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MARCH 2020

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County pencils in replacement of Philomont, Round Hill, and Hamilton fire stations

BY ANDREA GAINES

Loudoun's FY 2021 budgeting process has drawn attention to Capital Investment Program plans related to three historic fire stations in the western part of the County. The stations are part of what is known as the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System. Comprised of over two dozen career and volunteer companies, many of which have been in existence for a half-century or more, the system operates under the direction of Chief Keith Johnson.

The stations scheduled to be replaced include those of the Round Hill Volunteer Fire Department, organized in 1938, the Village of Philomont Volunteer Fire Department, started in the early 1950s, and the Hamilton Volunteer Fire Department, serving the community since 1944.

Combined, the CIP plans call for a total of 63,500 square feet of new fire and rescue

space for these three fire departments, at a cost of \$72.5 million. Those plans include:

Replacement of Round Hill Station #4

Round Hill marked the opening of a large, new Western Loudoun Sheriff's Station in 2016. The proposed new fire station would be a part of the County's public safety approach to this part of the area.

Size of replacement station: 23,300 sq. ft. (19,800 sq. ft. – new Fire Station #4, 3,500 sq. ft. – sheriff station renovation)

Location: Not available, according to the FYI 2010 Proposed Budget

Estimated Completion: 2026 Timeline: Land, FY 2021; design, FY 2021, 2022, 2023; construction, FY 2024, 2025, 2026

Cost: \$25.8 million (design – \$5.5 million, land – \$1.4 million, construction – \$16.5 million, "other" – \$2.4 million)

According to the CIP, "This project pro-

vides funding to design and construct a replacement 19,800 square-foot Round Hill fire station. The facility will include apparatus bays, bunkroom

facilities, a training room, break room, restrooms, showers, food preparation and dining areas, laundry and decontamination areas, and supply storage. It will also include a gear and hose drying area, a breathing apparatus air compressor room, a fitness room, offices, and a repair shop. The Station will include the addition of a brush truck.

"The project also includes a 3,500 square-foot addition to either the planned fire station or the Western Loudoun Sheriff's Station to provide a community meeting room and ancillary support for the community room (restrooms, vestibule access, and additional required parking)."



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Replacement of Philomont Station #8

The current Philomont Fire Station is a mainstay of this small village, located next to both the historic Philomont General Store and the Philomont Community Center. Many of the roads in the immediate area – dominated by small agricultural and equine operations – remain unpaved. The current station underwent major renovations in just the last several years.

Size of replacement station: 18,500 sq.

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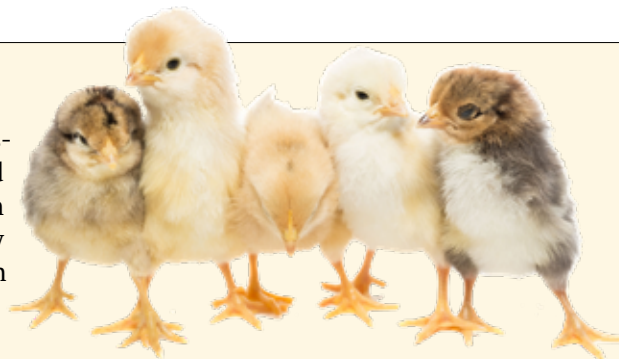
Baby bird extravaganza at Southern States, Purcellville

BY ANDREA GAINES

They are Golden Lakenvelders ... Rhode Island Blues ... Lavender Orpingtons ... Barred Cochins ... Prairie Bluebells ... Buff Plymouth Rocks ... Speckled Sussex, and, well too many more to mention – dozens and dozens more, in fact.

Are these types of flowers? Funny people who dress up in costume and do funny dances? Surprise! These are varieties of farm birds – chickens, guinea fowl, ducklings, goslings, and pheasants.

From late February through mid-May Southern States in Purcellville brings in freshly-hatched,



carefully transported one-day old chicks, and, in some cases pullets – 17-week-old birds of just about laying age – for sale in the store.

We interviewed the lady in charge this early

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28»



A customer admiring one of the chicks, "Oh, mom, can we take some home?" This question will be asked throughout the coming months!



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



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St. Patrick's Day. Subtle or not so subtle, let the pets do the talking



BY ANDREA GAINES

St. Patrick's Day is not really known as a "subtle" holiday.

Grown adults show up at work wearing bright green pants, or, if they are more reserved, bright green socks or a bright green silk tie.

Walking down the street, you'll see someone breaking into an Irish step-dance, the tiny green ribbon on their lapel the only thing that looks remotely Irish.

And, all of a sudden, corned beef and cabbage is everyone's favorite meal. Even vegetarians get into the act.

Of course, the most common way to celebrate St. Patrick's Day is to search your closet that morning and find something green, anything green, to wear.

But, why should you take all the

A fun St. Patrick's Day foodie idea: Coddle is a layered Irish dish, made in a crock pot or casserole, meant to use up leftovers – meats, potatoes and other starches, and onions and other veggies. Sometimes the chef adds a bit of Irish stout to give the dish some extra richness and flavor. Cream can also be used, and lots of flavorful herbs. Find a recipe that might work with some of the leftovers in your refrigerator. Just don't forget to add something ... green.

responsibility. Why not let our four-legged friends do the talking for St. Patrick's Day this year.

We got this idea from a reader who told us she was at her vet's office on St. Patrick's Day one year and in walked a tiny little dog dressed up as a Leprechaun – green velvet two-piece suit with rhinestone buttons, sparkling green booties, and a tall, bright green sequined hat. The dog was loving all of the attention, oblivious to the fact that he looked absolutely ridiculous.

You can take that more garish ap-

proach, or be more subtle with your pet.

Tie a green ribbon around your dog's tail. Cats of course will not tolerate that kind of suggestion from a human. But, all but the most persnickety dogs won't even notice.

You can probably get away with tying that green ribbon around your cat's collar – if they have one. Just don't let said cat get near a mirror; for they would be horrified at what they see.

A green neck scarf or bandana is a good idea for a dog, too. But, again, unless your cat is used to being dressed up, avoid that. For cats, and the neck area, think about a feather boa. Cats are attracted to anything with feathers. They put it in their mouth, shred it with their claws and otherwise go off and amuse themselves. They can be cruel that way. But, give the green feather boa a shot.

Doggie sweaters, in any shade of green are a good choice, too. And, go all out if your dog spends this time of year in a sweater or jacket of some kind. Just coordinate the sweater or doggie jacket with a green scarf and/or a bright green ribbon.

Finally, there is the subject of the head. If you have an old St. Patrick's Day hat around, secure it to your dog's head with an elastic band and go forth into the neighborhood. With respect to cats and headgear, get your cell phone ready, plop the hat on the cat's head, grab a selfie, and send it out as a text. No one needs to know the headgear was promptly ripped off and stuffed under a bed somewhere.

Now, as we are out here in western Loudoun County, there is always the option of letting our farm animals – horses, goats, cows, chickens – do the talking on St. Patrick's Day. We'll leave that creative exercise up to you.

Happy St. Patrick's Day.



Emerick fourth graders learn about documents

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser paid a visit to the Emerick Elementary fourth grade class Friday, Feb. 28, to discuss the importance of documents ranging from the US Constitution to the Town's budget and Comprehensive Plan.

When discussing the Town budget, the class learned how a tax dollar is spent in Purcellville. The class had recently learned about frac-

tions, so seeing the dollar broken up into percentages of how each dollar is spent – was very interesting to them.

The class also agreed that a dollar bill can be considered a document, because it stores and provides information. After 45 minutes of discussion with questions and answers, the students were off to their next class for the day.

Sign up to sponsor and paint a bench



Discover Purcellville, a community non-profit, is seeking Artists for their 4th Annual Summer art project "Painted Benches around Purcellville".

For 2020, custom made wood benches are available – and crafted right here in Hamilton for Loudoun's creative artists to paint. The past three summers Discover Purcellville coordinated the very popular community art's project "Painted Barrels around Purcellville" and "Painted Benches around Purcellville." These previous projects drew rave reviews and lots of media coverage for Purcellville.

Once completed the Painted Benches around Purcellville will be displayed around town from May through October, in front of local businesses that

have sponsored one.

In October they will be auctioned off to raise money for the Purcellville Art Gallery, and other community projects spearheaded by Discover Purcellville.

This year all artists will to create a Purcellville/western Loudoun theme for this year's painted benches project. As in past years – it is anticipated to attract a good deal of media coverage for Purcellville and all the talented artists. Interested in painting a bench? Contact Michael Oaks at Dpurcellville@gmail.com or Text 540-383-0009.

Review Your Investment Objective

Periodically reviewing your investments to help ensure they are on the right track is an important and meaningful measure in working toward your financial goals. Here is a simple but valuable way to get more from your investment strategy. When your next brokerage statement arrives, check your account profile to make sure that all the sections are accurate and up to date. This includes your investment objective, risk tolerance, and time horizon.



RICHARD RICCI

Investment objective. Focusing on your investment objectives helps your financial advisor align the other parts of your investment strategy – risk tolerance, time horizon, and liquidity needs – appropriately. Asset allocation models are grouped within three overarching portfolio orientations:

Income: Portfolios that primarily seek current income with minimal consideration for capital appreciation. They usually have less exposure to historically more volatile growth assets.

Growth and Income: Portfolios that seek a blend of current income and capital appreciation. They usually have some exposure to historically more volatile growth assets.

Growth: Portfolios that primarily seek capital appreciation with minimal consideration for current income. They usually have significant exposure to historically more volatile growth assets.

Risk tolerance. Many investors differ when it comes to factoring risk into their investment strategy. Each investment strategy should include an appropriate mix of investments, based on the client's objectives. Risk tolerance is the amount of risk you're willing and able to accept in order to pursue your financial goals. Risk tolerance should be viewed along the following continuum:

1. *Conservative* investors accept the lowest amount of risk.
2. *Moderate* investors seek a balance between stability and appreciation in their portfolio.
3. *Aggressive* investors accept a higher

risk for losses while seeking greater potential for returns.

Time horizon. How long do you plan to invest before you'll need the money? The answer, of course, depends on your stage in life and your goals. Your time horizon is the expected number of months, years, or decades you plan to invest toward your financial goals. Time horizon is generally expressed as:

- Immediate – Less than 1 year
- Very short-term – 1 to 3 years
- Relatively short-term – 3 to 5 years
- Intermediate – 5 to 10 years
- Long-term – More than 10 years

When checking your portfolio's alignment, it's also a good idea to make sure you've accounted for your liquidity needs. Liquidity need represents the extent to which a customer desires the ability or has financial obligations that dictate the need to quickly and easily convert to cash all or a portion of an investment. For reference, cash is the most liquid asset, while real estate, fine art, and collectibles are all relatively illiquid. Liquidity needs include:

- Significant (primary need is liquidity)

- Moderate (may need quick access to cash)
- None (have other sources of cash)

When building your portfolio, it's important to evaluate whether your current plan is aligned with your current goals and risk tolerance. Talk with your financial advisor to help ensure your strategy is on track to achieve your goals.

Our firm does not provide legal or tax advice.

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This article was written by Wells Fargo Advisors and provided courtesy of Richard Ricci in Washington, D.C. at (202) 364-1605.

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CAR Approval Number: 0119-04566
CAR Expiration Date: 8/01/2020

When work consumes

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

Do you ever wonder if your job is getting the better of you?

In her new memoir, *Smacked: A Story of White-Collar Ambition, Addiction, and Tragedy*, author Eileen Zimmerman writes of her ex-husband's journey toward an untimely demise.



MOORE-SOBEL

Her ex-husband, Peter, was a partner at an intellectual property law firm in California. He obtained a graduate degree in chemistry, before opting for a career in law. "Having grown up in a low-income family, he didn't want to worry about paying the bills again," Zimmerman wrote in *The New York Times*.

It wasn't until after Peter's death that his family learned of his secret battle with drug addiction. We don't know all the reasons why Peter became addicted to drugs. Perhaps he was struggling with his mental

health or his chronic back pain. (Zimmerman talked of Peter's chronic back pain in an interview on NPR.) Meeting the demands of his job likely played a role, too. A job he remained dedicated to until the very end. "The history on his cellphone shows the last call he ever made was for work..." Zimmerman wrote.

Peter's story can affect us in different ways. Zimmerman responded by pursuing an advanced degree in social work, motivated in part by the circumstances surrounding her ex-husband's death. Peter's story also seems like another lesson on the danger of letting work consume me.

I see how easy it is for so many of us to fall into the same trap. While circumstances may differ, many of us have trouble achieving a suitable work/life balance in the digital age. As professionals, we carry our laptops with us, or have e-mails and inter-office communications on our phones. We can be contacted at any point

of the day or night, summoned to work at a moment's notice.

"The more money you make, the higher the expectations," a mentor of mine recently told me. Perhaps this serves as a cautionary tale. As the saying goes, "Moderation in all things." Yet achieving this aim, at least when it comes to vocation, is tricky.

While perhaps it's true that being a lawyer has unusual demands, I think the tendency to work long hours exists throughout the workforce. I have struggled in this area, regularly checking emails after hours and answering messages over inter-office communication late into the night. I rarely take a day off; and even when I do, I find it hard to stop thinking about work. Who among us hasn't found it true that it can be hard to leave work at the office?

In no way am I saying that all workaholics will share the same ending to their story. Nor am I advocating that people to take their jobs less seriously, nor that it is wrong to pursue a successful career. Yet I wonder if it is possible to achieve some sort of balance, where we build a success-

ful career, without neglecting our personal lives.

Over the last few weeks, I've been doing my best to stop responding to late night emails or messages. I still work long hours, but I do my best to create space in my schedule to be emotionally present with those I love. It's been an adjustment, but I've started to notice an increase in my quality of life. Not to mention that taking time for myself makes me sharper at work, since I have time to recharge and perform at a higher level.

So, to those of you struggling with leaving work at the office, just remember that while work is important, it isn't everything. Being successful can only take us so far. I would wager that Peter's family would have willingly traded all of his success for his presence. After all, money could never make up for what they have lost.

Samuel Moore-Sobel has long been known for his workaholic tendencies by those closest to him. He is hopeful the new habits he has formed will continue to take hold.

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Five areas of research every parent should know about

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

With all of the advances in medicine and science, raising children today should be easy right? I suppose in many ways the knowledge we currently have, and our immediate access to it via technology, can make parenting less complicated. But what about all of the misinformation that's promoted in the news and that floods our social media accounts? Throw in long commutes, getting your kids to activities and the various other parental responsibilities, and finding the time to read-up on research informed parenting dos and don'ts can be difficult. As a child psychologist, I'm informed by research, and as much as possible, I think parents should be too. The following are five areas of research that I think every parent should know about:

Exercise and Athletics. Forget about the old stereotype of "the dumb jocks," research studies have repeatedly shown that children who exercise and who are fit perform better academically than children who are less active. In addition to improved academics, children who engage in sports have higher self-esteem and leadership skills, do better socially and have fewer emotional, substance abuse and behavioral problems.

Athletes and students who exercise on a regular basis are also more likely to finish high school and graduate from college than students who are not athletic or do not exercise consistently – one study found that former competitive high school athletes earn somewhere in the ballpark (pardon the pun) of 5 to 15 percent more across their careers.

Family Time. Spending quality time with your child is extremely beneficial in a number of ways. Spending time together as a family instills emotional se-

curity and helps to strengthen relational bonds and interpersonal skills for your child. It also provides opportunities for children to learn about their parents' values and morals, as well as family rituals and traditions.

Moreover, 60 years ago the average family dinner time was 90 minutes, today it's reported to be about 12 minutes. Studies have shown that children who eat dinner at least three times a week with their family have better grades, and lower rates of emotional, social and behavioral problems.

Sleep. Research has shown that nearly 25 percent of children will experience sleep problems at some point during childhood, and children with sleep problems have lower academic performance. Research in this area supports the notion that successful students tend to sleep more. Sleep experts recommend that children between 3 and 6 years of age should get 10-12 hours of sleep per night, children between the ages of 7 and 12 years of age should get 10-11 hours of sleep per night, and children between 12 and 18 years of age should get 8-9 hours of sleep per night.

Nutrition. Research in this area has consistently shown that children with poor nutrition have greater cognitive/intellectual, social, emotional and behavioral problems compared to children who eat healthily. And beyond your child's mental health and IQ, poor food choices can lead to physical problem (e.g., obesity and diabetes).

Technology. While it's tempting for parents to rely on screens to keep their younger children happy and occupied, parents really want to keep screen time use to a minimum for infants and toddlers. More specifically, research supports no screen time – to very limited screen time for children under 2 years

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Elections and Consequences

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

“All politics is local,” or so claimed former Speaker of the House Tip O’Neill. Old Tip once passed out in his dinner plate at a St. Patrick’s Day dinner at the Hibernian Society in Charleston, an unrelated tidbit

OPINION

I’m passing along simply because I know a witness to that splat. The adage aged better than Tip’s meal and is endlessly repeated by politicians and the media. They might be using it incorrectly.

Despite the blare of national politics, I tender a more accurate saying: “Local politics is local.” With around two months of freshly-constituted boards, committees and commissions here in Loudoun County, let’s see how local politics is panning out.

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I rooted for a bi-partisan slate of candidates and all but one, maybe two, won. My preferences were not about social issues, guns, climate, abortion or any of those things. I just wanted a Board with a majority of Supervisors who cared enough about Western Loudoun to protect it with good land use policies. I think we got that.

Every candidate in every district seemed to voice support for the west. Time will test their sincerity, but so far so good. There were some early votes by the Board that were very encouraging, such as reworking the makeup of the powerful Loudoun Water Board. We just saw a similar vote for membership on the Facilities Standards Manual Public Review Committee. Sounds dull as dirt, but the FSM is the document that controls how houses and roads must be built; it affects everyone. The former FSM committee had been packed by a single, departed supervisor, and at first glance it looked like my new Supervisor, Caleb Kershner, was doing the same thing.

It turns out that his motives were logical – he simply asked the FSM chairman whom he should be appoint to that committee, got that guy’s list of names and nominated them. Unfortunately, too many of them were pro-development types. People objected and ultimately additional

nominees were brought forward. Caleb showed grace during this give-and-take, and the newly confirmed FSM committee appears to be fairly balanced.

Supervisors from eastern Loudoun comprise the majority of the new Board and so far, it looks like most of them will support land conservation in the west. I’m particularly glad that Mike Turner is one of them – he’s impressed me as not just a supporter of rural Loudoun, but someone who is levelheaded and open-minded. I’m happy with the holdovers from the old Board, especially Tony Buffington who has been stalwart in his dedication to saving our rural countryside.

Phyllis Randall

Phyllis looks like she’s at the top of her game. When you become a member of any new group, you face a very steep learning curve. Phyllis climbed that curve in her first term. Now she’s been reelected Chair of the Board, a well-earned position.

She got my vote, she got some of my money, and if she ever wants my help on anything, she’ll get it, too. Loudoun is lucky to have her leadership.

The Planning Commission

In an Op-Ed a year or so ago I consigned

most of the then-members of the Planning Commission to the lower levels of Dante’s Hell. They were a wretched bunch, often at odds with the Supervisors who appointed them, always at odds with the west, and generally in bed with developers.

One who remains, Jeff Salmon, reportedly presumed that he would be the chairman of this powerful commission. Not so fast, Jeff. Your fellows chose someone else. I consider three of the nine members as my friends and I hear good things about some of the others. That leaves me optimistic that the Board and the PC will work together, and towards the ends we want.

You Coward!

Yes, you! The County has 39 commissions, committees, boards, councils and groups, all comprised of ordinary citizens. Some sound boring, others are boring, but each one has a role to play in what Loudoun is and what it will become. Commonsense, diligence and a modicum of intelligence are all that’s required of volunteers, even on some of the groups that sound technical.

There are still more than sixty (60!!!) unfilled positions on these boards. Every one of you has something to offer, but too many Loudoun citizens seem to be too busy, too lazy or simply don’t care. Prove me wrong and volunteer. (You can easily find how to do that on the County website. Here’s the

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— It Seems to Me —

What we can do to help prevent a Coronavirus Pandemic

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

By the time this article is published, infections from the coronavirus that originated in China will probably reach 150,000 with a death toll of 3,000. Luckily, most of the cases are still in China. Unfortunately, the death rate appears to range from 2.5 to 3 percent. The annual death rate in the U.S for the flu is 0.1 percent with an estimated 60,000 people dying each year from the flu or its complications.

OPINION

Many diseases like the new coronavirus (now called Covid-19) end up infecting a majority of the population, and become what is called a pandemic, where the disease spreads worldwide in an uncontrolled manner. This often happens when the disease spreads to and from third world countries where normal health care resources are limited.

According to the Center for Disease Control (CDC), it appears that this is starting to happen now. Pandemics are devastating to a population; the so called “Spanish” flu in 1918 became a pandemic with 50 million people dying worldwide.

There are a lot of things we don’t know

about this virus but, we do know that the disease spreads more easily than the flu, and that the death rate of those who get the disease is much higher than the flu. There is currently no vaccine or known medication that can stop the virus. Governments are frantically trying out known anti-viral drugs and developing multiple experimental vaccines. The current estimate for a human vaccine to be available is at least a year, which will be too late if it becomes pandemic.

Consider these numbers, if 50 percent of the U.S. population gets the disease, it is estimated that more than 4 million Americans will die. While governments around the world are enforcing quarantines on Chinese travelers and other areas with known cases of the Covid-19 virus, there are many things, you, the health care system, and businesses can do to slow the spread of the disease.

So, what can be done beyond the standard advice of washing your hands, don’t touch your eyes and mouth, don’t share food or drink, avoid crowds, and don’t make contact with sick people?

You are probably aware of some of these following suggestions. Wearing a standard

mask isn’t one of them, this type of mask will only limit you from spreading germs to other people; viruses floating in the air around you will pass right through a standard mask. If you walk into a room where someone who is infected has coughed, there is little you can do short of leaving quickly or wearing a bio-hazard suit to prevent you from inhaling the contaminated air. The answer is, the infected person must cough into a tissue or the crook of his/her arm.

What I am going to concentrate on is preventing you from bringing the disease to your body by touching contaminated surfaces. Your skin has evolved over millions of years to be a barrier against foreign organisms but, pathways into your body such as the eyes, mouth, and other mucus membranes will allow these organisms to enter your body.

Before we start, the real question is how long does Covid-19 remain viable on surfaces that you may touch? The answer is we really don’t know exactly. We do know that the Covid-19 virus can remain alive for as many as 9 days on some surfaces. Stainless steel and plastic surfaces seem

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I support Matt Truong for Congress

Dear Editor:

The voters of the 10th Congressional District will have a golden opportunity to help drain "The Swamp" in November. Matt Truong, a Conservative Republican from Fairfax County, is running to unseat the Democrat incumbent, Jennifer Wexton, who has done nothing for the citizens of her district here in Virginia. Instead, she has spent her entire tenure spewing falsehoods about President Trump, in a fruit-

LETTER

less effort participating in an attempted coup aimed at reversing the election of November 2016.

Matt Truong has a compelling story of human grit and determination to succeed against the greatest of odds. Coming to the United States after the fall of the South Vietnamese government – he was one of the "boat people" – and he knows exactly how evil socialism is – supported by our modern Democrat Party and Wexton. He is a shining example of what immigrants can and should do

to succeed against the greatest of odds by doing it the right way, that is, legally.

I have known Matt Truong for several years and can say to anyone who will listen – this is a man of honor and integrity who will work for us and not for himself or The Swamp.

His record of success in the private sector is enviable and is a testament to his work ethic, intelligence, and get-it-done attitude. Matt Truong is a strong supporter of our constitutionally bestowed right to bear arms, and will fight

for that right on our behalf. He wants to audit the federal government to scale down agencies and departments where needed. He is for term limits for all elected officials, and wants to build that big, beautiful Wall on our southern border ASAP. He also wants to have the death penalty applied to anyone who kills a law enforcement officer. The last person I heard talk like that got elected President three years ago. Sign me up!

*Lou Di Leonardo
Springfield*

Save the sixty-years and running Philomont Horse Show

Dear Editor:

The annual Philomont Horse Show will not be gracing the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department's historic show grounds in April, 2020. But, if the Philomont community has anything to do with it ... it will be back.

LETTER

On April 27, 1957, the fire department hosted their first fundraiser, the Philomont VFD Horse Show. The annual tradition has continued for over six decades with the support of volunteers, sponsors and riders enjoying one of the longest running horse shows in Loudoun County.

The Philomont VFD was established in 1956. Residents supported the new organization the best they could, but needed some fundraising ideas. First, came the horse show and then "Pit Beef BBQ," with both events held in the spring and fall. The Philomont VFD Ladies Auxiliary, also established in 1956, held fundraisers in support of the all-volunteer crew, too.

In the beginning, the horse show was held at the Griffith family farm on Colchester Rd. Then in 1962, in support of the Philomont community and the volunteer fire department, the Pierce family sold a seven-acre parcel along the historic Snickersville Turnpike to the Philomont VFD ... for pennies on the dollar. This established a forever home for the Philomont Horse Show and other events for the Philomont community. Philomont

residents played baseball games on the weekends. Today, a local equine group continues to use the grounds for practice.

As we entered the 21st century, attendance at the BBQ, held on Mother's Day weekend, began to decline, due to competition with numerous events being held in Western Loudoun. The Philomont VFD horse show saw a decline in the last five years, and it became more difficult to get volunteers to help.

Population increases in Loudoun County have challenged long-standing traditions such as our horse show. The annual BBQ ceased and the Philomont Ladies' Auxiliary, supporters of the firehouse for over 60 years, was retired in 2017.

As a community, however, we intend to innovate and to preserve our most valuable traditions. Philomont is hoping to find a local equine group to use the Horse Show grounds as their home for competition, and to continue the 60-years-plus Philomont Horse Show tradition.

The seven acres has plenty of room for horse trailers, two rings, a secretary shack, and a fully-restored cook shack/concession stand for food and drink. If anyone is interested in discussing an equine event – or has other creative ideas! – please contact Madeline Skinner at info@philomont.org.

*Madeline Skinner
Philomont*

Support Rob Jones

Dear Editor:

This coming November, we Virginians of the 10th Congressional District (VA-10) have an opportunity to vote for a candidate to the U.S. House of Representatives that will represent our interests, and our voice on the Federal level.

As a new resident to Loudoun County, I love how diverse our Congressional District is. VA's 10th covers parts of Fairfax

LETTER

County, to Loudoun, Prince William, Clarke and even Frederick County, far west of the metropolitan hustle of Fairfax County. Our district is distinctively diverse, with many backgrounds, from urban to suburban to rural.

All constituents need a leader who is familiar with their needs and concerns to work on their behalf in order to accomplish community priorities. The Founding Fathers designed the U.S. House of Representatives for local men of all professions, to represent the interests of their neighbors and nearby communities.

Rob Jones is that leader for the 10th. Lovettsville is his hometown. He has persevered under some of the most difficult situations in the USMC. It was Rob's job to guide his fellow Marines through enemy minefields. It's a very dangerous job and in July 2010, while deployed in Afghanistan, Rob stepped on an IED, which resulted in double leg amputations above the knees. Rob not only learned to walk again, he learned to bike, row and even-

tually run. While he was no longer able to serve alongside his fellow Marines in battle, Rob found a way to serve them and other veterans here at home. He raised over \$125,000 for charities that aid others like him who were wounded in battle. Rob did this by biking across our country from Maine to California. He also ran 31 marathons in 31 consecutive days. Rob and his wife own and operate a vegetable farm in Middleburg, where they just welcomed their first child.

After all of his trials and life altering events, Rob could settle down and live a quiet, peaceful life; he has certainly earned it. However, this Marine sees there is more work to be done and is therefore not done serving America. Rob will be a voice not only for veterans, he will also be a representative for his constituents here in VA-10th's. He listens and truly cares about people. He is a uniter, not a divider, and wants to bring a bipartisan voice to Washington.

He will reach across party lines and work with all members of Congress to tackle real problems that we face here in the 10th. We are in need of critical, outside of the box-thinkers. Rob possesses these qualities and skills. He will stand for, and honorably represent his fellow Americans in the 10th. I strongly encourage you to get to know and support Rob Jones on Nov. 3.

*Erika Field
Sterling*

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Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser announces re-election Campaign

After receiving encouragement from his family and continuing support from the community, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser has announced he will be seeking a fourth term as mayor in the upcoming Tuesday, May 5, 2020, town election. Fraser stated, "I am happy to announce my candidacy for Mayor, and I will continue to provide an innovative approach to government, to monetize our assets, and to construct creative ways to reduce the town's debt without imposing additional financial burden to our citizens. The pressure from the development community is never ending, and we need a strong leader who will keep promises and remain committed once elected. In our precious small town, development affects many aspects of our lives: our transportation, our staffing, our water resources, our schools, and our overall quality of life."



Under Fraser's leadership, the Town of Purcellville increased its non-tax revenue, reduced its debt by over \$7 million dollars, deployed one of the first online financial transparency portal in Loudoun County, enabling citizens greater visibility into the town's financials, restructured its Wastewater Treatment Plant debt to achieve millions in payment reduction, and welcomed over eighty new businesses in the past two years.

He also established a public private partnership to transform a distressed maintenance facility – a town-owned asset – into western Loudoun County's first MakerSpace and manufacturing incubator, and re-established the Purcellville Train Station Advisory Board, advancing the transformation of an underutilized historic asset into a museum. At the county level, Fraser was instrumental in reenergizing the Coalition of Loudoun Towns, partnering with Loudoun County's mayors to influence change at county and state levels to protect Western Loudoun's quality of life.

To preserve its citizens' quality of life and to create sustained prosperity for Purcellville, Fraser's agenda remains focused on transparency, innovation, and fiscal responsibility combined with slow growth, low taxes, infrastructure enhancement, and monetization of underper-

forming town owned assets. Toward this end, he has led the effort to successfully maintain Purcellville's stellar AAA credit rating by Standard & Poor's. Further, in 2019, Fraser was appointed to the National League of Cities Transportation & Infrastructure Services Federal Advocacy Committee to champion the call for nationwide transportation and infrastructure funding.

Prior to Fraser's election as mayor, Purcellville's Comprehensive Plan, the blueprint for its citizens' vision for the town, had not been updated in eight years. Subsequently, he initiated an update that is scheduled to be adopted this fiscal year.

Fraser's commitment to Purcellville's citizens is that he will stand firm on slow growth, prudent economic development, operational efficiencies, sensible zoning, and working with officials to improve transportation and other infrastructure needs. "Over the next two years," said Fraser, "the town will be working on the all-important zoning ordinance. It is essential to have a leader who, adhering to the will of the people, will guide Purcellville in the right direction."

Fraser's contributions to his corporate career include significant bottom line contributions in operational efficiency, business development, revenue growth, and cost savings at AT&T, Sprint Nextel, Marriott International, and Verizon.

Fraser earned a Bachelor of Engineering degree from Stony Brook University, an MBA in Finance from Rutgers University, an Executive Education certification from Harvard Business School, a Project Management Professional certification from the Project Management Institute, a Planning Commissioner certification from the Virginia Land Use Education Program, and a Blockchain for Business certification from eCornell University, all of which provide a sound foundation for leadership of complex organizations.

In addition to his business and council leadership responsibilities, Mayor Fraser has actively engaged in community service, youth sports, and local school activities. He has resided with his wife Angela and their three children in the Purcellville Locust Grove community for fourteen years.

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Town Manager's proposed budget creates concern in Purcellville

BY VALERIE CURY

Purcellville Town Manager David Mekarski has proposed a real property tax increase for the next calendar year from the current rate of \$.22 per \$100 of assessed value to \$.26 per \$100 of assessed value.

According to a Feb. 25 press release, this proposed increase reflects, "the maximum estimate that my office would propose as part of this year's budgetary process, which has yet to commence." Mekarski put out the proposed increase without notifying the Mayor or the Town Council.

Mekarski said his approach "was to advertise a rate providing maximum flexibility to achieve our antic-

ipated costs while maintaining the current level of services that both residents and businesses have enjoyed." He will present his budget proposal at a Town Council Special Meeting March 18 at 7 p.m.

In addition, Mekarski's office has recommended raising the Fireman's Field Service Tax District a half a penny, which would give the Town an additional \$75,000 for an Asset Management Program for the upkeep of Fireman's Field. "At a half penny increase, the approximate increased annual cost to a homeowner for a house valued at \$400,000, would be approximately \$20.00 (twenty dol-

lars)," the release said. If the majority of Council votes in support of this increase, it would bring the rate back to the 2018 adopted rate – since the Council lowered

the Fireman's Field tax rate one half cent after the 2018 budget.

At the Feb. 25 Purcellville Town Council Meeting, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser said the Town Manager's press release came a week late. "This should have been done before [his advertisement]." Fraser was referring to the public notice advertised in the Loudoun Times-Mirror, saying it was, without explanation, an unnecessary surprise to the taxpayers of Purcellville.

Fraser said his concern as a taxpayer is that residents' assessed value has gone up, noting that one resident said his assessment had gone up \$50,000. "By virtue of that assessed value going up \$50,000" – he was facing the "equivalent to a tax increase to his household. We will have that discussion to see where that .4 cent proposed tax increase is coming from. Town Council was not made aware of the advertised rate before it

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »

Cool urged citizens to look at the budget and tell him what to cut. "You will have the same data I have."

Hamilton Historic Landmark, Natural Mercantile listed for sale

Hamilton, Virginia's premier health foods destination, Natural Mercantile has been listed for sale.

Presented by Gloria Rose Ott, TTR Sotheby's International Realty, the listing includes the acclaimed and historic retail storefront, as well as the business contents of the operation, including its premium selection of natural goods inventory and farm to table provisions. The asking price is \$779,000. Ott is a Vice President at TTR Sotheby's International Realty.

341 East Colonial Highway, Hamilton

MLS#: VALO402562
Year Built: 1890
List Price: \$799,000
Agent: Gloria Rose Ott, Broker Associate,
TTR Sotheby's International Realty
(540) 454-4394

Photo Credits: McRae Visual Media LLC

"The sale of Natural Mercantile is one of those rare occasions where the history, the hard work of the current owner, the location and the future seem to converge," said Ott, "and it's not surprising that it is here in Loudoun County ... one of the wealthiest and fastest growing counties in the country, but also one where its rural spirit centers how the community sees itself." Located at 341 East Colonial Highway in Hamilton, the Natural Mercantile building circa 1890, has been a presence for 130 years. The Store is approximately 1344 square feet on .13 acres, holds a VA ABC License, and includes customer parking.



L to R: Natural Mercantile owner Sue Phillips, Marina Wilson and Sydne Iwerks.

In the early 1970s, 2 ladies from California started the health food movement at the Mercantile. When Sue Phillips, the current proprietor, purchased the operation in 2005, Natural Mercantile took the charge of maintaining the region's premiere health and wellness destination to a new generation of consumers.

"Our customers come from miles around to experience Natural Mercan-

tile," said Phillips, "And shop for key ingredients, supplements, CBD, and products that add to the health of their lives. It is time for me to go and be a grandmother, and I know the new and next owner will enjoy growing the business into the next decade or more."



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Warner meets with the Data Center Coalition

BY VALERIE CURY

U.S. Senator Mark Warner (D) met with Loudoun County economic development officials and data centers leaders on Feb. 28. The event was sponsored by the newly formed Data Coalition and held at the Equinix Campus Center in Ashburn.

GOVERNMENT The companies represented at the meeting were Aligned Energy, Amazon Web Services, CloudHQ, Digital Realty, Equinix, Iron Mountain, NTT RagingWire, QTS, Sabey Data Centers, and Vantage Data Centers.

Northern Virginia is the market leader in data centers, with approximately 70 percent of the world's internet traffic passing through Loudoun's data center alley – making Loudoun the third largest location for data centers – with over 100.

Data centers have created some 17,000 jobs in Loudoun and 45,000 across the state. OTS Data Center's Chief Hyperscale Officer and former State Delegate, Tag Greason pointed out that data cen-



Left to Right: President, Data Center Coalition, Josh Levi, Former Delegate and OTS Data Center's Chief Hyperscale Officer Tag Greason, and Sen. Mark Warner.

the industry is involved in the community – schools, retirement communities, “It's our job to tell the story.”

Attendees echoed that they are philanthropic in the community. They are also preserving wetlands, they said. As far as design, they are making progress not to look like a “brick prison – not a big box” – they are using buffering berms and landscape.

Warner said he would like to see data center projects in south-central and south western Virginia. He said he would look at state and federal incentives.

“We are grateful to Senator Warner for joining us for Friday's Data Center Industry Roundtable, and for his extraordinary efforts and commitment in championing and advancing Virginia's technology sector,” said Data Center Coalition President Josh Levi in an email after the meeting.

Continued Levi, “We have an important story to tell about the role of our individual companies and our industry collectively in powering the Internet and the Cloud, as well as our substantial impact in growing the economy, increasing tax revenues, creating new markets for renewable energy, training and upskilling the workforce, and supporting our local communities. We look forward to continuing to engage with policymakers, community leaders, students, educators and our friends and neighbors to increase awareness of the data center industry and its many benefits.”

Warner, along with a bipartisan group of other Senators, has introduced legislation to support U.S. innovation in the race for 5G, providing over \$1 billion to invest in Western-based alternatives to compete with Chinese equipment providers such as Huawei.

Warner finished the day in Bluemont at Boulder Crest Retreat – a non-profit facility that provides recovery programs for military, veterans, first responders, and their families.



Left to Right: Jon Lin, President Americas, Equinix and Loudoun County Economic Development Executive Director Buddy Rizer.

ters create more jobs than just the small amount of people they employ, “look at the parking lot, there's 600 contractors: that come to data centers on a daily basis.”

Said Loudoun's Economic Development Executive Director Buddy Rizer, “I think about the way they have transformed our economy, our county.” He said that prior to data centers in Loudoun nearly 81 percent of Loudoun's tax revenue came from home owners. He pointed out that data centers are slated to bring more than \$400 million in tax revenue to the county and they have reduced the tax rate by 21 percent. “This has been transformational to our County,” he said.

The sentiment in the room was that the industry has changed and grown in a positive way. It was pointed out that people are understanding what the industry is about. Greason said perception in the neighborhoods is changing, and

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Upbeat tone, financial independence, and resolve in Purcellville Mayor's State of the Town address

BY ANDREA GAINES

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser is, if anything, a seriously upbeat guy.

A get-it-done chief executive who believes in the grassroots. And, a policy-driven legislator sharply focused on what it takes to run a fast-growing town steadfastly determined to retain its small-town character.

Each of these aspects of Fraser's leadership style and policy perspectives were present in the annual State of the Town address he delivered in February – first at the Town Hall on Feb. 10, and then at a Purcellville Business Association luncheon on Feb. 11.

Fraser's main message, articulated at the beginning of the speech, and harkened to throughout, was clear and inclusive: "Collectively," he said, "our Town Council, our operational team, committees, commissions and boards, and our citizens, and business community have brought us to this point of declaration ... the state of our Town is strong and resilient."

Purcellville is where history and progress meet

Immediately following the Pledge of Allegiance, Fraser asked his audience to remain standing for a moment of silence to honor Mr. Edwin Potts, born in 1925, who passed away this Feb. 6.

Potts served the country in WWII aboard the USS Allagash, and, with his son, worked the Orchard Crest Farm upon returning from the war. Mr. Potts was active in many local causes, including many related to historic preservation.

Edwin Potts was "a partner, a neighbor, and a friend," said Fraser.

Humor and seriousness

"This is my fifth State of the Town address," Fraser said just minutes into his speech. "The first time I started," he continued, "I accidentally said State of the Union." But, he assured those present, "I have no political aspirations beyond this."

Despite the humor, Fraser's address did not skirt any of the pressing issues facing the Town, nor did the Mayor not have a point of view on all of them.

"2019, in spite of the myriad of chal-

lenges," he said, "was yet another great year in the Town of Purcellville, as we successfully garnered the majority Town Council vote to reject an annexation application that would have resulted in significant strain on our transportation, water, operational infrastructure, and overall quality of life." It was a touchy subject to address – right off the bat – in a town so often dominated by the forces of growth.

You'd think that the rejection of a proposal to annex land into the Town – to control more land – would be a bad thing.

But, Fraser has made his reputation as a small town mayor by bringing into focus the connection between bad growth-related decisions and the public purse, immediately following up his statement about that failed annexation with this one: "Our Town continued to pay down its debt and focused on long-term solutions to address the future payment increase in the wastewater treatment facility and funding for needed future water infrastructure-related projects."

Fraser also addressed, head on, police department-related lawsuits, saying "We successfully partnered with our insurance company and all impacted stakeholders ..." to avoid future costly settlements. From Fraser's point of view, the Town was able to bring closure to a major part of this chapter, and is confident that the Town and its partners will successfully address remaining matters.

A thorough and independent Operational Audit made recommendations, and the Town is acting on those recommendations.

The Town has made enormous progress on its new Comprehensive Plan, with adoption expected by the end of this fiscal year. Here, Fraser acknowledged the incredible work that had been done by the Planning Commission.

The Town's progress – whether on the issue of reducing the debt, managing Town assets in a more responsible way, adopting a new Comp Plan, or working through difficult investigative issues – was testimony that Purcellville's leadership can "deliver what we promised ..."

We are "still your small town where history and progress intersect and the people prosper," he said.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

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Officer in Sierra case abandons VA. Supreme Court appeal and makes court-ordered damages payment to family

BY ANDREA GAINES

On Nov. 5, 2019, the jury found in favor of the Sierras in the death of their son, 17-year-old Christian Sierra, by Purcellville Police Officer Timothy Hood. Sierra was shot dead in May 2014 by Hood, who was responding to reports of an attempted suicide by a teen. "It was a good shoot," Hood told Sergeant Guy Dinkins at the time.

Now, at least one part of this long and tragic story has been brought to a close.

According to a press release issued by

Thomas K. Plofchan, Jr. and Jacqueline A. Kramer, attorneys for the Sierra family, after months of court filings by Hood – including one in which he seemed intent on taking his case all the way to the Virginia Supreme Court – "Hood filed a motion to dismiss his appeal, and the judgment amount, interests, and costs have been paid in full."

Court documents for Hood's motion to dismiss his own appeal read: "On November 5, 2019 in Loudoun County Circuit Court, the jury returned a verdict in favor

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29»

Bertaut announces run for Purcellville Town Council in May 5 election

Christopher "Chris" Bertaut is running for the Purcellville Town Council in the May 5 election. Bertaut says his priorities are four-fold: to keep taxes low; to encourage slow

GOVERNMENT

growth; to improve the Town's infrastructure of water, sewer, roads, and telecommunications; and to encourage innovative and transformative solutions to the problems that face Town residents. He has experience in working with diverse groups of people to



reach accord and move projects forward which will make him a valuable addition to the Town Council.

Bertaut grew up in Washington, DC and attended public schools there. Since then, he has lived in Florida and Georgia before settling in Northern Virginia after graduate school.

He has been employed locally in the telecommunications and IT industries for the last 22 years. His employers have included some of the top names in tele-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

Real Estate Tax Relief applications available

One seminar left – March 10

Loudoun County Commissioner of the Revenue Robert S. Wertz Jr. has scheduled

GOVERNMENT

free information sessions to familiarize residents with the eligibility criteria for the county's generous real estate tax relief program and new eligibility thresholds for 2020.

Loudoun County homeowners age 65 or older or with disabilities who are below established income and wealth limits may benefit from a reduction in the amount of property taxes they pay. Qualified applicants for real estate relief must have a gross combined income less than \$72,000, and net worth less than \$920,000. Up to \$10,000 in income of a spouse or relative residing in the home is excluded from the income calculation. Program participants

saved almost \$8 million in real estate taxes in tax year 2019.

Find out about the county's tax relief program and have your questions answered. No appointment or RSVP is required to attend; the last session begins at 10:30 a.m. at the Rust Library, Tuesday, March 10 – 380 Old Waterford Road N.W., Leesburg.

Online applications are available at loudoun.gov/taxrelief. Residents may also call 703-737-8557 to have a form mailed to them or they may pick one up at the Commissioner's offices in the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison Street SE in Leesburg or the Loudoun Tech Center, 21641 Ridgetop Circle, Suite 100 in Sterling. Additional information about the program is available online at loudoun.gov/taxrelief.

Loudoun County's FY 2021 Budget

Bigger and bigger, but will citizens decide it is better?

BY ANDREA GAINES

Loudoun County Administrator Tim Hemstreet presented his proposed FY 2021 budget to the Board of Supervisors on Feb. 12. The 2021 fiscal year will officially begin on July 1, 2020.

GOVERNMENT

The day before, on Feb. 11, Hemstreet had presented his proposed FY 2021 Capital Improvement Program budget to the Board's Finance/Government Operations and Economic Development Committee.

Consideration of the County budget – for FY 2021, \$3.024 billion – began in late Feb., and will continue through much of March.

The preparation and adoption of Loudoun County's annual budget is an approximately 10-month process. For this cycle, it began in July 2019, and is expected to end in early April 2020, when the final budget is adopted.

Lay it out and get buy-in

The development and adoption of the budget operates on two tracks.

It is a nuts and bolts financial exercise, with thousands upon thousands of numbers adding up to what the County brings in revenue wise and what it plans to put out expenditure wise. But, as with the Envision Loudoun Comprehensive Plan process, it is also a PR exercise, looking for buy-in from the various citizen, business, and County departments impacted.

There are three main parts to the 429-page budget document: An Executive Summary, a detailed explanation of General Fund Revenue and Trends, and an even more detailed explanation of Operating Expenditures.

The names and titles of the many top level County employees involved with the budget are here, from the individual members of the Board of Supervisors – many of whom will vote on the budget for the first time – to Administrator Hemstreet, Chief Financial Officer Erin McLellan, Deputy Chief Financial Officer Janet Romanchyk, Acting Assistant

Director Caleb Weitz, Assistant Director Megan C. Bourke, Rebecca Kummel, Administrative Manager for the group, and the many, many dedicated County staff who put the budget together. This includes leadership and staff within the Budget Planning and Policy Division, the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, the Program Evaluation and Research Division, and the Capital Budget Planning and Policy Division.

A very big lift – politically

The budget is a very, very big lift – mindboggling in its complexity and reach, while at the same time carrying with it enormous implications for the individual homeowner, the farmer, the small business owner, and the taxpayer.

For this reason, selling the budget to the public is key. Before getting into the numbers, the budget document points out that Loudoun County received a Distinguished Budget Presentation Award from the Government Finance Officers Association of the United States and Canada for its effort to “publish a budget document that meets program criteria as a policy document, as an operation guide, as a financial plan and as a communication device.” Again, this is a financial exercise as well as a PR exercise.

The property tax rate rules

In a transmittal letter from Hemstreet to the BOS – that letter being the formal message delivering the document to the Board – the County Administrator said that while he had been asked to base the budget on the current real property tax rate of \$1.045 per \$100 of assed value, based on “slight positive shifts ... in the revenue picture,” and “a reduction in the anticipated Loudoun County School Board (LCPS) request ... I have proposed the FY 2021 budget at the tax rate of \$1.035, which is one cent below the current rate ...” In that transmittal letter Hemstreet also noted that he had been asked to prepare “two additional tax rate scenarios” – one at one cent higher than the current rate and one at one cent lower. So, said Hemstreet, “I have prepared the Proposed Budget at the \$1.035 tax rate and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »



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The County's FY 2021 budget, hearings schedule and supporting documents can be found at <https://www.loudoun.gov/budget>.

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6-7 pm Appetizers and meet the candidates

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8-9 pm Town Council candidates

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Come with your questions.

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No County action on Gable Farm landfill, but state-level landfill legislation is heating up

BY ANDREA GAINES

Despite years of controversy, the County has taken no concrete action on the Gable Farm personal recreational field, a landfill, more than 30 feet high in some places and containing anywhere from 220,000 to 420,000 (or more) cubic yards of dirt. The landfill is located just east of Hamilton on business Rt. 7.

COMMUNITY

While the property owner has stopped the dumping, a formal plan to rectify the situation, promised now for over a year, is nowhere to be seen.

It is a different story on the state level. Two Virginia bills, HB1310 and HB1639, address the unregulated dumping of fill dirt on agricultural lands. The House bills are the work of two bipartisan Piedmont legislators, Delegate Michael Webert (R-18) and Delegate Elizabeth Guzman (D-31), and would require notice to localities when a construction site is disposing of dirt on rural lands, and create a working group to research and make recommendations to the Di-

rector of Environmental Quality.

Both bills have passed the Virginia House of Delegates and the Senate.

With respect to the growing problem of dumping on rural lands, the working group referred to in HB1639 would address the following issues: 1) “the need of road construction and development projects to dispose of dirt in a responsible manner,” 2) “the practice of rural landowners charging a fee to allow the use of their lands as disposal sites,” 3) “the extent of monitoring for possible contaminants or effects on groundwater when dirt and rubble is deposited on agricultural fields,” and 4) “the use of rural lands by dump trucks traveling to disposal sites and any effects of such travel, including road damage, traffic congestion, noise, and the loss of a portion of the dirt during transit in the form of dust or mud.”

A Piedmont Environmental Council link urging citizens to write their senators – which features a photo of the dirt fill activity at Gable Farm – contains the following language. “The dumping of

excavation fill dirt from construction sites on rural lands has become a significant problem in several counties in Virginia, including Fauquier, Loudoun, Prince William, and Albemarle. Increasingly, many in the construction industry are looking to rural lands as a cheaper alternative to regulated sites. Without proper oversight, the practice of dumping construction site fill dirt on rural

land comes with significant negative impacts – with adjoining landowners often the hardest hit. Those impacts include: soil erosion, flooding, dust, noise, truck traffic, damage to public roads ... and potential contamination of land and water resources.”

A video documenting the conditions at the landfill on Gable Farm can be seen at www.loudounrurallandfills.com.

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Oakridge Auction Gallery

Where the thrill is in the beauty, the bidding, and the rarity

BY ANDREA GAINES

If you have never been to a live auction of really beautiful, really interesting, really rare things – Chinese cloisonné, fine watercolors, miniature bronzes, unusual antique toys, finely-carved jade, Sheffield silver plate tea caddies, and the like – let yourself be transported to that world right now.

Just minutes from the farms and villages of western Loudoun is the internationally-known Oakridge Auction Gallery, in Ashburn.

There are two competing time frames here.

There is the quiet, reflective moment when collectors and/or their agents, and lovers of beautiful things wander the gallery to see what is new and/or about to be put up for auction.

And, there is the wildly energetic moment when specific pieces hit the auction block, the bidding process begins and the hammer comes

down, signaling a successful sale.

Oakridge Auction Gallery caters to a wide variety of audiences and clients with an equally wide range of tastes and financial resources.

Some are wealthy clients carefully adding to or trying to sell their private and finely-tuned collections of art, antiques, and other goods. And, some are curators or agents



From L to R: Tia Lunghi, Stephen Hansen, John Toland, Andrez Leon, Edward Hocevar, Katharina Biermann, Keith Spurgeon, Alison Eubanks. The vase held by Andrez is a Chinese blue and white gu vase decorated with phoenix among flowering branches.

looking for pieces that might be missing from a museum's collection.

Some are people who have come into a piece of art, or sculpture – or a special artifact – and need the help of a professional to sell it at a good price. Some are individuals new to the whole process who want something beautiful for their home, or, to give as a gift. But, the essence of the place is how the magnificent things – big and small, old, ancient, or contempo-

rary – come in to Oakridge ... and how they go out. Some sell for the hammer price of several hundred dollars, and some sell for hundreds of thousands. But, all are treasures to the lucky individual, or museum or other place that they will now call home.

How the consignment process works

Oakridge Auction Gallery works on a commission, with a sliding scale depending on the value of the item being sold. The gallery meets with consignors and provides free estimates for evaluating the item, which, according to Oakridge is “the price an item or group of items may be expected to bring at auction ... based on past auction performance for similar items and current market conditions.”

Photos of items families and individuals might want to discuss consigning with the gallery are readily accepted on the Oakridge website (www.oakridgeauctiongallery.com).

With items that need to be seen by the gallery in person, Oakridge is happy to schedule an appointment to do so. The gallery also schedules regular auction evaluation days.

A bidder's paradise

Oakridge Auction House's Katharina Biermann, Press Liaison & Events Manager describes the actual auction and bidding process this way.

“Auctions take place in the company's Ashburn showroom,” said Biermann, “Which is transformed into a large, open, and exciting space, with bidders participating right there onsite and remotely.”

Live bidding in the showroom is perhaps “The most

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 »



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OAKRIDGE GALLERY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

exhilarating,” says Biermann.

But, it’s the dynamic between people present in the room, collectors and agents on the phone, people bidding online and absentee bidders that creates the excitement.

Bidders and/or their agents first complete a registration and authorization form and are provided with a bidder number paddle, allowing them to bid at a specific auction. Once approved as a bidder for that auction ... the fun begins. Bidders who cannot be present in person, or do not wish to bid online, can participate as a telephone bidder by registering prior to the day of the auction and following a similar signup process. They, too get a bidder number paddle, working with an Oakridge telephone bidding clerk to make their bidding wishes known.

A proxy bidder system allows people who cannot be present, and people who cannot bid online or by phone to bid up to the maximums indicated at the auction for which they have registered.

The treasures being sold

We asked Biermann to tickle our fan-

cy with some of the more unusual pieces that had sold through the gallery recently and what is coming up. And, her true love of her job and the business came shining through.

“Take close look at the 18th century Chinese cloisonné elephant (Lot 264) from our December 2019 sale,” she said. “This piece came to us from a client in Pennsylvania, from whom we have received additional items that will be allocated to our upcoming summer and autumn sales. Elephants are generally considered an auspicious symbol in Chinese art, but the way in which the elephant is depicted, and what it is depicted next to, changes its overall meaning ... the elephant is depicted with a vase on its back; this is actually a visual-linguistic play on words, because the Chinese phrase for ‘elephant with a vase’ is pronounced similarly to a phrase meaning good luck or auspicious tidings. Chinese art is rich with these kinds of puns and learning to read the art is part of what makes our work so interesting. It also appeals to collectors ... this elephant sold for a hammer price of \$14,000.”

Referring to an upcoming auction, Biermann said this: “Without revealing too much ... We have several paintings by the artists Zhang Daqian and Pu Ru.

“Zhang Daqian is a character. Born in 1899, he is most notable as one of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 >



Chinese cloisonné elephant

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OAKRIDGE GALLERY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

greatest forgers of Chinese Old Masters and lost works of art ... in our (now) June sale are some of his originals. However, his forgeries (as in, forgeries by him) often sell for higher than the originals they depict would have sold. One example of this phenomenon was Lot 733 in our Spring 2018 Fine Asian Art & Antiques sale, which realized a hammer price of \$440,000.” (Readers – refer to Lots 498,



Chinese
tourmaline
dragon pendant

497, and 500 in the gallery’s (now) June 2020 auction.) “Pu Ru is another interesting figure, as he was actually the cousin of the last Qing emperor, and might even have become the emperor but for the luck of the draw, so to speak. He fled to Taiwan after the fall of the Qing Empire and enjoyed a flourishing artistic career.”

Biermann also described her personal favorite in the upcoming June sale. “My personal favorite piece in this auction is actually Lot 450, a large-scale Chinese painting of a parade or a hunt, attributed to Jiao Bingzhen, from the early Qing Dynasty. Qing emperors would visit their Mongolian territories and go hunting, large events which were also occasions for tribute to be brought and for subjects

to solicit audiences with the emperor. The painting shows multiple different connected parts of the hunt, from the long parade of courtiers and tribute bearers to the ring of soldiers coordinating the hunt ... It’s both a dynamic and engaging artwork as well as an interesting historic insight into the functions of the Qing imperial household and its relations with its subjects.” (Readers: Refer to Lot 450 in the Gallery’s June 2020 sale.)

And, Biermann mentioned pieces coming up in the categories of “jades and porcelains from the Slade family collection” ... and “a lovely, early Joseph Mallord William Turner watercolor of Bonneville in Savoy from the same collection coming up in our April 2020 Fine Art, Antiques and Jewelry sale. What’s wonderful about this piece, in addition to the painting’s visual appeal, is that we have provenance documentation from its original sale into the owner’s family from the Fine Arts Society in London.” Bierman also mentioned “a miniature bronze Tai Chi statue by the contemporary Taiwanese artist Ju Ming ... The sculpture was a gift to the former Lt. Governor of Delaware from the Mayor of Kaohsiung in Taiwan.”

To see them all, go to www.oakridgeauctiongallery.com. Inquiries can be made by email – auction@oakridgeauctiongallery.com or phone by calling (703) 291-1010.

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LOUDOUN CO BUDGET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

have provided a series of scenarios in half-cent increments that both reduce the tax rate and also increase the tax rate from the Proposed Budget.”

Hemstreet’s letter also addresses how the County’s recently-adopted Comprehensive Plan, the 2019 General Plan and the 2019 Countywide Transportation Plan relate to the budget. Here, Hemstreet says, “Loudoun is well positioned to take advantage of the potential for economic growth opportunities associated with the anticipated opening of the Metrorail Silver Line extension in FY 2021.”

Finally, Hemstreet says: “During the Board’s term, the process to update the Zoning Ordinance in alignment with the 2019 Comprehensive Plan will be a significant organizational effort.”

Here, Hemstreet seems to be signally

Loudoun County Capital Improvement Program

The County CIP, as it is known, is a six-year plan detailing the proposed funding and impacts anticipated for major County capital improvement projects, from fire stations to roads. The program is organized into six sections: Completed Projects, Previously Authorized Projects, County Capital Projects, Transportation Projects, and School Capital Projects. Specific appropriations for the CIP, however, are made only made for the proposed fiscal year.

that the Comp Plan, the General Plan, the Transportation Plan, and the new Zoning Ordinance – yet to be adopted – need to work as one if the County wants to meet its numbers.

It is not surprising, then, that Hemstreet also touts “Department of Economic Development... wins” – including “\$3.6 billion in new commercial development, 3,043 jobs created or retained, and over 5.8 million square feet of space.” In other words, continued growth, and extremely high rates of growth are essential to the inner workings of the proposed budget.

The County’s Comp Plan push for more affordable housing, a “Broadband Strategic Plan,” a “Human Services Strategic Plan,” new court-related programs, and the newly-adopted Capital Improvement Program are also highlighted in Hemstreet’s letter, as are Loudoun County’s strong bond ratings.

Significant completed, planned and ongoing transportation project are detailed here, too, as are County efforts to maintain a compensation system that retains and attracts the best employees.

The question for citizens weighing in on the process is how to balance the enormous, and unabashedly pro-growth formulas present in the budget with what they want their county to look like in the years to come.

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Purcellville Art Gallery reception March 14

Please join the Purcellville Art Gallery for their latest show and meet the artist reception Saturday, March 14 from 6 - 8 p.m. View over 125 works of art and chat with some of Loudoun County's most creative talent.

Purcellville Art Gallery features paintings, photography, sculptures, pottery and much more. The gallery was just voted one of the top art galleries in Northern Virginia. Complimentary snacks and drink will be served. Purcellville Art Gallery is located at 760 East Main St across from Walgreens, and plenty of parking is available – for more info please call 540-338-0800.

Purcellville Art Gallery has just added more Paint like Bob Ross classes taught by a certified Bob Ross instructor. For available dates and to sign up call Kirsty at 540-338-0800.



FIRE STATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

ft.

Location: Seven acres owned by the Philomont Volunteer Fire Company, Snickersville Turnpike

Estimated Completion: 2026 Timeline: Land, FY 2022, 2023; design, FY 2022, 2023; construction, FY 2025, 2026

Cost: \$21.7 million (design – \$3 million, land – \$.7 million, construction – \$14 million, “other” – \$4 million).

The CIP states, “This project provides funding to design and construct a station to replace the current Philomont Volunteer Fire and Rescue Company #8 station. The fire station is planned to be located on a site of approximately seven acres owned by the Philomont Volunteer Fire Company, and will require a special exception.”

The facility is anticipated to replicate essentially all of the features of the new Round Hill station.

“Staffing for the fire and rescue Station will be 24 hours, seven days a week for a pumper and tanker, with the potential for additional resources as service demands dictate.”

Replacement of Hamilton Station #5, and Hamilton Station #17

Hamilton, as a Town, has strictly limited the amount of development it intends to absorb. The fire department and its companion Hamilton Volunteer Rescue Squad purchased ten acres of land to build the Hamilton Public Safety Center in the year 2000.

Size of replacement station: 22,000 sq. ft.

Estimated Completion: 2029

Location: The Town of Hamilton

Timeline: Design scheduled for FY 2025, 2026, no further details provided

Cost: \$25 million (design, \$3.9 million, construction, \$19 million, “other,” \$2.1 million)

Per the CIP, “This project is intended to replace the current Hamilton Fire Station with a larger facility, as the needs of the area have outgrown the capacity of the current facility.”

As with the new Philomont station, the facility is anticipated to also replicate essentially all of the features of the new Round Hill station.

“Coverage is provided by career staff 24 hours a day, seven days a week with possible combined coverage by career and

A lesson from Aldie

In November 2017, the historic village of Aldie was presented with County plans to build a new, 18,000 square foot fire station near the entrance to the village along Rt. 50. Those plans were eventually scrapped. While a new fire station was needed within this particular service area, the County decided it was not appropriate to overwhelm an historic community such as Aldie to serve the intense residential and commercial development dominating the Rt. 50/Rt. 15/Gilberts Corner areas to the south and east.

The proposed site also presented many other challenges. Much of it was identified as floodplain. Several historic structures would have been destroyed as part of the project. And, it was determined that safety considerations would have dictated that historic parts of Rt. 50 west would need to be altered to accommodate the project. After sustained community opposition, a new site was found.

volunteer staff. The station will also include the addition of a brush truck.”

Loudoun's first fire company was assembled in Leesburg in 1803. The concept was simple: set up a system so that when there is a fire, there is a signal – a bell, so residents will know that one of their neighbors needs help. Fire and rescue teams have obviously evolved over the years, with sophisticated equipment, medical services, and the like. But, it is still a community effort, with the firehouse structures and lands in the more rural parts of the County also serving as the place for a wide variety of community activities – including the fundraising efforts needed to keep fire and rescue squads well fed, well housed, well trained, and well equipped.

Philomont Volunteer Fire Department president Chris Young commented on County plans for his community's new fire station.

The land where the new station would be built has been used as a venue for community events for decades, including the 60+-year-old Philomont Horse Show.

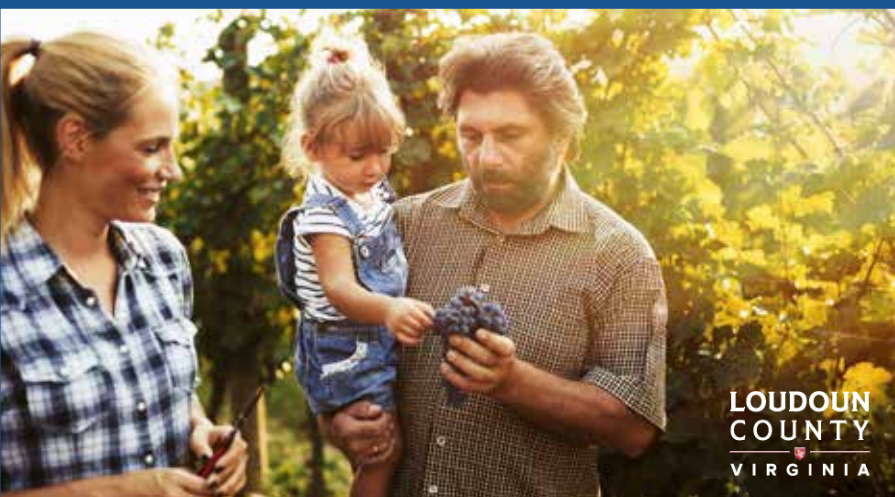
Said Young, “... Loudoun County Combined Fire & Rescue is currently researching the alternatives for a future firehouse and is preparing a presentation for the community...”

Supervisor Tony R. Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) said: “Balancing the need for sufficient public safety and the concerns of our residents is always a top priority for the Board. Regarding the Philomont Station, I've already begun discussions with LCFR Chief Johnson to ensure sufficient public input regarding the feasibility of the options that may be available. The Round Hill Station will likely be built on or near the current western Loudoun Sheriff's Station and will be sensitive to the concerns of the Town and its residents.”

Loudoun's fire and rescue system today responds to nearly 30,000 incidents a year. Just over 7,500 of their calls are triggered by fire incidents, 20,800+ are EMS calls, and 470 are public service calls. The

Loudoun County website states that the system is “a combined effort of volunteers and career employees,” and serves the public “24 hours a day, 7 days a week ... Loudoun County has more than 1,500 volunteer

members and approximately 500 career personnel to answer the calls of fire and rescue emergencies. The combination volunteer and career personnel system staffs more than twenty stations.”



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DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

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physical health problems increase exponentially for children and teens who over use technology.

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

Promote your rural business on the Loudoun Spring Farm Tour



With another growing season on the horizon, the Loudoun Spring Farm Tour, on the weekend of May 16-17, is the perfect way to promote your farm or rural business.

Whether your farm or rural business sells directly to consumers or supplies products for bulk buyers, then the Loudoun Farm Tour provides a great opportunity to connect with future customers.

The deadline for Loudoun businesses to apply to have their products included in this year's farm tour is Monday, March 23. To apply, fill out

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

VIRUS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

to allow the virus to live longer. Depending on temperature and humidity, viruses in general live as short as two hours or as long as two days – on wood and porous surfaces. Most viruses die from extreme heat or low humidity. There is some good news, some metals such as copper, copper alloys brass and bronze, and silver kill viruses on contact. You will have to assume that any surface that is constantly touched by the public can be infected by viruses and bacteria.

Here are some suggestions to avoid catching the Covid-19 virus, or the flu, and bacterial diseases by avoiding contact with contaminated surfaces.

Avoid touching these surfaces with your bare hands; door knobs and push bars, stair rails, shopping cart handles, gas station pump handles, pens in doctor's offices, restaurants and stores, elevator buttons, restaurant menus, money (except pennies), the arms and the sides of chairs, magazines in doctor's offices, light switches, toilet sink and commode handles, exercise equipment, tongs in salad bars, computer key boards, TV controllers in hotels and all other publicly touched surfaces. You should carry several antiseptic wipes in your pocket to clean your hands, if you must touch these surfac-

es with bare hands. Other less convenient options are to use a waterless hand cleaner or to wash your hands as soon as possible.

Wear gloves in the winter. Using gloves will obviously prevent direct contact with contaminated surfaces. On warm days wearing gloves will seem odd, so to avoid contact, use the bottom of your shirt or jacket if possible. Use your knuckle to push elevator buttons, there is likely less of a chance you will touch your face. Carry and use your own pen.

Be particularly careful in hospitals and doctor's waiting rooms because that's where sick people congregate. The CDC reports that hospital caused infections kill 100,000 people in the U.S. annually. Stay out of waiting rooms if possible, by going out into the hall and have the receptionist call you when the doctor is ready. Don't touch magazines or literature in waiting rooms. If a doctor wants to shake hands tell him/her that you can't because you may be ill, and he/she should have a no handshake policy in the office. Use the waterless hand cleaners found in all hospitals and doctor's offices, after touching surfaces that are publicly touched.

Hospitals, doctor's offices and other places where infected people congre-

gate should do more to limit infections. Doctor's offices should have single use pencils or take-home pens for sign-up sheets. Ten pens can be bought for a dollar.

While many stores use antiseptic wipes to disinfect shopping cars, some still do not; tell management to provide the wipes at the door or you won't shop there anymore. Door knobs, push bars and handles in these places should be made of brass to limit infections. Some hospitals are now showing positive results in limiting infections by replacing stainless steel, wood and plastic rails with brass or copper alloys that kill viruses and bacteria. Pure copper is also readily available as a thin foil backed by an adhesive. As a low cost quick fix, the foil can be cut to cover stainless steel and other virus friendly surfaces such as door handles and chair arm rests to limit infection.

Until the medical profession comes up with drugs or a vaccine to treat Covid-19, we have to use whatever means available to prevent a pandemic. I hope some of the suggestions will help.

Joe LaFiandra has an engineering degree from New York University and a MBA from Adelphi University in New York. He resides near Purcellville.

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STATE OF THE TOWN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Nitty gritty 2019 numbers – the debt is down

With respect to Purcellville's financial picture, Fraser focused on the Town's nearly one half million dollars in investment earnings (\$428,646), and the one million dollars+ reduction in the "outstanding debt balance" (\$1,014,410).

General Fund revenues, he noted, exceeded budget projections by nearly three quarters of a million dollars (\$746,112), and expenditures were over \$400,000 less than budgeted (\$433,847).

Operating revenues in the Wastewater Fund were slightly up, as were operating expenses. Fraser noted that the Wastewater treatment debt contributes the most to increasing fees to the citizens, and that high density residential development is not the solution. Likewise, operating revenues were up in the Water Fund, as were expenses.

These numbers, noted Fraser, show that the Town can move on from debt, while retaining what he called "our stellar credit rating."

More financial opportunities ahead ... but not from unbridled growth

Fraser also reinforced one of the most common themes in his administration; that while choking levels of growth is a fact of life in Loudoun County, communities like Purcellville must not succumb to them, or ignore the implications of these phenomena at their own peril.

Not only does growth not pay for itself, said Fraser, it carries enormous costs.

"We will continue to provide opportunities for our youth, to attract visitors through retention of our small-town character, and invite unique businesses," he noted in his presentation. "However, our continued success hinges upon our effective management of the challenges and taking advantage of opportunities."

The challenges? Accommodating growth to the benefit of the citizenry without blowing more holes in Town's finances. The opportunities? Producing more income from existing Town assets, and securing more operational cost savings.

As he has often noted, debt reduction will come, not from annexing huge areas of land for residential development, but by going after high-volume users that can benefit from the Town's excess wastewater treatment capacity.

Debt reduction will come, not from dipping into the taxpayers' pockets on utility rates, but pursuing more of the refinancing and debt restructuring strategies that have been so successful in the last several years – including obtaining value from the 500,000 gallons of clean, treated wastewater that leaves the community every day.

And, debt reduction will come, by getting aggressive – and creative – about how Town assets such as Fireman's Field, the 189-acre Aberdeen property, and others can be used to both generate income and improve the quality of life of current residents.

A business-youth-and community-friendly ... community

Fraser noted that behind the Town's improving numbers was an increasingly vibrant and diverse business profile, along with the social, cultural, and other community efforts that hold people together while generating ... to be blunt ... cash on the dollar.

The Town has "a distinctive blend" of family-owned businesses, boutiques, retail, and service-related businesses, Fraser noted. Entrepreneurship and innovation are alive here.

This includes "23 new storefronts" ... "18 new home-based businesses" ... a new art gallery ... and a Town mural spearheaded by Discover Purcellville.

"One third of Purcellville's population," noted Fraser in his presentation, are young people. And, the Town's leadership – from the Town Council, the Parks and Rec. Department, to Town staff – engaged and reached out to young people in spectacular fashion, including recognizing 21 Eagle Scouts. Fraser also specifically recognized teacher Jose Rodriguez's Loudoun Valley High School STEM class. Even the Town's water towers got into the action as they were painted with the logos of Purcellville's two high schools. And, the Makersmith's organization got youth involved with welding, windmill making, and robotics.

Fraser is the kind of mayor who thrives on keeping lots of projects and initiatives – long-short- and medium-term – in the air at once.

For example, he also reported on the continued progress with big-picture transportation issues such as the Rt. 690/Rt. 7 interchange, which he is intent on accelerating; a "connected trail system" between Purcellville and nearby Hamilton; a bike and skate park public/private partnership; efforts to secure regional, state, federal, and "enterprise funds" for infrastructure improvements; broadband expansion; and a Purcellville Train Station Visitor Center and Museum. Agricultural innovation is on his agenda, too.

Importantly, Fraser, while maintaining a very healthy wish list as Mayor, signaled in his State of the Town address that he is a community-minded man who never loses sight of the economics of it all, particularly as it relates to the public purse.

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HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

link: <https://www.loudoun.gov/2473/Vacancies-on-Boards-Commissions-Committee>.)

Seduction

Despite my sanguinity about our current state of affairs, I always fear the subtle seduction of “growth,” “business” and “prosperity.” We have enough growth, business and prosperity now, and I hope our new supervisors and commission members give short shrift to the developers and realtors who will try to seduce them for more.

A Few Catty Goodbyes

Editor: Whoa! Stop, Charlie! This is the most upbeat thing you’ve written. Don’t spoil it!

Charlie: But I want to trash some bad people who are gone ... thankfully.

Wife: Play nice.

Charles Houston developed office buildings in Atlanta, and has lived in Paeonian Springs for 20 years. He owns a donkey named “Dill,” and in addition to his donkey Dill, he has a beautiful wife named Emily.

BUDGET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

went in the paper.”

Council Member Ryan Cool said, “putting out an equalized tax rate ... people say ‘my taxes are staying the same,’ no folks, not even close ... I would venture to say that no matter what – if it’s \$.22 or \$.26 – your taxes are probably going to go up ... If the tax rate stays the same ... taxes are going to go up, let’s just say it for what it is now, and just be honest about it ... nothing comes for free and development doesn’t pay for itself.”

Cool continued, “The idea that we can get out of these tax issues, these cost issues, by just building out is a fallacy ... it doesn’t work. If it did, we wouldn’t have any debt right now.” Cool urged citizens to look at the budget and tell him what to cut. “You will have the same data I have.”

Council Member Nedim Ogelman said that press releases put out by the Town, Town Manager, or Town Council should not be written in the passive voice “so someone has to track down who the actor is ... if the Town is taking action, we should say that. If the Town Council is taking action, we should say that, if it’s the Town Manager ... we need to have clarity who’s acting ... and at what stage ... We need to do as much as we can, as early as we can ... about saying why we are taking that kind of action or making

that kind of proposal.

“I personally don’t believe that is the case,” continued Ogelman. “I don’t believe we have left no stone unturned with the kind of innovative ideas that the Mayor proposes. There are a lot of things we need, but the reality of doing all these things is always going to be, do we have the means to make them possible?”

Ogelman added, “We need to be honest with our citizens – that we have tried everything we can try to not put the burden of this on their backs – if there is another alternative. If I feel we have not left no stone unturned – I am going to be against any tax increase. I am going to say ‘have we tried this, have we tried that. Have we gone to the county, state and federal government across the board to see if we can get tax credits ... do we ask them for grants?’”

Ogelman reiterated what Cool said: “One thing about fiscal reality that I brought up lots of times is that growth doesn’t pay for itself. For every one dollar we spend it costs us \$1.60 ... That leaves us to work as hard as we can to find innovative revenue-generating ideas to address the growth we have already gotten and the cost that comes with it.”

In addition to the regularly scheduled Town Council Meetings and work sessions where the FY21 budget may be discussed, the Purcellville Town Council has scheduled a series of special meetings/budget work sessions. Here is the schedule of regular and special meetings:

Wednesday, March 18, 7 p.m. – Town Manager Presents his Proposed FY21 Budget

Tuesday, March 24, (this is a regularly scheduled work session) – Public Hearing – Property Tax Rates

Thursday, March 26

Wednesday, April 1

Tuesday, April 14, (this is a regularly scheduled work session) – Public Hearing – Budget and Master Tax and Fee Schedule

Wednesday, April 22

Tuesday, April 28, (this is a regularly scheduled work session)

Wednesday, May 6

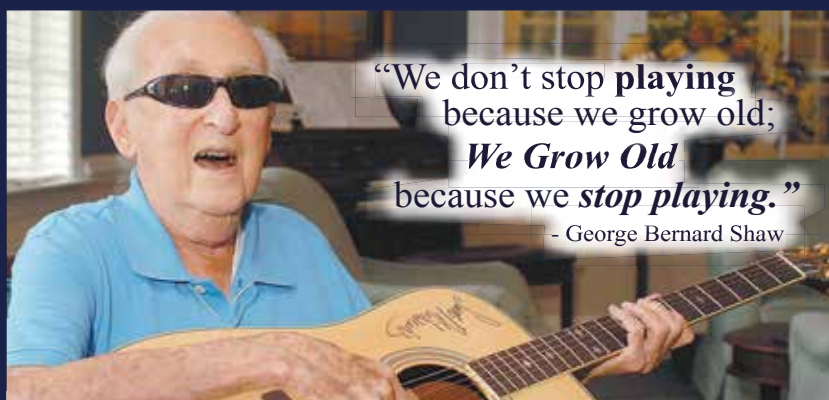
Tuesday, May 26 (this is a regularly scheduled work session) – Potential budget adoption by Town Council

Tuesday, June 9 (this is a regularly scheduled work session) – Town Council Budget Adoption

The meetings will start at 7 p.m. and will be held at Town Hall, 221 S. Nursery Avenue.

The purpose of the work sessions is to discuss the Town Manager’s proposed budget for FY21.

It might be cold outside but we sure are having fun inside!



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- George Bernard Shaw

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CHICKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

spring rite of passage – Siobhan O'Brien – on Feb. 29, the day the store's first shipment of newly hatched chicks was on display. O'Brien works with the store's manager, Dan Virts, to run the sale.

We caught O'Brien just in time. The store was nearly sold out, with this message on the store's Facebook page that evening: "Sold out of Gold and Silver Laced Wyandotte's, Rhode Island Blues and Speckled Sussex. Still have nine utterly adorable Australorps ..."

O'Brien, who hails from Clarke County, has 100 birds of her own. The lady is obviously mad about chickens and all farm birds. "Southern States," she said, will have sold approximately 4,500 little birdies by the time early- to mid-May comes around.

And, according to O'Brien, the sale has a pretty varied customer base. "Families new to the area who want to do some farming," she said, "usually start with chickens.

"Some people want to add more birds to their farm, and some people in the business of selling eggs come in to buy, too."

Southern States, she said, "Has the very best selection between breed and color." And, she wasn't just talking about the color of their feathers. The Southern States Purcellville website has a meticulous list of baby bird breeds that will be coming in over the next few months, and also tells you what color eggs the birds produce – from light brown to dark brown, from white, to blue, to green, to speckled.

And, "Here's a little teaser," said O'Brien. "In May we will be selling a set of

six Ayam Cemani chicks, one of the most rare domesticated birds in the world." The term Ayam means "chicken" in the Indonesian language. The bird is described as "all black, inside and out." Indonesia is where the breed is said to have originated. The Purcellville Southern States baby bird extravaganza continues through mid-May. Different breeds will be for sale on March 4, 7, 11, 14, 18, 21, 25 & 28 and April 1 & 4. And, the last arrivals are expected to be there on May 16.

There is lots of time to experience this sweet rite of spring, and maybe pick up some chicks for yourself. Some reservations are required for some birds. The store's Facebook Poultry Page has hourly updates on the breeds available: www.facebook.com/Southern-States-Purcellville-Poultry-Page-629789494143742/.

BERTAUT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

communications, IT, and data center services.

Bertaut has served the community in many ways. He has served for several years as an adult leader for both his sons in the Boy Scouts. He serves on the Town's Economic Development Advisory Committee, helping to develop income from the town's \$130 million in underutilized assets.

Bertaut holds a Master of Arts degree in Geography from the University of Georgia. His Masters thesis was published in a book of papers on Urban Geography. He has more than a decade of experience with geographic information systems.

Said Bertaut, "I am motivated to serve by a desire to engage more fully in public service to Purcellville. I believe citizen input is invaluable in helping to achieve the goal of what our citizens want in their elected leaders. I pledge to protect our small town way of life."

He lives with his wife, Elizabeth and two children in Hirst Farm, and can be reached at bertautforpurcellville@gmail.com.

FARM TOUR, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25

the online form at Biz.Loudoun.gov/Farm-TourApp.

"Most Loudoun County farms are family-owned and operated small businesses. This is an opportunity to take the public behind the scenes of your #LoudounPossible operations, forge relationships and generate sales," said Loudoun Economic Development's Executive Director Buddy Rizer. "This is a no-cost way to get your

message in front of thousands of consumers from around the region."

Last year's Spring Farm Tour attracted nearly 100 participating rural businesses, including traditional commodity farms, agritainment and agritourism businesses, craft beverage makers, community supported agriculture fans, farmers markets and stands, farm-to-table businesses and more.

According to the most recent national farm census, Loudoun farms produce more

grapes, more hops and more honey than any other county in Virginia.

Loudoun also leads the Commonwealth in alpacas and llamas, and has the most farmers who identify as women, Latinx, Hispanic, Asian or military veterans.

Farm tour locations will be promoted on LoudounFarms.org, social media, public libraries and other public buildings around the county, and through signage near participating farms.

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SIERRA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

of the Plaintiffs [the Sierra family] and an award of damages. On December 3, 2019, the trial court entered its Final order. On December 19, 2019, the Defendant [Hood] filed his Notice of Appeal ... Since the filing of the Notice of Appeal, the parties have reached an agreement thereby making this appeal moot.”

As the Blue Ridge Leader reported in January, in the dramatic and emotional six-day trial, the seven-person jury was persuaded that Hood not only shot Sierra without justification, but also that he moved his police vehicle afterwards to make the scene look more dangerous than it was.

Jurors also seemed to question Hood’s explanation of the sequence of events that took place and their

timing. Something was off.

Attorneys for the Sierra family had noted in a press release that as Officer Hood arrived on the scene, the youth was trying to distance himself from a friend present at the scene, Jared Mingo, and was walking “briskly” away.

But, said the Sierras’ attorneys, “Within 4.7 seconds of spotting Sierra and Mingo, Hood radioed to dispatch that he had located the individuals, parked and exited the vehicle, moved to the left of his door, shot Sierra [three times in the chest and once in the shoulder] ... and radioed back to dispatch...” Hood’s message: “Shots fired, put several rounds into him, got the knife,” continued the press release.

“Evidence revealed,” said the Si-

erras’ attorneys, “that Hood communicated his location at 1:31 on the dispatch record and finished that call at 1:32 on the record. [But] evidence from Hood’s own expert established that it would take Hood approximately one second to exit the vehicle, and two seconds to shoot the four shots, and radio back to dispatch announcing the shots at 1:35 into the dispatch record ...”

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See page 20

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