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Gable Farm under Notice of Violation; More sites under scrutiny

BY ANDREA GAINES

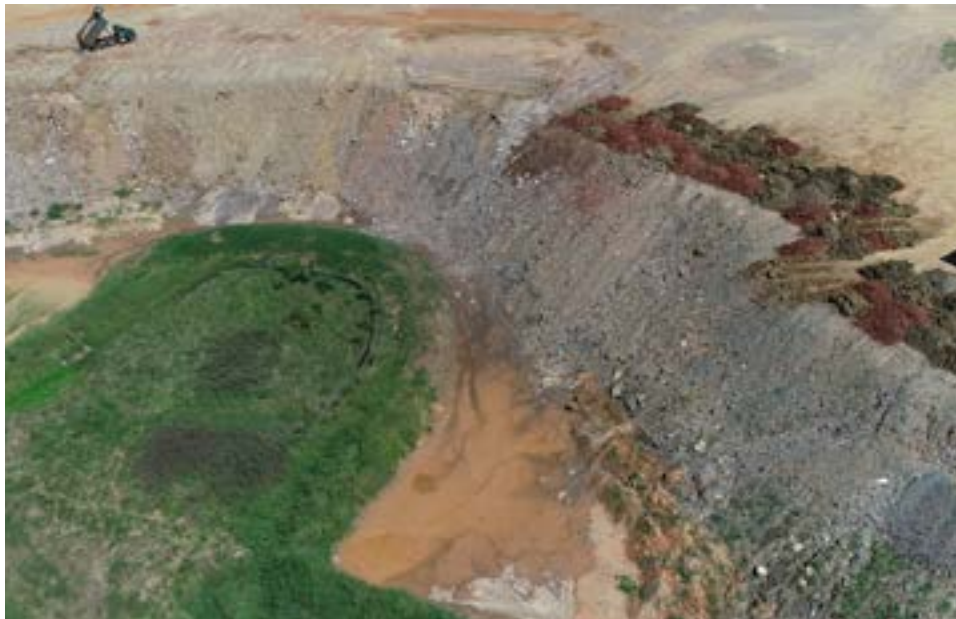
Cattail, LC continues to engage County officials on the implications of the Gable Farm personal recreational field/landfill and efforts to lift an original order issued to the landowner. The Gable Farm is on

the south side of Old Business 7 east of Hamilton, and abuts the Cattail LC's 800 acres of farmland under conservation easement.

Members of the community, also concerned about unauthorized dumping at

Gable Farm, met on March 2 to hear about the issues surrounding the landfill activity. Henry Harris, a family representative for Cattail and a hydrogeologist with many years of experience with landfills and other waste sites, is looking to the County for answers. Harris stated, "the responsibility for addressing the fundamental issue lies squarely in the hands of Loudoun County. The approved landfill alone is egregiously large and intrusive: 18-plus acres; at least 220,000 cubic yards of waste; thousands of truckloads; no screening and no setbacks; no notice to neighbors; no public information about the origin and contents of the waste; and no environmental monitoring.

"Whatever happens to our land, this should never be permitted again. Under current County zoning, a 'dirt stockpile' having exactly the same physical characteristics would not be permissible on this site without a special use permit from Loudoun County Board of Supervisors. How did that happen?"



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Stop Work Order at Gable Farm

The Gable Farm personal recreational field/landfill is an 18-acre tract of land covered with piles of dirt, massive chunks of concrete and asphalt, construction debris, and more, including liquid waste. In some places, the mounds are 30 to 40 feet high.

The waste was brought in by large dump

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Purcellville Mayor discusses sharing utilities with Hamilton

BY ANDREA GAINES

Purcellville's multi-million-dollar waste water plant – upgraded a number of years ago to prepare for rates of growth that residents have soundly rejected – costs Town taxpayers hundreds of thousands of dollars annually in debt payments alone. Nearby Hamilton has a much older plant, and, as it is built out to capacity

– and perfectly happy with that – the mayors of these two western Loudoun Towns have begun discussions on how they might "share" utilities, with Hamilton taking up some of Purcellville's excess capacity, and with Purcellville's property owners benefitting from potentially lower water and sewer rates.

"I have often wondered why the towns couldn't share

utilities and share the cost for both sides," said Hamilton Mayor David R. Simpson. "Neither Purcellville nor the Town of Hamilton would want to put in more water lines to promote growth. It is beneficial to them and to us."

In an interview with the *Blue Ridge Leader*, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser elaborated about the history of

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PROPANE COSTS TOO MUCH!

This Winter is the Ideal Time to Make the Switch.

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

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



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Keep Loudoun Beautiful launches new season in March

Keep Loudoun Beautiful is a fun, dynamic, and spirited County-wide cleanup effort that began in 1972. Imagine the drama – and impact – when a handful of concerned citizens “took the county’s litter problem into their own hands,” collecting roadside trash and ceremoniously depositing that trash on the floor of the Board of Supervisors’ conference room.

Today, some 47 years later, while slightly less dramatic, Keep Loudoun Beautiful continues to impress with its can-do attitude. Per the KLB website, in 2018, “1,014 volunteers donated

3,015 hours to collect 415 bags of recycling, 953 bags of trash, 153 tires” and more.

Some four-dozen plus Loudoun neighborhoods – from east to middle to west – participate in KLB, as area leaders organize their many volunteers and distribute big orange trash bags. And, that’s when the fun begins ... as citizens fan out to collect and bag litter along Loudoun’s roadsides, streams, and public areas – everything from paper to plastic to glass to metals to electronics.

A full list of cleanup locations, area leaders – including contact information – and more can be found at www.keeploudounbeautiful.org.

COMMUNITY

Freaky Friday Puts New Spin on Switch Spell

March/April performances at Loudoun Valley HS

Come have fun with Viking Theatre this spring as they perform Disney’s Freaky Friday, a new musical, at Loudoun Valley High School. Based on the Disney Channel original movie of the overworked mother and her teenage daughter who magically swap bodies, this new musical comedy is a hilarious, contemporary update on the tale of the mother/daughter bond.

Sixteen-year-old Ellie Blake and her mom, Katherine, accidentally switch bodies on a very important day: the day of Katherine’s wedding and Ellie’s school-wide scavenger hunt. Hilarity ensues as they attempt to live a day in each other’s shoes.

Ellie tries to run her Mom’s baking company, while Katherine tries to blend in with teenagers and participate in the scavenger hunt; but how will they get back into their own bodies before the wedding? Audiences will find out if the spell can be broken! LVHS Director of Theatre, Russ Staggs, says, “Every

audience member will find something relatable about this musical production. The characters are dynamic, the music is catchy, and the design-- all driven by students at Valley-- is beautiful. I’m truly amazed by what this group has created together. This is a must see show for everyone.”

The production is the work of not only LVHS theatre students as it incorporates input from all over the school and within the community. Staggs adds, “This is an amazing community-wide effort. We have students and staff from all corners of the building, as well as community members assisting with the creation of this hilarious and heartfelt story. It’s truly remarkable.”

Performances run March 29-30 and April 5-6 at 7 p.m., as well as March 30 and April 6 at 2 p.m. Admission is \$10 and tickets will be sold at the door and online. To purchase tickets, visit lvtheatre.org. Viking Theatre can be found on social media @vikingtheatre on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.



Gallop on over to the Expo

The Loudoun County Equine Alliance will hold its 4th Annual Equine Expo on March 19 from 5 p.m. to 9 p.m. at the Stone Tower Winery in Leesburg.

This popular event is the local horse enthusiasts’ premier networking and information-gathering event, and is being promoted as a great way for equestrians to meet the businesses and organizations that support their passion, and for product and service providers to meet potential new customers.



As many as 40 vendors will be present for the event. Refreshments will be served and wine will be available for purchase.

The mission of the Alliance is “to present a unified voice to actively advocate, educate and communicate the goals, initiatives and benefits of the horse industry, in order to advance the interests of all equine disciplines and the entire equestrian related industry.”

Stone Tower Winery is located at 19925 Hogback Mountain Road in Leesburg. For more information go to www.loudounequine.org.

Start some new traditions for Saint Patrick’s Day

BY ANDREA GAINES

Saint Patrick’s Day is Sunday, March 17.

The traditions surrounding this iconic holiday are well known. You eat. Perhaps you enjoy a special beverage. And, maybe you wear green.

But, the best holidays are the ones you make your own. The history of the day is a fascinating one, and finding new ways to celebrate it – with twists on the traditional – can be really fun.

- **Stage a potluck feast.** St. Patrick’s Day was first celebrated in the United States in the early 1700s. Food and drink have always played a big part in the festivities. So why not organize an Irish-inspired potluck feast? It doesn’t have to be corned beef and cabbage. My guidelines – any dish that has Irish roots ... or, anything “green” ... is welcome.

- **Make an offering to the Celtic Goddess, Bridgid.** Bridgid is the Celtic goddess of healing and fertility. In times past the descendants of today’s Irish would find a sacred place or “wishing tree” and walk around it in a clockwise motion, grateful for the end of winter and the coming of spring. Why not find your own wishing tree – on a favorite walk, or hike, or stroll around your property?

- **Celebrate the color green.** Everything is turning green this time of year, right in time for St. Patrick’s day. So, light a green candle, put up some green lights, wear something green – that time-honored tradition – or, spruce up the house with some new plants.

- **Educate yourself on the role the Irish have played in Loudoun County.** There are lots of spots in Loudoun County connected to the influence the Scotch-Irish have had on our land, politics and agricultural heritage. This includes a place right outside of the Village of Lincoln known as Irishman’s Field. More at www.LincolnPreservation.org.

- **Read some Irish poetry – aloud at the dinner table.** Favorite Irish poets – and there are so many – include William Butler Yeats, Seamus Heaney, Patrick Cavanaugh, and Samuel Beckett. Here is one of the most beloved poems, “Easter 1916” by Yeats. Read it around the dinner table, or find a favorite poem of your own.

*I have met them at close of day
Coming with vivid faces
From counter or desk among grey
Eighteenth-century houses.*

*I have passed with a nod of the head
Or polite meaningless words,
Or have lingered awhile and said
Polite meaningless words,*

*And thought before I had done
Of a mocking tale or a gibe
To please a companion*

*Around the fire at the club,
Being certain that they and I
But lived where motley is worn:
All changed, changed utterly:
A terrible beauty is born.*



— Amy and Dan Smith's planning for life —

Gift and Estate Tax: Where are we now?

Changes in the tax law have created some confusion regarding the current state of taxes associated with the transfer of assets both at death (estate tax) or during lifetime (gift tax). A brief summary of the current tax law may be helpful to some of our readers.



AMY AND DAN SMITH

Estate Tax

The taxation of estates can apply on two levels: federal and state.

With regard to federal estate tax, the exemption is now \$11,400,000 per person. The exemption amount is to be increased annually by C.P.I. adjustment. Furthermore, the law contains a provision

for "portability." This means that, as between a married couple, the unused portion of the exemption of the first spouse to die can be preserved and utilized at the death of the second spouse by filing a simplified estate tax return. This (increased by C.P.I. adjustment of the second spouse's exemption) at his/her death. The law creating this increased exemption is due to expire at the end of 2025, unless it is then extended. If allowed to expire, the exemption will revert to the amount existing before the change in the tax law increased by C.P.I. adjustment, estimated at \$5,600,000 per person. The provision allowing portability is not set to expire.

Virginia does not have a state estate tax. However, both Maryland and D.C. have

estate taxes which apply in addition to the federal estate tax.

There is one other type of "death tax" which can affect a beneficiary of an estate: the inheritance tax. Whereas an estate tax is a tax on the totality of a decedent's assets which pass at his/her death, the inheritance tax applies to the share of the estate which a beneficiary receives. It applies even if an estate tax is also to be paid on the same share. Fortunately, very few states have an inheritance tax. In our area only Maryland has an inheritance tax. Thus, the estate of a Maryland decedent could be subjected to both federal and state estate taxes, and the beneficiary could be subjected to an inheritance tax on his/her share of the estate. (Some advice: "Don't be caught dead in Maryland.")

Gift Tax

The current amount which may be given annually without any gift tax consequences is \$15,000 ("the annual exclusion"). This amount is subject to annual C.P.I. increases. For example, a husband and wife may each give \$15,000 per year to their son or grandchild or friend. So long as the gift is within the annual exclusion amount, no gift tax return is required to be filed.

If a gift from a donor to a person exceeds the annual exclusion amount, the donor is required to file a gift tax return. The purpose of this return is to show the IRS what part of the donor's exemption is being utilized by this gift. The gift tax exemption is the same amount as the estate tax exemption

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Dr. Mike,

We found a Juul and other vaping gear in our 14-year-old son's backpack recently and confronted him. It took some pressure, but he eventually owned up to it. He also eventually accepted our zero tolerance for vaping due to its harmful side-effects, most notably nicotine addiction. Well, kids will be clever, and now he's asked us if he could vape without nicotine. He says vaping "calms" him and that everyone is doing it every day, and what's the big deal if there's no nicotine in it. My husband and I see his point of view but still feel in our guts that zero tolerance is best. We haven't gone back to him yet because he's a good debater and we don't know exactly what to say. He's also getting too old for us to say "because we said no" without offering a sound explanation to the no. Is vaping without nicotine a problem for a 14-year-old? What are we supposed to do if all of his friends are doing it? Thank you for your thoughts.

— Confused Parents

Dear Confused Parents,

Your parental intuition here is correct, and there are a number of reasons why you shouldn't allow your 14-year-old son to Juul – even without nicotine. First, possessing and/or using vape products of any kind under 18 is illegal.

Thus, if your son were to get caught with a Juul at school, for example, there would likely be some pretty hefty consequences for him. Second, Juuling or e-cigarette use is known to cause popcorn lung and other health problems. Popcorn lung is a very real and dangerous risk that occurs when you inhale diacetyl into your lungs; diacetyl is one of the many harmful chemicals in Juuls and e-cigarettes. Popcorn lung symptoms are similar to chronic obstructive pulmonary disease (COPD) and include: shortness of breath, wheezing and coughing. Popcorn lung can also become a chronic and irreversible condition. Third, endorsing Juuling for your 14-year-old son as parents sets a bad precedent. You can let him know that you're not allowing him to Juul at 14 for the same reasons that you're not, and society doesn't, allow him to drink alcohol or drive a car – juuling at 14 is simply not developmentally/age-appropriate behavior.

While your son is likely correct that others in his life are juuling, I think he's exaggerating the number; it's hard for me to believe that "everyone is doing it every day." Regardless, I think you should keep a closer eye on who your son is spending his time with and what he's doing with them. Teens are curious about a lot of things, and exercising poor judgment and poor impulse control socially can go with the territory adolescence.

Your son's belief – and it's probably accurate – that Juuling helps to "calm" him is also a red flag. Turning to

a substance to manage the stresses of life isn't good for anyone; at 14 your son shouldn't be using his body vis a vis Juuling to process his negative emotions. Today, it's Juuling that calms him, but tomorrow it could be weed or alcohol or something far worse. Coping with a substance is a bad habit for your son to pick up at his young and impressionable age.

In the end, it's always our job as parents to help our children learn to make good decisions and to set them up to later becoming capable adults. So beyond the Juuling, perhaps this is a good time to reassess how your son is doing across the important areas of his life – his home life, his social life and his academic life. Is your son applying himself fully at school? What after school activities is he engaged in? Is he involved in a sport or does he exercise? How does he spend his time over the weekend? How's he doing emotionally? Definitely saying "no" to juuling or vaping is the right thing to do here for the reasons I've outlined, and if something is out of balance or lacking for your son, I think this is also a good time to address that as parents.

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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Red Rocks

If it had been any slicker, yours truly may very well still be down there along the river, trying to hoist his carcass back up the slippery slope from which he'd come; I found the wet, Virginia clay more than a little challenging that morning – perched –



JON

as it was – at a steep incline, with no appreciable hand-holds or foot traction of which to speak – and I had to chuckle as I remembered the odd literary phrase, “Root hog, or die.”

My day's adventure had started off as a mild – if oppressively humid – morning excursion through the lush leafy greenery along the hiking trail leading to the banks of the Potomac at Red Rocks Wilderness Overlook. The incessant seasonal rains had left the local woods (and the rest of the known universe, it seemed) absolutely saturated with moisture; I could hear, smell and feel the dripping from the overhead canopy as I made my way along the muddy path – and I found it almost eerily quiet, with no discernable bird or animal activity to break the constant earthward ooze of water. Long before I came within sight of the flooded Potomac, I'd worked up enough of a lather on my own brow to join in the overall sensory drip-fest, and I noticed how carefully I needed to trod on the primitive trail, as I followed the little brown corridor through the world of green – up hill and down dale on the way to the river.



And mud: despite the lavish vegetation everywhere above ground level – a veritable sea of green – I couldn't help but take in the floor of muck from which all things – including myself – were rooted. I surrendered to the resignation that most of my clothing was soaked – either from my own perspiration or the latent moisture from my brushes with vegetation, and my formerly just-like-new walking boots were now – and seemingly forever more – hopelessly dirty with the pasty substance which once had been a walking trail; but, “Take heart!” I told myself, I was in the great outdoors, lungs full of healthy air, eyes and other senses brimming with Mother Nature's friendly images and impressions to take home and later (fondly) remember as another chapter in my local book of safaris. “Yes,” another part of me said, “But it's still really muddy.” And, with that, I had no retort, so the solo conversation dead-ended in a draw, as I made my way closer to the swollen Potomac.

Now, if I found an impressive amount of soupy Virginia clay along the trail to the River, it was no match for what I came upon

as I stood at the bank summit and looked down at that ‘otter slide’ of brown going all the way down to the water. It was muddy; I realize I've previously made that point, but simultaneously feel an undying need to stress the fact. Yes, Northern Virginia, you were ‘very much like mud’ that day.

Well, it was inevitable; you no more could have stopped me from gingerly progressing down that slope that morning than ... almost anything else of which I can comprehend. I found the going almost effortless, yet nearly impossible: trying to remain somewhat vertical (camera in hand)

as I descended (I didn't walk – I slid), I kept looking for little stopping-places along the way (a fallen tree-trunk, a patch of water-logged brush, any vestige of rocky outcrop, the hand of God! Someone help me!)

My stay at the ominous river's edge was tense with the knowledge that I wasn't exactly sure just how I was to make my return to the relative safety of the bank, far above me. I remember taking a few shots of what seemed quite a dangerous body of water, which very well could have swallowed me without a thought as it slid past the flooded trees and world of muck where I stood.

I've heard that one difference between humans and the ‘lesser’ creatures is our self-contained knowledge of death; now, I'm not sure how much our four-footed and winged friends think about these things, but I will share the fact that this so-called writer was at least a little relieved upon once again making the summit of the slippery hill to look down on the morass in which I'd just been. As I had on my descent, my uphill climb was made in incremental purchases: the fallen tree-trunk, the patch of water-logged brush, that vestige of rocky outcrop, the hand of God! Someone helped me!

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Common Sense

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

“Pfftttt.”

Byne Rood arched her eyebrows quizzically, “What was that for?”

Robert Rood answered, “Just wrote a ten-dollar check to the county for Belle’s license. Irritates me. When you got your dog a rabies shot, the vet automatically sends it to Animal Control, and then, out of the blue, Animal Control sends you this threatening letter

OPINION

yapping about fines and such. All for ten bucks. Sheez.”

Byne understood, “So you essentially pay a penalty for being a responsible pet owner. That’s crappy.”

“Yep. Makes no sense. A lot of things don’t seem to make sense these days. Or maybe I’m getting curmudgeonly. Some things could be easy to fix. Take airplane seats – there should be a minimum

width. Or take spare tires.”

Byne poked Robert’s belly, “Like the one you’re starting?”

Robert made a mock scowl and started talking about tires, “In cars now you don’t even get one of those little donut spares. All you get is a can of goop you’re supposed to put into the tire to seal a flat. That doesn’t make me feel very secure. I just want a regular tire, a jack and a tire iron.”

Byne jested, “I just want a tow truck and a hunky driver.”

Robert shook his head in faux exasperation, then continued, “Here’s more common sense: No robocalls. If Zuckerberg can steal everyone’s personal data, then blocking robocalls should be child’s play for a phone company,” Robert replied and added, “And politics needs common sense...a lot of it.”

Byne knew her husband was headed for a rant; she would mostly give silent concurrence by nodding, and let him talk.

And Robert Rood ranted, “The Greenway tolls are crazy and there was a bill in Richmond to make its finances more transparent. At the last minute a Greenway lobbyist got to some state senator named Favola. She switched positions and killed the bill, then and there. Heck, lobbying should be outlawed. It’s not fair for slick lawyers and ex-politicians to have all that influence.” Byne nodded affirmation and Robert added more gripes. “There ought to be term limits; everybody except politicians wants them. It all comes down to good government, you know?”

“I’m with you,” said Byne, “and I’ve got a good example of bad politics. You know Tia Walbridge, right?”

“Yeah. She’s running against Tony Buffington for a Supervisor’s seat.”

Byne leaned over and handed Robert a half-page torn from a newspaper. “Here’s the story.”

Tia Walbridge, who is running for Supervisor against Tony Buffington, received a \$15,000 donation from Delegate (and current Senate candidate) John Bell on December 31st. The day before, the 30th, Bell had gotten a \$20,000 donation from Leesburg developer David Gregory.

Gregory wants to develop the 131-acre Graydon Manor property near Leesburg far from its AR-1 zoning into a much larger complex of 250 houses, multiple “country inns,” perhaps a winery, restaurants, a vet clinic and a childcare center. His plans were initially denied but he is apparently still pursuing the project through appeals and potentially, a lawsuit.

Was this actually a tricky way for Gregory to funnel cash to a candidate for Supervisor who might become sympathetic to his scheme to rezone this important property? Was this political money laundering, plain and simple?

Robert interrupted his wife, “And if you’re the suspicious type, you figure that Bell laundered the money for Gregory, who would then hope to have Tia’s vote on his rezoning ... Is this real?”

“Yep,” Byne gloated, “I knew this was an opinion piece, so I double-checked on the Virginia Board of Elections website. The facts are real.”

Robert smiled, “You know, I wish politics was non-partisan. We’re stuck with two parties whose only goals seem just bickering with each other. At least some local issues aren’t blatantly partisan.”

“Like?” Byne prompted.

“A lot of land use is non-partisan, like the Envision Loudoun planning fiasco. That’s developers vs. citizens, not Republicans vs. Democrats. But maybe

non-partisan does not guarantee a good outcome. I’ve got an example.”

“Which I’m about to hear,” thought Byne.

“Remember we went to a meeting in Waterford to talk about the draft comprehensive plan?”

“Yeah.”

Robert fiddled with his laptop and showed Byne a webpage about that meeting, pointing at two paragraphs and then showing her a video of a Planning Commission work session.

An outspoken member of the Planning Commission – Cliff Keirce, unexpectedly showed up at a meeting in Waterford where pro-conservation groups addressed the Envision project and its draft Comprehensive Plan. After the organizers’ presentations, Keirce stood and spoke. His primary comment was that he was against growth in the west and hoped no new houses would be built in western Loudoun. That surprised and pleased the audience since the Planning Commission usually advocates more growth. When the meeting was over, several well-mannered people went up to Keirce afterward and thanked him for what he had said.

The day after the Waterford meeting, the Planning Commission convened a work session where Keirce reported to fellow members, “The data they presented was accurate but lacked context. I found that the vast majority of the folks really think that we’re on the right track, both in adding residential to the Transition Area and more data centers. A lot of folks think we are really on the right track.”

Robert was enraged, “People here despise the Envision plan. It has some decent things in it about the Rural Area,

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— View from the Ridge —

Put out the Aldie fire

BY ANDREA GAINES

Twelve-plus years ago, in November 2006, County planners began the search for a site for a new fire station for the growing Aldie service area – 40 square miles near the intersection of Routes 50 and 15.

OPINION

“The current station,” said the County, “is limited in fire and rescue program service space and is subject to periodic flooding due to its location in a flood plain adjacent to the Little River. In addition, the residential growth in the

Aldie service area requires a station that meets current Fire and Rescue service standards for volunteer/career staff. Given the current location and constraints of the existing site it was determined that a new station on a new site would be required to effectively provide service to the Aldie area.”

Fast-forward now to February 2019.

After considering more than 20 sites – investing hundreds of thousands of dollars in architectural plans, land purchases, and more – not only does the County still not have a final site for the

desperately needed station, it continues to hold open the possibility that it will build the new, 18,000 square foot facility near the entrance to the historic village of Aldie on the footprint of the old Aldie fire station site – a piece of property that has flooded at least 20 times since it was built in 1971.

The flood plain problems, exacerbated by potential loss of important historic structures, has soured many residents to the plan. And, Loudoun’s Historic District Review Committee recently

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Purcellville Gateway requests zoning change to allow daycare

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Jan. 31 Purcellville Planning Commission meeting, NSHE Fool Hollow Lake, LLC asked for part of a remaining three-acre parcel of the Purcellville Gateway shopping center – which is zoned R-3 for six detached single-family homes – to be changed. The applicant proposed taking .81 acres from the residential proffered R-3 zoning and putting it with a small plot to make it big enough to put a 8,800-plus square foot child care center for 138 children. This is a request for rezoning and proffer condition amendment.

Less than two weeks before, in a letter dated Jan. 18, NSHE Fool Hollow Lake, LLC had withdrawn its application for a special use permit to expand Harris Teeter in the Purcellville Gateway. The request was to increase the existing 53,112 square foot Harris Teeter building by a maximum 10,000 square feet.

Planning Commissioner Ed Neham said, "I am very unsettled about adding anything

else into the center in terms of what I am hearing now."

Theresa Stein, Planning Commissioner Vice Chair, said, "This area was proffered to be three acres residential." Stein said that the applicant needs .8 acres from the three-acre residential parcel so it can have a day care center, much like the fact that where the

Chick-fil-A is currently located was supposed to be an office building.

Stein continued, "So down the line, the decision is 'you know what', the office is not going to happen, we are going to put a fast food restaurant there. So

that was a promise that was originally made to the Town and to the residents that we changed on them... there were expectations and those things did not happen. Now you are reducing the residential space by almost an acre, and again the expectation is that it would be used for residential – and now it is going to be a child care center? What I am looking at is that promises were made to the neighborhood and from all appearances you are taking R-3 property and you are turning

... A concept plan gets approved and any property owner can come back and change their proffers and concept plan at any time ..."

– Chris Gleckner, Land Use Planner

CONTINUED ON PAGE 13 »

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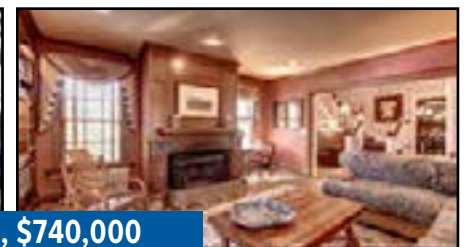


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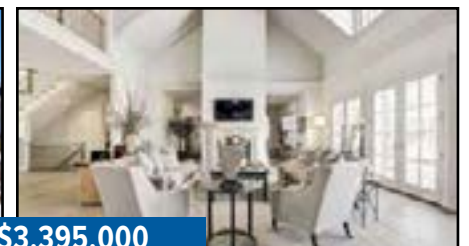
HAMILTON, \$740,000
1.5AC IN TOWN OF HAMILTON



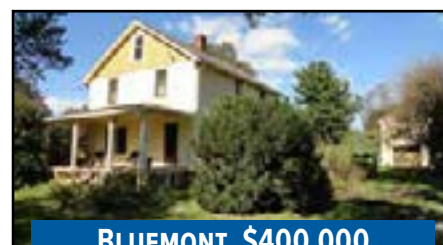
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Registration open for student cybersecurity programs

Programs offer financial rewards to Virginia schools, scholarships for college students

Governor Ralph Northam has announced that registration is open for the 2019 Girls Go CyberStart program, which aims to support and inspire high school girls across Virginia to explore careers in cybersecurity and computer science.

GOVERNMENT

“As a national leader in the cybersecurity and technology industry it is vital that we encourage Virginia students to take advantage of opportunities to explore cybersecurity and computer science,” said Governor Northam. “The 2019 Girls Go CyberStart program provides early experience that positions young women across the Commonwealth to step into valuable roles and careers after college.”

The Girls Go CyberStart program is an online game consisting of a series of challenges that put students in the role of a cyber protection agent charged with solving realistic problems and puzzles. It is designed to explore relevant and exciting topics such as

cryptography and digital forensics.

The program is open to girls in grades 9 through 12. Students can participate at both home and at school, or wherever an Internet connection is available. Participating students (and their teachers) do not need knowledge or experience in IT or cybersecurity to participate. The program is free for schools and students.

“Over the last 20 years, the educational infrastructure for cybersecurity and technology related jobs has continued to become more robust across Virginia communities,” said Secretary of Administration Keyanna Conner. “As the need for young, bright, vibrant talent only increases in these high-paying, sustainable jobs, programs such as these continue to offer talented young women the opportunity to learn about the industry and compete in a highly competitive field.”

“The more we are able to offer incredible programs like Girls Go CyberStart that introduce talented young women to careers in STEM, and more specifically cybersecurity, the better,” said Secretary of Education Atif Qarni. “Real time learning opportunities outside the classroom complement the education that our students already receive during the school day.”

More than 6,600 young women in 16 states participated in the Girls Go CyberStart program in

2018—the first year the program was offered. The program increased participant interest in cyber careers to 70 percent, an increase of more than 30 percent from before the program.

Registration for Girls Go CyberStart is open, with online gaming commencing on March 20. Additional details can be found at www.girlsgocyberstart.org.

The three high schools in Virginia with the most participants will receive awards of \$1,000, \$750 and \$500. High schools with at least five girls who complete six or more challenges earn the right for both boys and girls to use the CyberStart game for the remainder of the school year.

Girl Scout Troops across the Commonwealth are being asked to share information about the Girls Go Cyberstart program. High schools are encouraged to promote the program and participation.

Both male and female college students in Virginia are invited to participate in the Cyber FastTrack game. Students excelling in the Cyber FastTrack game will be eligible to win a share of \$2.5 million in scholarships for advanced cybersecurity training, and introductions to employers for jobs and internships in the field.

College students can pre-register for Cyber FastTrack track today. Registration continues through April 5, when play begins. More information can be found at www.cyber-fasttrack.org.

Call for participants: 2019 Spring Farm Tour

If you run a farm-related business in Loudoun County, you can apply to participate in the 2019 Spring Farm Tour, which will be held May 18-19. The Spring Farm Tour is a free, self-guided tour for people of all ages. There is no

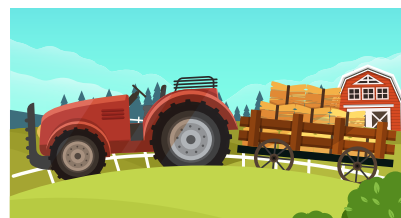
cost to participate as a tour site, and Loudoun Economic Development will promote all tour sites online and in a widely-distributed printed brochure. The deadline to apply is March 15, and the application is online at biz.loudoun.gov/FarmTourApp.

“It’s so important to keep providing opportunities for the community to interact with our Loudoun Farms.

We’re so lucky to have a great group of talented farmers, and they need and deserve our support,” said Buddy Rizer, Executive Director of Economic Development. “Each time customers buy “Loudoun Made, Loudoun Grown” products, they’re not only getting delicious food, they are also supporting local farmers, the local economy and local families.”

All businesses participating as a Spring Farm Tour site are asked to offer an educational component to visitors, such as:

- A short tour that informs visitors about your animals or crops;
- Demonstrations, such as animal



shearing or other animal care;

- Informational posters about your farm, products, or methods;
- Farm-related activities such as scavenger hunts or seed plantings;
- A short presentation about what you do, why you do it and why it’s important.

Acting Loudoun Agricultural Business Development Officer Vanessa Wagner explained, “We promote the farm tours as an invitation to learn more about the important role that agriculture plays in both the culture and economy of Loudoun County. The Farm Tour is an excellent opportunity for our residents and visitors to learn about local food while building relationships with the farmers and small businesses in our rural economy.”

Apply to be a 2019 Spring Farm Tour site by close-of-business on Friday, March 15: biz.loudoun.gov/FarmTourApp.

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Loudoun County Supervisor Geary Higgins announces bid for State Senate Seat

Loudoun County Supervisor Geary Higgins has announced his candidacy for Virginia's 13th Senate Seat, being vacated by Sen. **GOVERNMENT** Dick Black.

"Almost every important issue facing residents in Loudoun and Prince William Counties deals with quality of life – high quality schools, less traffic, low crime, low taxes, and protection of our liberties," said Higgins. "As an eight-year Supervisor, Chair of the Transportation and Land Use Committee, and previous Co-Chair of the Joint School Board – Board of Supervisors Committee, I have the experience and track record of making government work for our residents, not against them. I am running to take my experience and leadership to Richmond on behalf of the residents in Loudoun and Prince William Counties."



The retiring Senator Black has given his support to Higgins. "I give Geary Higgins my strongest endorsement for the 13th Senate District. Geary Higgins has demonstrated his commitment to defending the unborn and protecting the Second Amendment. He is a conservative statesman who will lead the Republicans to victory in November," said Black.

Former Prince William Delegate Bob Marshall noted, "Geary Higgins has the governmental experience as a Supervisor and the private experience in resolving disputes for

business organizations to prudently serve the citizens of the 13th Senate District. Geary is clear and candid. He knows that rights come from our Creator, and the first of these is the right to life for the innocent, from conception to natural death."

"I know Geary personally and professionally. You will not find a better public servant than Geary Higgins," said Randy Minchew, former House Delegate of the 10th District. "He is fair, gets results, and has a great amount of integrity. His love and passion for history has been a gift to Loudoun, given his support of the Loudoun Museum, Balls Bluff Battlefield, Waterford Foundation, and Loudoun County's new State Park."

Said Loudoun County Treasurer Roger Zurn, "I have seen and worked with Geary for many years. He has always looked out for the taxpayer and the County's fiscal health. I know he will do the same in Richmond."

"Our budget process is one of the most important issues we deal with on the Board," according to Higgins. "I am proud to say, that since my election in 2011, I have been able to work with my Republican colleagues to reduce the [property] tax rate on residents by \$0.20. Just last year our Board lowered the tax rate by four cents, and was still able to increase school funding by 6.6 percent. I am anxious to take this experience to Richmond on behalf of Loudoun and Prince William residents."



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TUSCARORA MILL

Space, style, and spectacular views

BY ANDREA GAINES

The home at 19821 Greggsville Road is just beautiful. Beautiful, and light-filled and offering the kind of personal space, privacy, and functionality that you'd find in the most sought after old estates in Loudoun County. Except this property was built in 1998 ... and has a separate 1-bedroom, 1-bath apartment on the main floor accessible to the main house – built for in-laws that lived with the family for many years.

The home's kitchen has been recently remodeled, and the 7 bedroom, 6.5 bath home has other really spectacular upgrades throughout.

Starting in the kitchen, special touches include reclaimed wood from a local winery, warm terracotta tile floors, a 64-bottle wine refrigerator, GE Monogram appliances, a microwave drawer, glass shelves, white cabinets, pretty ambrosia granite countertops, and under-cabinet lighting.

REAL ESTATE

There is also upgraded lighting throughout, making the interior just as welcoming at night as it is during the day.

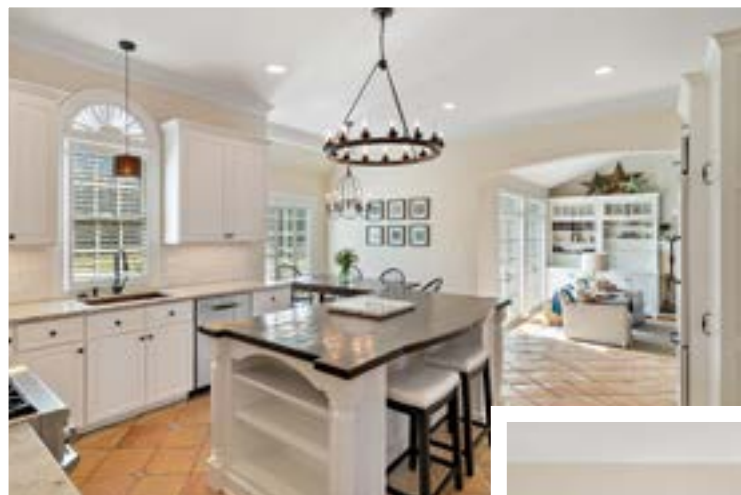
The family room has built in bookcases. The master suite has a custom walk-in closet with loads of special features, including a door to a private home office space. More bedrooms are on the third floor, and bathrooms too, of course.

Generous ceiling heights – 10 feet on the main level and 9 feet on the upper level – add to the home's open and welcoming feel. And, fireplaces? Yes ... of course! And, laundry areas? Yes ... two. And, a fully finished basement. Nice!

Western Loudoun's elegant country landscape is a feast for the eyes from every window, every deck-space, every patio.

A large circular driveway welcomes your family and guests. French doors lead to large decks. And, beyond that, beautifully curved and landscaped brick and stone patios await your own personal entertaining style, and a "sunset patio" awaits your dreams. There is also a 3-car, suburban-sized garage.

Space, style, and spectacular views. That says it all.



**19821 Greggsville Road
Purcellville**
MLS: Will be active Feb. 28, 2019
Year built: 1998
Beds/Baths: 7 bedrooms, 6.5 baths
Features: Private 1-bedroom, 1-bath apartment and 2 private offices
Total Acreage: 7.87 acres
List Price: \$895,000
Agent: Linda Culbert, Associate Broker,
Long & Foster Real Estate, 703-431-1724
Website: www.LindaCulbert.com
Email: Linda.Culbert@Longandfoster.com



Newest proposed County budget is \$3.2 billion

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors was recently presented with a proposed FY2020 budget. The budget includes \$3.2 billion in appropriations for the County government and Loudoun County Public

GOVERNMENT

Schools. The budget begins July 1, 2019 and is based on an equalized tax rate of \$1.045 – 4 cents lower than the current tax rate of \$1.085.

Spending categories break down as follows:

- School expenditures take up the

majority of the County budget – 57 cents for every dollar spent.

- The next highest spending category is debt service, which consumes 13 cents of every dollar – 9 cents



for LCPS debt, and 4 cents for County debt.

- Public Safety and Judicial Administration account for 9 cents out of every dollar and Capital Improvements, 9 cents. In the Capital Improvements category, 2 cents go to school capital costs and 5 cents to County capital costs.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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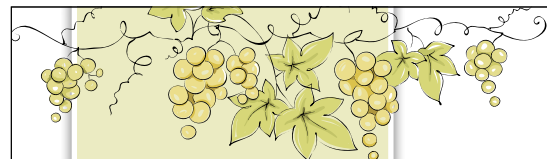


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SMALL BUSINESS GRAPEVINE

Shoes Cup & Cork
LEESBURG

Springdale Village Inn
LINCOLN

The British Pantry
ALDIE

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

THEME FOR APRIL

“A Breath of Fresh Air”

THEME FOR MAY

“Flowers, Flowers and More Flowers”

THEME FOR JUNE

“Hello for Summer”

BY ANDREA GAINES

Since launching this column in November 2017, we have featured nearly 50 fun, enchanting, delicious, and captivating small businesses in Loudoun County.

This month’s Small Business Grapevine theme – I’ve Got a Secret – shows there are still many more to be revealed and celebrated, including ones even locals might not know about.

Hope you enjoy!

The “sole” of Leesburg lives on

As the story goes, in the early 1920s, an Italian shoemaker named Vincenzo Ranieri set up shop in Leesburg with a shoe repair and hat cleaning business. Hmm, I did not know hats needed to be cleaned.

The iconic neon “shoes” sign he used to mark his place in the world still lights up historic King Street and the beautiful building that is now home to a cool little place called Shoes Cup & Cork.

You can’t get your shoes repaired here anymore, but you can enjoy a

I’ve got a secret

great meal – breakfast, lunch and/or dinner – in one of three settings: the casual cafe up front, the Secret Garden out back, or a 1920s-themed Poker Room upstairs. All recipes are made from scratch, with the kitchen focusing on sustainable and local products, and featuring Virginia beer and wines. You can find live music here, too. Who knew all this could be found behind a simple neon “shoes” sign?

Shoes Cup & Cork is located at 17 North King Street on Leesburg – 703 771-7463, www.shoescupandcork.com.

Welcome ... honk, honk

Walking up to the Springdale Village Inn in the historic village of Lincoln, you just might be greeted by some wayward ducks, and some very persistent honking. They may be trying to remind you that regardless of why you are here, don’t leave before you ask about the fresh duck eggs and organic ground beef the owner might have for sale at the moment.

The inn, of course, has beautiful

guest rooms, with intriguing names such as the Cashmere Room, the Twin Log Room, and the Green Room. But, it is also emerging as one of the area’s most charming special events centers – perfect for retreats, weddings, and the like. The beautifully-simple landscape of the place features a lovely brook, old stone walls, signature gardens planted with old-time flower varieties, and a wooded trail. And, a farm-to-table breakfast comes with every reservation.

As Springdale’s website notes, this majestic place was built by Samuel M. Janney, one of the area’s most celebrated historical figures. You can still feel his spirit here. Perhaps those ducks are calling out to him, too.

Springdale Village Inn is located at 18348 Lincoln Road in Purcellville – 540 751-8686, www.springdalevillageinn.com.

High tea for all

Right on Rt. 50, a little bit east of Gilbert’s Corner is a really charming

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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Hemp, Hops, and Horses – Plans for Purcellville’s Aberdeen property taking shape

BY ANDREA GAINES

Purcellville’s plans for the 189-acre Town asset known as the Aberdeen property, are taking shape. Recent discussions by the Town Council, Mayor Kwasi Fraser, and others point towards a multi-user, public/private partnership approach, providing space for the production of local agricultural products, family and visitor recreational opportunities, historic preservation and education, and, now, equestrian uses, including riding rings, small competitions and trails.

Said Councilmember Nedim Ogelman, Council liaison to the Purcellville Economic Development Advisory Committee, “We know from our Comprehensive Plan review input that the public wants parks – and open space – and to preserve Purcellville’s small town feel within the rural agricultural setting of Western Loudoun County. The Aberdeen property represents great potential to do this, while contributing to Purcellville’s attraction as a destination. On EDAC we have discussed holding a charrette so that the people of Purcellville can help inform us on how we can best use the Aberdeen property to fulfill their wishes for more parks and open space; to realize the town’s economic needs; and to help preserve Western Loudoun’s rural agricultural heritage.”

Early Aberdeen discussions had focused on partnering with local farmers to devote part of the 189

acres to hops farming, and the possibility of growing industrial hemp on the land.

Then, the Mayor, the Purcellville Town Council – led by Ogelman – and EDAC picked up on an idea from then Parks and Recreation Committee member from Loudoun Valley High School Mackenzie Forno to look into equestrian uses on the Aberdeen property. EDAC, during its February meeting spoke with equestrian course designer Tremaine Cooper.

Cooper, from Bluemont, is well-known locally, regionally, nationally, and internationally. He has worked extensively in Virginia and elsewhere, designing courses for many prominent events including the Millbrook Horse Trials in New York, Morven Park in Leesburg, Southern Pines in North Carolina, the Puhinui Horse Trials in New Zealand, and Poplar Place in Georgia.

Although possible equestrian uses for the Aberdeen property are in the early planning stages, Cooper sees great possibilities for the site.

He likes the idea of a “multi-use place,” that could serve families, horseback riders, equestrian eventers and organizations, mountain bikers, even casual visitors and users looking for a nice open space to enjoy a picnic lunch, a walk, or a contemplative cup of coffee.

It’s a real plus, noted Cooper, that the Aberdeen property is not far from the center of town. It’s northwest of Purcellville on Short Hill Road.

He sees the potential for a riding ring or two – appropriate for smaller horse-related competitions. The

historic Aberdeen homestead might be used as a welcoming spot. The land also lends itself to the possibilities of an outdoor picnic area, and/or a camping area.

On the equestrian side, the property could also be used for teaching and clinics.

In an interview with the Blue Ridge Leader, Cooper noted that while Aberdeen is a fairly small property, it compares in concept to larger areas in Maryland and elsewhere that have been preserved as multi-use sites – resources for the general public, as well as people and organizations with particular interests, such as mountain biking or equestrian, and even local schools.

Cooper also noted that the success of sites such as Purcellville’s Surefire Farm – a private equestrian events facility on 50 acres with an adjacent 300 acres in conservation easement – shows Aberdeen’s potential.

Ashburn Seniors and children participate in Read Across America Day

In celebration of Read Across America Day, residents at Waltonwood Ashburn joined youngsters from the Compass School in Ashburn March 1 to read some of Dr. Seuss’s classics such as “The Cat in the Hat,” “Green Eggs and Ham,” and “One Fish, Two Fish, Red Fish, Blue Fish.” Sponsored by the National Education Association, Read Across America Day encourages children to celebrate reading on Dr. Seuss’s birthday. During this intergenerational activity,

COMMUNITY



“Help me keep my hat on my head,” said a Waltonwood resident.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

ZONING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

it into MC [mixed use commercial].”

In response to Stein, Christine Gleckner, land use planner with Walsh Colucci Lubeley and Walsh P.C. who is representing Purcellville Gateway said, “... And your view of promises, a concept plan gets approved, and any property owner can come back and change their proffers and concept plan at any time ... Those commitments can be changed ... there is nothing permanent ... zoning can change, it’s a commitment in place until it gets changed, by either the property owner with Town approval, or by the

Town itself.”

Stein, answering back, said, “My point in mentioning that is that we at our last meeting – we had a lot of community members here; and for them this was another change that was being foisted upon them. And, those are my words not theirs. They expected an office and they got a fast food restaurant, right?”

Gleckner responded, “Things change.” To that Stein replied, “That was one of their concerns, it changed and now we have another change. We need to be mindful of what the community wants as well.”

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‘On the market’ with Sam and Ray Rees

(As satisfying as coffee with cats)

BY ANDREA GAINES

Sam and Ray Rees have been in the real estate business since college, with much of that time devoted exclusively to Loudoun County. When you meet these two, though, it’s not just their experience that impresses, it is their youthful exuberance. Each day presents them and their clients with a clean slate – the chance to find the perfect buyer, the chance to find the perfect home, the chance to find the perfect property. We interviewed Sam and Ray, who met ten years into Sam’s career, to find out what makes this real estate couple tick.

COMMUNITY

Drop in and drop off

One clue to what’s at the heart of Sam and Ray’s approach is that their real estate office is a drop-off point for the Loudoun Pet Pantry. The pet pantry helps keep the pets of needy families in their loving homes, and well fed. And, the office itself is a converted 1900s residence with leather chairs, dog bowls, and chocolate!

Sam and Ray are very community-minded. Success for one means success for all. So, we asked Sam and Ray, what do you most like about the real estate business, and in particular, the real estate business in Loudoun County? Said Sam, “Real Estate has been very good to us. “I would say that the best part about it, early on, was meeting my husband Ray.

“But,” she continued, “What I also love is that while there is the left brain part of the business that you need to

be on top of – interest rates, what comparable properties sell for, days on market, appraisals, and assessments – there is the equally important right brain side of the business – communication with your clients and other agents, and creative marketing (so important!), and persistence and consistency in maintaining a positive attitude. If you can work both sides of your brain, real estate is not just a financially rewarding career, but a way to have a positive impact on your clients’ lives. It is quite gratifying, and downright humbling!”

Selling in Loudoun County

As for the benefits of running a real estate business in Loudoun County, Sam and Ray had an equally compelling answer. “The variety on the listing side – a typical day for us – will range from working in the morning on a historic property’s MLS write up, to reviewing well records for a horse property in the afternoon, to reviewing homeowner documents for one of our outstanding subdivisions. “When we are out in the field with our buyers, we can be selling a rooftop townhome in Leesburg, and then hours later helping a client find that perfect piece of land. No ground hog day snoozing ... ever!”

So, we asked, what is the most important attribute of a selling home in Loudoun?

“It’s hard to use the ‘Location Location Location’ adage when you list homes in Loudoun County,” said Sam, “That is a foregone conclusion.

“The other two drivers are price and condition. Pricing



L to R: Sam and Ray Rees with Gumbo from Briggs Animal Adoption Center, West Virginia and their client Charlene Lane.

is Ray’s forte and he loves analyzing the comparable properties to find the ‘right’ list price. My passion is staging ... and in today’s marketplace you must understand how mandatory great staging is. Staging affects the sale price and days on market – statistics heavily touted on the internet. The public thinks that staging is just about paint color and furniture placement. But, great staging is much more subtle and simple: Encouraging the buyer to move through your home like a breeze ... and imagine themselves as already living there. It’s a combination of so many things that sparks that magic moment. And, if you know how to do it, you get great results in a short amount of time.”

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »



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County announces upcoming Comp Plan 'milestones,' urges public to participate in 'official process'

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors is urging citizens to be aware of what it describes as "upcoming milestones", as the body prepares to adopt its Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan. The Board also cautions citizens that if they want their voices to be heard, they need to go through official channels.

Citizen interest in the County's Comp Plan revisions has exploded in recent months as the Planning Commission and others pressure the Board to agree to major increases in residential densities, changes to the Transition Policy Area, and more land for data centers. As the level of citizen interest has risen, so has the Board's efforts to rein in the process.

In a Feb. 12 electronic alert, County officials made clear that while "A number of community organizations are reaching out to the public to share their ideas and encourage participation in the community-wide process ... meetings that are organized by non-County organizations are not part of the County's official process for revising the comprehensive plan."

The "Loudoun County Government," continued the electronic alert, "... encourages the public to participate in the official process for sharing input directly with the policymakers and elected officials who are shaping and ultimately will adopt the plan. To ensure your input is received ... you must provide input directly to the Board by email, by telephone, or in person ..."

One of the kind of "non-County" meetings the County may have been referring to took place on Feb. 19 at

Purcellville's Carver Center. Hosted by the Towns of Purcellville and Hamilton, and organized by the Piedmont Environmental Council, the meeting was well attended.

The Planning Commission's most recent work and recommendations are posted at <https://www.loudoun.gov/4957/Loudoun-2040-Comprehensive-Plan>. Upcoming County public meetings include:

- **March 21:** The Planning Commission will present the Board with a draft Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan (agenda and documents on the County website).
- **April, May, June:** Starting April 3, the BOS will hold a series of work sessions to review the plan. Work session dates and times can be found on the County's Master Calendar.
- **On April 24 and April 27,** the Board will hear public comment on the Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan. April 24, at 6 p.m., April 27, at 9 a.m.
- **July:** The Board of Supervisors is scheduled to adopt the Loudoun 2040 Comprehensive Plan early the month.

Meetings of the Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors are held at the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street, SE, in Leesburg. Email the Board at bos@loudoun.gov, call the BOS comment line at 703 777-0115 and/or email the Planning Commission at loudounpc@loudoun.gov.

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COLT to focus on economic development, transportation at March meeting

BY VALERIE CURY

COLT – the Coalition of Loudoun Towns – will focus on economic development, transportation, and all things important to Loudoun’s towns, at its March 13 monthly meeting, following the Chamber of Commerce’s State of Loudoun’s Towns event.

Resurrected in 2015 by Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser and the former Mayor of Lovettsville Bob Zoldos after being dormant for some time, COLT is comprised of Loudoun’s seven incorporated towns – Hamilton, Hillsboro, Leesburg, Lovettsville, Middleburg, Purcellville, and Round Hill – which are represented in the group by their mayors.

At its Feb. 15 meeting, COLT discussed drafting a letter to the Board of Supervisors and the County’s Planning Commission, rejecting the proposal to add tens of thousands of new homes and millions of square feet of commercial space to the Transition Policy Area – which is supposed to be a buffer between the east’s Suburban Policy Area and the west’s Rural Policy Area.

The meeting started off with Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce’s vice president of membership and government affairs, Grafton deButts talking about



L to R: Grafton deButts of the Chamber of Commerce, Mayors Bridge Littleton of Middleburg, Nate Fontaine Lovettsville, Dave Simpson of Hamilton, Roger Vance of Hillsboro, Kwasi Fraser of Purcellville, Scott Ramsey of Round Hill, and Kelly Burk of Leesburg.

economic development and how the Loudoun towns contribute so much to the community.

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser said that in 2018 the Town of Purcellville welcomed 71 new businesses. He also noted that economic development is not residential rooftops. Middleburg Mayor Bridge Littleton said that businesses in western Loudoun are creative and dynamic.

The towns’ mayors have spoken before the Board of Supervisors in support of preserving the Transition Policy Area. One of their primary focuses remains staying involved with the County’s Envision Loudoun process. COLT will work to ensure their voices are heard on issues affecting their towns and all of the County.

Following the COLT meeting, when asked what other major issues he would like to see COLT address, Mayor Fraser indicated that there will be a growing need to prevent degradation of water quality in the County’s watersheds. Fraser stated that in 2009, the County conducted an assessment of streams within all the County’s watersheds, and found that 75 percent of those streams were impaired. With the massive data center developments, many wetlands and streams have been destroyed. More data centers will destroy more wetlands and streams. In fact, there is a scarcity in the wetland, stream, and nutrient credits marketplace due to development. The few remaining vibrant wetland and stream buffers are in the Rural Policy Area and Transition Policy Area. It will be an interesting study to determine how many wetland, stream, and nutrient investments are being made by the data center and construction industry.

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Treasures Coming to Purcellville

BY DIANE HELENTJARIS

Swag! Plunder! Loot! – however you express it, treasure can be found in Purcellville. Very Special Arts Loudoun County is presenting the musical *Treasures: The Musical Adventures of Tom Sawyer* at the Franklin Parks Art Center.

COMMUNITY

This original adaptation features Matthew Murray as Tom Sawyer, Eliza Schoppert as Becky Thatcher and Grayson Carnall as Huckleberry Finn. Amanda Barr is Director and Sophia Tenaglia, Musical Director. The cast, in keeping with VSA's mission to be "the county's organization on arts and disability," includes children and adults of all abilities.

Dolly Stevens and Tom Sweitzer adapted Mark Twain's quintessential tale of childhood shenanigans to the stage. Stevens currently directs Blue Ridge Middle School theatre productions and Sweitzer is the Executive Director of "A Place to Be." He believes "VSA is one wonderful organization." The nonprofit has helped him "realize the power and the authentic capability people with challenges possess." Stevens finds participation in the performing arts promotes self-esteem, self-confidence, feelings of self-worth - "all the selfs." It also "allows people of all abilities to connect on a deeper level," said Stevens. There is science to back up these thoughts; multiple research studies have found theatre work enhances verbal and social skills. For instance, autistic children increased the time they spent in group play after being part of a theater program. Performing can offer fun in a safe and structured setting.

VSA Loudoun County traces its origins to the late

President Kennedy's family. His sister, Rosemary, was disabled. In 1968 his sister Eunice Kennedy Shriver founded the Special Olympics. His sister Jean Kennedy Smith – realizing the scarcity of opportunities for children with differing abilities to participate in the arts - founded the non-profit national VSA Arts six years later.

VSA Loudoun County activities include an annual spring musical, summer social activities and an autumn skills-building "boot camp." A low participation fee is charged with scholarships available. Children and adults at all ability levels are welcome. If a child or adult wants to perform, VSA "will make it work" according to Jody Rodgers, Co-president of the organization. She proudly recalls the use of voice-over for a nonverbal actor playing Tarzan. VSA built an antique car prop around another young actor's wheelchair to coordinate with his role as town mayor. Rodgers believes "watching VSA magic come to life ... is life-changing for the audience." She also emphasizes the role of professionals to create the costumes, sets and otherwise make performances possible. Loudoun County Government provides a part-time adaptive recreation specialist, Ben Curtis, to help with activities. Family members are encouraged to participate and readily do so, acting and singing alongside their brothers, sisters and children as well as volunteering. Each *Treasures* performance will require approximately seventy individuals – from Tom Sawyer to the ticket takers.

VSA Loudoun County also remembers the needs of the audience. The organization created and donated



L to R: Esme Danielson and her sister Amelia Danielson get ready for *Treasures*. Photo: Meredith Bean McMath.

Sensitivity Bags to Franklin Park to help audience members with sensory needs enjoy shows at the Arts Center. Each bag includes a weighted blanket, ear muffs, fidgets and other items.

This year, VSA plans to sell swag bags of chocolates as a fundraiser at each *Treasures* performance. One lucky chocolate-lover's bag will hold the key to that night's treasure chest, filled with plunder. Treasure!

There are many wonderful things that only happen once a year. Don't miss this one. Shows: March 22, 23 & 24 and March 29, 30 & 31, 7 p.m. Fridays and Saturdays, 3p.m. Sundays at Franklin Park Arts Center, 36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132, 540 338-7973. Group rates are available for groups of ten or more. Information and tickets are available at www.vsaloudoun.org.

Diane Helentjaris is a non-fiction writer based in Leesburg. www.DianeHelentjaris.com

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12th Annual Gingersnap Girls Foundation Silent Auction

On Saturday, March 30, from 1-5 p.m., the Gingersnap Girls Foundation will hold its 12th Annual "New Day for the Horses and Ponypalooza" silent auction and benefit at Harmony Hall (Hamilton Safety Center), 39071 East Colonial Highway, Hamilton.

All proceeds from the silent auction will go toward the rescue and rehabilitation of abused, abandoned, sick, and slaughter-bound horses,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

COMMUNITY



This quilt is donated by Julie Henry with a shout out to Special Occasions Quilts and Julia Graves. Tickets are \$10 each and the winner will be drawn on March 30 at the 12th Annual Silent Auction Benefit. Tickets may be purchased via PayPal- info@gingersnapgirls.org.

VSA-Loudoun proudly presents

TREASURES: The Musical Adventures of Tom Sawyer

DaVinci Art Show - Hidden Treasures March 15 - April 14

March 22 - 31
 Fridays & Saturdays at 7 pm, Sundays at 3 pm
 Franklin Park Performing Arts Center
 36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville

TICKETS: VSAloudoun.org
 Online: \$15 Adults, \$10 Students & Seniors
 At the Door: \$20 / \$15

TREASURES: The Musical Adventures of Tom Sawyer is an original musical adaptation of the Mark Twain classic written by Dolly Stevens and Tom Sweitzer. Fun for all ages, the show is presented by the County organization dedicated to providing creative opportunities to people of all abilities through the performing and visual arts!



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The heart of any home is the kitchen.

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The Project

A local homeowner in Ashburn contacted Abbey Design Center with a problem. Their kitchen was badly outdated, lacked storage space and needed upgrading. It was the original kitchen from their house's construction and they needed a completely new look, on a budget. They also wanted to keep the existing hardwood flooring intact.

The experienced Abbey Design Team knew exactly how to handle this project. They got to work designing a space that would be beautiful while fully functional. They knew they needed to upgrade the cabinets, countertops and replace the existing appliances with state of the art stainless steel. However, that was just the beginning. They also redesigned this kitchen, adding more storage and giving

it an open inviting feeling, all within the same footprint while maintaining the existing hardwood flooring.

They replaced the builder grade cherry cabinetry with bright, white, modern Shaker-style cabinets. They added shiny pulls to both drawers and cabinets that accented the modern look. The original countertops were replaced with white quartz to complement the clean modern feel and provide durable, maintenance-free surfaces. They also added a designer's touch, with a shiny glass backsplash and under counter lighting to show it off and illuminate prepping areas.

The importance of a professional design team

Abbey Design Center's team took a long hard look at the existing layout of the kitchen. They wanted to maximize storage and counter space for the homeowners while keeping the project within budget. They also knew that on the customer's wish list was a mini-bar area, and they needed to add this, and still remain on budget and on time. To improve the kitchen workflow, the oven/microwave unit was relocated next to the refrigerator. This opened up more valuable counter space than the original layout. The old black refrigerator was replaced with a double-door, counter-depth stainless refrigerator. This along with the added counter space made the new kitchen even more user-friendly for cooking and entertaining.

It is important not to underestimate having a professional kitchen designer in charge of your remodeling project. Abbey's designers are experts at maximizing space and storage. They are also familiar with the best lighting options for your new kitchen. The proper design elements are crucial to getting the outcome that you desire for your project.

Success Story!

Abbey's team was successful at keeping the project within budget while adding every item on the homeowner's wish list including a mini-bar area for entertaining guests. This new area provided additional counter space and cabinets with roll-out shelves for storage. They even added a wine fridge to complete the look. Their new kitchen was now the showcase of their home.

The final result was a kitchen the homeowners loved. It was bright and open, with clean finishes throughout, and has an improved workflow that makes this new kitchen a daily pleasure to use. Abbey's experienced design team exceeded their customer's expectations and would love to do the same for any remodeling project in your home!

Renovations can make your house feel more like home, and Abbey Design Center knows how to create your dream remodel from kitchens to bathrooms, basements, and flooring. Abbey has been going beyond expectations for their customers for 30 years and counting. One Company, One Contract, One Exceptional Result.



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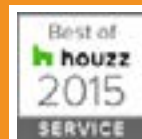
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— Franklin Park, March 2019 —

Get your Irish on

This month, Franklin Park Arts Center is the place to go for ongoing performances of the Last Ham Standing Comedy Improv ... the Gallery Coffeehouse ... and the Planetarium Show.

For the month of March, all of these great offerings will be featured along with the fantastic music of the Ocean Celtic Quartet. This performance – on Saturday,

March 16 – is sponsored by the Friends of Franklin Park as part of their Gold Series. Performers include Jennifer Cutting on accordions and keyboard, Lisa Moscatiello – vocals, whistles and guitar, Andrew Dodds on fiddle, and Steve Winick – vocals and percussion.

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



Download your Season 11 Franklin Park Arts Center Playbill on the County website: www.loudoun.gov/DocumentCenter/View/145129/Franklin-Park-Season-11-Playbill-PDF.

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PURCELLVILLE MAYOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Purcellville's wastewater treatment facility and how sharing utilities could benefit both communities.

Blue Ridge Leader: Why are Purcellville residents and businesses paying some of the highest water and sewer rates in Northern Virginia?

Kwasi Fraser: Our increasing water and sewer rates are results of the over \$40 million upgrade and expansion of our Wastewater treatment plant ten years ago. Some will say the plant was expanded to meet state standards, but I firmly believe the majority of that expansion was done in anticipation of growth. It was all based on potential new tap fees from high density development being used to service the debt.

BRL: How much growth was anticipated?

KF: I can say that qualitatively significant growth was anticipated given the current wastewater treatment plant's processing capacity of 1.5 million gallons per day, and on average it only processes 600,000 gallons per day, equating to 40 percent capacity utilization.

BRL: Does this mean that the wastewater treatment plant can process up to 60 percent more than it does today?

KF: On average, when a plant approaches 80 percent utilization, an upgrade would be necessitated. Our plant is 40 percent away from that and can process another 500,000 gallons per day without needing an upgrade.

BRL: We have heard that the oversized capacity of the plant has prevented sewage from flowing into

the streets of Purcellville during major rainfall. Is this true?

KF: Two major threats to any wastewater treatment plant are Infiltration and Inflow (I/I). Infiltration results from groundwater entering sanitary sewers through defective pipe joints and broken pipes. Inflow results from water entering sanitary sewers from inappropriate connections to a sewer line like sump pumps, roof drains, cellar drains, storm drains, and yard drains in which urban features prevent surface runoff. I/I causes dilution in a sewage plant which decreases the efficiency of treatment and may cause sewage volumes to exceed design capacity. Building a plant with excess capacity, however, is not a prudent solution for addressing I/I. The best solution is to invest in upgrading the sewer pipes and removing inappropriate connections. We have a program in place to address this.



BRL: With \$40 million of wastewater treatment debt passed down to you from the previous administration, what's your solution for addressing it?

KF: Knowing that residential growth does not pay for itself, we are pursuing alternative solution models to replace the tap fee model that has been employed to pay the debt. Our solutions are focused on monetizing the \$130 million in assets owned by the town in such a way that will not compromise Purcellville's character and charm. One such asset is the \$40 million wastewater treatment plant that is environmentally sound and is one of the best performing in Loudoun County. Our plant uses over \$150,000 in electricity per year. We'll look at ways to reduce that cost via renewable energy. In addition, by host-

ing two or more cellular carriers at our wastewater treatment property, we can obtain annual revenue in excess of \$125,000 per year. Other solutions I am championing are partnerships with state, local, federal, and private entities to convert our 189 acres Aberdeen property into a center of economic excellence in Hemp, Hops, and Horses.

BRL: What about increasing Capital Improvement project costs?

KF: Our nation recently passed an \$867 billion farm bill, and the CEO of Wells Fargo announced at the Conference of Mayors that his company will invest \$200 Billion in renewable energy projects over the next ten years. Further, as a member of the National League of Cities, I am joined by mayors from around the nation in lobbying to bring some of our precious tax dollars back to our communities such as:

- \$125 Billion to Modernize America's Water and Wastewater Systems
- \$12 Billion to protect America's cities from cyber security threats and natural disasters

BRL: What do you mean when you state that residential growth does not pay for itself?

KF: Studies show that for each tax dollar gained from a home, the municipality spends almost \$1.62 in services. So, essentially new high density residential users of our system comes at a cost to the community for infrastructure maintenance, upgrades, and replacement, for traffic congestion, for classroom growth, for public safety, for trash pickup, and for administrative support. Our citizens' voices from the last three elections and from input to our draft Comprehensive Plan clearly state a desire for Purcellville to retain its small town charm and character

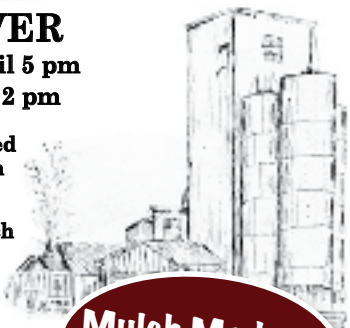
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Loudoun County Accepting Applications from Nonprofits for Property Tax Exemptions

Loudoun County Commissioner of the Revenue Robert S. Wertz Jr. is accepting applications from nonprofit organizations seeking an exemption from Loudoun County real and/or personal property taxes for the 2020 tax year. The deadline to apply for the exemption is April 1.

Most charitable nonprofit organizations are not automatically exempt from local property taxes in the Commonwealth, even those that may be exempt from federal income taxes. The filing of an application with the Commissioner of the Revenue is the necessary first step to obtain a local real estate or personal property tax exemption.

Completed applications should be returned to the Commissioner of the Revenue postmarked no later than Monday, April 1, for consideration this year. Any exemption, if granted, would be effective January 1, 2020.

Applications are available online at www.loudoun.gov/NonprofitTaxExemption.

Nonprofit organizations that have already received an exemption from Loudoun County property taxes need not file an application.

Organizations that are unsure of their status may contact the Exemptions and Deferrals Division of the Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue at 703 737-8557 or at trcor@loudoun.gov for further information.

Carver Center Events for March

Friday, Mar. 1, 11:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Carver's Got Talent! Featuring John Sanger on Piano.

Friday, Mar. 1, 12 p.m. to 2 p.m., Monthly Lunch and a Movie -- Finding Your Feet. Please call 571-258-3400 by noon Thursday to reserve a lunch.

Wednesday, Mar. 6, 11 a.m. to 12 p.m., White House Modern History of Entertainment Presentation. Former White House butler, Alan DeValerio, will give a behind-the-scenes look at all the preparations that go into the making of Presidential functions.



Monday, Mar. 25, 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m., Hearing Loss Presentation. Debbie Jones (NVRC) will present on the Technology Assistance Program, which helps deaf and hard-of-hearing residents get telephone and signaling equipment at a lower cost.

Tues., Mar. 12, 10:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m., Carver Center Advisory Board Meeting.

Friday, Mar. 15, 1 p.m. to 2:30 p.m., St. Patrick's Day Celebration. \$3.00. Registration deadline: Mon. Mar. 11.

Friday, Mar. 22, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m., Carver Lunch Bunch -- I.J. Cannes, Winchester. \$4.00 transportation fee.

Friday, Mar. 29, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., AARP Driver Safety Class. Check payment (\$15 AARP Members/\$20 Non-Members) will be collected on arrival by instructor. Please make checks out to AARP.

GINGERSNAP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

ponies, and donkeys. Items to be auctioned include: artwork, jewelry, and photographs by local artists; gift cards from area restaurants; gift baskets from area merchants; theatre and museum tickets, Potomac River cruises; winery tours; hotel/B&B packages; and much more. Food, drinks, and fun will also be at hand. Tickets are \$5 at the door; children 10 and under are free.

The Gingersnap Girls Equine Education and Rescue Foundation, a 501(c)(3) organization, was established

in 2004 in honor and memory of three mares--Calypso, Flag, and Chrissy-- who were rescued from the slaughter truck and who had an abiding love for gingersnap cookies. The mission of the Gingersnap Girls Foundation is: to raise funds for rescuing, sheltering, healing, and adopting out of horses that may otherwise have been slaughtered or lived lives of abuse; to raise awareness by educating the public to the plight of slaughter bound horses; and to strive to end all horse slaughter.

For more information email Info@gingersnapgirls.org or call 540 338-5218.

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PURCELLVILLE MAYOR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

and not to acquiesce to calls for high density residential growth.

BRL: Why would you recommend connecting Purcellville's wastewater treatment to other towns in need?

KF: It's about being good stewards of the environment, and for our rate payers to be compensated fairly for it. Purcellville's Basham Simms Wastewater treatment plant is a state of the art facility that uses a membrane technology which results in the lowest nitrogen and phosphorus discharge levels in the Chesapeake Bay region. I would venture to say that the wastewater from the plant is cleaner than the creek it is flowing into which is the North Fork Goose Creek, a tributary of the Potomac River and the Chesapeake Bay. With phosphorus at 0.28 or less parts per

million and nitrogen at 3 or less parts per million, Purcellville's wastewater treatment plant's output is better than the strict state standards. Meanwhile, our neighboring towns currently lack the resources to upgrade their wastewater treatment to meet state standards. One of our neighboring towns has a wastewater treatment plant that was built in the 1940s and upgraded in the 1980s. Further upgrades will cost that town close to \$10 million.

BRL: Does the wastewater treatment plant have enough capacity to extend treatment to neighboring towns in need?

KF: Yes. Purcellville's wastewater treatment plant currently has 60 percent excess capacity.

BRL: Where are you with this initiative?

KF: We are exploring ways to connect neighboring towns to our environmentally sound and efficient wastewater treatment plant without spurring increase in residential density.

BRL: Can this connection be made without spurring high density growth?

KF: I am being told there are two ways to accomplish this, and both ways need to be verified. The two ways are as follows:

1. Force main with a deed restricted easement along the right of way where the connection is made.
2. Cap the size of the main to not accommodate residential growth in excess of a pre-established limit.

BRL: Let's talk about development pressures. First, did you call developers rats in a council meeting?

KF: Look, I respect developers; they are vital to our economy. They should have social and economic contracts, however, with our community. Regarding a social contract, whatever developers propose to build should not compromise the current charm and character of Purcellville and Western Loudoun. Further, future development should take into consideration replacement and upkeep costs and be worthy of restoration forty years from now. Regarding an economic contract, every citizen should know that we have a significant advantage at the negotiating table since we possess established water and sewer. Without access to water and sewer, developers are limited by County and State regulations about what they can build. Hence, my statement that there are only two creatures that follow water and sewer: rats and developers.

READ ACROSS AMERICA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

residents of the senior living community and the children spent time together reading some of their favorite Dr. Seuss books. The senior living community also donated books to the school.

"Spending time with children is definitely a highlight for our residents," said Justin Roberts, executive director of Waltonwood Ashburn. "These intergenerational activities like Read Across America Day are so enriching and always bring so much joy to our residents



Children mesmerized by the Dr. Seuss story.

and the children. We are always looking for ways to give back to the local community, and are thankful for our partnership with The Compass School.

"Intergenerational activities provide many benefits to the lives of seniors, including improving their physical and mental health. The children also value the connection with the older generation and truly benefit from the relationships with the seniors. Celebrating Read Across America Day is just one of many intergenerational activities Waltonwood

Ashburn plans throughout the year," he said.

"It is very rewarding to see the seniors and children interact with one another during our visits to Waltonwood Ashburn," said Erin Price Warren, ambassador for the Compass School. "We are focused on creating an educational environment for our students that promotes curiosity and excitement; and events like Read Across America Day at Waltonwood Ashburn help us deliver on that mission."



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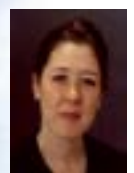
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LANDFILL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

trucks that enter, dump their waste, and exit, day-in and day-out – a process that has been going on intensively for over three years.

According to the Gable Farm site plan, the amount of material to be brought in is limited, as is the area where materials can be deposited, and how high the newly-graded surface can be. County regulations also state that the personal recreational field be “not open to the public or used for any commercial purposes.”

According to the Stop Work Order, Gable Farm is in violation of multiple land use and site plan provisions. It is

also being scrutinized by the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

The fill now onsite is more than 420,000 cubic yards – which is approximately twice as much as originally approved.

The surface of the Gable personal recreational field/landfill is in violation of the site plan as it appears that the dumping at the site has occurred outside the approved footprint. The height of the landfill is 10 ft. higher than originally

Aerial photos, video, and an explanation of the case can be seen at www.loudounrurallandfills.com

approved.

There are no manifests – records of contents and where they came from – available to the public.

The dumping of liquid waste has also been observed, and large holding ponds at one end of the landfill are now discharging liquid onto a neighboring property.

Commercial activities prohibited ... but

As the name implies, personal recreational fields are just that, private as opposed to commercial in nature.

In the case of Gable Farm, however, it appears that an entity called Skinner Enterprise, which runs the landfill, had shared with the County a “Materials for Sale” and “Charges for Materials” price list.

The list detailed the costs of raw materials being sold at the site – including screened topsoil, screened millings, and regular dirt, and also detailed charges for dumping. Although it appears that a wide variety of materials have been dumped at the site, the Charges for Materials schedule includes just two: chunked asphalt at \$100 per load, and “dirt,” at \$65 per load.

In an email exchange with Loudoun County Department of Planning and Zoning Assistant Compliance Program Manager Jacob Hambrick, Cattail representative Harris pressed the issue.

“As I understand it,” Harris said, “The County directed Mr. Skinner to shut down the activities referred to in the price list because they were considered to be commercial and therefore not permitted under the terms of the site plan. Is that correct?”

Hambrick responded, “A Notice of Violation was issued on June 30, 2017 for the commercial activity of selling millings and/or topsoil from the property. This notice was not appealed and subsequently a civil fine was issued for observed non-compliance with the notice.

“This fine was paid by the property owner,” continued Hambrick. “After [the County received] contact from the property owner concerning the notice of violation and the civil fine, the property owner stated that the selling of the millings and/or topsoil from the property would cease. He also stated that he was unaware that the contractor was doing this. After multiple follow up inspections by staff, it was deemed that the selling of the materials from the site had ceased. Therefore, the complaint was closed out in July of 2018.”

In the same email exchange, Harris, said “I assume that the items under ‘Charges for Material’ refer to the amounts charged for dumping materials (chunked asphalt, dirt) at the site. These would also seem to



Hamilton Station Road site, shut down since 2015.

The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality visited the Gable site on Feb. 22. Their inspection of the site was a “visual inspection of the surface and the side slopes of the fill material.” They did not “take any samples of the landfill materials or the surrounding water bodies.” DEQ “will not certify that the landfill does not contain hazardous materials.” Below are their comments:

“The fill material primarily contained of soil, bricks, asphalt, concrete, and rocks. A nominal amount of woody vegetation, silt fence fabric, and PVC was also observed. Staff did not observe any evidence of contamination such as an oily sheen or chemical odor. The material appears to be exempt under the Virginia Solid Waste Management Regulations (9VAC 20-81), as per:

“9VAC20-81-95.C.7.n - “Uncontaminated concrete and concrete products, asphalt pavement, brick, glass, soil, and rock placed in commerce for service as a substitute for conventional aggregate.” and 9VAC20-81-95.D.11 - “Using rocks, block, dirt, broken concrete, crushed glass, porcelain, and road pavement as clean fill.”

be commercial activities. Did the County also direct Mr. Skinner to stop charging for these activities? If not, can you explain why?”

Hambrick’s response: “As noted above, the commercial activities cited at the property were those materials being sold from the property not those materials entering the property to be disposed of. The County did not direct the property owner to stop charging for the acceptance of materials. The County was focused on the materials leaving the site for sale given that this was the complaint at that time. Additionally, the property owner had an approved County site plan to bring materials on site ... “

The county did not to elaborate on the issue of the applicant charging for dumping.

Another dump, just down the road, also under Stop Work Order

Since the Blue Ridge leader’s coverage of the issue last month, we have received numerous comments and inquiries about not just this site, but others as well, including a site on Hamilton Station Road that operated from July 2011 to January 2015.

At that 17.59-acre site, grading and dumping occurred during both day and evening hours – and sometimes throughout the night – with the only

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »



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LANDFILL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

recourse to neighbors being to call the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office. The rough grading permit had been given to an entity called "Hamilton Station Assembly Building" – without an approved site plan. In January 2015, a Stop Work Order was put on the property. The property has been left idle with steep drops, high mounds, and deep, water-filled pits, for four years.

Now what?

In December 2018, Gable Farm appealed its Stop Work Order. The Board of Zoning Appeals ruled, at the time, that the owner had not provided enough information upon which to make a determination.

In mid-February, the Gable Farm owner submitted a plan detailing how to remove 217,000 cubic yards of waste dumped at the site in excess of what was permitted by the original site plan.

As of press time, Gable Farm was

in the process of submitting a second revised plan.

The issue of how to fix or "cure" situations in which a large amount of unknown/ unauthorized landfill material has been brought onto a site is a tricky one.

Such kinds of mitigation activities – removing huge volumes of waste – are hazards in and of themselves.

Digging up and removing waste can release potential toxins into the air, and disturb soils and debris, subjecting the site to erosion and releasing sediment and pollutants into either groundwater and/ or nearby waterways.

Community groups say they will continue to monitor any new plans submitted by the owner of Gable Farm and press for fundamental changes to the way personal recreational fields are regulated and monitored by the County.

ON THE MARKET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Two for the price of one

We then asked Sam, under what circumstances do you and Ray work together on a sale? And, said Sam, "Ray and I work together on just about everything. We are the proverbial two for the price of one. But, it goes much deeper than that. While we are both long-time agents with literally hundreds of sales, we each have a unique perspective on what it takes to succeed for our clients in 2019. We are a bit Yin and Yang. We challenge each other's thinking – and, sometimes, as husband and wife, that is not easy! But we respect each other immensely, and know that at the end of the day, we need to be and do what is right for our client. Sometimes that is me telling Ray or Ray telling me, 'Hey, you may be right,' and letting go of your own ego."

Coffee with cats and repeat customers

On another issue, their own home, we asked Sam and Ray, what about the place makes it the perfect place for you? "Real estate is more a way of life than a career," Sam said. "We work long hours, more often than not, seven days a week – and those stretches can last a long time. So when I get home, it is more about recharging my batteries than one particular thing about our home. But ... I do love the way the sun spills into one of our run-in sheds in the morning. I sit there with my cat and drink coffee!"

So, we asked, what do you think is the key to getting repeat customers – people who come to you over and over. "We

approach our working with our clients as if they are on a trajectory that we can't quite see the end of. That means long after the sale, we are there for them when there is not a commission involved. Our past clients call us all the time – or drop by our downtown office with their dogs! They want to know what the latest craze in home improvements is, or should they buy an investment property, or just the old standby question – 'How is the market?' Sometimes they just need to talk out loud about their future real estate plans, concerns, and dreams.

"I'd say that our secret is ... we listen."

P.S. Sam Rees asked specifically that the Blue Ridge Leader "plug the dog and cat food, if you can!" ... and we are happy to oblige. As mentioned earlier, Sam and Ray's real estate office is a drop off point for the Loudoun Pet Pantry. The pantry's website, www.loudoun.gov/3020/Pet-Pantry, provides more details on how you can help. Donations to the Loudoun Pet Pantry can be made by check and mailed to: The Humane Society of Loudoun County, P.O. Box 777, Leesburg, VA 20178. If you or someone you know might be able to benefit from pet food donation services, contact Loudoun Hunger Relief at 703-777-5911.

On The Market with Sam & Ray Rees is a branch of Keller Williams Realty Ray Rees, Supervising Broker 107 East Main Street, Suite 1A, Purcellville, VA 20132 Sam Rees: Onthemarketwithsamrees@gmail.com, 703-408-4261 Ray Rees: Onthemarketwithrayrees@gmail.com, 703-470-0680.

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SMALL BUSINESS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

small business called The British Pantry.

Just as the name implies, all of those things that folks in the UK live for – including home-baked scones, fantastic clotted cream, and fruit preserves and tarts – can be purchased here, as well as authentically British items, such as porcelain cups and saucers, kitchen items, linens, and more.

You may want to make a reservation for a British Pantry tea service as you visit. Enjoy a beautiful selection of teas, along with finger sandwiches and home-baked goods--and get a little education on what to purchase on your way out to bring a little piece of Great Britain back home.

The British Pantry is located at 41153 John Mosby Highway (Rt. 50) in Aldie – 703 327-3215.

AMY AND DAN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

and is also to be increased by C.P.I. adjustments. Thus, if Mother gives a gift of \$115,000 to Daughter, Mother would use \$100,000 of her exemption that year. As with the estate tax exemption, the amount of the gift tax exemption is to revert to its level prior to the tax law changes at the end of 2015 unless the law is extended.

One note on gifts during lifetime: they carry the same basis to the donee which they had in the hands of the donor. This does not apply to gifts of cash, but should be a consideration with other gifts. For example, assume Father paid \$5 for a share of GE stock. If Father gives that to Junior at a time when the stock is selling for \$10 and Junior sells at that price, Junior has a capital gain of \$5 which he must report on his income tax return. (Note: there is no tax to Junior for receiving the gift.) However, if Junior inherits the stock from Father at his death, Junior takes a "stepped up" basis; that is, the value of the stock at the time of Father's death. In this way, significant capital gains can be avoided.

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BUDGET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

- General Government Administration accounts for 6 cents of every dollar, 4 cents go to Health and Welfare, 2 cents to Parks and Recreation, and 1 penny apiece for Community Development and a "Miscellaneous" category.

Three recent public hearings were held on the budget – two on Feb. 27 and one on March 2.

In making his department's presentation, Loudoun County Administrator Tim Hemstreet noted that one of

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

but it rapes the TPA. We see that as a horrible step towards opening the west to developers. The guy must be from the Planet Ork or somewhere," Robert opined.

"A Dork from Ork! I love it," Byne exclaimed. "Hey! Remember a year or so ago when one of the Supervisors asked Keirce what planet was he from? Must be Ork."

His wife always made him smile. Robert added to the tale, "Then Keirce showed up at a meeting on the 19th in Purcellville. I heard that he was better prepared but so was the audience. He was challenged vigorously, so I was told. Somehow I doubt he told his PC mates about that."

"True," Byne said. "What other common-sense ideas do you have?"

It didn't take long for Robert to hatch two more. "Take daylight

savings time. It happens on a Saturday night – Sunday morning. That leaves people just one day to adjust their body clocks before Monday. Instead, the change should be Friday night – Saturday morning. A day earlier and more time to get used to the change."

Byne grinned. It made sense.

Robert's second thought was a bit out of the ordinary. "Then here's one every adult should want: Zappers. See some cell phone zombie or somebody talking too loudly in public, you pick up your little gadget, and Zap! Disconnected."

Byne had the last word, "Let's disconnect, zap from here and find a restaurant. You buy and I'll chip in a few cents. Pun intended."

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

ALDIE FIRE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

sided with residents and historic preservation groups who opposed putting the new fire station there.

But, the larger issue is that the tens of thousands of new homes that the County has allowed to go forward in the Aldie fire and rescue service area, including the Route 50 corridor heading west towards Gilberts Corner – and parts of the Transition Policy Area – have caught up with Loudoun's Board of Supervisors.

Loudoun County can no longer afford to approve any major development, hoping to satisfy that development's need for public infrastructure, later, including the schools, fire stations, roads, commercial centers, etc. needed to service that development. It is a recipe for disaster for the quality of life of current residents – just as an 18,000 square foot fire station is

for the citizens of Aldie, and anyone who understands the historic significance of the place.

The Aldie fire station's service area has absorbed huge rates of growth in the last several years – up to and beyond 40 percent.

As the Blue Ridge Leader reported one year ago this month, "At least one person familiar with the tide of growth heading out on Rt. 50 west suggested it was time for the BOS to build the public infrastructure needed for new developments, including fire and rescue, into the plans for the new communities themselves, instead of plunking them down in a small village like Aldie."

Ironically, the Aldie station was originally planned for an area in a new community called Little River Farms, near the intersection of Rt. 50 and Rt. 15, Gilberts Corner. The County had paid \$1.2 million for land there in 2008, after looking at more than 20 possible parcels. But, that location was blocked by two neighborhood lawsuits, one claiming the station violated neighborhood covenants and another claiming conflicts with Loudoun's Comprehensive Plan.

That is the bind the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors finds itself in.

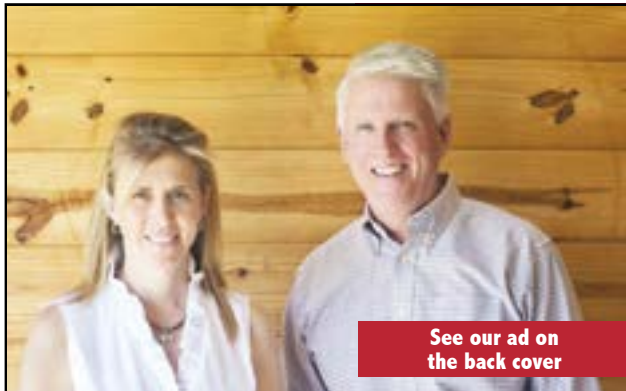
People love living here in Loudoun County – long-time residents and newcomers alike.

But, if we want to preserve the best of why people love living here, growth must "pay" for itself. The citizens of a place like Aldie should not be forced to absorb things like an 18,000 square foot fire station.

We have to put out the Aldie fire.

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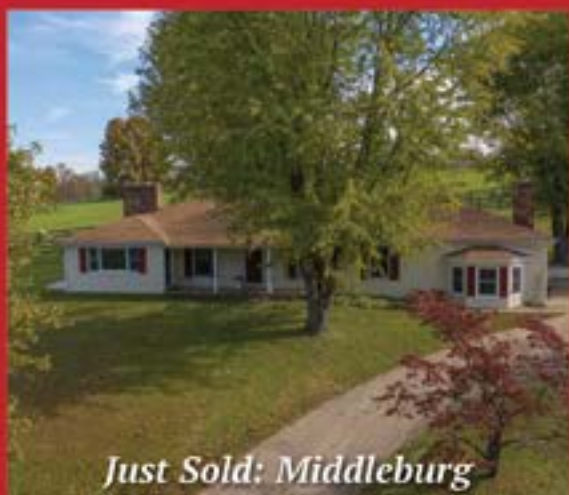
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