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February Is For Lovers Of Fireman's Field

Open House Feb. 17, Loudoun Grown Expo Feb. 24

— By Andrea Gaines

Virginia is for Lovers. It's one of the most heartfelt and effective marketing messages ever written. This month, the same thing can be said of Fireman's Field in Purcellville. February is for lovers of one of the community's most precious public places.

Open House

The new management team at the iconic Purcellville landmark will hold a celebratory Fireman's Field 2018 Kick-Off and Open House, Saturday, Feb. 17, 12:30 p.m. to 2 p.m. The event is open to the public — an opportunity for all to see, up-close, the new management team's future plans for the complex.

The team, including Shaun Alexander Enterprises, Inc., Play To Win, LLC and Every Citizen Has Opportunities (ECHO)

Continued on page 22



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Calling All Artists

Discover Purcellville, a community Non-Profit is seeking volunteer artists to paint handmade Adirondack Love Seats to be displayed around Purcellville this Spring / Summer. This year's theme is anything related to western Loudoun County or Purcellville. For more info or to volunteer please text Michael Oaks 540 383-0009 or email Dpurcellville@gmail.com.

Decision Time For Cut-Through Traffic

— By Valerie Cury

In 2011, it was 800 vehicles per day. By 2013 it was 1,000. And, according to an October 2017 count, it was 1,300. These numbers represent the cut-through traffic that zips through the Country Club Drive neighborhood in the northwest part of Purcellville, sandwiched between Main Street to the south, the Rt. 7 Bypass to the north, and Rt. 690/North 21st Street to the east.

Families on the short stretch of Country Club Drive have tried for some three decades to get a resolution to what they see as an accident waiting to happen -- the newspaper headline they never want to see.



Residents living on Country Club Drive describe it as a "traffic cut-through gauntlet." Many parents have made the choice not to allow their children to play in the front yard or ride their bikes during peak traffic hours. Adults put off walking

the neighborhood until the weekend, when the traffic is lighter. For the people who live here, the idea that they might turn onto Country Club one day to see a flurry of fire trucks, police cars, and ambulances

Continued on page 21



PROPANE COSTS TOO MUCH!

This Winter is the Ideal Time to Make the Switch.

"So very happy we switched to Hunt Country. My only regret is that we didn't do it sooner. How much money we would have saved...However, we finally made the right choice about our propane. For years I have been receiving offers from other companies offering low rates, only to find out you have to enter a contract with them. It never made sense to me that you could drive around town and shop for fuel for your car, but not for your home. It's nice to see that a business owner understands this and caters to the customer. We received our first delivery this past Saturday and the owner himself brought it out. The service was excellent. Of course, I'm not surprised, as the initial account set-up was easy and the lady in the office was so pleasant!" —Caroline T.

"I have been buying propane from Hunt Country for about a year now. My previous propane provider was much higher priced. The staff was rude and didn't seem to care if you gave them business or not. When I was shopping around for a new company, thankfully I found Hunt Country. The staff is friendly, professional, knowledgeable and genuinely cared that you gave them your business. Hunt Country prices are consistently lower than their competitors. I highly recommend that you call Hunt Country Propane, if you don't, you're making a BIG(\$) mistake. Thanks Hunt Country!" —Ed, Leesburg



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Around The Game And Beyond

– By Andrea Gaines

When you look deep into a person well known for a particular set of accomplishments, you might find yourself admiring that person even more than when you first learned of her story.

This is what we found when we interviewed the family of 17-year-old Haley Pasqualone, a Loudoun Valley High School student who, it turns out, is not just a basketball star, but a young woman who has her sights set on a whole lot more.

On the court, Haley has a career high 24 points, with eight steals, four rebounds, and two assists – so far, at least.

Those 24 points, by the way, were a gift from Haley to her teammates on her very own birthday. She also scored 17 points in a recent game at Woodgrove High School. And, thanks to her efforts and those of her hard-working teammates, Loudoun Valley High School girls' basketball is routinely finding itself in the top 20 or better of teams in the entire region. By the end of January, Loudoun Valley was ahead by two games in Dulles District competition.

LoCoSports, a news source for high school sports in Loudoun County, said this about Haley when reporting on a recent game: "Pasqualone has a knack for finding openings inside ten feet and connected on jump shot after jump shot to keep her team ahead." She, is a star.

Haley's father Frank Pasqualone attended Broad Run High School, and both he and his wife Traci were active in athletics. Frank played basketball and baseball, and Traci played rugby. Haley's brother Alex is a junior at Radford University. He also attended Loudoun Valley High School,



Players, front row, left to right: Olivia Badura (#1), Jordan Campbell (#11), Sarah Thompson (#2), Samantha Jackson (#32), Haley Pasqualone (#10), Alyssa Hassan (#5), Allison Dunkleberger (#22). Players, back row, left to right: Lakin Krisko (#40), Lee Volker (#4), Megan Stevenson (#15), Celine Fink (#13), Allison Traub (#14), Hadley Coil (#12). Head Coach: Kenyamo McFarlane; Assistant Coaches: Stewart Wilcox, Mic Green; Managers: Abby Taylor, Payton Schaaf, Genni Hummer; Athletic Trainer: Andy Gordon.

where he was the president of DECA, a student organization that is part of the Marketing Education programs supporting school- and work-based learning. This close-knit family clearly knows that life is to be lived.

We asked Haley's dad, Frank, about how he feels in looking at his daughter's athletic accomplishments. "I feel kind of amazed, really," he said. "Haley grew up playing different sports, but didn't really seem to love basketball, at first. Then, in middle school, she stopped playing all other sports, and began to focus herself on the game. She got involved with AAU travel basketball, and otherwise made basketball the center of her sports activities."

"The game has been a great influence, on Haley," her father says. "It's about commitment. Other players and the coach

depending on you. They give it their all, and so you do, too."

As for the challenges these modern times can present to young people – with access to everything from electronics to the internet, including cell phones – Pasqualone expressed the opinion that kids, in general, despite all that's available to them, can have "too much time for downtime." "Basketball," he said, has kept Haley "focused and concentrated on a goal."

Every member of the Pasqualone family clearly knows how to excel at specific things, but also seeks out lots of different experiences. And, you see that love of variety in this star basketball player.

Haley, says her dad, enjoys school, is a good student, and is also a member of the National Honor Society. "But," he says, "she also loves hanging with 'her girls,'



Haley in action.

she has a boyfriend, she volunteers, has babysitting jobs, and is a lifeguard."

Haley referees in basketball leagues for younger players – first and second grade through middle school – and she works at local basketball camps. So, basketball is clearly a dominant factor in her life.

But – and here's where the around-the-game-and-beyond idea comes in – Haley Pasqualone has an interest in becoming a neonatal nurse.

Hmm. A three-point champion who loves hanging out with her friends hopes to become a neonatal nurse, and still finds the time to volunteer. No wonder her dad's last words in our interview were: "She's just a great girl."

HeroHomes Casino Night

Please join HeroHomes and the Washington Redskins Alumni Association for a fun evening of glamour, gambling, music, and fellowship in a 1920's speakeasy setting, Saturday, Feb. 10, Shadow Creek, 18090 Silcott Springs Road, Purcellville, Virginia 20132. From 6p.m. to 11p.m., black tie optional, \$150 per person or \$250 per couple. All proceeds will benefit HeroHomes. To purchase tickets visit: Mkt.com/herohomes.

Claytor Joins Local Bank, Holding Company Board



Cary Claytor

Cary Claytor was elected to the boards of Eagle Financial Services, Inc., and Bank of Clarke County at the company's monthly board meeting. Claytor is President of H.N. Funkhouser & Company, a local family-owned petroleum company that operates in the Northern Shenandoah Valley.

Claytor is a native of the Winchester/Frederick County area. A Handley High School graduate, she is a Certified Public Accountant. She holds a Bachelor of Sciences degree with a minor in Art History from the University of Richmond.

Claytor is an Elder of First Presbyterian Church, President-Elect of the Winchester Rotary Club and is a board member of the Mount Hebron Cemetery.



At approximately 2:30 p.m. on Friday, Feb. 2 the Town of Purcellville made this darling little announcement: "Anyone missing this cutie pie? Very friendly. No tag. No collar. He followed one of our employees into Town Hall. Please call 540-338-7421 if you know him." And, here's the sweet ending ... The Town got a call shortly thereafter with information about where Angus lived, and a Town employee made sure he got home!

Your Family's Dream Come True

– By Andrea Gaines

For certain homebuyers, nothing but the perfect combination of old and new, will do. They don't just want to purchase a property ... they want to take over the care of a home from the family that lived there before. They want cozy, rustic places and sleek modern conveniences. They want a place where their lifestyle can move right in, without missing a moment.

This property, off the beaten path in the charming Village of Bluemont, fits the bill, perfectly.

With two residential structures – a 1840s log cabin home, completely renovated by its last owner, and 1970s brick rambler – potential buyers have lots to look at, and consider. The two are being offered together for \$599,900. Separately, the log cabin home, on 10.9 acres is listed at \$349,900. The brick rambler, on 9 acres can be purchased for \$249,900, but is not yet officially listed.

A Mr. Raleigh Colston came to the property through an original Manor of Leeds grant from Lord Fairfax, and only three families have owned the property since that time.



The original main part of the log cabin house is a perfectly rustic, now perfectly updated log cabin, built onto in the mid 1800s by a Mr. Andrew Jackson Feltner – the road's namesake. Robert Edward Feltner, believed to be the first child born in the cabin purchased the home from his parents in 1922. He and his wife, Elsie May raised seven children, and lived out their lives, right here.

In the decades since then, the cabin was doubled in size. And, over the last decade it took on a new identity with a major renovation and addition overseen by one of the most well-known and respected historic renovation professionals in the business, David Logan of Vintage Renovation.

This renovation brought the property back

- **Address: 1459-1381 Feltner Road, Bluemont**
- **Log Cabin: 2 bedrooms/2 baths**
- **Rambler: 2 bedrooms/1 bath**
- **Total Acreage: 20 acres**
- **List Price, Together: \$599,900**
- **Agent: John Constant, Middleburg Atoka Properties**
- **Phone: (703) 585-6278**



full circle, to where it is today. Specially-sourced reclaimed woods including long leaf pine, tobacco barn wood, and reclaimed oak now compliment the original structure's 1800's chestnut logs. Walls of glass bring the gorgeous gardens of the property inside, with a view visible from the entire length of the addition.

A large deck, including a screened and covered eating area overlooks the creek, gardens and historic outbuildings. Do you cook? There's also a pizza oven built on site with stones from the beautiful paneled walls, wood, beamed and vaulted ceilings, a wood-burning stove, eat-in kitchen open floor plan and more await the next family hoping to begin their journey, here.

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A Marvelous Encounter

— By Samuel Moore-Sobel

I live in a fast-moving world, filling my days with near-constant activities and events. My closest friends often joke about the whirlwind of the life I live, marveling at my ability to juggle a never-ending list of engagements and commitments.

The last few weeks have been a bit different. Undergoing surgery has a way of sidelining even the most active of life's participants, forcing them to slow down to achieve healing. My imperfect quest to rest led to hours spent engaging in leisurely activities often eschewed at the expense of chasing productivity. This forced period of relaxation led me to discover *The Marvelous Mrs. Maisel*, which premiered Nov. 29 on Amazon.

The show centers around Miriam "Midge" Maisel, married with two children, living in New York City. Her husband, Joel, is a successful businessman working at a plastics firm. Corporate life doesn't seem to suit him, however. He dreams of hitting it big as a comedian, spending his nights telling jokes in comedy clubs with his supportive wife in tow.

Who among us is unable to relate to the desire for more? Many of us spend our days at our jobs, only to spend our nights and weekends pursuing a different course. A desire to create something original to make a meaningful impact on the world around us. Dreams are often celebrated when possessed by children. We encourage young ones to pursue originality, urging them to be all they can be. A steep price tag is attached to each and every hope nursed and passion harbored, however. Once adulthood is attained, one feels the closing of a window on those very dreams borne long ago, forcing us to come to grips with the fact that we may never become what we desperately longed to one day be.

"Most men lead lives of quiet desperation and die with their song still inside them" -- a quote attributed to Thoreau. A feeling I once believed to be confined to the Millennial generation. Recent experience has proven otherwise. Countless interactions with men twice my age, whose massive achievements look quite impressive when listed sequentially on a resume, are haunted by the same questions. They wonder about the path not taken. The books they could have written. The companies they could have started. The dreams they left in the dust long ago, to pursue the safety offered by embarking upon a career in corporate America.

Joel is clearly a man experiencing the feeling of "quiet desperation". By the end of the first episode, Joel reveals



MOORE-SOBEL

he is having an affair with his secretary, leading him to ask his wife for a divorce. Devastated, she seems lost in the haze, albeit for a moment. Until suddenly, her greatest tragedy reveals an abiding passion and natural talent for comedy. She embarks on her own journey, free from the apparent muzzle placed upon her by cultural expectations unique to 1950s America.

As the series unfolds, Mrs. Maisel seemingly comes into her own. Although her development is not without some hiccups. She knows she has a talent, but a part of her seemingly wants her old life back. The future seems scary and uncertain. At one point, she gives up comedy to work as a makeup artist, despite protestations from her manager. She seems to lack self-confidence, or is scared of the implications surrounding her impending stardom. She knows once she crosses the threshold, her life will never be the same.

I wonder if a certain fear doesn't grip many of us as well. The fear that our dreams are too far-fetched. That the things we love will never reap the necessary salary to live the lifestyle desired. Or that certain responsibilities -- such as having a family or paying a mortgage -- interfere with the amount of risk we are willing to shoulder. Or even that success will bring unforeseen consequences. Do we limit ourselves before the world is ever able to see our work?

In the end, the central character in this delightful comedy seemingly finds her way. In an effort to avoid giving away the ending (containing a bit of a twist), one gets the feeling in the episodes preceding the series finale that a star is about to be born. Perhaps that is the point. Dreams are not easy things to achieve, requiring sacrifice and persistence along the way. Relationships and social mores that get in the way are better off left behind. Only in the pursuit of such endeavors can we truly find ourselves; and even if our stars fail to rise to the level we dream, at least we can say we tried.

"Do what you love, and the money will follow," Allison Alison, a high school teacher, used to tell me. As 2018 begins with great anticipation surrounding the potential achievement of big dreams, here's to hoping she was right.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is nearing completion of a memoir. Visit his website at www.holdingontohopetoday.com and find him on Facebook and Twitter.

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Catching The Tiger's Tail

– By Charles Houston

Buddy Rizer, head of Economic Development for Loudoun County – was on vacation. A safari in the mysterious Bandhavgarh Tiger Reserve, in Madhya Pradesh, India. He was armed with a very expensive camera lens.

Bingo! Not 50 yards away, a tiger was half asleep in the shade. The tiger looked at him with sleepy eyes and rolled languorously, scratching its back on a tree trunk before settling in with a deep, purr-like sound. It seemed as slow and lazy as his old hound, Butter n' Biscuits, Rizer mused. Transfixed, all common sense vanished.

Buddy walked towards the tiger, which seemed to be telepathing a message, "Brother, you may greet me in peace." Rizer was now 10 feet away. The tiger rose and ambled off. Rizer picked up his pace; the animal did the same. The tiger started a slow trot, but with a mad burst Rizer leapt forward and caught the

tiger's tail. Yes, they would find oneness.

The alarmed guide stood in the pickup's bed and shouted, but his warnings were drowned out by a terrible scream. He looked in shock as he saw the tiger bound away, Buddy in its fateful grip.

* * *

A good name for the tiger would be "Amazon." I hope that gory introduction got your attention, for if Amazon lands in Loudoun County, it's our way of life that will be ripped away.

I sense a new wariness about Amazon's gigantic project. Its glamour besotted our leaders, who still utter gee-wiz statements about the glory of it all. Funny, though, that their scripted comments unintentionally contain warnings. One said that Loudoun is "the best place for Amazon and its 50,000 workers to live, work, learn and play." I'll reword it: "50,000 workers and their families will move here, further congest our roads, inundate our schools at incomprehensible cost, and burden us with more and more taxes."

Buddy Rizer's Department of Economic Development has a glitzy website that includes this fact: Loudoun's 33 largest employers have somewhere between 40,000 and 60,000 workers. Amazon has said that along with its 50,000 techies, its presence will create "tens of thousands of

additional jobs" attracted here to profit in Amazon's orbit.

Some think that's just peachy. Tony Howard of the Chamber of Commerce says Amazon would be "a huge win," but acknowledges that housing 50,000 employees and their families would be "a challenge, though one Loudoun can meet." Jeff Salmon, head of the County's Planning Commission, has an equally sanguine answer, saying that "Amazon would hardly disrupt" Envision Loudoun's fumbling planning effort. (Can we send these guys on a safari?)

The secret proposal that Rizer made to Amazon has costs that should frighten us. There would be direct economic giveaways, much like cities which build giant stadiums (at taxpayer expense) to attract major league sports teams. Do we really want our taxes to be used as corporate welfare for a company worth almost a trillion dollars? Worse, we'd be burdened with the cost of new roads, transit projects, and cold-hard cash that we'd pour on Amazon.

We actually have no chance of seeing the proposal itself, even with the Freedom of Information Act. I'm an optimist, though. Why not make a FOIA request myself? Let's find out what studies Buddy and crew made of potential effects Amazon would have on Loudoun County ... not things in the proposal, but facts that would have

been necessary to determine what Amazon would really mean to us.

So, I began my own FOIA adventure. Competitive bids, lawsuits, and the like are exempt from FOIA, so I tried a neutral approach. "Can you, please, provide copies of contracts with consultants and records of marketing expenses?" I asked. State Code says that information is exempt if providing it would "adversely affect the County's financial interest." My request asserted that having more than 50,000 people invade us was probably not in the County's financial interest, and thus my request had to be honored. That logic failed, and I received an email denying the request, basically parroting the exemption language in the Virginia Code.

I next FOIA'ed for fiscal analyses, studies and projections of the effects Amazon might have on population, traffic, housing and school and governmental costs. Citizens have a right to see this, correct?

Nope; request still denied! This was becoming a game. I then submitted yet another watered-down FOIA request, asking now for documents related to general expectations of Amazon's effects on the County.

A week later I got the expected denial, essentially saying that everything related to Amazon was exempt. We continued this pas de deux until January 4, when one of Rizer's people made the most amazing statement: "The County does not have documents that contain projections about population growth and school enrollment that could stem from Amazon, or otherwise related to the effects of Amazon on various aspects of life in the County."

Please read that last sentence again.

Does it make you angry?

Here is my conclusion. Many people, including most Supervisors, were so awed by Amazon's glory that no one even considered what its arrival could mean to the "various aspects of life in the County." Excitement can cloud judgment, after all. A tiger! By the tail! But then; "Uh-oh."

Now, with many people having second thoughts about catching that tiger's tail, it's time for the Supervisors to rethink what they authorized Buddy Rizer to do. Let go of the tiger's tail and excuse Loudoun County from the Amazon game.

* * *

Author's note: I don't know Buddy Rizer. He might be a really nice guy who works hard at his assignment. That's the problem. His job is to bring as many companies into Loudoun as he can. With our unemployment at 3 percent, congestion everywhere, and the highest county taxes in the state, wouldn't we be better off if his department were given the task of helping people and businesses already here, rather than bringing in more, more, more?

Charles Houston developed office buildings in Atlanta, and has lived in Paeonian Springs for 20 years.

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Letters To The Editor

Slow Down The Growth

Dear Board of Supervisors:

I plead with you to stop this wild growth and business development. There is no need. Loudoun County has one of the highest, if not the highest, household income in the nation. Loudoun County's growth has been one of the fastest in the country over the last 20 years. Things need to settle down. Keep the transition area a transition area. Keep Western Loudoun rural.

More business development will only make matters worse attracting more people to Loudoun where our schools are already struggling to keep up with the growth in population, where housing developments are flooding the rural areas and where traffic gets worse and worse. There is no logical reason to want more business development other than to line the pockets of developers and satisfy the ego of people who measure success on growth rather than quality of life. Arguments that business development adds to tax revenue are without merit. With the wealth of our county and with already high taxes we certainly can manage budgets to maintain excellent schools and public safety with a lot left over for amenities (but not gold plated everything everywhere).

Community input from Envision Loudoun has made it clear that we do not need more growth and that the transition area and rural west need to be maintained. Attracting more development like the Amazon new headquarters will grossly exacerbate the problems. Further, pro developers will want to attach all sorts of tax incentives costing Loudoun County taxpayers even more.

A good start to controlling growth would be to transform the Department of Economic Development into concentrating entirely on encouraging existing agricultural enterprises to continue their business and attracting new, young farmers to startup in Loudoun.

*George Bardsley
Round Hill*

Tax Cuts Are Working

Dear Editor:

Barely two months into 2018, tax cuts passed by Congress have paved the way for over 200 American businesses to expand and reward their employees. More than three million workers have already reaped the benefits.

Here in Virginia, Stafford Bounce n Play will be distributing \$1,000 mid-year bonuses to all employees thanks to the 20 percent deduction that small businesses receive under the tax cut. It's further proof that federal tax relief is already making great progress here in

the Old Dominion State.

I'm excited to see what the rest of 2018 has to offer for our job creators, who pave the road to economic prosperity.

*Gary Desilets
Catharpin*

Big Ditches, Big Data Centers, But No Internet



"AT&T installing a massive, fat, fiber pipe along my front yard, that does not deliver Internet locally." – Christopher Griggs

Dear Editor:

I find it amazing that I can live in Loudoun county without access to high speed broadband. I have been pushing on American Tower to upgrade the tower so the companies can be permitted to use modern equipment and deliver Internet to we residents of western Loudoun. The process seems to have been moving along, but is now stalled again.

Is the Board of Supervisors able to do anything to help? After two years, very little has happened. In the meantime, the Board talks "General Plan," but moves to approve a resource consuming, impermeable datacenter alongside Goose Creek tributary, in the transition area.

This does not seem like anything residents want. Moreover, this is only the first opportunity, and I am sure there will be better options. So wait for them, or offer the residents of the county the decency to be honest. And don't waste our money, time and effort in meaningless efforts like Envision Loudoun.

I attended most of the Envision Loudoun meetings, and I certainly do not recall anybody in those meetings calling for datacenters on Goose Creek, but what I do remember is talking about the need in rural Loudoun for high speed Internet access. There is too much focus on greed, and not the need of the people. Help us.

Request approval of a site plan amendment to replace the existing self-support tower with new monopole, in the Agricultural Rural, AR1 Zoning District, SPAM-2017-0082.

*Christopher Griggs
Neersville*

Keep Your Eye On The Ball

– By Karen Jimmerson

Since July 2017, systemic administrative and operational failures have revealed themselves, as seven members of our police command staff came forward with critical Police Department operational issues. Many – even most – of these internal failures were unknown to the Town Council. It has become clear, that absent wholesale management changes, half our police force would have quit. One way or the other, Town leadership would have had a crisis to deal with – a crisis that required an immediate and thorough investigation.

At the conclusion of the first investigation, and after the Police Chief was terminated, the Town Council began receiving anonymous emails regarding the conduct of the Interim Town Manager. The content of those emails prompted Council to place the ITM on administrative leave. Thus far, the allegations made in those emails have not been substantiated.

We have since brought on a new and very experienced ITM, and an investigative team which in short order recommended that two more employees be placed on administrative leave. To protect an employee from being terminated without just cause, and to ensure the original investigation was sound, we

have instructed that the initial Police Chief investigation to be thoroughly reviewed, and that any and all other allegations be carefully examined. This Council has taken every appropriate action thus far.

This past week – the last week in January – the Town Council was cyberstalked; receiving alarming messages that were recorded and made available to the investigative team we have in place.

So what, do I believe, is going on? It seems someone is intent on widespread disruption of the necessary communications and inner workings of representative government in Purcellville. We have a very skilled IT forensics team working on these issues; and that is where my trust lies at the moment. Trust in their ability to expose the antagonist(s), and recommend eventual criminal prosecution, if that is warranted.

The backdrop to all of this is the ongoing false narrative that this Council has created "this mess." That has been punctuated by, among other things, the idea that the investigation will cost hundreds of thousands of dollars. Some media have inflated the costs, ignoring and misrepresenting the financial information the Mayor has posted, and is available

Continued on page 22

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Kaine Tours ECHO's Leesburg Facility

– By Andrea Gaines

On Feb. 1, United States Senator Tim Kaine visited the mailroom, day support areas and the medically-related program spaces at ECHO's northern Virginia facility. It was a visit by a politician; one of many the nonprofit has hosted over the years. But, in a place like ECHO, where everything you see and everyone you meet lives and breathes the ECHO spirit, a visit by a sitting United States Senator takes on a different tone.

Here, a United States Senator and the wheelchair-bound man working to meet his deadlines in the mailroom ... are on the same level.

As Kaine said in a Facebook post shortly after his visit: "Inspiring visit to ECHO in Leesburg today. ECHO is an incredible organization ... Thanks to ECHO, nearly 150 adults with disabilities have jobs in Loudoun and Fairfax Counties that have given them tremendous social and professional opportunities. In order to build stronger communities, we should be helping all hardworking Virginians and Americans access the jobs of the future."

The short version of this extraordinary organization is that ECHO provides job skills training and support, job placement and transportation for adults with disabilities.

The more enduring version is that ECHO



makes a lifelong commitment to each and every individual it serves, supporting their talented and diverse family from their Leesburg facility, and onsite at the dozens of businesses that employ them.

The long and enduring version is that, to ECHO, adults with disabilities travel back and forth to work just like we do – with jobs at restaurants and in administrative offices, mail rooms, and fulfillment and packaging shops, in manufacturing plants, at warehouses, and in retail stores.



During his visit Kaine met with the leaders from the organization, toured the facility and shook hands with ECHO's office and administrative staff as well as the disabled adults who work here. Welcome signs, and welcome T-shirts with the new ECHO logo were everywhere, and Kaine seemed genuinely touched.

One ECHO partner at the meeting with Senator Kaine was Janelia Research Campus, a scientific research campus of the Howard Hughes Medical Institute. Director of Innovations and External Relations,

Mike Perham shared how Janelia employs ECHO participants in daily research and upkeep at the campus.

Senator Kaine also saw the benefit of state and federal support of ECHO's work, including through what are known as AbilityOne contracts. These contracts facilitate the employment of people with disabilities at federal agencies, including the U.S. Department of Transportation Eastern Federal Lands Highway Division in Sterling, and the Federal Aviation Administration in Leesburg.

Toll Relief Legislation Passes House Committee

Legislation put forward by House Transportation Committee vice-chair Del. Tim Hugo (R-Fairfax) and Del. Dave LaRock (R-Loudoun) to provide toll relief for Northern Virginia commuters passed the House Transportation Committee Feb. 1, on a 21-1 vote, with Del. Ken Plum, (D-Fairfax) opposed.

LaRock said, "Northern Virginia was already one of the highest-tolled regions in America – now, commuters driving the 36 miles from Leesburg to Washington, D.C. during peak times travel on three distinct toll roads, paying as much as \$56 one-way. January 18, the one-way toll on I-66 ITB (Inside The Beltway) hit a new high of

\$47.25. My constituents call this 'Highway Robbery,' and I agree. Tolls this high hurt families, hinder economic growth, and are just unacceptable."

LaRock and Senator Dick Black (R-Loudoun/Prince William) introduced HB 1489 and SB 898 to reduce tolls on Interstate 66 ITB and the Dulles Toll Road. The scaled-down version of the bill passed the House Transportation Committee, and was sent to the Appropriations Committee with a strong show of support. The bill will adjust two key aspects of the McAuliffe administration's I-66 ITB tolling program:

- Provide equity and improve traffic flow by activating tolling of reverse commuters on

I-66 ITB by Oct. 1, 2018. Those revenues will go into the I-66 Commuter Choice program (the NVTC program currently managing I-66 ITB revenue)

- Refund I-66 ITB tolls exceeding \$200/month until completion of widening the four-mile segment of eastbound Interstate 66 from the Dulles Connector Road to Fairfax Drive in fall 2020.

"Northern Virginians shouldn't be expected to pay a \$40 toll," said Delegate Tim Hugo. "We need to find an immediate solution to lower these tolls, such as reverting the HOV hours back to where they were before the tolling went into effect."

Loudoun County Supervisor Ron Meyer

said: "We need to make transit a better option, but instead, these tolls simply price people out of their cars and out of employment opportunities. This bill should have strong bipartisan support."

Hugo, LaRock and Black, as well as many other Northern Virginia Republican legislators, have opposed the McAuliffe I-66 Inside the Beltway toll plan since the proposal was first announced in March of 2015. Nine of these legislators sent a letter to Gov. McAuliffe outlining their toll relief proposal Dec. 21, 2017, shortly after the tolls began on I-66 ITB. For more information on LaRock's toll relief efforts, go to www.votelarock.us/issues/toll_relief.



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Fraser Launches Bid For Third Term

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser – the change agent with two decisive victories in 2014 and 2016 – has announced that he will be seeking a third term as Mayor.

The Purcellville Town Election – for Mayor and three Town Council seats – will be held on Tuesday, May 1, 2018. The terms for Council Members Ted Greenly, Doug McCollum, and Karen Jimmerson will end on June 30, 2018.

In making the announcement Fraser said, “I am humbled by the outpouring of support I have received during my two terms as Mayor. I am committed to working with the Council majority to fulfill the vision for our Town, acting on the desires of our citizens. In four short years, we have reduced our debt, eliminated double digit water and sewer rate increases, created hundreds of thousands of dollars in non-tax revenue, and most recently saved taxpayers over a million dollars in yearly debt payment while retaining our stellar credit rating. I am committed to advancing our planned operational audit of current systems and processes to enhance efficiencies, a first for our Town. There is enormous pressure to grow the Town by hundreds of acres – via annexations. My vision is to listen to our citizens and not transform Purcellville into anywhere USA.”

“We still have much to accomplish,



Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser

and we have momentum on our side,” Fraser said, “And, with continued citizen engagement and support, committees of volunteers, and the strength of our local businesses, Purcellville will continue to be successful and attain greater heights. It is with these goals in mind that I am running for re-election and ask for your vote on May 1 for Mayor of the Town of Purcellville.”

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Jimmerson Announces Candidacy For Board Of Supervisors

In announcing her candidacy for Blue Ridge District Supervisor of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Purcellville Town Council Member Karen Jimmerson issued the following statement Jan. 29:

"Loudoun's Blue Ridge District Member of the Board of Supervisor has shown himself to be an ineffective champion for the citizens living in our district and the rural policy areas. Time and again, Eastern Loudoun Supervisors

have controlled the vote on areas which do not impact their constituents. Too many times over the years I have watched representatives on the Board marginalized by the Supervisors who live in the more urban areas of the County. How can those of us who live in the Transition Policy Area and the Rural Policy Area expect Tony Buffington to firmly stand up to developers' special interests, when they funded his election?"

This same paradox started in 2011 and has continued. Over the years, I have successfully lobbied colleagues on the other side of an issue when it was citizen-supported, the rationale was sound, and it was the right thing to do. It is clear, either our current Supervisor is misrepresenting himself or incapable of advocating for the Blue Ridge.

The Blue Ridge District needs a Supervisor with a proven record of fighting back against the establishment, demanding that growth be financially viable, and who has consistently voted for the interests of her constituents."

Before Jimmerson was elected, she successfully rallied the community against unchecked and unpopular development and government officials who had long ignored citizens. In 2014, she ran for Purcellville Town Council, and in her first year negotiated a settlement in the decade-long lawsuit between the Town and Crooked Run Orchard. During her term, she has voted to make Town financials more available to the public, crafted budgets with her colleagues that added no additional debt during her term, and voted to hold the line on tax and water/sewer rate increases.

She is a Virginia Certified Planning Commissioner, serves on the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority Planning Coordination Advisory Committee, has served on the Purcellville Arts Committee



Karen Jimmerson

and the Tree-Environment & Sustainability Committee, and is currently the Town Council liaison to the Purcellville Planning Commission.

Her husband's service in the Marine Corps brought them to Northern Virginia in 1992, and in that same decade, she became a resident of Loudoun County. After residing in Leesburg for many years, Jimmerson and her husband Richard chose Purcellville for the "high quality of living, excellent schools, and beautiful small town atmosphere." Together, they have three daughters; one who graduated Loudoun Valley High School in 2017, a tenth grader at Loudoun Valley High School, and a seventh grader at Blue Ridge Elementary School. She has served as Secretary of the Old Dominion Valley Homeowners Board for five years, and is an active community volunteer.

Jimmerson will be seeking the Democratic nomination.



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Envision Loudoun Update: No Public Input Sessions 'Til Spring

– By Andrea Gaines

The next round of Envision Loudoun public input sessions is now many weeks away. Said Envision Loudoun spokesperson Christina Torrible in January: “We expect our next round of public outreach activity to take place in the Spring; we will be in touch with specific details about how you can participate.”

It had been anticipated that planners would be “putting it all together” by January 2018, with the public weighing in via a series of Plan Review Workshops. However, whether it is the sheer volume of work to be done or the intensity of the public’s interest in the process, Envision Loudoun seems to be in a brief holding pattern.

It is unclear whether the controversial True North data center vote – which set the Loudoun County Board of Supervisor’s Fall 2017 and early 2018 zoning agenda on fire – is contributing to that slowdown.

That issue came to a head in January when the BOS rezoned 105 acres in the Transition Policy Area for a data center owned by Compass Datacenter, a Dallas-based company.

The 750,000 sq. ft. facility on Goose Creek – vigorously opposed by citizen groups and many on the Loudoun County planning staff – is some five miles from Loudoun’s “data center alley,” and the first-ever to be approved in the Transition Policy Area. The action confirmed the belief of many that Envision Loudoun, while promoted as a citizen-driven process, is in the firm control of special interests, including the Envision

Loudoun Stakeholders Committee.

The powerful committee is heavily-weighted towards the building and real estate industries, moderated – it was hoped – by citizen representatives from each of Loudoun’s nine districts, and representatives from community, preservation, and conservation groups.

The Stakeholders Committee and its subcommittees have met frequently – two, three, four, or more times a month, since July of last year.

While it is perhaps natural for the Stakeholders to push for greater housing, commercial, and industrial densities, there is growing unease about whether the group ... is accountable to anyone.

Throughout a series of Envision Loudoun public input sessions in 2016 and 2017, citizen sentiment ran strongly and consistently in favor of strong limits on growth, providing explicit direction about where that growth should go. Citizens believe in the three-part growth management strategy represented by the Suburban Policy Area, the Transition Policy Area, and the Rural Policy Area.

Documents and presentations crafted by the Stakeholders say that public supports a balance between “residential and non-residential development,” and policies that ensure “adequate infrastructure and public facilities” as precursors to growth. The public, says the Committee, wants “quality development that is compatible with its surroundings and sensitive to environmental features,” and a Comp Plan capable of “maintaining the rural environments in the

County,” and preserving “natural, cultural, and historic resources.”

But, nowhere within any of the most fundamental concepts upon which the Stakeholders seem to be relying, is that citizen sentiment being given a home.

Deep cracks in the public’s confidence with respect to how seriously their input was being taken grew in intensity over the summer of 2017.

As reported in the July 2017 issue of the Blue Ridge Leader & Loudoun Today, the draft Vision Statement presented at the Envision Loudoun June 2017 public input sessions had made no mention of the County’s long-standing Suburban, Transition, and Rural Policy Area growth management strategy.

This more generalized statement, combined with presentation materials describing 6,761 acres of land “available for development” in the TPA (30 percent of that area) had left many wondering if the Envision Loudoun process was as open and citizen-driven as intended.

A George Mason University housing study, presented by industry groups as the Holy Grail of salvation for a County in dire need of more affordable residential units, seemed to take over the whole Envision Loudoun process.

In testimony presented at the Board’s 2017 Housing Summit, a spokesperson for the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association advocated for policies that would “accommodate all types of housing in all policy areas,” taking the position shared

by the Stakeholder majority, that despite tens of thousands of residential units having been approved but not yet built, Loudoun still is some 20,000 residential units short.

These Envision Loudoun dynamics – consistent public demand to slow growth and maintain the County’s three-part suburban east, transitional middle, and rural west approach to growth management ... pitted against Stakeholders and industry demands for ever increasing levels of growth – were in place before the Board crossed the TPA data center vote. Citizens were understandably, shocked.

A January memo to the Stakeholder’s Committee from Ricky Barker, Director of Planning & Zoning for the County, stated: “As we move forward toward the completion of the Stakeholders Committee draft General Plan and Countywide Transportation Plan, staff will present an updated Project Timeline and a Revised Plan Outline [and] for the remaining Committee meetings and associated agenda from February until the Stakeholders Committee recommends its draft Plan to the Board of Supervisors.”

All parties – from the Board of Supervisors to the County planning staff to the Stakeholders Committee – are acutely aware of the keen interest members of the public continue to have in the Envision Loudoun process.

In that way, the True North data center vote has primed the pump for a very busy planning season as the next round of public comments – in the form of spring Plan Review Workshops – gets underway.

Water In, Cash Out Purcellville Explores Water Reclamation Strategies

– By Valerie Cury

The Town of Purcellville, working with the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) is actively exploring ways to innovate its approach to municipal water management, through water reclamation.

Water reclamation is a process whereby a municipality’s treated water is captured or managed in a way to allow a second bite at the apple – before it is absorbed back into the natural water cycle. Treated water that would be normally be returned to nature via safe discharge into a stream, for example, is diverted for a secondary use. Sometimes the water is treated and reused at a potable level – for drinking. But, in most cases the water is treated and reused for irrigation or recreation, to maintain and clean school buses and safety vehicles, for manufacturing, by highway systems workers, even at construction sites.

Depending on the specific strategies used, the secondary use may give the municipality an opportunity to generate revenue through sales, to reduce overall water management costs, and/or to better manage its water resources during times of drought or times of high usage. In this way, water reclamation can help lessen the pressure on groundwater resources and the environment.

Continued on page 20

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National Days February

Random Acts Of Kindness, Friendship, And Sticky Buns

– By Andrea Gaines

Imagine your reaction to this situation:

You come home after a long day to find a bakery box by your front door with this note: “I know you love cinnamon, butter, and bread ... or any combination thereof. Enjoy. Just because. Love you!”

Sunday, Feb. 11 is National Make A Friend Day. But any day, of any month, and any moment is the perfect time to celebrate – in even the most ordinary of

ways – the friendships you enjoy. For, isn't it the everyday moments that reveal the real depth of our relationships?

And, acts of kindness – random acts of kindness, celebrated on Saturday, Feb. 17 – are the things that both nurture friendships and give a spark to new ones. And, they are contagious. So, pay the toll for the driver behind you. Stop by the house of a neighbor you've not yet met ... with some freshly baked something-or-other. Forgive a debt – big or small. Pass along that book to the

first person who says, “I've always wanted to read that.” Just give it away.

Psychologists note that friendships and the specific and practical benefits that come with them – including the encouragement to lose weight or quit bad habits such as smoking, the support provided in getting through a major illness, and more – actually increase our life spans, and make us happier.

Back to that bakery box, though.

Wednesday, Feb. 21 is National Sticky Buns Day, celebrating one of the oldest and most traditional of sweets.

We've enjoyed sticky buns, or some version of them, since the Middle Ages.

But, this ordinary, everyday treat is as common as it is unique to the kitchen king or queen who makes them.

One recipe calls for a savory version of the sticky bun; a sweet and salty combination of honey, cinnamon, butter, and nuts for the toppings, with one surprising addition – cheese. A nutty or fruity cheese such as



gouda is perfect, with one baker making the claim that “adding cheese to your sticky bun recipe ... can change your life.” Another savory recipe calls for adding a sweet-type sausage to the recipe. Goodness gracious. I'll have to save those recipes for another National Days installment.

For now, flip through the most precious friendships in your recipe book of life, and plan to visit upon them a random act of kindness this month. You've got everything to gain ... and nothing to lose!

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Love Is In The Air

Small Business Grapevine

Joy's Dream Bakery, Purcellville
Angela Reinales Haute Couture, Aldie
Mellefleur Custom Floral Design, Purcellville

– By Andrea Gaines

Love is in the air this month as we celebrate Valentine's Day and look ahead to the spring. Here are three local small businesses dedicated to the topic ... celebrating our love of sweets, well-tailored things and fresh flowers.

The Joy In Everything Sweet

I like a woman who not only makes an indescribably delicious chocolate cake, but seeks to educate me while I enjoy it. A recent Facebook post from Joy's Dream Bakery presents some fascinating research about cocoa beans and cacao butter, little tales of pleasure that lead, inexorably, to our absolute infatuation with anything sweet.

Joy's love of baking extends from the time she spent in her mother's kitchen, to the times she spent living abroad in various American consulates and embassies. One of her company's specialty cupcakes, "The Scottish Gentleman" is reflective of her wide-ranging and sophisticated style.

Joy's Dream Bakery is local to Purcellville but serves the entire northern Virginia area. Menu items include biscotti, cake pops, cookies, cookie bites, cupcakes, cakes, fudge, muffins, scones and more. She can be reached at 703 999-1279, via email at joysdreambakery@gmail.com – or through her website, www.joysdreambakery.com.

Tailoring For The Things Women – And Men – Love

Many small business people get their start when something that they themselves need, can't be found on the open market. This is the case with a woman named Angela Reinales, an Aldie-based fashion designer.

Reinales got her start designing for a South American men's brand called Domenico. When she and her fiancée couldn't find the tailoring services they needed for their wedding, she got the idea to start her own little tailoring business called, simply, "We Fix Ur Clothes" – a home-grown custom tailoring house that gives new life to a customer's favorite jacket, dress, or pair of jeans.

Business has been good in the tailoring business. And, now, Reinales has opened a custom men's suits and shirts company called Angela Reinales Haute Couture, producing hand-crafted business and special occasion clothing – based on the individual customer's measurements, fabric choices, and style preferences.

Get in touch with Reinales – your very own local fashion house – at 914 409-8268 or via the web: www.angelareinales.com, or www.wefixurclothes.com.

The Million Colors Of Love

It is, perhaps, the color of a particular flower that first attracts us. And, then we take in the scent, and, if we are bold, we reach out to touch it as realize, yes, I like the texture, or the ripple or the shape of that flower, too.

MelleFleurCustomFloralDesign, a Loudoun-based company run by Melanie McKenzie understands this, and all of the feelings we have for fresh flowers, including the flowers we chose to represent us on the most significant of occasions; our wedding.

McKenzie favors "the European influence" in floral design, which she describes as "abundant and lush with contrasting and unique color schemes and lots of gorgeous textures." She works out of a studio in her home, and uses local sources when they fit into her vision and her customers' needs, including flowers harvested from her own property. The result – as shown in the design samples on her website – are surprising in every way that a flower is meant to be. Mellefleur Custom Floral Design, 703 309-3958, www.mellefleur.com.

To have your small business featured in our Small Business Grapevine, contact Andrea Gaines via email at andrea@andregaines.com.

**Theme for March 2018, "Spring Has Sprung."
For April: "The Artist In Everyone."
For May: "Welcome Summer."**

Remembering Gale Waldron

July 11, 1947 – Jan. 7, 2018

Gale Waldron was born in New Jersey in 1947 to George and Eileen Kentera. Growing up in a newspaper family, she lived in many areas surrounding the metro D.C. area. After graduating from Radford College, she went to work on Capitol Hill, where she met and married Gerry Waldron. With their daughter Sarah, they settled in Loudoun County in 1985. Her love for creative and interesting people, the area's beauty, and the art community compelled her to spend the rest of life here.

It is here where she found her calling. For more than two decades, Waldron committed herself to celebrating, supporting, and growing the arts in Loudoun County – launching her own magazine, *Loudoun Art*, in 1997, to founding and nurturing Gallery 222 and the Loudoun Academy of the Arts Foundation.

She served on the Arts Advisory Committee of Loudoun County and on the Balch Library Mural Committee for two years, in its mission to complete a public art project (2002). She also was on the Board of the Aurora Theatre Group and the Town of Leesburg's Public Art Commission.

As past President of the Loudoun Arts Council, she created a logo, website, and members' newsletter. Also in this role, Waldron directed the 2003, 2005, and 2007 Designer Showhouses, fundraising events for the Arts Council. Under her leadership, the Arts Council increased its membership to more than 400.

Waldron volunteered her time with many arts organizations and events, including the annual Four Seasons of Oatlands Art Show and Sale, the Town of Leesburg's Fall Into the Arts Festival, and the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce's Horsing Around Event. She also served on the Western Loudoun Studio Artists Tour and on the Loudoun County Art Advisory Board.



Gale Waldron

She was a forerunner to the founding of the Leesburg Public Art Commission, having proposed a mural project about ten years ago for the downtown district. While this proposal was not granted, it served as a catalyst for establishing guidelines for public art projects. Now, ten years later, the Public Art Commission has made great strides in bringing art to public spaces for all to enjoy.

Waldron also served as secretary to the Lincoln Community League and was one of the founders of the town's 4th of July Parade, a non-motorized celebration.

In 2002, along with Sarah Huntington, Waldron co-authored a book entitled *In Their Own Words*, a collection of vignettes from 32 notable Loudoun personalities.

She leaves a hole in the hearts of her husband of 46 years, Gerry Waldron, beautiful daughter, Sarah Waldron of Belfast, ME, and loving sister, Jean Hendrickson of Chapel Hill, NC, along with friends far and wide whom she loved.

An event to celebrate her life with family and friends will be held at a later date. In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be made in Waldron's name to Blue Ridge Hospice, 333 Cork St., Suite 405, Winchester, VA 22601 or BRhospice.org/giving/donate-now/. Online condolences may be made to the family at www.loudounfuneralchapel.com.



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ASK DR. MIKE

– By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Dr. Mike,

My husband was recently diagnosed with Asperger's Disorder, and I guess I should be happy to finally know what's wrong with him, but I'm not. After 18 years of feeling lonely, confused and disappointed in our marriage; I'm worried that it might be too little too late. I'm exhausted by, oh let's see ... pretty much everything; his social and communication problems, his embarrassing me (and our kids) in public over and over, his letting the kids and me down over and over and his lack of attention to me (and us) and his lack of intimacy. At least before knowing about his Asperger's diagnosis, I just thought he was a jerk and quirky and I had a right to be mad, but now he's wanting me to be patient and understanding. He's excited about his new Asperger's therapy and therapist, and I guess I should be too, but I'm not. I could use some advice.

– Unhappy in Loudoun

Dear Unhappy in Loudoun,

Being married to someone on the Autistic Spectrum can be challenging, and I appreciate that your marriage is in a very rocky place for you after years of hurt and upset. Perhaps you are at a point of no return, and leaving is your best option, however, maybe what you need to do is readjust how you are in the marriage.

Rather than seeing your husband's challenges as something you need to painfully be on the receiving end of for many more years to come, I suggest that you assert yourself to make things better. Let him know how unhappy you've been in the marriage, and also let him know what your expectations are for him as his wife moving forward. Maybe you could even attend a few of his therapy sessions, and his therapist could help you address your concerns with your husband. The three of you could put together reasonable short and long term goals, and with progress, you could hopefully start believing in your husband and marriage again.

In no way do I mean to diminish what you've been through, but I encourage you to keep in mind that Asperger's is a real condition that your husband has no control over. Would you leave your husband if he had a different type of neurological or brain based condition (e.g., dementia)? Maybe if you think about it in this way, your heart will begin to soften.

I'm glad your husband finally got diagnosed, and I want you to be glad too. The two of you finally have an answer to what's served to compromise your connection for all of these years. And the two of you can



Dr. Mike

now come together to tackle, head on, what it is he needs to work on – not just to be a better man – but also to be a better father and husband.

Dr. Mike,

I recently discovered that my husband secretly moved a significant amount of our savings into Bitcoin, and he, or I guess we, made a killing. We made a lot of money in a short time, and I'm thrilled about it, but I am also really upset that he didn't tell me what he was doing with our money. What if we lost all of that money? I'd be even more upset because I wouldn't have had any say and we worked hard for that money together. I told my husband that I don't appreciate what he did, and he laughs and points me to how much money we made. He doesn't get that what he did was wrong, and every time I've tried to bring it up, he gets upset and tells me that I'm being ridiculous. I'd love some good advice please.

– Disappointed in Ashburn

Dear Disappointed in Ashburn,

You have every right to be upset. Yes, it's great that your husband rode the Bitcoin wave up and cashed out at the right time, but what if he didn't, as you pointed out, and you lost a lot of your hard earned money?

I suppose you could argue that you have two problems that you need to address with your husband – but they're really the same problem. First, he willfully and secretly took a large amount of your shared savings to do with as he pleased, and without considering you. And second, when you discovered what he did and shared how upset you were, he still didn't consider you.

Maybe your husband is a great guy, and I would like to assume that he is. But for whatever reason, he isn't communicating well with you on this topic. So, is this just an isolated moment, or are there other times where he doesn't consider your thoughts and feelings. If you see a problematic pattern here, I suggest you sit down and talk to him about it. If that proves unsuccessful, perhaps the two of you should spend some of your Bitcoin earnings on some good couple's therapy.

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

Amy And Dan Smith's Planning For Life: Tax Act Implications For Education Savings

– By Amy and Dan Smith



AMY & DAN SMITH

In late December, 2017, the President signed new federal tax legislation that will change how 529 accounts can be used. Individual states may have variations. One of the most impactful changes is that tuition for primary and secondary education is now a qualified expense. Other changes include higher gifting limits and tax-free rollovers from 529 accounts to ABLE accounts.

Primary and Secondary School Expenses

As part of the act, the IRS code was amended to reflect that "qualified higher education expenses" will now include a reference to expenses for tuition in connection with enrollment or attendance at an elementary or secondary public, private or religious school. The changes made in the new tax program take effect after December 31, 2017 and there is no sunset provision for this change.

The new legislation stipulates that the amount of cash distributions from all qualified tuition programs for a single beneficiary during any taxable year shall not exceed \$10,000 for these expenses, incurred during that year. It merits noting that the rules for tax-free withdrawals for post-secondary education remain unlimited up to the amount of post-secondary qualified expenses incurred for the beneficiary.

At this time, individual states and program managers are in the process of reviewing the recent federal tax law changes and determining how best to incorporate them into their programs. Please consult with your tax advisor to best determine how each state may be treating the expenses associated with K-12 education.

Gifting Limits

In any given year, an individual can gift up to the annual gift tax exclusion amount to anyone without incurring gift tax consequences. Effective January 1, 2018, the exclusion amount increased to \$15,000 from \$14,000. And uniquely to 529 plans, an individual can accelerate the gifting by five years, thereby making an immediate contribution of \$75,000. A married couple filing jointly can now make a split gift in the amount of \$150,000 per beneficiary in 2018.

If a person makes the five-year election, the gift is ratably divided over five years;

should the contributor dies, a prorated part of the gift is moved back into their estate. The five-year and/or split gift election is made on IRS form 709. Although a larger gift can be made, the amount exceeding the five-year election amount would reduce your Unified Lifetime Gift Tax Exemption. Contributions to a 529 plan account are considered completed gifts to the named beneficiary, but from a legal standpoint the owner always controls the account.

Rollover Provisions

The new legislation also allows for a tax-free rollover of a 529 account to an Achieving a Better Life Experience (ABLE) account. The rollover would need to take place prior to January 1, 2026, as this provision expires. ABLE accounts were created in 2014 to give individuals with disabilities and their families the opportunity to save for the future without limiting access to critical income, healthcare, food or housing assistance programs. Rollovers from 529 plans are still subject to annual contribution limits of \$15,000 in 2018.

Certain conditions may apply. Earnings in 529 plans are not subject to federal tax, and in most cases, state tax, so long as you use withdrawals for eligible education expenses, such as tuition and room and board. However, if you withdraw money from a 529 plan and do not use it on an eligible education expense, you generally will be subject to income tax and an additional 10% federal tax penalty on earnings. Rules and laws governing 529 plans are varied and subject to change. As with other investments there are generally less fees and expenses associated with participation in a 529 plan. There is also risk that these plans may lose money or not perform well enough to cover college costs as anticipated. Most states offer their own 529 programs, which may provide advantages and benefits exclusively for their residents. Investors should consider before investing, whether the investor's or the desired beneficiary's home state offers state tax or other benefits only available for investments in such state's 529 college savings plan. Such benefits include financial aid, scholarship funds, and protection from creditors. 529 plans outside their resident state may not provide the same tax benefits as those offered within their state. Please note, changes in tax laws or regulations may occur at any time and could substantially impact your situation. While familiar with the tax provisions of the issues presented herein, Raymond James Financial Advisors are not qualified to render advice on tax or legal matters. You should discuss any tax or legal matter with the appropriate professional.

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Viking Theatre Presents Putnam County Spelling Bee

Become spellbound by Viking Theatre's production of The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee at Loudoun Valley High School this February 15-18. Featuring just 15 talented actors and actresses, this small-scale musical packs a big punch, with uproarious comedy layered over touching moments and darker themes. Spelling Bee follows the stories of six pre-adolescent spellers, each tween with their own host of problems and personal hardships which are wholly exploited by the Bee. As the competition progresses, the spellers learn more about how to personally cope with the scary new world they're growing into; in

tandem, the Bee's deeper effects on each character unveil intricately nuanced morals and themes.

In conjunction with their language-centric musical, Viking Theatre is partnering with the Loudoun Literacy Council with a book drive to fight local illiteracy. Bring your gently used children's and young adult chapter books to the show to help support this crucial and excellent organization, and help people in your community take momentous steps towards future success!

You can see the Bee Feb. 15-17 at 7 p.m. and Feb. 17-18 at 2 p.m. Tickets at the door or lvtheatre.org.



The adults at the Bee, portrayed by Claire Poirier, Onna Thomas, and Henry Trochilil

Line The Streets Noon, Feb. 17 Celebrate National Champions Boys Cross Country Team

All are invited to join the Town of Purcellville at noon on Saturday, Feb. 17, to honor the achievement of the Purcellville Boys Cross Country Team which won the national championship at the 14th annual Nike Cross Nationals; their coaches, Marc and Joan Hunter who were awarded the Boys Coaches of the Year at the Nike Cross Nationals; and Natalie Morris, who is the 2017 Virginia 4A State Cross Country Champion. The

Purcellville Boys Cross Country Team is made up of the following Loudoun Valley High School students: Sam Affolder, junior; Colton Bogucki, senior; Chase Dawson, senior; Kevin Carlson, sophomore; Jacob Hunter, junior; Peter Morris, senior; and Connor Wells, junior.

At noon, the runners and their coaches will board a trolley, provided by Virginia Rides, and be escorted by the Town of Purcellville's Police Department, the

Purcellville Volunteer Fire Company, and the Purcellville Volunteer Rescue Squad from Loudoun Valley High School to the Bush Tabernacle. There, Mayor Fraser and the Town Council will recognize them at the open house for the historic building. Shaun Alexander of Shaun Alexander Enterprises and Chris Bourassa with Play to Win, will also say a few words before sharing the exciting efforts they are working on at the Bush

Tabernacle.

Natalie Morris, who in addition to being the 2017 Cross Country state champion, is also a 10-Time All-state performer, and the 2016 State 3200-meter champion. She will be running track and cross country at Cornell University in the fall.

Come line North Maple Ave and Main Street to cheer on the winning athletes at noon on Saturday, Feb. 17, then join the team at the Bush Tabernacle.

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Loudoun Preservation Society Grants Deadline, March 15

The Loudoun Preservation Society (LPS) is seeking proposals for its 2018 grant program. The locally-based grants provide funds to County non-profits and government entities focused on the preservation, restoration, and conservation of Loudoun's historic sites and places, and for research and publications about local history.

LPS was formed in 2008 with the merger of the Loudoun Restoration and Preservation Society – organized in 1967, and the Preservation Society of Loudoun County – organized in 1973, giving the group a combined total of nearly 100 years of historical preservation experience.

The deadline for the 2018 grants cycle is March 15, 2018. Awards will be presented at the annual LPS meeting on the evening of April 20 at the Old School in Waterford.

LPS has presented over 100 grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$10,000 to 75 local organizations since the beginning of the program. Recent grant recipients have included:

- The Waterford Foundation, Inc. for re-installation of an interior staircase and the original floor in the fellowship hall of the John Wesley Community Church.
- Mosby Heritage Area Association for the printing of "Raised from Obscurity," A Driving Tour of the Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville, June 17-21, 1863.
- Oatlands, Inc., for the Oatlands Garden Shed plaster repair and preservation project.

For more information about the grants program, and an application form, go to www.preserveloudoun.org/Programs/grants. Interested grant seekers may also contact the LPS Grants Chairperson, Paul Lawrence, at lps@preserveloudoun.org or P.O. Box 351, Leesburg, Virginia 20178.



One LPS grant helped stabilize plaster walls in an Oatlands garden shed containing old signatures and sketches. Another grant helped restore original flooring in Waterford's John Wesley Community Church.

White Lady



The Blue Ridge Leader recently received this message and photo from Loudoun resident Tom McMahon: "Dear Editor, I was driving home to Round Hill on Business Route 7 from Purcellville last night (Tuesday, Jan. 17) when I spotted a very unusual site – an albino deer in a group of other deer – and was able to get a few photos!"

Thank you, Tom!

A bit of whitetail deer/wildlife science ...
 "Albino" refers to a total lack of body pigment – an all-white appearance that can occur in many mammals, including humans. The eyes are pink, and the eyesight, generally, poor. "Leucistic" creatures lack pigment over all or part of their bodies. Some appear all white and some partially white. But, things such as eyes, hoofs, etc. are not affected, as in an albino. A third term, "piebald" refers to a deer with normal brown eyes, nose and hoofs, along with color variations and other genetic abnormalities that alter the animal's appearance – producing shortened legs, a bowed spine and/or a rounded nose, for example.

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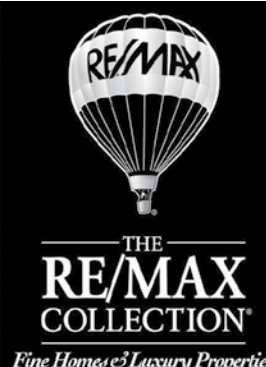


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Water, continued from page 11

In 2010 the Town invested tens of millions of dollars in a new and upgraded wastewater facility, anticipating that the growth to come – in the form of new homes and new tap fees – would not only absorb excess capacity, but pay for the new plant itself.

In recent years, however, the Town has tempered its taste for growth, with the result that – even at peak times – with an average daily wastewater flow of 575,000 gallons per day, the 1.5 million gallons per day plant is 60 percent underutilized.

Purcellville has also lost its taste for the plant's massive \$41 million debt – and the excessive water and sewer fees this over-capacity represents. Mayor Kwasi Fraser sees water reclamation efficiencies, not as an outright solution to that debt, but as an important tool the Town should consider in bringing balance back into the system. Municipal water is a Town asset, like any other. Fraser intends to maximize its value to the taxpayer. Said Fraser, "With over \$115 million in assets owned by Purcellville, we are well positioned to pursue strategies to significantly reduce our debt burden and invest in our community

without dependency on high taxes and out of character development. The more our assets can generate revenue, the less taxes and fees will be needed from our citizens."

Purcellville currently discharges approximately 500,000 gallons of fully treated water into the natural bodies of water that serve the treatment plant. According to the DEQ – keeping in mind environmental considerations and other factors – 50,000 to 100,000 of that one-half million gallons of water may be available for reclamation; sold or otherwise reused as opposed to being discharged.

Conservative estimates put the value of that water to the Town at anywhere from \$8

to \$15 per 1,000 gallons, depending on the volume being purchased – by the hops farmer who needs water for her vines, or by the construction company that needs water for the production of cement or for dust containment.

At least one local agricultural operation has expressed an interest in purchasing Purcellville water. And, Fraser is of the opinion that a Town water reclamation effort built around service to the local agricultural community would be a win-win; economically, from a fiscal point of view, and culturally – as a way to show support for traditional ways of life in western Loudoun.

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Traffic, continued from page 1

clustered in front of a neighbor's house – or their own – is very real. The fear of “injury or worse,” according to neighborhood leaders, is very real.

In many ways, this particular stretch of road presents safety experts with the perfect storm of traffic problems.

Country Club Drive is a narrow-paved road – 22.5 feet from edge to edge – with no sidewalks, and no gutters or curbs. Unlike the newer communities in town with wider, sometimes boulevard-style roads, grassy medians, and sidewalks and curbs for safe pedestrian use, in the Country Club neighborhood, dog walkers, kids on bikes, school buses, and the like must share the narrow road with the hundreds of vehicles – including trucks – now traveling from Purcellville's Main Street, through their neighborhood to Rt. 690/North 21st Street and the Rt. 7 Bypass.

While motorists in other parts of town might use more commercial-type routes – North Hatcher past the Purcellville Post Office, or Rt. 287 past the Harris Teeter Shopping Center – to get to the Rt. 7 Bypass, this neighborhood cut-through has become the increasingly popular shortcut of choice for east-bound commuters trying to avoid downtown Purcellville.

Ever-present in the background to all of this is the modern commuter's taste for speed, convenience, and choice – getting to the 55 mph Rt.7 bypass as quickly as possible, stopping off for a quick cup of

coffee before jumping back on that favored route, and/or having the option to take another route if traffic reports warn of an accident up ahead. The newer but now well-established subdivision of Catoctin Meadows figures in prominently as well.

In the late 1980s and early 1990s, as this new subdivision just north of the Country Club was going in, the engineering and planning firm of Bradbury and Drenning warned that the Town should be very careful regarding the traffic patterns going in to and out of Catoctin Meadows.

The firm cautioned specifically against opening up a connection from Catoctin Meadows to Rt. 690 via Country Club Drive. With two access points to Country Club Drive from the main east and west road in Catoctin Meadows – Glenmeade Circle, the firm argued, commuters would go on Country Club Drive to get to Rt. 690. Motorists coming from the west and south of Purcellville – from Main Street and the southern end of Rt. 690 – were already starting to cut up North 33rd Street (near 7-11) and to Country Club Drive, seeking access to Rt. 690. Said the firm, anticipating potential problems for both the Catoctin Meadows and Country Club Drive neighborhoods: “It is our judgment that introduction of such outside traffic into this subdivision and the existing Country Club subdivision would be an undesirable feature from noise, safety, and privacy standpoints.”

The firm also pointed out that many subdivision ordinances discourage through-traffic through residential subdivisions. “It

is our judgment,” said the firm, “... that any convenience to residents of this subdivision would be outweighed by the adverse impact of significant volumes of outside through-traffic upon Country Club and Catoctin Meadow.”

Despite these clear warnings, when the Catoctin Meadows subdivision was approved, Town officials allowed traffic connections to Country Club Drive in two locations, one at the east end of Glenmeade Circle and the other at its west end.

A resolution passed by Town Council in 2000, promised that Glenmeade Circle would be an unrestricted connector road (to Country Club Drive), dashing hopes that there was any relief coming from that direction.

A “Country Club Drive reconstruction design project” put in speed bumps in 2013. But nothing implemented by the Town did anything to solve the neighborhood's growing safety problems.

Town traffic counts over the years foreshadow the situation the Country Club neighborhood finds itself in, today. The latest traffic figures, recorded in October 2017, show the 1,300 daily trips with approximately 235 vehicles in each two-hour morning and afternoon rush hour time frame.

Woodgrove High School has added to the traffic passing through the Country Club neighborhood. And, regional traffic mitigation/management measures have only increased the neighborhood's concern and vulnerability to the cut-through problem.

During the latter part of 2017, it came to the

attention of the Country Club residents that the current Virginia Regional Transit (VRT) commuter lot at the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church on Main Street was going to relocate to a 250 vehicle VRT commuter lot off of Hirst Road. The relocation of the VRT lot to Hirst Road raised tremendous concern with residents, because that would increase cut-through traffic even more.

When the new VRT lot was approved, the Purcellville Town Council unanimously approved a 33rd Street and Country Club Drive Traffic Pilot Program. The pilot program, is the first to eliminate cut-through traffic through “delineator-based” solutions, i.e. physical barriers.

Mayor Kwasi Fraser addressed the issue in a Town-wide announcement on Feb. 3, noting that grave concerns about the initial decision to allow access to Rt. 690 through the affected neighborhoods have existed since 1987. Citing statistics showing that the town's population has increased more than five and one-half times since 1987, from 1,600 to 9,200, Fraser said, “Purcellville's oldest neighborhoods are living the nightmare of cut-through traffic.

“... My position is to execute our unanimous decision by implementing a delineator-based pilot solution for one month, collect and analyze results, then move to another solution based on survey feedback from all impacted residents. At the end of two months, we will reassess ... I understand we cannot please everyone on this, but inaction on this safety and welfare issue is not an option,” he concluded.

Follow Your Own Path

– By Mary Rose Lunde

Nowadays, there is so much pressure to follow the mainstream path. Students in Northern Virginia are pushed to the maximum, be it with advanced placement classes or college-application-boosting extracurricular activities. The stress is on students to get into a good college and graduate, to even allow themselves to get low tier jobs. The fact is, there is no way to guarantee this path even works. Some people, depending on their desired jobs, may even have to go through further testing or college to be considered.



LUNDE

In college, we are told to pick out a major when we apply, and then we are thrown into what are deemed weed-out classes, under the guise of helping us make sure that we know what we want to do with our lives. The truth is that by the time you graduate, it's likely that you will have changed your major or added a major or minor at least once. With the growing amount of available majors and minors, it has become easier to add variability to increase your qualifications and experience just a bit.

Personally, I didn't know I wanted to become a teacher until my junior year of college. Before I entered Virginia Tech, I thought I had my whole life planned out. I believed I was going to go to college and earn a degree in biology, and then continue on to veterinary school. My third year of college, I dropped my science degree, and focused on the field that I really wanted to be in, English. I have a passion for diving into literature, for

asking the big questions that transverse into side research projects that don't count for a grade. Because of this decision, I graduated from undergrad in Spring 2017, a full year before I was supposed to. This semester, I entered the English MA program in Literature and will graduate in the spring. Eventually, I would like to become a teacher. And after that, who knows what will happen? I know my path has been unusual by many standards, but I wouldn't change the path I've experienced.

Realistically, we don't know what the future will hold. To be successful in life from a career standpoint, it is imperative to make mistakes. By learning various skills and then settling on what you want to focus your life on, you become versatile and gain experiences that will benefit you in your career. Although society may tell you differently, making mistakes is a necessity to discovering what you enjoy and would be satisfied with doing for a decent chunk of your life. If you aren't satisfied with your major, change it, because you will be miserable in a job in that field if you don't. Do what you enjoy and you will be successful because you are able to enjoy life. Following a different path is okay because sometimes paths aren't meant to be followed. Sometimes, the most beautiful experiences are when you aren't following the ingrained path.

Mary Rose Lunde is a MA student in Literature at Virginia Tech. In her undergraduate career, she changed her major six times before she graduated.

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Fireman's Field, continued from page 1

was awarded the contract to manage the complex in December and has hit the ground running with early structural repairs serving the Bush Tabernacle's enthusiastic skating crowd, a new website, Facebook page and calendar of events, and social media links to the organizations that use and promote the facilities regularly, including the Purcellville Cannons baseball team, Upper Loudoun Little League, Greater Babe Ruth Loudoun and the American Legion.

The Open House will show renderings of the improvements planned for the complex, and present the new programming opportunities available for the area's middle and high-school aged youth. A signature ongoing feature at Fireman's Field will be a professionally designed walking history tour of the Bush Tabernacle, Fireman's Field and baseball in Loudoun, and this too will be an exciting part of the Open House. The full Fireman's Field complex includes the athletic grounds – including Haske Field, the Bush Tabernacle and Dillon's Woods.

More Love At Loudoun Grown Expo

In recent years, Fireman's Field and the Bush Tabernacle have become the venue of choice for many of western Loudoun's most celebrated annual events, among them the highly-successful Loudoun Grown Expo. The 8th Annual Loudoun Grown Expo will be held in the Bush Tabernacle on Saturday, Feb. 24, from 11:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.

One of the Town of Purcellville's biggest events, along with the spring and summer's Music & Arts Festival and Wine & Food festival, the Loudoun Grown Expo is the first major event to grace Fireman's Field since management of the complex was assumed by the new team.

Loudoun Grown is both quintessential, old-time country, and representative of the new. Traditional agricultural businesses that drive the County's powerful western Loudoun economic engine – hay, feed corn, row crops, apples, and the like – find a home here, along with cattle and

dairy farmers and other producers of meat and cheese.

The County's growing wine, viticulture, distillery and craft beer businesses are on display, along with the growers and producers operating small farms and greenhouses in service to the public, farm-to-table restaurants and caterers and area farm markets. Craftspeople, artists, photographers, nurseries, wedding planners even the makers of soap, cosmetics and fine woolen goods display at the Expo, along with the growers of hydroponic tomatoes and micro greens.

If you can grow it, raise it or make it here – even if you are simply inspired by life in Loudoun County – the Loudoun Grown Expo is a great place to get a down home picture of what is happening.

Fireman's Field Team Expects Big February Crowds

Planned attendees for the Fireman's Field 2018 Kick-Off and Open House include Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser, the Purcellville Town Council and staff, Supervisor Tony R. Buffington Jr. (R-Blue Ridge), Loudoun County School Board Representative, Jill Turgeon, Shaun Alexander, Chris Bourassa – managing member of Play To Win, and others. The Purcellville Fire Department will be on hand and the Loudoun Valley High School Cross Country team and coaches will be honored for winning the 2017 National Championship.

Loudoun Grown Expo organizers estimate a collection of 40+ businesses and companies will be featured at the Expo. *Fort Bacon Farm* will be there. *Lettuce Be Healthy* will tempt Expo guests with coy freshness. And, *Wild Hare Hard Cider* will be on the Expo menu, too. Big Mike's BBQ will be the main food vender for the event, which is presented in partnership with the Town of Purcellville, Play to Win, LLC and the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development.

Details on the happenings at Fireman's Field – including the Fireman's Field 2018 Kick-Off and Open House and the 8th Annual Loudoun Grown Expo the can be found at the complex's new website, firemansfield.com.

Eye On The Ball, continued from page 7

on our website – for all to see. These expenditures are a result of managerial failures; and part of this process will be ensuring this won't happen again.

The Greek Philosopher Parmenides observed that revealed truth tends to be the truth we would disbelieve, except for its unimpeachable source. I look forward to the conclusion of this investigation. And I hope that we will be able to reveal to the public every detail fully, and validate for all that this Town Council's public service has been principled.

I'm keeping my eye on the ball; the Town-government-wide operational audit that the Mayor and majority on Town Council have advocated will move forward. We are poised for a robust budget season, and to continue the progress we have made thus far on lowering the debt and raising revenue without tax increases. Most importantly, we are on track to appoint a new Town Manager in the coming months.

Karen Jimmerson serves on the Purcellville Town Council, and was elected in 2014.



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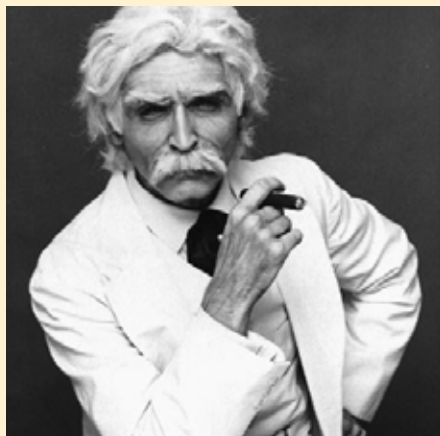
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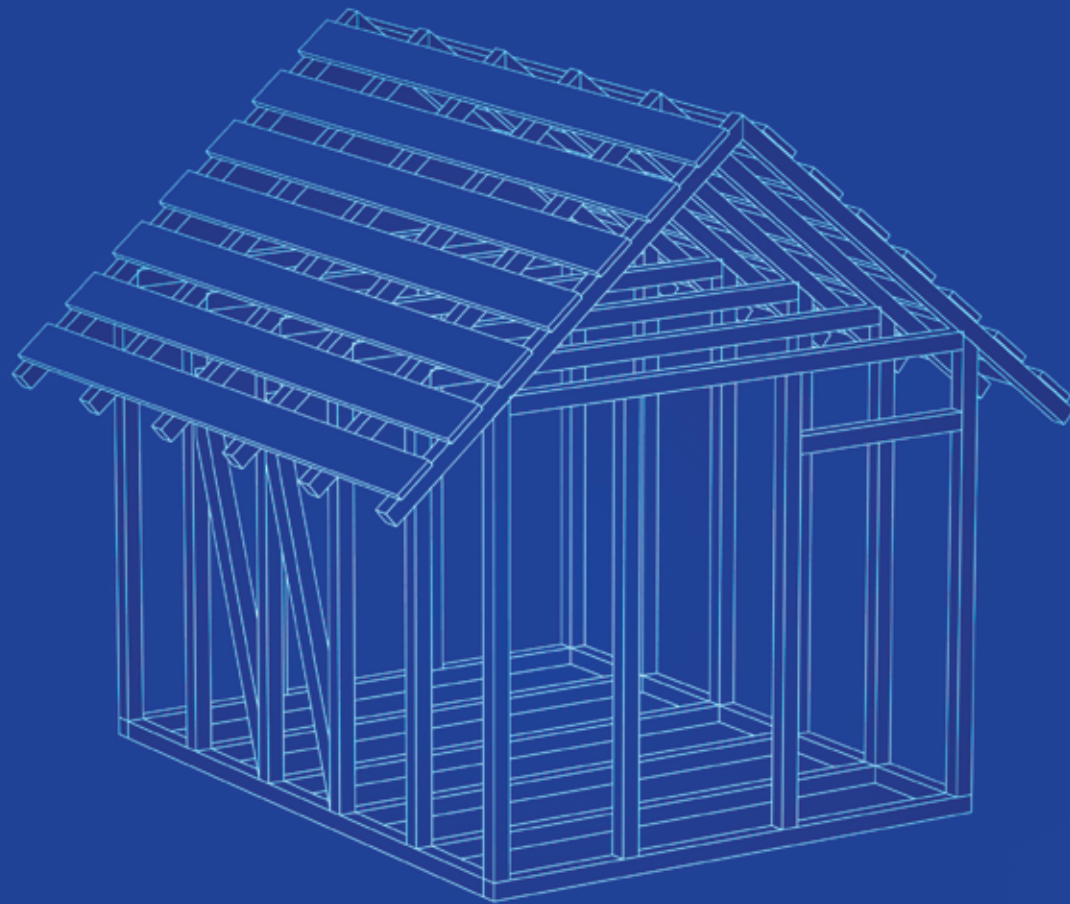
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