In contrast, Envision Loudoun's public input sessions have been anything but silent on the topic of data centers – including where they should be located, how they relate to the County budget, and how they contrast with corporate office parks, which employ more people, locally. Residents also want planners to take a hard look at how data centers impact residential neighborhoods and water and energy resources. And, they want to know what can or should be done with these enormous structures after their useful life has expired.

Loudoun County is home to approximately 70 data centers, with over 40 new sites identified as potentially suitable for that use. Experts predict that the County could have 100 data centers by 2018.

Several Supervisors, including Ralph M. Buona, Vice Chair (R-Ashburn District) point out that data centers are critical to the County's fiscal health, bringing in some \$150 million in tax revenue. They are also an integral part of eastern Loudoun's well-established defense and technology economy – with some experts suggesting that the electronic "pathways" here account for more than one-half of all traffic on the internet.

Western Loudoun resident Christopher Griggs, who participated in the Envision Loudoun public input sessions, and whose home is directly across from what he calls the "Short Hill disaster" has a different view. He sees the County's efforts to protect the economic value of his area – which is based, not on data centers, but "historic, cultural [and] agricultural heritage," including the long-establish Harper's Ferry scenic byway – as incompatible with the huge presence AT&T has been allowed to establish here. "I hope our supervisors recognize," said Griggs, "that, for us, the nightmare looms above us every day ... and torments us through the night [with] floods of manufactured light." Griggs continued, "These are conflicting visions" for the area.

is demand-driven: How many people want to move to Loudoun, and how can we accommodate them? ... The process should have started by asking something much more fundamental: How large does the county want to be, and can we afford even that? In the 2016 Survey of Residents conducted by UVA for the county, 69 percent of our citizens said the biggest problems were too much growth and too much traffic. I imagine that they would also say that Loudoun already has enough people." In April BOS proceedings focusing on the work of the REDC, individual members of

the BOS expressed their repeated support for preserving western Loudoun and the Transition Policy Area, designed as a buffer between the Rural Policy Area and the Suburban Policy area.

The question will be whether Supervisors agree – and vote – with those who see things the same way – a still-rural future for western Loudoun.

Said Donnie Virts, whose family has tilled the soil in Loudoun County since the 1790s, "The way we keep houses out of the west is to make sure the rural economy is vibrant."

Just Like Nothing (Else) On Earth: The Stone House

– By Tim Jon



TIM JON

No – they don't serve fresh oysters here, there are no wi-fi hook-ups, and there is no Happy Hour; from what I hear, though – this little place used to jump and swing with the best of 'em – at least by early 19th Century standards. You'd never know it by that quick glance you give the Stone House at Harper Park as you buzz past on Route Seven, just east of Leesburg – that this was once a popular destination for weary (or maybe just thirsty) travelers – who, perhaps, even, were not all that different from you or me. Jenkins' Ordinary, as it was called back in the day, reportedly sold rum, 'vittles' and a place to bed down for the night; kinda hard to believe just from scoping out the relatively small size of the structure – I'm guessing that they (like many other establishments of their time) had an outdoor (or basement) kitchen – and the rafters must have been used for sleeping quarters- making for a pretty cramped arrangement, at best. But, history tells me that – quite long ago - this was a successful business, for its time.

The almost-forgotten little Stone House



now conveys a completely deserted, ignored (except for a manicured lawn and set of security lights) – and even an out-of-place look; juxtaposed between the modern neighborhood around Harper Park Middle School, the hustle and bustle of a commuter highway just a few yards away, the looming sound barrier extending to within crowding distance from the east, and the 21st Century development across the road – Village at Leesburg, complete with the clearly-visible Wegman's sign - beckoning as an alternative to my early-morning stroll around this forlorn, one-room structure. And, I'd like to think that I'm completely off base here, but I got the distinct sensation, walking the perimeter about the Stone House, that Our Time in

general, with its alluring night spots and endless entertainment opportunities – all squeaky clean and marketable in proper fashion – feels no impending impulse to preserve, protect and utilize an historic (if a bit unsightly in its present garb) resource such as this.

Now – I'm not about to turn off my electricity and toss out my (fairly) modern communications devices and revert to hunting and gathering – but I'd like to include some of the simple (and for me – instructive) things from the past in my present-day world of endless choice for pretty much instant gratification. Looking back now, on my sunrise walk around the old Stone House, I can still feel some of the impressions: Such as, the importance of the stamp of individuality in our world of increasingly familiar facades; this structure bears the look of a weathered character out of Hemingway, or Thomas Wolfe – or Nathaniel Hawthorne. Its oddly-placed windows even reminded me of a young child's first (failing) attempts at placing the comical features on a Mister Potato-Head doll – with the nose or an eye in the wrong spot. And I find this (the finished product of early-1800's rural architecture) completely endearing – revealing the basic humanity

in those who constructed the little building. It certainly doesn't look perfect – not in the sense of many of its man-made surroundings. But the Stone House has been around for a while – it possesses the asset of experience; it stood through two World Wars, many American Presidencies, the construction of Dulles Airport, and for several generations of Loudoun County Citizens. And – in spite of what I had earlier described as general neglect – this monolithic creation still appears remarkably resilient: built from stone and mortar (with a very sound-looking metal roof) as it is, I'm guessing the little Stone House may yet stand far beyond the natural life span of many of its neighbors – both living and manufactured.

So – if a deep-pocketed visionary's dream comes up with the will and carry-through to 'save' and showcase this gem from the past, I'm sure they'd be rewarded – if only in the intangible sense. That's the kind of treasure you can take anywhere.

The structure we now call the Stone House at Harper Park reminds me of a time when warmth came from a welcome fireside, sustenance from home-style cooking, and comfort from a wooden chair. And that was sufficient. Perhaps it still is.

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Clip and Save

7 Ways To Say I Love You On Mother's Day

– By Andrea Gaines

Whether they are still with us or not, moms do so much for all of us, all year long.

They remind us of from where we came. They remind us of the happiest of times. They are there to help us stand up again – after all sorts of bad falls. And, they remind us that nobody is perfect ... except for us ... at least in their eyes. Mother's Day 2017 – proper, cordial, polite, respectful, sweet and romantic – is Sunday, May 14. But, the merry month of May also has quite a few really silly “National Days of Remembrance” you might want to combine with your Mother's Day festivities.

So, put on your light-hearted hat – in

honor of mom, of course – and get to work. Let's make 2017 a year that mom will not soon forget.

For example, National Comic Book Day, is Sunday, May 7. Why not ask mom who her favorite childhood comic character was growing up? Then, find the best mother's-day-card-maker in your group and make a great big card for mom, starring her favorite comic book heroine.

And, these two National Days of Remembrance – these two – are downright precious. Wednesday, May 10 is National Clean Up Your Room Day, and Thursday, May, 18 is No Dirty Dishes Day. No, I'm not kidding. So, here's the question. Who among you is ready to stand up and say “I pledge to super-clean my room once a



month, and do the dishes once a week ... all year long ... for you, mom.” On Mother's Day itself, we also celebrate National Dance Like a Chicken Day and National Buttermilk Day. That's easy. Do a chicken dance for mom and make her some buttermilk pancakes for breakfast. (Dance while you bake.)

And, not to overdo it ... but, here are two more. Sunday, May 21 is Take Your Parents To The Playground Day. That's a great thing to do for mom, any time – a few

minutes of peace in a nice outdoor spot with her favorite coffee and donuts or tea and cookies.

And, here is something that any son, daughter, spouse or partner can do for the moms in their life any time they want. Thursday, May 31 is National Speak in a Sentence Day. So do that. Speak in a full sentence. Slowly, carefully, and with all your heart. Say, “I love you, mom,” as often and as earnestly as you can.

Our roving reporters, Tim and Sebastian, toiled around Loudoun recently and asked people about the special things their Moms had taught them over the years. Here are the results:

Sandy:
“This too shall pass. Bad things will pass with time.”



Debbie:
“Be strong.”



Bill: The oldest from a family of 12. “Love God with your whole soul, might and strength.”
Mary Ellen: “There's more to life than what you see ... the eternal realm.”



Tom: “Be good natured about life.”
Irene: “Do unto others as you would have them do unto you.”



Dylan (left):
“Caring for others.”
Mike (right):
“Respecting people.”



Anna Maria:
“She taught me hard work and perseverance by example.”



Tom:
Don't compare yourself to your brother.”

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STEM Turns To STEAM

– By Mary Rose Lunde



LUNDE

Virginia Tech is a renowned STEM school, and is known for its engineering school and strong research presence. As such, compared to other schools, Virginia Tech does not include a lot of non-STEM students. It is ironic, therefore, that none of my four roommates are in the STEM fields. By extension, if you expand the idea of STEM fields, however, all of our five majors could be considered in the STEM fields. This is exactly what has been done with the STEM acronym. The addition of the A to create STEAM instead of STEM allows for the inclusion of multiple practices.

STEM, for those of you who don't know, stands for Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math. The addition of the A, which stands for Arts, changes the entire meaning. STEM was founded to promote those fields, and to establish a credibility for them – encouraging students, particularly young women, to continue their education in those fields.

The main reason I believe STEM was created was to encourage young women to succeed in the STEM fields. Recently, at VT, I've noticed that a majority of the engineers I know are female, which proves to me that the idea of STEM has been increasing the

number of women in STEM fields. It is no longer taboo for women to not be in the "lesser" subjects, such as teaching and what are considered the arts.

It is for this reason that I would assume the A has been added to the STEM acronym. I believe, at least I hope, that it is because there is a need for equality, or at least that's what the higher-ups think. I can see why people in the arts would claim specialized interest in one subject as an equal push for all of the subjects. This push for equality may actually be taking things backward, as opposed to forward, though.

One of my roommates commented, when I discussed this with her, that they can't push for everything. She claimed that equality is good, but it's frustrating because the arts aren't where we need women, because the arts already have women. She has a valid point, because the STEM classes are for encouragement in the STEM fields, not the others. She continued saying that you have to pick one class--you can't have them all. Why even have this at all, if it's not pointed toward one aspect?

Honestly, STEM classes were built toward the subjects that need attention – the ones deemed more inclusive. The idea that the arts are included now takes away from this inclusion of specialized subjects.

continued on page 29

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Video online at: www.loudoun.gov/adultday

Administered by Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services.

Update On Catoctin Corner Property To Be Anchored By Large Shell Station

Details on the development plans for Catoctin Corner, a 6-acre parcel of land at the corner of Main Street and Rt. 287 to the south of Patrick Henry College and across from the Harris Teeter development, are now emerging. Commercial zoning for area was approved several years ago by the Lazaro Town Council.

In the building closest to the traffic circle and Rt. 7, there will be a 2,264 sq. ft. Chipotle Mexican Grill, and an 1,800 sq. ft. Dunkin' Donuts, complete with a drive thru.

On the same side of these businesses will be a hair salon, a pizza restaurant and an eyeglasses business – the three totaling 5,500 sq. ft.

A dental office has also been confirmed.

A large Shell gas station plus convenience store business totaling 5,400 sq. ft. will round out the commercial center, with eight fuel dispensers for 16 cars.

The total number of buildings for Catoctin Corner is anticipated to be seven.

Cannons, continued from page 1

fans under the lights at Fireman's Field.

The Cannons compete in Valley League Baseball ... so described as "The Gateway to the Majors."

And, while they didn't rack up as many wins as they wanted early in 2016, "we got hot at the end," said Fuller, "making it to the playoffs with a walk-off win in the bottom of the ninth against the New Market Rebels."

The Cannons didn't make it far in the playoffs, but found solace in the fact that the team that edged them out – Strasburg Express – went on to grab the Valley League Baseball championship title.

Teams like the Cannons have great baseball players. Everyone plays a role in how the team performs. But, with respect to top skills on the field, the players to watch (among others) are two-time MVP Will Reed (pitcher), Tyler Radcliff (shortstop), Trey McDyre (3rd base) and "JC" Correa (2nd base, shortstop). Correa's brother Carlos plays for the Houston Astros, and was the youngest well-known player to enter the 2012 Major League Baseball Draft, having already been identified as one of the game's best young players by Sports Illustrated and ESPN.

Special events are planned for the month of May, including a Cannons booth at the Purcellville Music and Arts Festival on May 20, and an exhibition game at the

Schedule:

- Home Opener Saturday, June 3.
- 11 away games and 13 home games, June 2–30
- 10 away games and 8 home games, July 1–27

Tickets:

- Season or bulk ticket packs available online at www.purcellvillecannons.com, or email the Cannons directly at info@purcellvillecannons.com (cash or check). Season tickets get you into every home game, during the regular season.
- At the gate: Adults, \$5, Seniors (65+), \$3, Child (12 & under), \$2.
- Children wearing any Little League uniform are admitted free with one paying adult.

More Fun: Spirit Nights and all-Day events at Chic Fil-A (June 1) and Velocity Wings (Thursday June 1– July 27). See website for details.

Purcellville Cannons, PO Box 114, Purcellville, VA., 540.303.9673.

end of the month. The Cannons' opening home game is Saturday, June 3. For details go the Cannons' web page, www.purcellvillecannons.com.

Purcellville Cannons Fan Stats ... details on www.purcellvillecannons.com

Retired, continued from page 1

private and personal." Grim further said that Lohr explicitly had mentioned his future plans. "I am not going to violate FOIA laws, and I am certainly not going to violate his confidences that were held in that room. No one is supposed to repeat what happened in that room. But if some people repeat some things that aren't true, that's their issue," said Grim.

Council Member Karen Jimmerson added that during the May elections last year, 72 percent of the voters voted Mayor Fraser into office, and the other former candidates now on Council also won by an overwhelming majority. Referring to citizens' public comments, Jimmerson remarked, "I heard somebody say there's a black cloud over this Town. It's a misnomer. We have the residents in our stead. Maybe it's an opinion of the people who aren't the majority anymore. The executive sessions we had were privileged information. Somebody either on this Council leaked it, spread it, and got all of you in a tizzy. None of us did that. We didn't call all the people who voted – we didn't call our supporters."

Fraser then said, "Seven of us have a challenge. Mr. Rob Lohr's tireless service has been a benefit to this Town. But I assure all of you who spoke; he has laid the foundation for that which we will build on. Without him there would be no foundation ... I listened to every one of your comments, and I believe that what Mr. Lohr has put in place the process the mechanisms, the staff – we can build from that and take Purcellville higher ... For the folks out there who believe that Purcellville has nowhere to go but down, I'll prove you wrong. I'll work with this Council and staff to take Purcellville to higher heights – that is my commitment."

Background

At the April 18, 2017 Town Council Meeting, Council member McCollum presented a motion he had prepared: "I move that the Purcellville Town Council convene in a closed meeting to continue discussions on the annual performance evaluation of the Town Manager, including discussion of performance, demotion, disciplining, separation agreement from the Town's payroll by retirement or resignation or other appropriate action based on this evaluation." Current and potential developers of land in Purcellville and its surroundings, as well as their associates, former candidates, former council members, staff, and citizens attended that meeting. Reportedly, they understood or assumed that closed sessions often do not indicate a positive result but rather signal debate and or conflict. This, among other reasons, generated discussion regarding Lohr's post as Town Manager.

Meanwhile, the Purcellville Town Council was fulfilling its obligation to

complete Lohr's annual performance evaluation, as required in his employment agreement, which states: "The employer shall annually review the performance of the employee." Lohr, however, does not have an annual contract, and his employment agreement is without "a definitive term and [he] shall serve at the pleasure of the Council."

Had Lohr not retired, and the Town Council relieved him of his duties, per his agreement he would have been "entitled to nine (9) months' severance pay." As his original employment agreement and his approved retirement package specify, he must be the highest paid town employee, he will receive compensation for two months based upon an approximate annual salary of \$144,000. Lohr will also receive credit for 25 years of service (he actually served 24.2) which will allow Lohr and his wife to "participate in the Town's health insurance plan at no cost to them." Moreover, the Town will pay the final annual \$10,000 payment into his 457-deferred compensation account (which has been paid every year), and Lohr will receive payments for 25 percent of his unused sick leave (approximately 1,400 hours) and all of his unused annual vacation and personal leave.

Several times, Lohr has stated that this is the first time in 24 years that all seven elected officials have participated in his annual performance evaluation. In December 2016, the Town Council began the process of his review, and both parties were required to agree on the review process, as stated in Lohr's employment agreement.

The agreement also states that the review process shall include the opportunity for both parties to: "Prepare a written evaluation, meet and discuss the evaluation, and present a written summary of the evaluation results."

The Town Council held two meetings in closed session, April 11 and 18, 2017. Traditionally, matters of personnel and human resources protect an employee's privacy. Accordingly, during the April 18 meeting, Council Member Nedim Ogelman confirmed with Lohr and the Town Attorney Sally Hankins whether Lohr's review could occur at an open public meeting. Lohr, given the choice of public or private review, chose the latter. In other words, Lohr chose the executive session to continue his review as opposed to conducting it in a public forum.

Given that Mr. Lohr's decision to retire constitutes a human resource issue, the Town Council Members are unable at this time to publicly speak about this topic.

This newspaper and other observers and participants of Town meetings note that management and the Town Council have disagreed on matters concerning town boundary and building growth, town staff growth and matters of transparency of government functions. Utility rates, balancing the budget and solving fiscal issues have also been areas of tension.



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– Dale Schultz

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Giving Voice To The Voiceless

– By Samuel Moore-Sobel

“It’s to make a difference in someone else’s life,” Wendy Melcher, coordinator at McLean Bible Church’s Loudoun Campus, tells me when I ask the source of her motivation. “It’s to see them smile.” I first met Wendy in 2009 as she was just assuming her role working with special needs children and their families. She struck me as a kind and thoughtful soul, committed to the idea of making a difference in the lives of others. Over the years, I have come to love her enthusiasm, encouraging spirit, and commitment to the children and the families she serves.

Our conversation begins with a discussion about BreakOut, a monthly program offered through the church. The participating children are led through a number of activities including sports, crafts, and games. Wendy affectionately describes BreakOut as “an opportunity to provide an actual breath of fresh air” for parents and families “at their end of their rope.” The statistics support the idea that respite is needed. Melcher went on to tell me that “80 percent of marriages with special needs” children end in divorce.

Wendy’s own story led to her passion for her current vocation. “It started in my childhood of being made fun of because of my learning disabilities, and being told I would never amount to anything.” This



MOORE-SOBEL

instilled in her a desire to give back, while focusing on the person rather than the disability. “I think it all stems from how people treated me without knowing who the real Wendy was.” Despite the negativity of her experience, her faith has brought peace. “Would I go back and change it? No, because it is for the greater good.”

Melcher’s words caused me to reflect upon my own journey. I remember my first foray into this world – as a counselor with *Soaring Over Seven*, a summer camp offered through McLean Bible Church. The insight they had into the world was remarkable, and their gifts of observation and attention to detail, astounding. They were affectionate and loving, happy just to be noticed.

There were things about me these children noticed, too. Several campers made a habit out of running their fingers over the harsh, red upraised skin protruding from my face. At first, this was rather startling - as if someone was penetrating into the deepest hurts of my soul. Until I realized it was their way of saying I belonged. “That was their way of saying ‘I accept you,’” Melcher said, echoing my earlier conclusion. Naturally, these children have a desire to receive the same in return. “They just want to be accepted, they just want to be loved,” she said.

When asked about the biggest obstacles confronting the disability community, she responded by noting the gap in services offered once these children reach adulthood. “All the laws are all about the kids. But these kids grow up. Once they are out of school, there is not much there,” she said. She suggested the gap could be filled in part by an increase in funding for Every Citizen Has Opportunities. This non-profit organization, which assists people with disabilities in obtaining employment, has not secured an increase in funding since fiscal year 2008, despite its expanding waiting list.

This turn of events could be seen as a symptom of a larger attitude within our culture. “It’s an old mentality...[others] always see their disability first...before seeing their humanness.” This could be a result of a culture built upon viewing people through the lens of ability to contribute. “People rate other people’s worth based upon their perception of what they think that person is worth to the world or to society...”

Despite all the progress achieved, the need remains. BreakOut is always in need of volunteers, especially since an increase in volunteers would allow Melcher to accept 25 children and beyond. Volunteering can have unexpected benefits for those who choose to sacrifice their night to spend time with these children. “People think that by

volunteering in this program they are doing these kids a favor; in reality, it turns out to be more of a blessing to the volunteers,” Melcher said.

The last seven years of my own life prove the veracity inherent in her confident assertion. The experience of volunteering-chasing these children as they do their best to escape, or jumping in the moon bounce, letting them bounce higher and higher until my legs feel like jello – led to my application for a seat on the Loudoun County Disability Services Board. This resulted in my confirmation by the board early last month. My initial reaction was a feeling of gratefulness at the prospect of serving a community that has given me far more than I ever could have anticipated. Yet it also served as a gentle reminder that every day must be lived to the fullest, that an attitude of purpose and service must be espoused. No matter your height, weight, or scars, your voice still matters; and no experience is wasted – as long as you can do all you can to make a difference, or, at the very least, bring a smile to the faces of those who need it most.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is a newly confirmed member of the Loudoun County Disability Services Board. He is looking forward to serving the disability community in this new role.

Amy And Dan Smith’s Planning For Life: Choosing A Fiduciary

– By Amy and Dan Smith



AMY & DAN SMITH

The choice of an executor or trustee is very important and will likely have long range consequences. Family wounds can linger for years from a mistake or unwise conduct of the person in charge of the estate or trust.

An executor is appointed in the will. His/her job is to identify and collect the assets of the estate, pay the expenses of administration and the debts of the decedent, and then distribute the balance of estate assets as directed in the will. In the course of his duties, he will normally provide two reports to the Commissioner of Accounts: An inventory of estate assets and an accounting showing what he did with the estate assets, including the final distribution to the estate beneficiaries. In Virginia, the executor takes an oath to perform faithfully the duties of his office and signs a pledge (bond) to that effect.

The job of the trustee will depend on the terms of the trust. In a typical living trust used to avoid probate, the trustee may

perform a function similar to an executor. That is, after the death of grantor of the trust, he will identify and collect the assets of the trust, pay expenses and debts, and distribute the balance of trust assets to the beneficiaries designated in the trust. While he has a duty to report to the trust beneficiaries, he usually is not required to report to the court or to the Commissioner of Accounts. The job of the trustee in this case is similar to that of the executor: it is temporary and administrative in nature.

A trust, however, may involve more than administration of assets after the death of the grantor. For example, trusts may be established in a will or living trust for the benefit of the children of the decedent. Such trusts may last until the beneficiary reaches a certain age or the trust could be established for the life of the beneficiary. In such case the responsibilities of the trustee are for a period of years and often involve the exercise of discretion. If the trust authorizes the trustee to distribute for the “health, support, maintenance and education” (commonly used language) of the beneficiary, the trustee must decide whether the particular needs of

the beneficiary rise to the level where a distribution would be appropriate.

The selection of a trustee for an on-going trust where discretion is required should be given careful consideration. Often grantors will look to one child to be trustee for the trusts of one or more of their other children. While family knowledge is an important factor in selecting a trustee, thought should be given to the impact on the relationship between siblings if one is in charge of the funds available to another.

If the trust is of some duration, a sequence of successor trustees should be established in the document if possible. If not, a mechanism should be provided for appointing successor trustees such as selection by the serving trustee; that is, the appointment can be done while the trustee is serving so that the successor is named in case of death or disability of the serving trustee. Also, the beneficiary(ies) can be authorized to select a successor.

In some cases, it is wise to have a “trust advisor.” This is a person whose role is passive but who monitors the actions of the trustee. For example, if the trust beneficiary is young or otherwise vulnerable, the trustee could be required to submit annual reports

to the trust advisor.

An advantage of having family members serve in fiduciary capacities is that they will often waive their right to fees. This is especially important where the estate or trust account is relatively small. A fiduciary is entitled to pay from the estate or trust for professional investment advice, tax preparation and legal advice when needed.

The foregoing article contains general legal information only and is not intended to convey legal advice. For legal advice regarding estate planning, the reader should contact his/her lawyer. Amy V. Smith Wealth Management, 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 and email, www.amysmithwealthmanagement.com. Any opinions are those of Amy and Dan Smith and not necessarily those of Raymond James. Raymond James does not guarantee that the foregoing material is accurate or complete and does not provide legal advice. Dan Smith is not affiliated with Raymond James.

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LVHS Boys Basketball Team State Champs

Loudoun Valley High School Boys Basketball Team State Champions receive recognition at the April 25 Purcellville Town Council meeting. May 1, is Loudoun Valley High School Day in Purcellville.

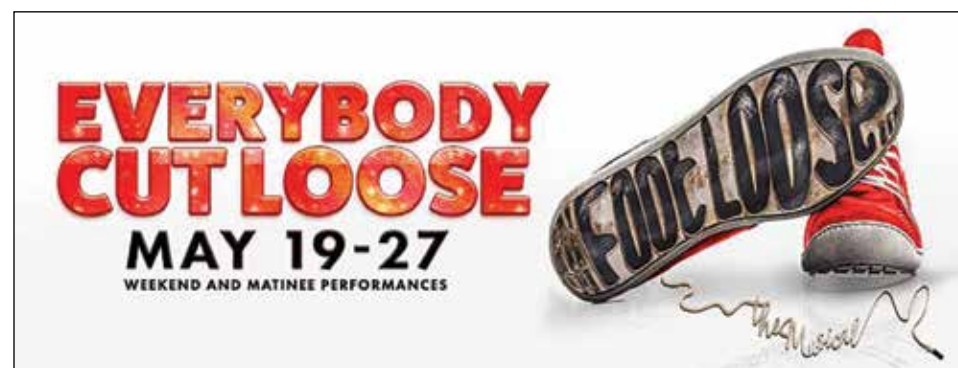


Franklin Park – Month-Of-May Fantastic

Franklin Park just wrapped up a wonderful set of shows for April, with more in store for May ...

May 5-14, Seussical the musical, six weekend performances, all ages. Enjoy your favorite Dr. Seuss characters – Horton the Elephant, The Cat in the Hat, Gertrude McFuzz and more in this great production from Main Street Theater.

May 7, Gallery Coffeehouse: Savannah Sipping Society. A “laugh-a-minute” comedy show from the Performance group BITWC “Imagine That” presents a comedy show about four Southern women who reclaim their enthusiasm for life via an impromptu coffee -hour. Coffee is free for



ticketholders, too.

May 10, If Pigs Could Fly, ages 2 and up. In intimate arts center lobby performance of a multiculturally-themed puppet show featuring reading a pig librarian and more.

May 19-27: Footloose, The Musical, in four performances. Loudoun Centre Theatre presents the musical version of this classic dance film for local audiences. Great music and action.

May 23, Gallery Coffeehouse: The Comedy Cult. Enjoy a wonderful time as Loudoun Valley HS Comedy Cult Improv team takes audience questions and create scenes and stories on the spot. Coffee is free for ticketholders.

May 23, Bouquets & Botanicals Silent Auction & Open House. This event pairs juried artwork with great floral displays for local florists.

Professional Gallery Exhibits all month. Last Ham Standing Comedy Improv on tap for June

For details and tickets go to www.franklinparkartscenter.org or www.mainstreettheaterproductions.org.

Four Seasons Of Vivaldi And Piazzola

Orchestra 2100 is presenting The Four Seasons of Vivaldi and Piazzola with Natasha Korsakova on the violin and David Michael Wolff on the piano – May 24, 7:30-9:30 p.m. The concert is followed by a meet-the-artists' reception and the pre-concert cash bar opens at 6:30pm. This event will be held at The Stone Tower Winery, 19925 Hogback Mountain Rd, Leesburg and helps support the expansion of Orchestra 2100 music education program, “Encore! Kids” into Virginia. The cost is \$50 preferred, \$30 general admission, and \$10 for students. Tickets can be purchased online at www.orchestra2100.yapsody.com.



Photo: Marco Cambiaghi

Del. LaRock Presents House Joint Resolution To PHC Moot Court Team



On April 26, Del. Dave LaRock (R-33) presented House Joint Resolution No. 1067, commending the Patrick Henry College intercollegiate moot court team. The team won its tenth national championship in the last 13 years. This year, team members Meridian Paulton and Thomas Siu from PHC defeated a team from the Air Force Academy in the final round – in Gulfport, Florida. They won

both the brief writing and oral argument national championships. The coaches for the team were the college's chancellor, Dr. Michael Farris, and Dr. Frank Guliuzza. LaRock encouraged the students to have a strong desire for excellence, make firm blueprints, believe in yourself, learn from the best, work really hard, and never give up. Said LaRock, “Your excellence does not go unnoticed.”

Fuog Awarded National Frame Building Of Year



Fuog/Interbuild Inc., of Purcellville, has been awarded the National Frame Building Association's Building of the Year award for 2016 in the category of Post Frame buildings – 5,000 sq.ft. and above.

The winning entry was built for Toll Brothers in Upper Marlboro, Md. and won top honors out of more than 100 entries. The horse barn is a 24 stall barn with

locker rooms, office, and living quarters located in Marlboro Ridge. The awards were presented to owner John Fuog and Project manager Jamie Hochmuth on March 16 in Nashville, TN. The winners will be recognized in Frame Building News Magazine.

For more information on Fuog/Interbuild Inc., go to www.fuoginterbuildinc.com.

Register For Bike To Work Day Friday May 19

Registration is open for Bike to Work Day, set for Friday, May 19. All bicycle commuters, from first timers to daily cyclists, are encouraged to register at www.biketoworkmetrodc.org or by calling 800 745-7433.

Loudoun County will host two pit stops where registrants can pick-up free t-shirts, receive giveaways, enjoy refreshments, and win prizes. The Loudoun County pit stops are adjacent to the Washington and Old Dominion Trail in:

Leesburg at Rafflo Park on Harrison Street, from 6 a.m. to 9 a.m.

Sterling, just east of Route 28, at Ruritan Road behind Orbital ATK from 6:30 a.m. to 9 a.m.

This year, organizers expect at least 16,000 people to participate. In Loudoun County, more than 500 cyclists are expected to take part in the 2017 event. Bike to Work Day is coordinated regionally by the Washington Area Bicyclist Association and the Metropolitan Washington Council of Governments. The local festivities are planned by Loudoun County Commuter Services. For more information contact the local coordinator, Judy Galen, at 703 737-8044 or Judy.Galen@loudoun.gov or go to www.loudoun.gov/BiketoWork.

WLVBC U14 Boys Volleyball Wins WLVBC Invitational

The Western Loudoun Volleyball Club's U14 Boys team won the inaugural WLVBC Invitational Tournament held Saturday, April 15 at Foxcroft School. The team went 4-0 on the day, winning first place against WLVBC U15 boys team in a three-set match 25-19, 22-25 and 15-11. The team reached the Gold Bracket in all of its single day events, finishing 3rd in five tournaments.

WLVBC is one of only two volleyball clubs in Loudoun County that has a boy's program, and had two teams competing in events this season. The club has clinics scheduled for April, May, June and July. The program also offers sand and grass play, with courts at facilities including Franklin Park and Patrick Henry College. Details found at www.wlvbc.org.



Kneeling: Parker Osoba, Ryan Croson, Andrew Plowman, and Daniel Nour. Standing: Assistant Coach Joanne Dekker, Jack Lydon, Spencer Holdridge, Nate Pearsall, Brody Graham, Randy Devere, Cooper Josties and Head Coach Matt Croson.



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Seussical has brought to life all of our favorite Dr. Seuss characters, including Horton the Elephant, The Cat in the Hat, Gertrude McFuzz, lazy Mayzie, and a little boy with a big imagination – Jojo. The colorful characters transport us from the Jungle of Nool to the Circus McGurkus to the invisible world of the Whos. mainstreettheaterproductions.org

Tickets: \$20 Adults, \$15 Children, Students, Seniors General Admission

BLUE SKY PUPPETS: IF PIGS COULD FLY

WED, MAY 10 10:00 AM

This performances will be in the lobby, a more intimate setting for this multicultural reading-themed puppet show. Shadow puppets, a pig librarian and plenty of audience participation make this a favorite!

Tickets: \$5/person Pay at the Door



LOUDOUN CENTRE THEATRE: FOOTLOOSE

FRI, MAY 19 & 26 7:30 PM, SAT, MAY 20 & 27 2:30 & 7:30 PM

Moving from big city Chicago to a small farming town isn't easy for Ren and his mother, especially when they find out about a ban on dancing instituted by the local preacher. When the reverend's rebellious daughter sets her sights on Ren, many of the locals are eager to believe the worst about the new kid. Footloose, with its rockin' Oscar- and Tony-nominated Top 40 score, is filled with music and dancing that will lighten your heart and take you to an "Almost Paradise."

Ready to cheer? Yeah! "Let's Hear It For The Boy". www.thelct.org

Tickets: \$15 in advance, \$20 at the door General Admission

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 "Savannah Sipping Society"
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LOUDOUN SKETCH CLUB:
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GALLERY COFFEEHOUSE:
 Comedy Cult
 5/21 6:30pm \$8/person

BOTANICALS & BOUQUETS
 Reception and Auction
 5/23 6:00pm-8:00pm

Emergency Medical Services Week Events

Each year National Emergency Medical Services Week brings together local communities and medical personnel to honor the dedication of those who provide day-to-day lifesaving services on medicine's "front line." This year EMS Week has been designated from May 21 through May 27.

Purcellville Volunteer Rescue Squad, Saturday, May 13, 11 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Purcellville Public Safety Center: 500 N. Maple Ave, Purcellville.

Come celebrate Purcellville Public Safety day and check out ambulances, fire trucks, and police cars. Lots of informational displays to see, kid's activities, and food.

Loudoun County Volunteer Rescue Squad, Saturday, May 20, 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Station 13: 143 Catoctin Circle SE, Leesburg.

Check out an ambulance and a fire truck, meet a K9 bomb detection dog, get fingerprinted, learn about first aid and CPR, tour the station, have some food, play some games, and maybe win one of several gift cards or other prizes being raffled every half hour.

Round Hill Volunteer Fire and Rescue, Saturday, May 27, 11:30 a.m. to 4:30 p.m.

Station 4: 4 Main Street, Round Hill.

Round Hill Volunteer Fire and Rescue will open their doors for a fun-filled day of interactive activities for the entire family. Come meet Sparky the Fire Dog, dress up as a junior EMT or Firefighter, practice calling 911.

Hamilton Volunteer Rescue Squad, Saturday, June 3.

Station 17: 39071 E Colonial Hwy, Hamilton.

Come meet Sparky the Fire Dog, EMT Teddy, and little ones can dress up as a Junior Firefighter. www.hamiltonrescue.org

Miller To Receive National Trustee Award

The American Library Association has named Mark Miller, chair of the Loudoun County Public Library Board of Trustees, as the 2017 recipient of the ALA Trustee Citation.



The ALA Trustee Citation, established in 1941 to recognize public library trustees for distinguished service to library development, honors the best contributions and efforts of the estimated 60,000 Americans who serve on library boards. "Mark Miller's dedicated service and commitment to excellence in libraries has resulted in initiatives that benefit all Loudoun County residents," noted Library Director Chang Liu. "During his time as chair, the Board has developed innovative solutions to serve the needs of our community."

Miller received the Virginia Library

Association Trustee Library Award in 2016. He has served as a member of the Loudoun County Public Library Board of Trustees since 2011 and as its chair since 2013. He has also served on the Loudoun County Fiscal Impact Committee, the Loudoun County Housing Advisory Board and on the board of the Friends of Ashburn Library.

He resides in Leesburg with his wife, Ellyn, and son, Jake. His daughter, Gabriella, passed away from brain cancer in 2013 at the age of 10. To defeat childhood cancer, the Millers established the Smashing Walnuts Foundation. Miller will be honored with the ALA Trustee Citation at the Opening General Session of the 2017 ALA Annual Conference in Chicago.

LCDS Students Go To National History Day Competition

Three eighth grade students from Loudoun Country Day School will be attending the national competition for National History Day, to be held at College Park June 11-15, at the University of MD.

Danae Flannery and Noora Samadi collaborated on a documentary of Cesar Chavez. Their presentation at the state level in Richmond on Sat., April 22, resulted in a second place at the state level, which qualifies them for the national competition.



Left to right: Sophia McMahon, Noora Samadi, and Danae Flannery.

Sophia McMahon competed in the individual documentary category. Her project on Margaret Sanger took first place.

At LCDS seventh and eighth grade students either produce a documentary or web site as part of their civics and history projects.



VOLUNTEERS NEEDED

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UPCOMING EVENTS:

May 7th
Ashburn Volunteer Fire and Rescue-Open House

May 13th
Purcellville Public Safety Day

May 20th
Loudoun Volunteer Rescue Squad-Open House

May 20th
Sterling Volunteer Rescue Squad-Open House

May 27th
Round Hill Volunteer Fire and Rescue-Open House

June 3rd
Hamilton Volunteer Rescue Squad-Open House

For more information
call 571-442-2801

Sniffing Out The Best Summer Camps

- By Andrea Gaines

Fresh off of Spring Break, and looking forward to the Memorial Day Holiday and the last day of school, Loudoun's kids are lining up for the county and area's fantastic summer camp offerings.

In addition to the dozens and dozens of camps offered by the Loudoun County Department of Parks and Community Services, organizations with loads of educational, recreational, and scholastic expertise are rolling out their best for Loudoun County's children and young adults.

At the county level, parents and kids can choose from a camp focused on arts and crafts, music and theater, fishing, horseback riding, or outdoor adventure, every kind of field or court sport - from baseball to basketball to golf to soccer, to tennis or volleyball - nature, history and the environment, science and technology ... even LEGO Building & Engineering.

Local conservation organizations ... music stores, and art, dance and theater groups ... learning and language centers ... the YMCA, 4-H, outdoor clubs, local sports leagues, and fitness clubs - even local police departments are also answering the call (Details on the Leesburg PD's Junior Police Camp at www.loudoun.gov).

Other sources for information on Loudoun County's many camp offerings can be found with an easy Google search,



or, start with these links:

- The PRCS 2017 Activity Guide - www.loudoun.gov/prcs-activityguide.
- The PRCS 2017 Camp Guide - www.loudoun.gov/camps.
- Summer Horse Riding Camps Directory for Aldie, Chantilly, Hamilton, Leesburg and Purcellville - go to www.ohorse.com and click on summer camps.
- Easy zip code/state/topic searches at: www.kidscamps.com, www.washingtonparent.com, www.certifikid.com and www.bestovernightcamps.com.
- Other area/regional websites include the Loudoun 4-H - www.loudoun4h.weebly.com, Summer Break Guide To Camps & Fun at www.dullesmoms.com/camp-guide, Best of Summer Camps in Northern Virginia 2017 at www.poshseven.com, and for the arts: www.loudounartsdirectory.wordpress.com.

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This horse barn is a 24 stall barn with locker rooms, office, and living quarters to facilitate the equestrian facility located in Marlboro, Md. It was built for Toll Brothers and won Fuog Interbuild the National Frame Building Association's Building of the Year award (2016)

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Spruce-Up Your Deck, Patio Or Porch

– By Andrea Gaines

One of the best investments a property owner can make is to spruce-up their home's deck, patio, porch or favorite green space.

Looking at them a little differently ... can be as rewarding as putting an inexpensive addition on your house. Just let your imagination roam a bit.

First ... What Would You Use These Spaces For If They Were Re-Engineered?

These go-to outdoor areas are the places where people gather to visit, fire up the grill, celebrate a summer birthday. But, expand those options in your mind.

If there was a little more privacy – a screen or other divider – could your outdoor space also be used as a quiet place for someone to grab a nap or to read?

If there was a covered workspace of sorts, could your porch or deck be used for homework, crafts projects, to repot plants, or to catch up on your to-do list?

Next ... Consider What's Lacking In That Outdoor Space – Proper Structure Or A More Pleasing Ambiance

By this I mean, if your outdoor space were an indoor room that you wished would do more for you, consider where you'd focus your attention.



- **If you are looking for greater function** (to accommodate more people/uses), focus on the space's structure and features – the decks, railings, stairs, screens, pillars, stones and walls that need to be added, replaced, repaired, dug out, or painted; the availability of places to sit, get out of the sun, store/serve food and beverages, etc.

Maybe there's a stone walkway that's overgrown and unused, a weak railing that could benefit from some bench seating, or garden area that could be turned into a coffee/lunch nook with the addition of a simple brick floor surface and a bench. When structures are in good shape, you instantly have more options.

- **If you want the space to have a more**

inviting atmosphere or flavor – mimicking your favorite indoor room – focus on the colors, plantings and small or large special touches that define it. Most homeowners have standard outdoor furniture, umbrellas and flower pots they bring out each year. Make this your decorative base, and then add to these things your favorite decorative objects, pillows, throws, side tables, candles and lighting from inside rooms – things that are also safe to use outside.

For items in this category I think of tall candlesticks, chandeliers, and all-weather bookcases that can serve as plant stands and provide storage. I also like folding screens, magazine racks and that extra coffee table, carefully placed standing

mirrors that reflect your lawn and garden, and simple overhead frames draped with fabric to shade seating areas or sun-sensitive plants. Old food and wine crates, set on end or stacked upon one another can serve as tables. Hay bales make great all-weather seating for grassy and/or patio areas.

Outdoor spaces also benefit from decorative items that serve as structure. Think overhead ropes, branches and lines that potted vines can use to climb on, large pots (lightweight plastic ones are great) that form an entry way to a deck's seating area, or line a pathway.

It's all about looking at your outdoor area as an indoor room – a spring and summer addition to your home.

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STEAM, continued from page 21

The arts are varied just like the other acronym subjects; however, the arts are not where people have trouble engaging. Arguably, all people can engage in the arts in whatever ways they would like; by comparison, not everyone can be engaged with the STEM subjects.

Perhaps the way to correct this is to consider what is best for the students that are engaged in these programs. It would be wise to have the STEM idea continue – to continue encouraging students to pursue these fields. The arts need to have their own focus that

is driven toward students’ motivation – and toward the creative aspect that helps drive their success in their studies. This is not about funding or recognition; it is simply the encouragement toward the subjects. It is just a name – it is ultimately up to the students whether they want to pursue a specific field; these classes just show them what it’s like, just like all the other classes.

Mary Rose Lunde is a senior at Virginia Tech, and will start her masters in the fall in Literature.



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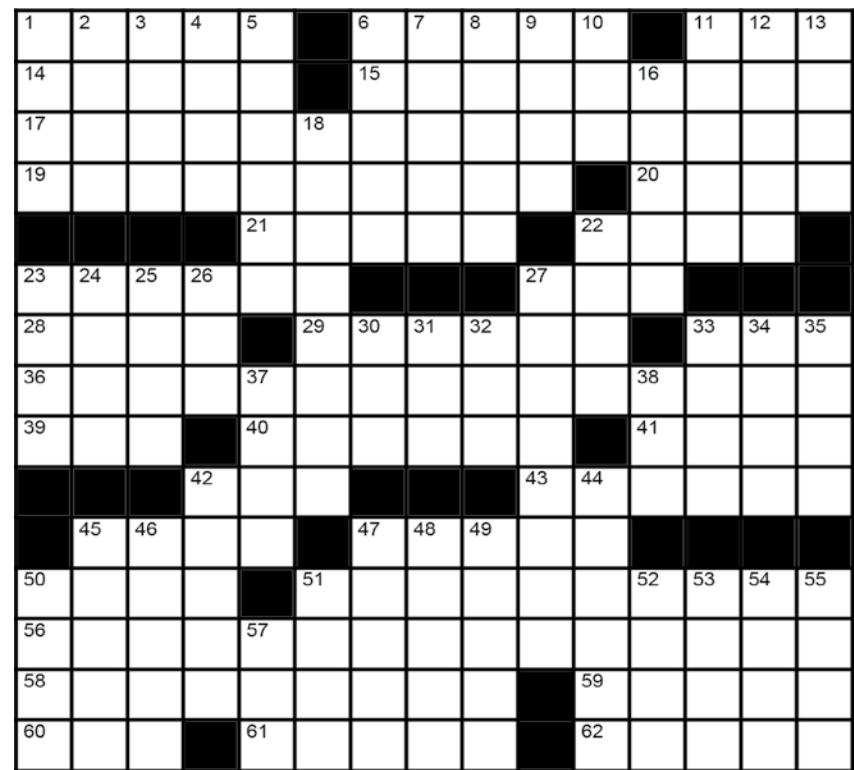
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Hidden Conveyances

By Myles Mellor and Sally York



- | | |
|------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| 1. Sight parts | 7. Related maternally |
| 6. Beginning of a conclusion | 8. Archibald and Thurmond |
| 11. Loser’s place? | 9. Decent |
| 14. Rustle or murmur | 10. It may be smoked |
| 15. Stimulant drug | 11. Nirvana tune |
| 17. Chomps at the bit | 12. Ski trail |
| 19. Arranged anew | 13. Distress signal |
| 20. Ticket | 16. Ice cream flavor |
| 21. Carryalls | 18. Relating to newborns |
| 22. Locks in a barn? | 22. Speck |
| 23. Typewriter roller | 23. ___ Bear |
| 27. Carbonium, e.g. | 24. Merry-go-round music |
| 28. Campaign worker | 25. Garden figure |
| 29. Dialect | 26. Half a score |
| 33. French collagist | 27. Kind of treatment |
| 36. 1968 movie title | 30. Rook |
| 39. 20s dispenser | 31. Certain refrigerant |
| 40. Tungusic language | 32. Biblical verb suffix |
| 41. Horned goddess | 33. Bishop’s seat in ancient churches |
| 42. Squat | 34. Curb, with “in” |
| 43. Instant | 35. “Hey there!” |
| 45. Have an edge against | 37. Issue |
| 47. Old dagger | 38. Deadeye’s forte |
| 50. Foreign dignitary | 42. Care for |
| 51. Foul-smelling herb | 44. Antsy |
| 56. Goes too far | 45. Drooping flower spike |
| 58. Certain doctor | 46. Wee |
| 59. Outdoor magazine | 47. Small finch |
| 60. Hog haven | 48. Limestone topography |
| 61. Extra inning | 49. Archie’s better half |
| 62. Thirsty | 50. Protection |
-
- DOWN**
- | | |
|-------------------------|-------------------------------|
| 1. Red letters? | 51. Niels Bohr, e.g. |
| 2. Express a preference | 52. West Samoan monetary unit |
| 3. Continental capital | 53. Bit of kindling |
| 4. Petri dish filler | 54. Put on |
| 5. Orthodox Muslim | 55. Appraiser |
| 6. Lacks, briefly | 57. PC component |

Answers on page 34

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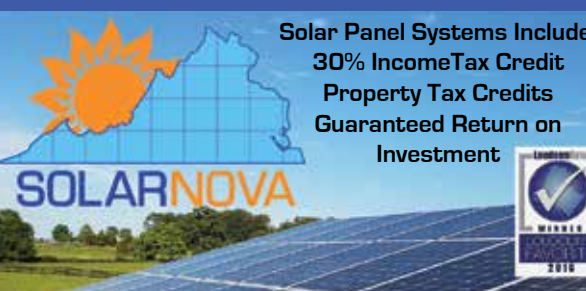
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Slow But Steady Burn Towards Solar

– By Andrea Gaines

Three energy-conscious partners – The Piedmont Environmental Council, The Northern Virginia Regional Commission, and LEAP, the Local Energy Alliance Program – have wrapped up a six-week, March 15 – April 30 campaign called Solarize the Piedmont. This is the third year of the innovative program, covering Albemarle, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Madison, Orange, Rappahannock, and Loudoun counties.

The program has produced more than 750 solar power leads over the last three years in this nine-county area alone, with the final 2017 numbers still to come. Last year, said Bri West, Director of Outreach and Communications for the Piedmont Environmental Council, the program resulted in the installation of upwards of \$800,000 in solar equipment. For 2017, PEC hopes to surpass the \$1 million mark.

Amanda Chance, Client Relations Manager for LEAP, noted that although the Piedmont program has produced relatively modest number of solar power installations in its first two years of operation – approximately 13, not including what they hope to install as a result of the 2017 program – the effort is changing minds, and lots of them.

The objective of Solarize the Piedmont is simple: Help people who might have considered solar power for their property to test out the idea in real time; with a free property assessment, a detailed proposal on how it could be done if a particular property is a good candidate for solar, and a professional, low-cost installation, if everything is a go.

Similar programs that LEAP has helped



Ricky the llama loves the solar panels on his farm outside Charlottesville. Photo courtesy of LEAP.

organize in Fairfax County have produced conversion rates that would more than satisfy anyone in the business of sales – whether it be a new car, a new home, or any other significant purchase. Ten to 20 percent of people who make the initial inquiry eventually purchase a system.

In our nine-county area, the solar installations are coming in at a slower pace. But, according to both Chance and West, the program is seeing more and more inquiries from long-term thinkers: people who always wanted to add solar to

their homes and are finally taking a step towards it; people considering building a new structure on their property that could accommodate solar; or, people in the market for a property that will be a good candidate for solar. According to West, lots of people who are otherwise very interested in solar electricity are overwhelmed and apprehensive about what it might entail. How much does it cost? How do I find the right contractor? What will my HOA say? What does zoning in my area allow? Solarize the

Piedmont can answer these questions and get people on the road to solar ... even if they are not ready to make the investment, today.

Prices for solar are also headed down, dropping some 20 to 25 percent in recent years. And, with access to special financing methods, bulk purchasing, the 30 percent federal tax credit available to solar power users, and the know-how to put it all together, programs such as Solarize the Piedmont are making it easier than ever to check out and take advantage of the power of the sun.

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Answers to puzzle from page 29

1	U	2	V	3	E	4	A	5	S	6	H	7	E	8	N	9	C	10	E	11	S	12	P	13	A		
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58	I	N	T	E	R	N	I	S	T											59	G	L	I	D	E		
60	S	T	Y							61	T	E	N	T	H						62	E	A	G	E	R	

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Dr. Mike, continued from page 2

Dr. Mike,

There is a dad of another girl on my daughter's soccer team that is really taking side-line coaching too far. My daughter is 8 years old and sensitive, and although I understand him yelling at her to "pass," "get open," and "hustle," is what he thinks is best for the team, she only hears a man yelling at her and making her feel like she doesn't measure up. I know this is supposed to be fun, but she has been tearful after a few games and doesn't want to play anymore. What do I do? - Concerned Parents

college applications, so do we need to push him harder? - Concerned Parents

Dear Concerned Parents,

There is no doubt that getting into college/university has become increasingly difficult over the years – even for competitive students with solid grades and SAT scores. At the end of the day, there are more applicants than there is space, and so every aspect of your son's application counts.

While doing more academically is certainly important, and while college admission departments have GPA and SAT numbers they like and don't like, admission counselors have always stressed the importance of a balanced application in my conversations with them over the years. And an academically impressive but imbalanced application can sometimes be passed up. As a child psychologist, I've seen applicants with outstanding GPAs and SAT scores get turned down by good schools, and I've seen applicants with less than stellar GPAs and SAT scores, but more balanced applications, get accepted to those very same schools.

So, in addition to an impressive academic record, community service, volunteering, internships, etc. – activities where your son gives back – are important parts of a balanced college application.

Before encouraging your son to take more APs next year, I recommend that you first ask him about his future plans; does he wish to attend college after high school, and if so, what colleges does he plan to apply to? I would then research each school's requirements to see if your son is a good fit. He could also meet with his school's advisor or you could hire a private college placement professional.

Dear Concerned Parents,

I think you should talk to the dad at your daughter's next practice or before her next game. Be mindful of your feelings before you speak to him; it's better to approach him with an open mind and kind heart than it is to be correcting or defensiveness in manner.

I would explain to him that while you appreciate his cheering and directing of the children as a devoted dad, your daughter is sensitive and has become upset by his excitement on the side-line. I would not expect that this dad wants to hurt the children, and as soon as he hears how your daughter feels, he'll likely pipe down.

It's easy for parents to get caught up in team sports for their children, but we should all recognize that we don't know the inner workings of all the young players like we do our own children, and thus, we need to think twice about how we cheer and encourage our little ones from the sideline.

Dr. Mike,

My son will be a junior next year and is planning on taking only one AP course. Most of the kids in our neighborhood will be taking 3-4. My son is a good student, and I want to support his choices, but it seems as if 3-4 APs is now the new normal and only taking 1 will put him behind for

Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He has been featured on CNN Nightly News, Good Morning America and several other media outlets. He can be reached at 703 723-2999 and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.



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