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LVHS Boys Cross Country team, national champs, celebrated – along with others – in Christmas Parade

BY ANDREA GAINES

Small town, end-of-the-year parades are always tons of fun – spectacularly so when local athletes win big over the course of the year and get the chance to celebrate with their neighbors and friends as the year comes to an end.

COMMUNITY

This was the case for Purcellville’s Christmas parade, as four local teams, including the two-time national champion, yes, Two-Time National Champion Loudoun Valley High School Boys Cross Country team, were given keys to the Town by Mayor Kwasi Fraser.

The keys were hand-crafted by the Makersmiths

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The Loudoun Valley High School Boys & Girls Cross Country teams, with the Mayor and their coveted key.

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BOS rejects extension of automatic Greenway toll increases

BY VALERIE CURY

The effort to maintain the annual Greenway toll rate increases provided for by what is known as the Herring Bill took a hit Jan. 3 when the Board of Supervisors voted 8-1 to oppose extending the bill until 2056.

If the Herring Bill sunsets Jan. 1, 2020,

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From Mount Vernon to Loudoun, U.S. farm bill energizes, and legalizes hemp

BY ANDREA GAINES

As 2018 came to a close, the United States Congress passed a sweeping, bi-partisan \$867 billion farm bill.

The farm bill process is a locally-inspired, but federally dominated affair, funding a wide variety of agricultural and nutrition programs. The national crop insurance program is here. Farm credit, trade, and conservation programs are here – even agricultural research, rural development, and ... now ... industrial hemp.

GOVERNMENT

Purcellville Mayor likes the bill

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser is very happy with this year’s farm bill.

In a detailed newsletter sent to constituents he said, “I applaud the bi-partisan action by the House, the Senate, and

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Hemp harvesting demonstration, courtesy of Mount Vernon.



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“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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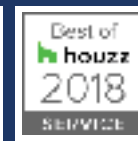
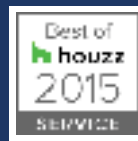
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Register for Ida Lee NFL flag football

COMMUNITY

Registration for the spring 2019 NFL Flag Football League at Ida Lee is open. Two leagues are available: Ida Lee NFL Flag Football House League and the Ida Lee NFL Flag Football Elite League.



The Ida Lee NFL Flag Football House league will be made up of six age groups, 6 to 7, 8 to 9, 10 to 11, 12 to 13, and 14 to 16-year-old divisions. Teams will be selected and formed through a draft process after the players' skills have been evaluated on Feb. 23 and 24, with a make-up day on March 2. All players will be outfitted in NFL jerseys. Each team will play up to seven regular season

games and playoffs to determine division champions.

To register, visit www.idalee.org or contact the front desk at Ida Lee Park Recreation Center at 703-777-1368. Registration ends on Feb. 12. Practices will begin Saturday, March 16. The cost per team is \$800, and includes NFL team jerseys, up to seven regular season games, playoffs, and practice space.

For more information, please contact Kemper Winstead at 703 737-7157 or kwinstead@leesburgva.gov, or Kyle Clarke at 703 771-2778 or kclarke@leesburgva.gov.



COMMUNITY

Calling all Lovettsville, Philomont and South Riding kids

Parents Night Out Winter Blast, Jan. 11, 6 p.m. to 9 p.m., Philomont Community Center. Kids enjoy crafts, games, and a movie, while holiday-weary parents enjoy a much-needed night out. Dinner and snacks will be provided. Call 540-338-5882 for more information.

Ever After Princess Party, Jan. 26, 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., Lovettsville Community Center. Come dressed in princess dress and enjoy some fun in the castle. Activities include princess crafts – a wand making station, a tiara making station, and more. Light

refreshments served. Space is limited and pre-registration is required, so call or email today: 540-822-5284, Lovcc@loudoun.gov.

A Winter Luau, Jan. 26, 2 p.m. to 4 p.m., Dulles South Recreation and Community Center. Event features Luau activities and game stations – flower crown-making, whale and shark tooth necklace-crafting, pin-the-heart-on-Te Fiti, Kakamora bowling and more. Call 571-258-3456 for more information.

Parents: Events have age, ticketing and other restrictions ... so call ASAP for details.

LVHS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

organization, and each team was congratulated by the Mayor just before the parade began.

The cross country team, for example, has reached international level competitive heights – breaking the record when becoming National Champions in 2017, and doing it again, with another record, in 2018. Faster than everyone in 2017, and even faster than that in 2018.

In the parade, the athletes were joined by all manner of people and organizations that make these kinds of small town holiday events so special, so enduring, and so unique to the place.

Here, in western Loudoun, there was Santa (of course). There was an honor guard from American Legion, the police department and fire departments in their cars and big trucks, characters from The Grinch and Star Wars, veterans, led by a grand old U.S. Army jeep, farmers, sports groups, dance groups, scouts, dogs, horseback riders, local businesses, the rescue squad, and of course ... our local leaders and politicians.

The teams receiving keys from the Town include:

The Loudoun Valley High School Boys Cross Country team – 2018 National Champions, who, during the parade, stood atop a local construction truck decorated with hay bales, and ropes of glitter.

The Woodgrove High School Boys Football team – 2018 State Football

Champions. This team accomplished an amazing feat in 2018, bringing the Virginia State Champion trophy to our very own Loudoun County. During the parade these guys rode in style, decked out in their jerseys in a snazzy truck decorated with bright red drapes and festive greenery.

The Loudoun Valley High School Girls Cross Country team – 2018 State Champions, who waved to the crowd from a gleaming white pick-up.

The Woodgrove High School Girls Varsity Softball team – 2018 State Champions. Their gold pick-up provided the team with comfortable hay bale seats, too.

In a Facebook message following the event, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser summed up the day. “We had a great time at the Christmas in Purcellville parade! Thank you to all of the participants and to all of the Town staff, Town Council members, and volunteers who worked so hard to make this and all three weekends of the Christmas in Purcellville festivities possible.”

And, here is something you don't see or hear every day or everywhere. One person watching the parade remarked that he thinks he saw that same old “Lower Burrell, PA” fire truck used in the parade here ... somewhere else. Having spent many years growing up in Armstrong County, PA, and serving in the fire department there, he thinks that same truck might have appeared in parades up there – when it was still in service.



The Woodgrove High School Girls Varsity Softball team.



The Woodgrove High School Boys Football team is all smiles.

We Must Never Forget

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

"Power is when we have every justification to kill, and we don't," Oskar Schindler (Liam Neeson) says to Nazi Captain Amon Goeth (Ralph Fiennes) in *Schindler's List*.



MOORE-SOBEL

Just one of many memorable lines in a movie that is arguably Steven Spielberg's finest film.

In honor of the 25th anniversary of *Schindler's List*, Universal re-released the film Dec. 7, offering a chance for a new generation of viewers to visually experience a recreation of the horrors of the Holocaust. In an interview with Lester Holt, Spielberg heralded the film's significance. "I don't think I'll ever do something as important to my

life...this for me is something I will always be proudest of." Spielberg also went on to detail how he never expected this movie to catch on with audiences. "I couldn't imagine, based on the story that we told, that an audience would tolerate the amount of violence, human against human..."

Spielberg was proven wrong. The film won seven Academy Awards, including Best Picture and Best Director, in 1994. Even more importantly, Spielberg succeeded in bringing the horrors of the Holocaust to life. Offering viewers across the world a chance to experience the depravity of a genocide that never should have been.

The scenes depicting the brutality inherent in the Holocaust are moving in part because they show how powerful the emotion of hate can be. "Individual

hate is a terrible thing; but, when collective hate organizes, and gets industrialized, then genocide follows," Spielberg told Holt. Suddenly, the lessons of this movie seem even more powerful today than they were back in 1993. "I think there is more at stake today than even back then," Spielberg said.

Some may find such words as needlessly hyperbolic. Yet rising anti-Semitism proves that many have failed to heed the lessons of the past.

Last month, on the 80th anniversary of Kristallnacht, German Chancellor Angela Merkel spoke out against rising anti-Semitism in her country. "...We see a worrying anti-Semitism. Which means Jewish life in this country, and in other places considered safe havens for the world, is threatened," she declared.

Part of her argument stemmed from the realization that the Holocaust was set in motion years before it occurred. "The terror of Nazism did not happen overnight, but grew gradually," she said, making the case that the hatred we see now could be laying the groundwork for further escalation in the future.

Recent polls published by CNN help further illustrate these alarming trends. In one poll, more than 25% of respondents indicated that they believe that Jewish people have too much influence in "business and finance." Another poll revealed that one out of every five Europeans believe that the Jewish people possess undue influence "in media and politics." In Poland, 50% of respondents indicated that they believe that Jews employ the Holocaust

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Dr. Mike,

Our friends are getting divorced and they're making my husband and me choose which of them to keep as a friend and which one of them to drop. On top of this very uncomfortable ultimatum, they're



DR. MIKE

also dragging us in to court to pick a side even though we've both told them that we want nothing to do with their nasty custody battle. Needless to say, our friendship with our friends has soured terribly. My husband thinks we should drop the friendship altogether

since there's not much of one left anyway, and I'd like to do that also, but the problem is that our children who are 11 and 6 have been close to their children for many years now. I know that breaking up the children would be hard on them all. Have any advice for us?

— *Unhappy in Loudoun*

Dear Unhappy,

First of all, as you are seeing with your friends firsthand, high conflict divorces can be very painful and volatile – not just for the divorcing couple, but also for surrounding friends and family. So, while

you may not like the way your friends are behaving, please keep in mind that they're in the throes of a very difficult time; few people can pull off a painful divorce and custody battle with grace and consistent decision making.

However, your friends' painful divorce shouldn't be overly burdensome on your husband and you; it's one thing for your friends to need a listening ear or empathy from you both, but it's entirely something else to ask you to choose one of them over the other and to testify in a court room in favor of one over the other.

I think your best approach to this situation is to be as clear as you can be with your friends in terms of what you can and cannot give or be to them. Perhaps you could let them know that you respect the children's friendships and that you'd like those to continue, but you're both unwilling to pick sides or attend court. You could add that if they continue to drag you into the middle of their divorce or place unreasonable demands on you as a couple, then you will be forced to support the children's friendships but nothing more. I'd then give them a chance to go through their court proceedings and adjust to the changes in their lives. Hopefully things will

eventually calm down in time, and your friends will be able to create a new normal for themselves as divorced parents – and one that isn't so off-putting to you both.

Things will either get better or get worse, and the two of you will then need to adjust to what happens. If things get worse, it might be time for your husband and you to let the entire connection with them (children included) end. If that occurs, I wouldn't burden your children with the full truth given their younger ages. Rather, I'd share what you feel they can handle, age appropriately, and I'd spend some extra time on nurturing their other friendships and social life. Also, if the friendship eventually needs to end, be kind to yourselves and know that you didn't do anything wrong. In my opinion, there are two types of friends in life, friends for life and friends of the road, and most people can count their friends for life on one hand.

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.



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Beaverdam Run

BY TIM JON



JON

Here is a place where I can hardly wait to park my car, jump out of the seat and start to explore the sights and sounds and smells. There are few types of geography – none, perhaps – that get my blood boiling like ... and it wouldn't be your first guess, I'm sure ... a swamp. Now, in our highly cultured region of Northern Virginia we would be corrected and told that this area is not just a swamp, it's a 'wetland.' OK, whatever you want to call it, I got a real charge out of making the circuit of wooden walkways, bridges and vantage points at the Van Metre Nature Preserve in Ashburn – just off the Dulles Greenway and Mooreview Parkway.

Part of the attraction that morning also came in a light drizzle and misty breeze that made the very air a refreshing treat for a walk, but the opportunity to commune with the many small animals and birds did my heart as much good as my perambulation around the plant-ridden water. If you want to see undeniable proof of the goodness of life itself, head for the lowlands and witness the chorus of critters at work and play, and you'll be able to tap into the hum of activity, and just about take the pulse of Nature. Or, maybe that was my own heart beating, as I probably walked faster on this tour – from a desire to be able to see everything at once; I was truly the 'kid in the candy store' on that morning.

Part of the allure came in the very level of the walking surface; builders had constructed this wooden framework high enough for great views of the plant life in and around the water, and to be able to take in the entire Preserve from just about any point in the tour. The elevation also allowed me, at least on that morning, to escape mosquitoes and any other insect pests.

And I noticed some rather unexpected behavior from some of our feathered, and furry, friends. I'm not sure if the wet weather played a role, but the birds seemed far less timid at this local water-hole than I expected; in fact, I remember having a very close encounter with a white egret as I was standing on one of the wooden structures jutting out over the lily pads. He acted as if I'd taken



his favorite observation post – nearly upsetting my headgear as he whooshed in and flapped off. A small rabbit – just recently out of the nest, it appeared – had displayed a similar tameness earlier that morning – as I was leaving my vehicle and getting my walk under way. I almost had to shoo the little critter off the path. I kept hoping that he'd show more sense if something hungry came his way. And, several times, as I stopped to take in the panoramic views at the various lookout points, I'd feel the thrill of watching cardinals and other songbirds land on the wooden railings within just a few feet. It was an honor to be getting all this attention. I recall a distinct sense of regret in saying goodbye to all these new acquaintances after I completed the circuit and found myself back where I'd started the tour.

So, I'd like to think that I'll be able to visit the Nature Preserve on something like a regular basis – to see the effects of the seasonal changes, as the water of Beaverdam Run slowly makes its way through the little sanctuary. Having enjoyed the presence of a swamp, growing up on our family hobby farm in the Midwest, I'm well aware of the vast differences seen in these areas in Fall, Winter, Spring and Summer. I'm sure the local residents who visit the wetland would agree.

Now, as much as I'd like to keep this local treasure all to myself, I still have an urge to share it with everyone I know; it certainly wasn't overcrowded during my visit (I was the sole motorist using the small parking area off Demott Drive). And I know that 'swamps' are not on the top of everyone's list of local attractions – with picnic places, ballfields, swimming areas and local historic sites being – in general – far more popular, and part of me hopes that pattern remains; so – go ahead and have your picnics and ballgames, go for a swim and study the local history – I'll be enjoying the flow of Mother Nature at this little gem of a wetland walkway.

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Opinion as literature

A conservation allegory

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Having lived long and travelled far, many strange events have etched themselves into my artist's memory. I painted many – put oil on canvas – while thinking only of the image and not regarding what the image might imply. Older now, I see that the meaning of an image can be paramount but not obvious.

An allegory is “a story, poem, or picture that can be interpreted to reveal a hidden meaning,” and this one is about Loudoun County.

OPINION

The image ... The Suburban Policy Area

Some years ago, I visited a stretch of coast that was divided into three very large crescents. Behind the first beach the land was checker-boarded with comfortable houses. There were scattered woods and pastures, a few horses and cows. The suburbs were peaceful and quiet, but oddly a black – yes, black – waxing moon was high over the beach. Was it a harbinger of misbegotten change?

I returned to the Suburban Policy Area a month ago; change had come and it was not good.

I gave the first curve of its beach a painterly sizing-up. The sea was dark and grayish and a brisk wind blew foam from the whitecaps. A silver fin scythed along the trough of a wave, towards the shore. The wet gray sand was wind-rippled and crisscrossed by the spiderweb trails of hermit crabs. The land bled seamlessly into the roiled water and thence into the broken clouds of a lowering sky. In the paling light of dusk, white-gray sleet sliced down.

Two artifacts lay upon the sand. One was a curved shard of crystal. Inscribed upon it were three faint numerals “666,” so this had been a goblet linked to the Beast of biblical fame. Beside this relic was a black whip. The whip's handle was ebony inlaid with runes made of mother-of-pearl and there were five braided strands, each as long as two paces and each strand ending in a talon taken from a large bird-of-prey. Red flecks of blood tipped the talons. Over time and after an onslaught of greed, the area had changed.

The subdivisions had metastasized and streets were choked with countless vehicles. A few forlorn pastures

remained, as did isolated woods, but the suburban area was now defined by traffic jams and monoliths called “data centers.” All bucolic traces were gone and the suburban area was no longer a land of quiet cul-de-sacs and contented families.

In the center of this first beach was a man lying amidst hoof prints incised in the sand. He wore a simple gray cloak which was rent with five slashes, each tear matching a bloody welt on his back. His chest, arms and legs were tied with black roping and he could move neither body nor limbs. His neck and head had been left free and he was gazing at the sky with an expectant yet wary expression, looking at ephemeral objects high in the sky, departing.

The image ... The Transition Policy Area

The hoof prints led to the right-hand edge of the suburban crescent, a small peninsula beyond which was the arc of the second beach. The sea afront of that second crescent was calm and ultramarine blue as the sky lightened. This beach itself brightened in the growing light. Yet a cold rain had just passed: Trees with glazed fronds and branches seemed like confections of white frosting. Why was I seeing, and now painting, these icy signs? Was warmth itself going to become a relic of the past?

Above the sea was a golden pyramid, suspended in the blue sky. On its sides were unrecognizable letters in a script I had never seen. Long rays of yellow light sparked outward and upward from the pyramid's uppermost point. As I watched, it rotated until that tip was pointing down. The pyramid's golden rays lit the center portion of this second crescent of beach and bathed two figures.

One figure was a centaur with the torso a chestnut colt. Its head was that of the very same man I saw on the first crescent of beach, now unbound and bare-chested. The whip wounds on his back had almost healed and he was looking to his right with a warm smile. The centaur reached out and touched the outstretched left hand of a mermaid.

Instead of the expected iridescent and slick blue or green hue, her scales were brown and of soft white, laying in feathery patterns. Her upper body and arms were slim, pale and well-proportioned. Blond hair fell in waves below her shoulders and covered her breasts. The mermaid was comely, with bright green eyes, an aristocratic nose and a glowingly white smile. The smile, like the auric rays of the pyramid, illuminated the both of them. Would the golden rays lure some mercenary culture to envelop them, I wondered?

Inland, I saw more big data centers, industrial structures and shopping centers. The rest of the transition area was blanketed with subdivisions. The houses were jammed together as “affordable housing.” When I had been here before, these lands were almost completely forested save for the occasional settler's cabin. Now there was no transition between suburbs and farms; “transition” had become jest. An image flared – an intrusive camel's nose inside a Bedouin tent.

The image ... The Rural Policy Area

Worrying of change since my first visit, I turned away from the centaur and the mermaid and looked farther right and saw a third and beauteous crescent of sand.

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Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

Publisher & Editor
Valerie Cury

Creative Department
Pam Owens, Layout/Design

Advertising

Sabine Bibb SabineBibb@gmail.com 571-437-9953	Tonya Harding THarding455@gmail.com 703-314-5200
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Here's How to Reach Us
Email advertise@BRLeader.com or call 540-338-6200

Editor:
(letters to the editor & press releases)
editor@BRLeader.com

Special Editorial:
Andrea Gaines – andrea@andreagaines.com

Hot News Tips:
Valerie Cury, 703-943-8806 – tipline@BRLeader.com

Webmaster:
webmaster@BRLeader.com

Mailing Address:
PO Box 325, Purcellville, VA 20134-0325

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The Last Straw

BY JOHN P. FLANNERY, II

There has been a move in restaurants and retail stores including Starbucks to reconsider using any plastic straws. Also Marriot Hotels. And Salamander. And Mo's coffee shop in Lovettsville.

Several years ago a marine biologist posted a video of a sea turtle off the Costa Rica's coast with a plastic straw stuck up its nose. They used pliers to extract the straw. 31 Million have since seen the painful procedure - [https://www.](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wH878t78bw)

[youtube.com/watch?v=4wH878t78bw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4wH878t78bw) . The reaction has been outrage and a correlative drive to ban plastic straws.

Many remember the line from Mike Nichols's 1967 film “The Graduate,” when Benjamin Braddock, the twenty-one-year-old, disaffected hero, played by Dustin Hoffman, is at a cocktail party his parents have thrown for his graduation from college. A friend of Ben's parents, Mr. McGuire, takes Ben aside at the party and says he has one

word of advice for him, a faux Delphic oracle, just one word—and the word is “plastics.”

Benjamin's generation recoiled from “plastics” and, some few years later, many are taking a step back from plastics in a more complex way, given the harm we've uncovered.

Of the 8 million tons of plastic trash dumped into world's oceans, the plastic straw is only part of the problem but it is fair to argue that, well, you don't need a straw at all to drink a beverage, and the small size of a straw makes for an

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Transition Policy Alliance to Loudoun County: ‘Bank it .. don’t give it away’

BY ANDREA GAINES

The nonprofit Transition Policy Alliance has grown into a potent defender of the three-part suburban east, transitional middle, and rural west growth management approach under challenge by the Loudoun County Planning Commission as it debates the proposed Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan.

In a recent communication to members and others who share the group’s support for protecting the Transition Policy Area, the Alliance urged all citizens – east, west and middle – to put as much pressure on the ultimate decision makers as possible; the nine members of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors who will ultimately accept or reject the PC’s recommendations.

Said the Alliance in its recent message, “Open land is finite: once it is gone, it is gone. Loudoun already has problems finding suitable land for fire stations, schools, and other public spaces. Our comprehensive plan should bank it, not

give it away.”

The Alliance pointed out that the County is already in need of 32 new schools ... just to cover the housing growth already approved in the current Comprehensive Plan.

“The County’s own Capital Needs Assessment,” said the group, also “identifies a current deficit of nearly 2,000 acres of parks and recreation land needed primarily by residents of the Suburban Policy Area.” And, all of these pressures are in addition to the traffic from the west that “already clogs the corridors of Rt. 7, the Greenway, Rt. 50, and Braddock Rd.”

Planning Commission sessions in November and December 2018 were dominated by the Transition Policy Area debate, with Chairman Cliff Keirce pushing for a westward expansion of the area, greater housing densities, and more commercial development. This would mean converting now Rural Policy Area lands to the TPA – something never contemplated before – while also allowing for more residential and light

industrial development.

The debate is polarized – with the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (the mayors of western Loudoun working under the COLT banner), the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, the Loudoun County Equine Alliance, the Piedmont Environmental Council, and others facing off against developers, and now, the Planning Commission.

But, it is also one-sided with respect to where the pressure for growth, particularly residential growth, is coming from.

The Planning Commission majority, taking its lead from groups like the Northern Virginia Building Industry Association, sees its job as addressing Loudoun’s so-called “housing affordability crisis,” as laid out in the infamous George Mason University Loudoun County Housing Needs Assessment, 2015-2040 released in 2017. The study is a boon for developers, finding that, looking to 2040, the County is tens of thousands of homes short,

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“Instead of ‘demand-based’ analysis driving planning, the County should adopt ‘capacity-based’ analysis. Instead of housing sales driving public facility capacity, the new Comprehensive Plan should identify public facilities needed. Once those items are mapped out, their ability to support various housing levels should drive the housing plan. Without this approach, Loudoun will continue in its ‘can’t win, can’t catch-up’ situation, scrambling to find solutions for the problems caused by too-fast growth.”

– Transition Policy Alliance



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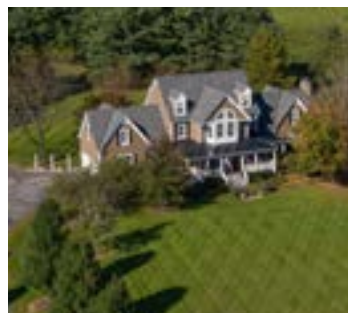


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State Senator Black to retire next January

Senator Dick Black (R-13) has announced that he will retire at the end of his current term, which ends January 2020. By that time, Sen. Black will have completed 50 years of public service.

Over the past 20 years, Black has won 12 elections. "It's been an honor serving Virginia in the House of Delegates and in the Senate," Black said. "I thank the people of Loudoun and Prince William Counties for electing me to represent them in Richmond."

Black began his service at 19-years-old, when he fought in Vietnam as a Marine lieutenant. He flew 269 combat missions as a helicopter pilot, then fought in ground combat as a forward air controller for the 1st Marine Regiment. Lt. Black was awarded a Purple Heart when he was wounded and his radiomen were both killed as they attacked to rescue an embattled Marine outpost.

After law school, Black rose through the Army JAG Corps, becoming Chief of the Criminal Law Division at the Pentagon. He advised the Senate Armed Services Committee, prepared Executive Orders for the President, and represented the U.S. Army in testimony before Congress. Col. Black retired after 32 years of service.

After moving to Sterling, he was appointed to the Loudoun County Library Board, where he fought to block pornography on computers in public libraries. The library battle made national news in 1996, and launched Black into the House of Delegates, where he served for eight years. In 2011, he was elected to the State Senate for a four-year term; and was reelected in 2015.

During his time in office, Black

opposed every tax increase. He supported religious freedom, the Right to Life, 2nd Amendment Rights, tough criminal enforcement, and school choice, among other positions.

Black is considered the most conservative member of the General Assembly. He received the American Conservative Union's Award for Conservative Excellence, was Family Foundation's Northern Virginia Legislator of the Year, and received the top national award from National Right

to Work.

A foreign policy expert, Sen. Black has worked to end America's long war in the Middle East. He traveled to Syria, visiting the front lines just after terrorists were ousted from Palmyra in 2016, and again in 2018 after they were driven from Aleppo.

Sen. Black and his wife recently celebrated their

fiftieth wedding anniversary. He and Barbara have three children and 16 grandchildren.

Black said, "I've been honored to serve, both in uniform and in elected office. My family has made enormous sacrifices, which enabled me to serve. I'm indebted to voters for their support. And, I'm especially grateful to my wife, Barbara, and to my daughter and chief of staff, Michelle, whose work was vital over the years."

"I'm blessed with 16 beautiful grandchildren, and look forward to spending more time with them now. Although I've appreciated representing a quarter million people in Richmond, it takes a tremendous amount of time away from the family. I will continue to support our nation's quest for strength-through peace. I'm proud of what we've accomplished, and look forward to adventures ahead."



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County Government Calendar, January 2019

Advisory Board

(Shenandoah Building)
Jan. 8, 8 a.m.

Jan. 17, 8 a.m., ADUAB Joint
Builders/Zoning Modification
Committee

Jan. 22, 8 a.m., ADUAB Builders
Committee

Board of Supervisors Business Meeting

(Government Center)
Jan. 2, 5 p.m., Business Meeting
Jan. 9, 6:00 p.m., Public Hearing

Board of Zoning Appeals

Jan. 24, 6 p.m. - 10 p.m.,
Government Center

Communications Commission

(Government Center)
Jan. 15, 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.,
Legislative Review Committee
Jan. 15, 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m.,
Jan. 23, 7 p.m. - 9:30 p.m., Cable
TV Franchise Performance &
Renewal Committee

Community Policy Management Team

Jan. 17,
9 a.m. - 11 a.m., Shenandoah
Building

Economic Development Advisory Commission

Jan. 11, 8:15 a.m. - 9:30 a.m.,
Schools Administration Building

Disability Services Board

Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m., Government
Center

Family Services Advisory Board

(Government Center)
Jan. 10, 6:30 p.m., Shenandoah
Building

Finance/Government Operations & Economic Development Committee

Jan. 8, 6 p.m., Government
Center

Health Council

Jan. 10, 3 p.m. - 4:30 p.m.,
Government Center

Heritage Commission

(Government Center)
Jan. 8, 6:30 p.m. - 8:30 p.m.
Jan. 17, 5:30 p.m. - 7:30
p.m., Courthouse Grounds
Subcommittee

Historic District Review Committee

Jan. 14, 6 p.m.,
Government Center

Housing Advisory Board

Jan. 9,
4 p.m., Shenandoah Building

Multicultural Advisory Committee

Jan. 9, 7 p.m., Government
Center

Parks, Recreation & Open Space

Board of Directors
Jan. 10, 7 p.m., Parks, Recreation
& Community Services

Planning Commission - Public Hearings & Worksessions

(Government Center)

Jan. 10, 6 p.m., Worksession &
2040 Comprehensive Plan

Jan. 22, 6 p.m., Public Hearing
Jan. 23, 6 p.m., Worksession &
2040 Comprehensive Plan

Jan. 31, 6 p.m., Worksession &
2040 Comprehensive Plan

Rural Economic Development Council

(Government Center)

Jan. 2, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.,
Implementation Committee

Jan. 4, 8:30 a.m. - 10 a.m.,
Business Development

**Strategy Subcommittee, and
Implementation Committee**

Jan. 8, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m.

Jan. 25, 8 a.m. - 9:30 a.m., Rural
Economic Business Development
Strategy Committee

Jan. 30, 4 p.m. - 6 p.m., Policy &
Implementation Committee

Transit Advisory Board

Jan. 16, 7 p.m. - 9 p.m.,
Government Center

Transportation & Land Use Committee

Jan. 15, 6 p.m., Government
Center

Zoning Ordinance Action Group (ZOAG)

(ZOAG), Government Center
Jan. 9, 9 a.m. - 11 a.m.

Jan. 9, 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m., Rural
Uses Subcommittee

Jan. 16, 9 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.,
Urban/Suburban Subcommittee

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Loudoun Board of Supervisors sets 2019 meeting schedule, Re-Elects Buona Vice Chairman

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors has set its meeting schedule for 2019 and has re-elected Ashburn District Supervisor Ralph Buona as Vice Chairman. In the absence of Chair Phyllis Randall, Buona will perform the duties of the Chair.

Under the rules of order adopted Wednesday during the Board's first meeting of 2019, the Board's monthly schedule of business meetings and public hearings will remain unchanged from 2018:

- Business Meeting: held on the first Tuesday of the month at 5 p.m.

Public Hearing: held on the Wednesday of the week following the first business meeting of the month at 6 p.m.

- Business Meeting: held on the Thursday during the week following the monthly public hearing at 5 p.m.

Public input at the Board's business meetings will continue to begin as early as 6:30 p.m. and be limited to a one-hour time period. At the second business meeting of the month, an additional time of public input limited to eight speakers will be included at the beginning of the agenda.

The Board also made appointments to regional and county boards and appointed

members to the Board's standing committees: the Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee, the Joint Board and School Board Committee, and the Transportation and Land Use Committee.

In addition, the Board made adjustments to its meeting schedule due to religious holidays and Election Day:

- Moved the Oct. 1, (Rosh Hashanah) business meeting to Oct. 2.
- Moved the Oct. 9, (Yom Kippur) public hearing to Oct. 10.
- Moved the Nov. 5, (Election Day) business meeting to Nov. 7.

The Board's full schedule of meetings

will be posted at www.loudoun.gov/mastercalendar. Meeting documents are posted at www.loudoun.gov/bosdocuments.

Board of Supervisors meetings are held in the Board Room of the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street, S.E. in Leesburg. The meetings are available for viewing on television on Comcast Government Channel 23, Open Band Channel 40, and Verizon FiOS Channel 40, and online at www.loudoun.gov/webcast.

More information about the Board of Supervisors is available online on the Loudoun County Government website at www.loudoun.gov/bos.

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Sheriff's Dept.: 'No criminal charges re local priest'

Issue moves on to Diocese Review Board

BY VALERIE CURY

According to local authorities, Rev. Ronald S. Escalante, pastor at Saint Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Purcellville, has been cleared of all alleged boundary violations.

On Dec. 14, the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office put out this statement: "On November 21, 2018, the LCSO was contacted by the Catholic Diocese of Arlington regarding potential inappropriate contact by a member of their clergy in Purcellville. The investigation has concluded and there are no criminal charges."

The Diocese of Arlington has placed Escalante on administrative leave pending their review.

According to a source wishing not to be named, "These charges came about from a disgruntled employee, when staff members brought to Escalante's attention workplace irregularities, and disagreements over parish policy."

Said Robert Holzbach, who is active in the Knights of Columbus at St. Francis DeSales, "I always stand in line after church to say a personal hello to Father Escalante. My grandchildren cannot wait to hug Father at the end of mass, and they always wait in the long line."

"We always wait in line to greet Father after mass," said Kim Hall. "We are recent converts to Catholicism under Father Escalante, and my teens

adore him."

The source went on to say that the same employee approached numerous people, and attempted to persuade them to allege that Father Escalante hugged them inappropriately in the line after church, or looked at them in an inappropriate manner.

As of press time, no date has been set for when Escalante will go before the Diocesan Review Board. A group of parishioners have started a fund for Escalante at www.opusbono.org, a nonprofit for priests. Donations must be earmarked for Father Escalante, who is responsible for all his legal fees. As of press time, the Diocese of Arlington has not responded to requests for a statement.

Coalition proposes county-wide park and trail system

The Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition has proposed a county-wide system of parks and trails, to be known as Emerald Ribbons.

Capital constraints and high land prices have made creation of more passive parks, trails, and other recreation facilities difficult.

The Coalition says that the County's inventory of public parkland and accessible trails falls far short of County standards and far short of the levels achieved by other communities.

Loudoun is rich in natural and historic features including attractive stream and other natural and historic corridors that

reach most parts of the County. These stream corridors are important natural habitats and provide important water management services. The Coalition says those corridors, especially the stream flood plains, which are generally not developable land, could be the foundation for an affordable, interconnected, and widely accessible system of linear parks and trails reaching all parts of Loudoun County.

Building this network over time through the proffer of new trails and protected natural corridors as part of development projects, and collaborating with private landowners of existing private trails and appropriate corridor areas, all guided by an overall plan, can create a major

asset of benefit to the entire community. A large scale system of trails and parks will, according to the experience of other communities, raise property values, improve health and quality of life, attract business investment, improve security, increase regard and protection for natural areas, and preserve critical natural drinking water and storm management systems. And, designed properly, it can even provide alternative transportation access for residents traveling to work or for other purposes. The committee, consisting of representatives from The Piedmont Environmental Council, the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Bike Loudoun,

and the Coalition Executive Committee, has been meeting with numerous groups and officials around the County, and has received widespread support for the idea. The committee suggests that a public/private partnership involving County government, other agencies and organizations, and private sector sponsors join to form a steering team to develop a detailed plan, and work with the public to define the details of the proposed network.

To learn more, visit loudouncoalition.org/2018/12/coalition-launches-emerald-ribbons-initiative. Or contact: Dennis Kruse at 571 278-5596 or Gem Bingol at 703 431-6941.

New Purcellville location for MotoMember Sports

MotoMember owner Billy Mulyar has a lot on his mind this time of year, trying to take advantage of holiday season sales while also making time for friends and family.

Mulyar opened MotoMember Sports, Purcellville in November 2018, selling, servicing, maintaining and accessorizing Spyders – a three-wheeled motorcycle, traditional

motorcycles, ATVs, Side X Sides "off-road machines," and watercraft.

The time-tested big names are all here, demonstrating that Mulyar really knows what this motorsports business is about – Kawasaki, Suzuki, Yamaha, Can-Am and others. Mulyar also has a successful Leesburg operation.

"I've been in the automotive business for about 18 years," Mulyar, "and have been in

motorsports for the last three. A combined 20 years."

"Leesburg, and now the Town of Purcellville have been very open to this kind of business," Mulyar said, "very supportive." The area, he said, is a great market for this kind of product, adding, "we've had our Leesburg location open for a while now, and are very happy to now be here in Purcellville, too."

Motorsports vehicles, equipment, sales, and service – and the cache that goes along with the feeling of belonging for people who love this racy and growing activity – is a multi-billion-dollar industry. It's also a culture strongly connected to the popularity of NASCAR, and, as insiders will tell you, one's sense of individuality and drive for innovation.

Moto locations include 911 Edwards Ferry Road in Leesburg, and now, 405 Browning Court in Purcellville – (703) 669-4848, www.motomember.com.

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THEME FOR FEBRUARY 2019

“Loudoun's Heartbeat”

THEME FOR MARCH

“I've Got A Secret”

THEME FOR APRIL

“A Breath of Fresh Air”

BY ANDREA GAINES

All is quiet as January 2019 slips and seeps into the fields, hills, creeks and small businesses of western Loudoun County.

The month is a time to reflect and prepare for the new year.

What better time to do a little exploring; to renew and relive our connection to this great land. Here are three places to visit and enjoy in the spirit of “All Things New” – the Carriage House and Museum Store at Oatlands Plantation on historic Rt. 15, Baileywyck Antiques in the quaint village of The Plains, and for another village venue, Market Salamander in Middleburg.

A gift of local history

Sometimes, the places we drive by every day, and the historic destinations we send friends and family to whenever we have out of town guests, are also the places that hold so much value to us as residents

All things new

of western Loudoun County.

Oatlands Plantation, with its exquisite and unusual Carriage House Museum Store is one of those places.

We all know that Oatlands is a National Trust for Historic Preservation site – “designated by the Secretary of the Interior,” as a place that possesses “exceptional value or quality in illustrating or interpreting the heritage of the United States.” But, don't forget the gift shop and store here, with clothing, books, teas, jewelry, soaps, art, glassware, ornaments, toys, and food and beverage items with a distinctly Virginia, distinctly historic, and distinctly local feel.

Oatlands is located at 20850 Oatlands Plantation Lane in Leesburg; www.oatland.org, (703) 777-3174.

Everyday treasures from hunt country

If you've lived in this area for some time, or are a new arrival, Baileywyck Antiques is a place you must come to know. A place to find treasures –

unimaginable, enduring and affordable for the home in contrast to our neo-plastic, throw-away modern day world.

Here, you will find the authentic, the unusual, and, most importantly, the usable. Old classics in the form of furniture, rugs, decorative items, gifts for every age ... and art.

Owner Lisa Vella travels the United States and abroad in search of architectural elements, equestrian items, garden pieces, lighting, all kinds of antiques, etc., to add to your home. Shop here and your home will look like no other.

Two golden retrievers roam the shop. And, the spirit of a dog named Baily, no longer of this world, is here too.

Make a January 2019 New Year's Visit to this enchanting shop – www.baileywyckantiques.com, (540) 687-6079. 4274 Loudoun Avenue, The Plains, VA 20198.

Stop here for an exquisite lunch
Market Salamander is the gourmet

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 »

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Tickets are \$20 at the Door; ages 17 and under admission is free. Tickets can be purchased in advance at evenbrite.com (search for music with a cause). Concert proceeds will benefit Loudoun Free Clinic.



Venue: St. Andrew Presbyterian Church 1711 West Main Street, Purcellville, VA. www.standrew-pres.org | 540-338-4332

— Amy and Dan Smith's Planning for Life —

12 Financial Resolutions

Review and revamp your financial plan all year long

Instead of hauling out those familiar New Year's resolutions about eating less and exercising more, how about focusing on something that's also very good for you in the long run—and even sooner? We're talking about your financial plan—your fiscal health, if you will. The approach of a new year – or any time, for that matter – is a great time to review your plan and make whatever revisions might be indicated. With that in mind, here are 12 suggested resolutions that, if followed, could help you go a long way toward attaining your financial goals.



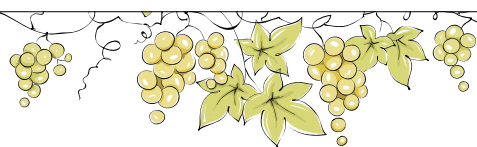
AMY AND DAN SMITH

1. Get your balance sheet in order – using December 31 as the effective date, update your personal balance sheet (assets versus liabilities, broadly speaking.)
2. Review your budget and spending habits – how close did you come to what you had planned to spend last year? Where did you go off-track and what can you do about that?
3. Review the titling of your accounts – account titling is more than just using the right form – it can also be a tool for estate planning. Review your account titling and determine if that's still the arrangement you want.
4. Designate and update your beneficiaries – if you don't correctly document and update your beneficiary designations, who gets what may be determined not according to your wishes but by federal or state law.
5. Evaluate your cash holdings – everyone should have a certain amount of their assets set aside in cash.
6. Revisit your portfolio's asset allocation – are you comfortable with the current amount of risk in your portfolio?
7. Evaluate your sources of retirement income – every individual picture is different. Think about how secure each source is.
8. Review your Social Security statement – use the SSA's online calculator to compute your benefits at various retirement ages
9. Review the tax efficiency of your charitable giving – give, but do so with an eye toward reducing your tax liability.
10. Check to see if your retirement plan is on track – retirement has a lot of moving parts that must be monitored and managed on an ongoing basis.
11. Make the indicated changes – go after any problem areas – or opportunities—systematically and promptly.
12. Set up a regular review schedule with your advisor – establish a regular schedule for getting together and reviewing your portfolio, your financial and retirement plans, and what's happening in your life.

Since we all know that resolutions tend not to survive very long, add one more to make this a baker's dozen. Resolve to really follow through on these – and give yourself permission

to spend a day lazing around watching movies and eating ice cream when you're done! Just one day though.

There is no assurance that any investment strategy will be successful. Investing involves risk and investors may incur a profit or loss. Asset allocation and diversification do not ensure a profit or protect against a loss. Past performance is not indicative of future results. The foregoing contains general information only and is not intended to convey investment advice. Amy Smith Wealth Management, LLC, is not a registered broker dealer and is independent of RJFS. Securities offered through Raymond James Financial Services, Inc., member FINRA/SIPC. Investment Advisory Services offered through Amy Smith Wealth Management, LLC. Her office is located at 161 Fort Evans Road, NE, Suite 345, Leesburg, VA 20176. (Tel. 703-669-5022, www.amysmithwealthmanagement.com) Dan Smith is not affiliated with Raymond James.



GRAPEVINE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

market extension of Salamander Inn & Resort.

In many ways the market represents the best of the resort itself, a tiny refuge of great food, great atmosphere and great culture.

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desired, with classics like fried chicken tenders, lump crab cakes, potato, pasta and seasonal green salads, sandwiches and soups. And, desserts and coffee ... plenty of desserts and coffee.

Choose to dine however it suits you, with an in-market meal, a box lunch to be taken elsewhere, catering – whatever works for your occasion or rendezvous.

Market Salamander is located at 10 north Pendleton Street, Middleburg. (540) 687-3710.

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I was built in 1818; I await your caring touch, and offer you mine

BY ANDREA GAINES

The carefully maintained historic building at 40188 Water Street in the Village of Waterford is known as The Weavers Cottage.

Properties of this historic providence do not come on the market very often. This is an enormously significant real estate purchase opportunity with so many options – as a main residence, as a get-away, as something to ... protect.

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As the new owner, you will have the chance to blend your life with this lovely and rustic log and stone structure – so basic in its beauty. You will also play a part, just by virtue of your ownership, in preserving one of the most significant historical spots in the nation; Waterford, Virginia.

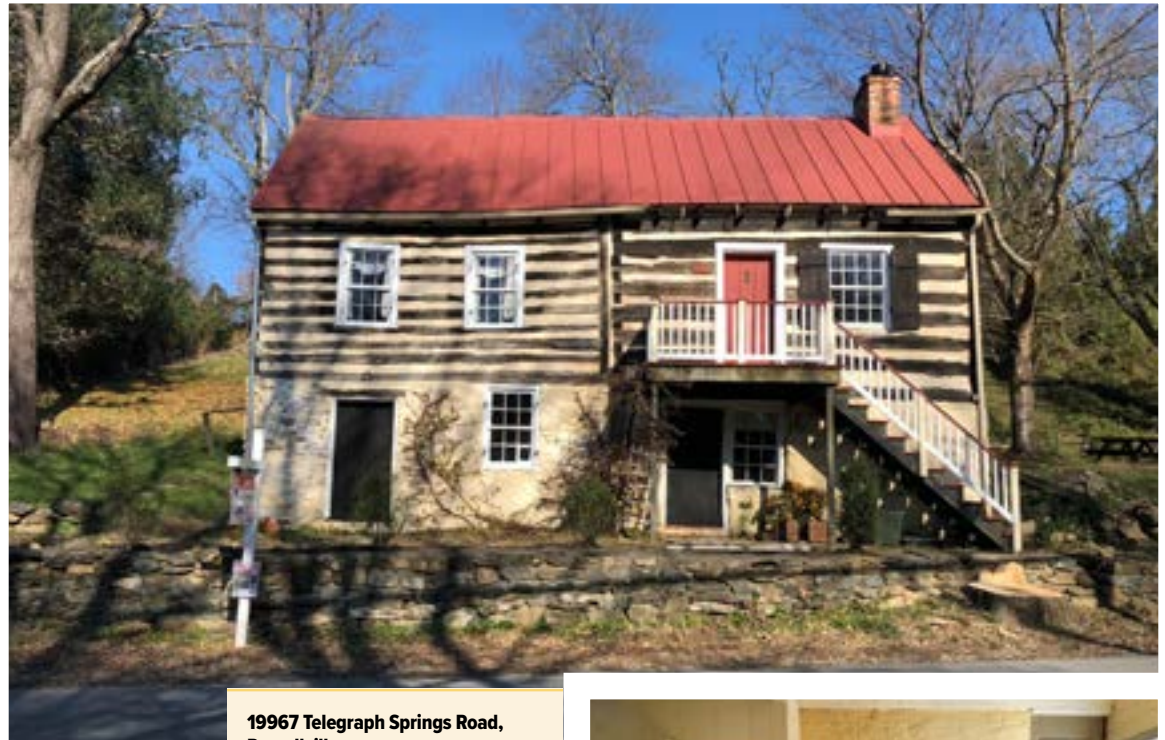
The home has original – completely original – features throughout, including hardwood floors, moldings, and doors, stonework, and window frames.

There are two bedrooms, a quaint bath with a claw-foot tub, a lovely sunroom with a patio, and terraced gardens in the rear.

It features a walk-up attic, and is presented in two lots totaling .92 acres, incorporating into your possible plans a garage and/or apartment with garage space.

Or, maybe you will decide to change it, not at all.

Consider this your primary home, or, as the chance to enjoy an ongoing get-away like no other.



**19967 Telegraph Springs Road,
Purcellville**

MLS: VAL0120752

Year Built: 1818

Beds/Baths: 2 bedrooms, 1.5 baths

Total Acreage: .92 acres

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Agent: **Shannon Buchanan**

Realtor, Associate Broker

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The Weavers Cottage, as described in the Waterford Foundation's signature National Historic Landmark brochure, Walk with us: "This two-story stone and log house is the only structure still standing on Water Street. It exemplifies housing for less affluent individuals in the early 19th century; many builders continued to use log and stone as a cheaper alternative to brick or frame construction. Its earliest known owner was Elizabeth Gore (c.1772-c.1848), who in 1818 bought what was probably a vacant lot. She sold the property in 1849 to a weaver from Germany, for whom the building is named. In the mid-1850s William Robinson (born c.1821), a free African-American, purchased the house; it remained in his family for close to a century. Two additional dwellings owned by African-American families stood to the right of the Weaver's Cottage until the late 1800s."

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Citizens challenge 'Free Money,' waterline permitting to Rockwool; FOIA requests sets issue on fire

BY ANDREA GAINES

According to the citizen group Toxic Rockwool, the company known as Rockwool "is grabbing \$2.2 million in our tax dollars directly from the West Virginia treasury." Moreover, claims the group, the tax breaks were given to the company via a secret Memo of Understanding not shared with the public, and revealed only by a recent Freedom of Information Act request.

Water quality issues have followed the approval process for the plant as well.

In November 2018, the organization Jefferson County Vision Inc. (JCV) questioned the apparent awarding by the Jefferson County Development Authority (JCDA) of a sole-source contract in connection with the waterline.

Said JCV, "As we began this investigation, over 120,000 documents were recently handed over to JCV

under the Freedom of Information Act. This investigation is preliminary and ongoing. Regardless, preliminary evidence indicates that JCDA failed to follow the State-mandated 5G process in the awarding of the contract to Thrasher. To the contrary, the evidence actually suggests that JCDA awarded what can only be described as a sole-source contract to Thrasher, in contravention of the 5G process ..."

Loudoun County officials, area farmers speak out

Rockwool broke ground in mid-2018 on a \$150 million stone-wool insulation factory in Ranson, West Virginia – just 12 miles from the Loudoun County line. The factory – which would be located directly across from a Ranson public school – has been challenged by citizen groups and several area municipalities, including the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, and the Town of Hillsboro.

From the beginning, the question has always been this: are the local jobs to be created worth the cost of bringing

a heavy industry such as stone-wool manufacturing, here.

Often, the approval process for manufacturing plants such as this centers on the potential harm that may come to people, including babies, infants and young children especially vulnerable to air and water-based pollutants.

Water and air pollution laws, of course, prevent certain emissions and discharges. Ironically however, the permits awarded to companies allow free and legal release of a certain levels of pollutants as part of the permitting process. In the case of Rockwool, that includes the release into the air of 138,000 tons per year of substances such as carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, particulate matter, formaldehyde, and others – chemicals that will flow and deposit themselves here in Loudoun County.

Economic incentives

In recent months, the question of what Rockwool is getting in exchange

for providing some 150 jobs has broadened into a discussion about the the basic tax and economic incentives that states, and localities such as Ranson, can offer large companies such as Rockwool to locate in the area.

Now, it's not just about the price Loudoun County and area municipalities will pay for the potential impact on human health, and water and air pollution that the Rockwool plant will set in motion, but also about how local fiscal and tax policies get pulled into the process.

Timeline

As it relates to Loudoun County and area municipalities, the Rockwool 2018 timeline is as follows:

- **June** – Rockwool breaks ground on the Ranson factory.
- **July & August** – Public protests in Ranson set in motion a series of actions and public meetings by local government bodies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

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Leesburg's George C. Marshall International Center gets new president

Thomas S. Greenspon, a native Virginian who has resided in Leesburg and Loudoun County since 1997 is the new President of the prestigious George C. Marshall International Center.

The Center is located at the elegant, early 19th Century mansion of George C. Marshall, architect of the Marshall Plan.

The home, known as the Marshall House and/or "Dodona Manor," is a museum and a National Park Service National Historic Landmark. It is one of the most popular historic spots in the northern Virginia area

and the state.

Greenspon served as a Senior Executive at the consulting firm of Booz Allen Hamilton, where he built a huge European and Pacific portfolio for the company.

Prior to serving in that capacity Greenspon served as Development Officer with the VMI Foundation, Inc. as a Development Officer, and as a Sales and Operations Manager with Federal Mogul Corporation.

A former US Navy pilot, he served on active duty from 1985 to 1994 and is a

decorated combat veteran of the First Gulf War.

Greenspon received his undergraduate degree from The Virginia Military Institute and his MBA from The George Washington University where he was a member of the Beta Gamma Sigma Honor Society. At VMI, Tom was Captain of the varsity lacrosse team and worked as an editor for the college newspaper.

Greenspon continues on as a Trustee on the Board of the VMI Foundation, and is also a former Board Member for the National Defense Industrial Association (NDIA). He has been very active in youth sports in Loudoun County, serving as the commissioner for Western Loudoun Lacrosse, as a boys and girls coach, and is a past member of the Northern Virginia Lacrosse Officials Association.

VMI Chairman Steve Chapin notes,

"Tom is truly a world class strategist and fundraiser, who believes strongly in the George C. Marshall International Center and its mission."

Mr. Greenspon will be responsible for continuing the strategy and raising the funds for the ongoing preservation of the Marshall House and supporting the international student partnership exchange programs in which more than 400 students from the U.S. and European countries have participated in to date.

These programs, plus international speakers' forums and community events hosted at the Marshall House, continue to raise the awareness of Marshall's historic home and his legacy.

The George C. Marshall International Center is located at 312 E. Market Street, Suite C in Leesburg. For more information, call 703-777-1301 or go to www.georgemarshall.org



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Virginia Council on Women announces STEM Essay Contest for high schoolers

Governor Ralph Northam and the Virginia Council on Women have announced the 8th Annual STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math) Essay Contest for women in their junior and senior years of high school.

The Council will award at least five \$5,000 scholarships to high school junior and senior women who will be pursuing STEM education at institutions of higher education. One scholarship will be awarded in each of five geographic regions across the state. Additional scholarships may be awarded at the discretion of the Council.

"It is critical that we prepare all Virginia students to succeed in fields like science, technology, engineering, and math, and this annual contest is a great way to encourage more young women to explore their passions and pursue careers in these industries," Gov. Northam said in a release. "The scholarships awarded by the Council will help Virginia women achieve their academic and professional goals in high-demand sectors that are charting the path of our global economy today and into the future."

The STEM Essay Contest was launched in 2012 with 170 young women from across the Commonwealth

submitting essays focusing on their vision for a future STEM education or career. In its first year, the Council raised \$10,000 and made three scholarship awards. Now, in its eighth

year, the Council has awarded nearly \$200,000 in scholarships. The Council partners with the Math

Science Innovation Center, which, has served as a regional math and science center since its establishment in 1966, to administer the contest.

Last year, the Council received nearly 500 essay submissions and, thanks to the generosity of sponsors, awarded \$50,000 in scholarships to five Virginia students.

To be eligible, one must be a female or identify as a female, reside in Virginia, be a junior or senior in high school, and hold at least a 2.5 GPA. Applications and guidelines are available online.

Entries must be submitted by 11:59 p.m. on Feb. 22. Essays will be judged by a panel of Council members and individuals who represent STEM fields. Winners will be notified by March 21. The scholarship awards will be presented at a reception at the Executive Mansion in Richmond in April.



— Call for submissions —

Cabin Fever Film Fest Jan. 25 – 26



Franklin Park Visual & Performing Arts Center and Town of Purcellville Arts Council

Regional filmmakers are invited to submit films (short and feature-length) and home movies for the Cabin Fever Film Festival sponsored by Franklin Park Visual and Performing Arts Center and Town of Purcellville Arts Council. The second annual Purcellville Cabin Fever Film Festival kicks off with a slate of films that highlight local tales and talent. The focus this year will be on films, student productions, and vintage home movies all shot by Purcellville area (20132) residents. Break that cabin fever in late-January and enjoy the second year of Purcellville's only film festival.

COMMUNITY

Entries should be no longer than 90 minutes and a minimum of 1 minute. All films should be in digital format on a flash drive or on a DVD. Any subject matter is acceptable keeping in mind that the Cabin Fever Film Fest is a family-friendly event. Films can include live action, stop motion, animation, etc. Entry fee is \$10 for first film entry, \$5 for each additional film entry. Films should be dropped off to Franklin Park Arts Center (36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132) by 5 p.m. on

Friday, Jan. 11. All films will be reviewed and filmmakers will be contacted shortly after the submission deadline as to their acceptance and scheduled showing time block.

Show times will be Friday, Jan. 25, from 7 – 9 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 26, from 10-11:30 a.m. or 12:30 – 2 p.m. Friday night will also include a reception.

Important dates:

- **Friday, Jan. 11, 5 p.m.** – Deadline for film festival submissions.
- **Monday, Jan. 14** – Film Festival slate announcements
- **Friday and Saturday, Jan. 25 and 26** – Cabin Fever Film Festival

Filmmakers must complete registration form and submit with film and entry fee. Cash, checks (payable to County of Loudoun) or credit card. Franklin Park Arts Center is open 9 a.m. – 5 p.m. Monday – Friday and weekends by appointment.

Questions should be directed to Elizabeth Bracey, Manager, Franklin Park Arts Center Elizabeth.Bracey@loudoun.gov or 540 338-7973 or Liz Jarvis, Chair, Purcellville Arts Council, arts@purcellvilleva.gov.

Sports league funding grant program accepting applications

The Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board accepting applications from local organizations for the annual Sports League Funding grant program. The due date for applications is Thursday, Jan. 31, by 5 p.m., and eligible organizations can now apply online.

COMMUNITY

To be eligible for funding, applicant organizations must serve the Town of Purcellville area, the majority of players must be citizens of the Town of Purcellville, and a letter to the Town from the IRS confirming the organization's tax-exempt status must be provided. Priority consideration will be given to sports teams from Purcellville that have

an open participation policy where all players are allowed to play regardless of skill level.

Last year, 7 organizations received funds to support their programs, including the American Legion Post 293 Shooting Club, Catocin Basketball Club, Greater Loudoun Babe Ruth, LoCo Motion, Northern Virginia Athletic Club, Western Loudoun Volleyball Club and Western Loudoun Wrestling.

The Town of Purcellville has \$5,200 allocated in the FY 2019 budget for these grants. Qualifying organizations may apply using the new online application on the Town's website at www.purcellvilleva.gov/875/Purcellville-Sports-Grant.

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Community water and wastewater project assistance

The Loudoun County Water and Wastewater Program will begin accepting applications for county assistance with community water and wastewater projects starting Jan. 1.

The Water and Wastewater Program is designed to support Loudoun County communities experiencing issues with deficient or non-existent water or wastewater systems with funding and other resources. Properly functioning water and wastewater systems help to assure a cleaner and healthier community.

COMMUNITY

Communities that need assistance are encouraged to apply after reading more about the opportunities available for help at www.loudoun.gov/waterprojects. Applications will be accepted from Jan. 1 through March 31.

Additional information can be found at www.loudoun.gov/waterprojects or by contacting Scott Fincham, Loudoun County Environmental Program Specialist, at 703 771-5520 or Scott.Fincham@loudoun.gov.



Franklin Park, January 2019 Intergalactic magic, gospel reviews & more

Franklin Park started the New Year with a fantastic debut concert by the Immortals on Jan. 5. Don't miss The Glorifying Vines Sisters and Thomas Rhyant on Jan. 12, Last Ham Standing Comedy Improv on Jan. 18, and more throughout the month. For more information, go to www.franklinparkartscenter.org.

Application deadline Feb. 1 14th Annual Western Loudoun Artist Studio Tour

The application process is open for the 14th Annual Western Loudoun Artist Studio Tour. Loudoun County visual artists may apply to open their Western Loudoun studios or participate as a guest artist.

Applications are due Feb. 1, 2019. Sixty or more artists are expected to participate.

The tour takes place Saturday and Sunday June 1-2, and is presented by the Franklin Park Arts Center, the Round Hill Arts Center, and The Friends of Franklin Park Arts Center.



Music with a Cause

Jan.13, 4 p.m. Music with a Cause presents internationally acclaimed artists Brian Ganz, pianist and Magdalena Wor, mezzo-soprano in a program entitled "Chopin: Spirit of Poland," at St. Andrew Presbyterian Church

COMMUNITY

in Purcellville, 711 W. Main Street. Ganz will play works that highlight Frédéric Chopin's profound connection to his homeland, mazurkas and polonaises, as well as the rarely heard Allegro de Concert, Op. 46.

Magdalena Wor will join Ganz in a performance of ten of the composers beautiful but neglected songs, which set lovely folk-like poems in Polish to music in Chopin's inimitable way. The recital will benefit the Loudoun Free Clinic. Tickets are \$20 and can be purchased at the door; ages 17 and under admitted free. For more information visit www.standrew-pres.org or call 540 338-4332.

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Our Princess Daisy delights and sparkles

Local author Millie Gallahan holds book signing

Our Princess Daisy is a new children's book by local resident and author Millie Gallahan.

The wonderful story about a charming little goat who shares her love – and her sparkling tiara – with her fellow barnyard animals as she prances and pirouettes around the farm was shared with all at a special book signing at the Purcellville Train Station on January 6.

"Our Princess Daisy is a delightful story for children," Said Gallahan.

"I have dedicated it to Dorothy W. Harper," she continued, "My wonderful friend who passed several years ago."

Gallahan has lived in Loudoun County for many years and has owned a business in Purcellville. She now resides in Hillsboro.

"Writing this book about my farm family," she continued, "was a great joy as the animals in the book are my family."



Book purchasers received their own sparkly tiara at the book signing.

Our Princess Daisy is widely available on Amazon.com and elsewhere.

Dressage association banquet and celebration

VADA/Nova, the Northern VA Chapter of the Virginia Dressage Association will be having their Year End Awards Banquet, Volunteer Celebration, and Silent Auction at the River Creek

Country Club, Leesburg, Sunday, Jan. 20, from 5:30 p.m. to 9 p.m. Please visit www.vadanova.org for more information on the banquet, membership and dressage shows.

Loudoun County is 'SolSmart'

Only four communities in the entire Commonwealth of Virginia got the call ... and Loudoun County is one.

Earlier this month SolSmart – a program of the International City/County Management Association and The Solar Foundation – recognized Loudoun for its efforts to make it easier for homes and businesses to go "solar," taking steps to address local barriers to solar energy and foster the growth of local solar markets.

County Administrator Tim Hemstreet announced the special designation, clearly proud of what

his county had accomplished – including zoning ordinances which allow solar energy by-right in most residential areas, a tax exemption for certified solar equipment, a streamlined permitting process for the installation of solar systems, and cross-training of inspection and permitting staff on solar photovoltaic systems.

Loudoun also takes part in the annual Solarize NOVA campaign, which provides free assessments for homeowners and businesses regarding their property's suitability for solar, and discounted on solar panels.

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ROCKWOOL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

- **Also in August** – Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis Randall goes on record in opposition to the plant.
- **September & October** – Loudoun County Board of Supervisors directs staff to “provide a summary of the project details, status, regulatory approvals, permitting and other relevant publicly available information,” to give the BOS options for further action. The Board also voted to add an additional air quality monitoring station to measure pollutants moving from the facility into Loudoun County.
- **Also in September** – The citizen group Jefferson County Vision sues to stop the plant’s construction, challenging the authority of the JCDA to take certain actions in relation to the waterline that will serve the facility.
- **November** – Sensing the shifting political winds, 12 of the 21 members of the Jefferson County Development Authority resign as several Rockwool opponents win seats in the West Virginia House of Delegates, the West Virginia Senate, and two of the three seats on the Jefferson County Commission. Members of the JCDA are appointed by the Jefferson County Commission.
- **Also in November** – The citizen

group Jefferson County Vision sues to stop the plant’s construction, challenging the constitutionality of the use of PILOTs – “payments in lieu of taxes” – to benefit Rockwool.

- **December** – The West Virginia Public Service Commission approves two extensions of natural gas service, including one to the Rockwool plant.

PILOTs

One common tax incentive program used by West Virginia and other states is known as a payment in lieu of taxes, or “PILOT.” In the Ranson case, Rockwool and various county agencies entered into an agreement that enables the Jefferson County Development Authority to hold the title to the 130 acres the company purchased for its factory. As the owner of record for tax purposes, the JCDA will lease the entire property, including the newly constructed factory, back to Rockwool. PILOT payments require companies to shoulder significant costs, but, they also save huge amounts in property taxes.

According to a spokesperson for the 11,000+-member group Concerned Citizens Against Rockwool, Ranson, the PILOTs used here will net Rockwool anywhere from \$2.2 million to over \$20 million annually. “Free Money” from the West Virginia Taxpayer.

The factory is expected to create

150 jobs for area residents. But, said David Levine, a contributor for Forbes Magazine and Founder and CEO of Indeco, Social Capital for a Better Human Experience, “In the case of Rockwool’s factory, the massively polluting project would only create 150 jobs and drive away the kinds of companies and industries that would continue to lift up our region.” In other words, it’s not just about the jobs, it’s about who gets the money from government to help generate what kinds of jobs.

The legal case, water quality, and the case for clean energy

In their court motion defending the PILOTs, Rockwool states that the citizens’ “Complaint is a collection of political grievances rather than legal claims. This Court cannot grant relief for political grievances, however, and must dismiss ... “

In this specific court case the citizens are a group called Jefferson County Vision, which is also challenging water permitting practices at the site.

With regards to the PILOTs, JCV is claiming that Rockwool is being given tax breaks at the expense of other businesses in violation of the West Virginia Constitution, which requires that “Taxation shall be equal and uniform throughout the state, and all property, both real and personal, shall be taxed in proportion to its value to be ascertained as directed by law. No

one species of property from which a tax may be collected shall be taxed higher than any other species of property of equal value.”

The plant is opposed by some agricultural groups including the Delmarva Farmer. Delmarva’s website notes: “The West Virginia Department of Environmental Protection permits the plant to emit more than 138,000 tons per year into the air of substances like carbon monoxide, carbon dioxide, particulate matter, formaldehyde, and sulfur dioxide, the exact impacts of which are not yet known.” This goes back to the David Levine argument that tax incentives benefiting one industry group can materially damage another’s bottom line. In this case, stone-wool manufacturing vs. agriculture and perhaps, tourism.

The controversy also has implications for the mammoth Mountain Valley Pipeline which runs through West Virginia and cross through Giles, Montgomery, Roanoke, Franklin, and Pittsylvania counties in Virginia, and into North Carolina. The natural gas pipeline would serve companies like Rockwool in West Virginia, and, although supported by pro-development forces, it has faced fierce opposition from organizations wanting more state, local, and federal support in fighting climate change.

Loudoun's Local Businesses

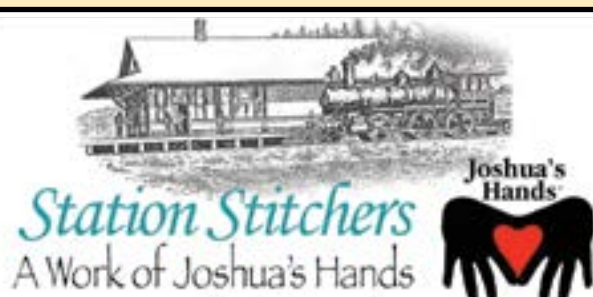
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LAST STRAW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

insidious polluter that entangles marine animals when not consumed by fish. Thus, the movement, #StopSucking, to favor a strawless ocean.

Nancy Heltman, visitor services director with Virginia State Parks, said, "Plastic is made to last forever. You don't need that for something you are going to drink for 45 minutes."

There are some with disabilities that argue that any "no straw" policy compromises the need they have to use straws. Fair point, and aside from reusable straws, another emerging answer is coming to the rescue – paper straws.

Maureen "Mo" Donnelly Morris, owner of Backstreet Brews Coffee and Tea House, announced her change of straw policy weeks ago – and announcing not just that she'll be using paper straws but multi-colored paper straws. Annee Olden was proudly handing them out this past Sunday.

If you visit Sheila Johnson's fabulous complex, Salamander, in Middleburg and order a tea, you will get a rigid paper straw – if you insist on a straw at all.

Some jurisdictions are banning plastic bags and straws entirely, not leaving it up to the public.

Across the Potomac, in DC, they are making an effort to ban single use plastic straws. Many thought an earlier 2014 law applied to straws. But they are making a stab at it.

Towns and Counties across the nation have banned plastic straws.

In Virginia, it is believed that the Counties can't ban straws on their own, because of the Dillon rule, without authorization from the General Assembly.

Perhaps, our General Assembly will catch the wave and ban these straws.

John Flannery practices law in Leesburg and is a regular guest commentator in print, TV, and radio on law and politics.



Salamander's paper straw



Annee Olden & Maureen Morris



Plastic waste threatens ocean wildlife

GREENWAY TOLLS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the State Corporation Commission would regain its authority to regulate tolls, which it lost when the bill took effect in 2008.

Section I of the bill eliminated the SCC's authority to reject toll increases. BOS Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-At Large) was the lone vote in support of extending the bill until 2056 – at which time the road will go to the control of the state. The Herring Bill locks in annual toll rate increases at Consumer Price Index plus 1 percent, real GDP, or 2.8 percent – whichever is higher. The General Assembly must vote on whether to extend the bill beyond Jan. 1, 2020.

The proposal to continue the Herring Bill – which the BOS voted to oppose – was negotiated by Randall and State Delegates David A. Reid (D-32) and John J. Bell (D-87). It also included distance-based tolling at a dollar per mile up to five miles in off-peak hours for EZPassholders. According to Greenway estimates, the cost to implement distance-based tolling would be \$30 million.

From September 1995 to July 2007, the toll on the Greenway was raised in increments from \$1.75 to \$3.00, a total increase of \$1.25 over just under 12 years, or a pre-Herring-Greenway-Bill average of 11 cents per year.

From 2008 to 2018, the bill caused tolls to rise from \$3.00 to \$5.65, an increase

of \$2.65 over ten years, or an average increase of over 25 cents per year; almost double the rate of increase.

Without the Herring Greenway Bill, if tolls had increased at 11 cents per year from 2008 to 2018, the current maximum toll rate would be \$4.21, or \$1.44 less per one full-length one-way peak trip. That translates to increased tolls of \$576 per year for someone who commutes round-trip 200 days a year.

Supervisor Matt F. Letourneau (R-Dulles) said, "By giving away our ability to challenge on a yearly basis, the toll rates – we need to understand what we are actually agreeing to." Letourneau and Supervisor Tony R. Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) said they wanted the bill to expire, so that the Greenway would have to deal with the SCC again.

Supervisor Ron A. Meyer (R-Broad Run) said that the high Greenway tolls discourage commuters from using the road. "Have you driven in the morning on Loudoun County Parkway going toward Waxpool Road?" he asked. "It backs up a quarter mile and sometimes three quarters of a mile from people avoiding the Greenway."

Supervisor Kristen C. Umstatted (D-Leesburg) said, "To me it boils down to one thing, is the SCC likely to approve higher rate increases than what is being proposed here? And I think the SCC will."

Said Randall, "Right now there is no new deal to be worked ... If this is what we

have whether it benefits a lot of people or not, they [Greenway] are not going to come back and make another deal, two years, three years, four years, five years. It's better than what we have right now."

Vice-Chair Ralph M. Buona (R-Ashburn) said, "I appreciate what you are trying to do, but it just doesn't get us there. I am not going to be able to support this as far as legislation goes, the way it stands ... We aren't going to take a deal that is worse for our constituents."

If the bill isn't extended until 2056, the Greenway representatives said they "will go to the SCC, and ask for an increase that is substantially higher than CPI+1."

Weighing in on the proposed continuation of the Herring Bill, Delegate Dave LaRock (R-33) wrote in a statement, "As my constituents know, I've been fighting against toll increases for many years. I've introduced numerous bills and budget amendments aimed at reducing the toll burden. High tolls pick the pockets of hard-working folks in Western Loudoun. We just got hit by a massive 35 percent toll increase on the Dulles Toll Road. I continue to oppose the outrageous tolls on I-66 inside the Beltway, which have reached \$45+ one-way."

"The Dulles Greenway bills being promoted by Del. Reid, Del. Bell, Sen. Favola and Chair Randall are asking the General Assembly to extend the 2008 Mark Herring Greenway Sweetheart Deal and the higher tolls that came with it, and that

is a horrible idea. Instead, we should let the 2008 Mark Herring Greenway Sweetheart Deal expire on January 1, 2020, to allow the State Corporation Commission to regain its authority to regulate tolls and protect Loudoun commuters."

Delegate Wendy Gooditis (D-10) wrote in a statement, "Distance-based tolling is a win for everybody. It does not hurt the long-distance commuters, many of whom are in the district I represent. But it will help for local trips, and in my opinion, encourage more use of the road, which will benefit the road itself. After many years of struggle, here is a solution that helps everyone."

In a written statement Senator Dick Black (R-13) said, "The Greenway is the worst corporate citizen in Loudoun County. They want us to give them endless toll increases without SCC oversight in exchange for a minor distance-pricing benefit. The Greenway proposal is highway robbery."

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser agreed with those voting to let the Herring Bill expire in 2020, saying: "I applaud the Board of Supervisors for opposing this bill. It's a win for the citizens of Purcellville and western Loudoun in that it brings the parties back to the table in January 2020 to negotiate lower tolls instead of 36 years with no voice at the table and significant increases in tolls. The toll increases under the current bill are a burden to our families."

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FARM BILL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the President in passing the 2018 Farm Bill, and making it law. This bill provides support and reassurance to western Loudoun’s agriculture community.”

The specific farm bill measures Fraser pointed out as favorable to the local economy include:

The legalization of industrial hemp. This product, an essential commodity in colonial times, was put on the nation’s list of controlled substances in years past as part of the war on drugs. According to Fraser, it is now “Positioned as the new cash crop that feeds, clothes, houses, and heals us ...” Continued Fraser, “Industrial hemp has the potential to reward western Loudoun farmers and processors with substantial revenue from textiles and other hemp products.”

Rural broadband expansion. The farm bill provides for grants and loan programs to help rural economies beef up broadband



Hemp rope product samples.

organic agriculture are also targeted as beneficiaries of the farm bill. Farmers just starting out, as well as socially disadvantaged and veteran farmers will receive assistance, as will vertical farming and precision agriculture methods.

Local agricultural interests are particularly intrigued by the industrial hemp opportunity, as is the Loudoun County Department of Economic Development.

As Fraser notes, “Chicago market researcher Brightfield Group predicts the hemp-derived Cannabidiol (CBD) market is expected to hit \$591 million this year and could balloon to \$22 billion by 2022 ...”

Even George Washington’s Mount Vernon, in Alexandria, has gotten into the act. Dean Norton, Director of Horticulture for the property, partnered with the University of Virginia to plant test plots of hemp starting in 2018. That effort has been conducted under provisions of the 2014 Farm Bill which allows states to grow industrial hemp for research purposes.

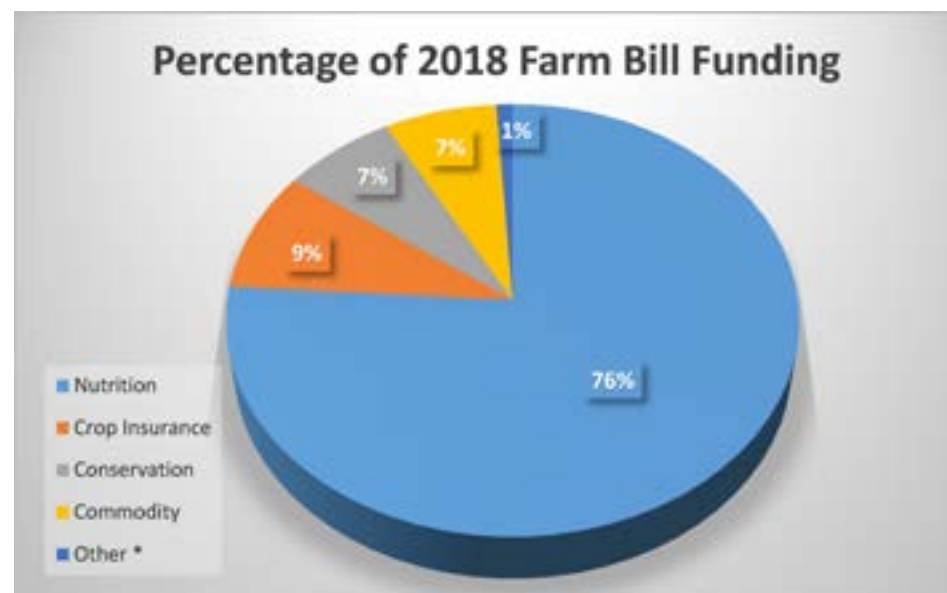
The current farm bill went into effect Jan. 1.

“I am very glad to hear that the Gardener has saved so much of the St. foin seed, and that of the India Hemp. Make the most you can of both, by sowing them again in drills ... Let the ground be well prepared, and the Seed ... be sown in April. The Hemp may be sown any where.”

George Washington to William Pearce, 24 February 1794

infrastructure. Added benefits of this expansion, noted Fraser, “Will connect our rural economy to regional, national, and global market opportunities, and will advance the adoption of big data analytics and artificial intelligence to enhance agricultural production.”

Agricultural training, research, energy sustainability, specialty crops, and



*Other, as depicted in this graph, includes trade, credit, rural development, research and extension, forestry, horticulture, and miscellaneous programs.



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MOORE-SOBEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

to their advantage. These are numbers suggesting that Europe is quickly turning into unfriendly territory for the Jewish people.

The United States has not been exempted from these developments. A startling 57% rise in anti-Semitic actions was recorded in 2017 by the Anti-Defamation League. A fact crystallized by the shooting at the Tree of Life synagogue in Pittsburgh. An event classified as the largest attack upon Jewish lives in American history. All this in a country once considered to be one of the safest places in the world for Jewish people to reside.

Most of us have been exposed to such attitudes by members of our own communities. I still remember

the time a co-worker – who commonly advocated for tolerance – made a startling admission. “I don’t like the Jews,” he said. Remarks he would repeat in different ways over time. Such blatant discrimination shocked me to my core. After all, hasn’t the past taught us of the dangers of hate?

The stakes today are seemingly much lower than they were in 1940 Germany. The rising tides of anti-Semitism can be beaten back, drowned out by strong, thoughtful voices, determined to thwart prejudice at every turn. The future remains unwritten, but one thing is for certain: more work must be done to reverse the current trends, more voices raised in favor of offering words of hope, rather than spewing words of hate.

Revisiting the story of Oskar Schindler, as captured in *Schindler’s List*, can offer important reminders. Not only of how dangerous hate can be, but the true value of virtue. A single man went to great lengths to save 1,200 lives. As Itzhak Stern says to Oskar Schindler near the end of the movie, “Whoever saves one life saves the world entire.”

The least we can do is to stand up for what is right in our current time.

For, no matter how far we have come, we must never forget.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is a freelance writer. To read more of his work, visit www.holdingontohopetoday.com

TRANSITION POLICY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

based on projected economic growth. Develop and expand the TPA – even if it means taking land from the RPA – or else.

That “or else” carries the subtle message that not dramatically increasing the County’s affordable housing stocks threatens the whole economy. No “affordable” housing, workers can’t afford to live here. Workers can’t afford to live here, then companies don’t want to come here. And, that includes the increasingly dominate data center industry sector, retail, hospitality, and so on.

Keirce, not hiding his distaste for lowering housing densities, and, also, clearly impatient with anyone who thinks Loudoun can limit growth, said last fall: “Not planning for more houses is the worst thing you can do for that Transition Policy Area.”

According to Keirce and the NVBIA, if the demand is there, you build it, plain and simple. According to the Transition Policy Alliance, COLT, and others – that is the equivalent of, as the Alliance has intimated, giving it away to whomever has the money

to buy it.

According to the Alliance, “Needs of current residents must take priority in the Comprehensive Plan. Residents of Eastern Loudoun deal with increasing traffic congestion, a shortage of park and public spaces, and shortages of public facilities.

“The proposed plan does not alleviate these problems, and in fact would make them worse.

“Adjustments must be made to the current plan to recognize changing environments. But what’s on the table is half a plan. The plan identifies the locations of additional homes and data centers, but not the locations of parks, trails, and open space. It depends on an ‘after the fact’ approach to securing land for public facilities, land that is already deemed scarce.”

The Alliance noted that “The draft hasn’t been approved yet, but the housing ‘demand’ study that appears to be driving it allows for more than a 50 percent population increase – to over 600,000, based on the number of homes that could be sold if they could be built somehow.”

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Sunshine brightened sea and shore and sky. The ocean had settled as a still-lighter blue. A spattering of small, rounded clouds glided by. Arched backs of a pod of dolphins broke the liquid surface as they played below. The beach shone white. Leafy branches undulated. From the near edge of this third crescent the centaur’s hoof prints resumed close alongside the parallel lines of a piscine tail; the centaur’s and the mermaid’s, surely. I thought that I had left them behind, but somehow the mystical pair now led me. Their marks became shallower and fainter as they moved across the sand toward the end of this curved beach, where the traces disappeared into the water.

There was beauty to this third crescent and the lands beyond.

I looked above the third beach and saw a string of animals, flying to the right and upward. The centaur and the mermaid stood in shallow water near me, also watching.

The nearest of those flying animals, to the left and lowest in the sky, were five seahorses. While of golden hue, their color expressed innocent, not rapacity. In front of the seahorses was a brace of goats, horns raking small curves against the sky and cloven hooves trailing beneath them. Next flew two young ponies, whinnying and bucking and larking about.

Leading this troop, highest in the sky and farthest right, were two regal horses.

The mare was a brown and white pinto, lean and athletic and spirited. Alongside her a muscular stallion led the parade across the sky, holding his head high and occasionally snorting the way proud horses do. He was dark bay with a white star on his forehead and his eyes, oddly, were vivid blue. Those eyes alternated between watchful looks at the others in trail behind, and determined scans of the lands ahead.

Gentle hills marked the end of the beach itself. The two horses, flying high, could see over these hillocks and take in the terrain beyond. I could see it through their eyes: Tens of thousands of acres of woods and fields, pastures and farms, and the occasional manicured estate. Beauty. Though the spoor of man was here, these lands felt of nature, as if animals and streams and forests and good-spirited people had made a community.

The Images on Canvas

Watching the little caravan pass overhead and head inland, I decided to paint an allegory, for that is what I had seen. I made a triptych, a three-panel painting with one panel for each crescent of beach. I daubed the sky on the third panel with a last bit of cerulean and I named the work “Home.”

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

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