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SEPTEMBER 2020

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Fueled Farm Brewery “moved” by concerns of neighbors rescinds application for ABC license, will “terminate development”

BY ANDREA GAINES

Citizens opposing a farm brewery on Middleburg’s eastern doorstep welcomed the developers’ decision, announced Aug. 28, to cancel their plans.

Virginia’s state farm brewery law largely preempts local authority to regulate these establishments, yet it is not explicit in defining what qualifies as a farm or what must be produced on site. And while counties have little say, the Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, which issues brewery licenses, is limited in the criteria it considers in denying or conditioning a license.

Minimum acreage requirements are quite small, just 10 acres. Yet the resulting crowds, noise, and traffic can be large. And, music and other forms of entertainment are often part of the

mix. The result can be unwelcome in many rural Loudoun communities. Earlier this year, Middleburg residents Scott Buzzelli and Brian Yarnal filed an application with the ABC Board in Richmond for a small “farm brewery,” just east of Town and adjacent to Mickie Gordon Memorial Park. A legal notice appeared in the Washington Post, where few locals saw it.

Once area residents became aware of the proposal, community alarm bells went off.

Over 445 people signed a petition against ABC approval. And, many of their comments would have made your head spin.

But no one knew how the process – rushed and confusing, pitting neighbor against neighbor, and involving both

a cherished public space and a valued County tourism industry – would turn out.

Would the state ABC folks grant a liquor license to what is essentially a beer bar ... on a barely ten-acre parcel adjacent to one of the most celebrated parks in western Loudoun, and a potential future school site?

Is it wise to set this kind of precedent ... using Virginia’s so-called “Brewery Law” – legislation designed to help farmers and keep land from development – to slip into a rural residential neighborhood what is essentially a beer bar?

The Fueled Farm proposal envisioned producing most of its cold and refreshing product elsewhere – Vanish

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

Purcellville management eyes new police station for upwards of \$6.5 million

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Town of Purcellville’s Aug. 11 Town Council meeting, Josh Bennett with Moseley Architects presented a space-needs assessment for a possible permanent new police department headquarters and also an assessment for a temporary police station. The projected cost for a new police headquarters is \$6.5 million, not including the land. The Purcellville Town Council has yet to discuss the issue.

Said Town Manager David Mekarski, “This is actually the first public presentation for a quest for a possible new police headquarters site for the Town of Purcellville.” Mekarski said the search incorporated both a search for temporary and

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Developers seek last minute redo of mega Vineyard Square project

BY VALERIE CURY

Trying to beat the expiration date of their approved project, Vineyard Square, the developers of the project are looking to change their plans from “luxury living in the heart of Virginia’s wine country” to “workforce housing.”

This according to a meeting requested by a Vineyard Square representative, Casey Chapman, (from CaseCo, another Chapman Company), with the Town on Aug. 17.

The current marketing materials state that “Vineyard Square brings gracious

living to a limited edition of 40 distinctive condominium residences. Each single-level residence comes with fine features and thoughtful design, concierge service and carefree low maintenance.” “Concierge service,” “fine features, and

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Loudoun's Black History Matters, Part III

“Colored” education and integration through the eyes of one Black man

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Louis Jett is an avid Loudoun historian who has documented the County's African American cemeteries, schools, churches, communities, and organizations such as the Emancipation Association.

When he was born in 1950, his family lived in the historically Black village of Oak Grove, about two miles from Herndon. At age 6, he started school in a dilapidated building with two classrooms and coal stoves, two outhouses and a pump for drinking water. “It wasn't much,” Jett says, “but it was close to home, and the neighbor kids were friendly and fun.”

Then, one day, bulldozers arrived. “I remember them digging up our front yard,” he says. His community had been condemned for the construction of the airport that would later be named for President Dwight Eisenhower's secretary of state, John Foster Dulles.

Pushed out, Jett's family moved to Ashburn where he went to the “colored school” in Willard



known as the Ashburn Colored School. Today it may be better known as the historic school that was vandalized with “white power” graffiti four years ago.

In 1958 the family moved again, west to Hillsboro and the African American community on the Short Hill where Louis Jett's mother, Doris Lucas, had been born. Their home on Ashbury Church Road was just a stone's throw from the one-room Colored School in the Hills, where Louis was taught by Miss Hannah Daniel, a Storer College graduate and the same teacher who had schooled his mother.

Progress at a glacial pace

For the African American community, progress did not come as quickly as the runways of Dulles.

According to the late Loudoun historian Elaine Thompson, “When the one-room schools became inadequate and dangerously overcrowded, the school board found endless excuses not to improve them. Groups such as the Odd Fellows in Hamilton and the Willing Workers Club in Purcellville offered the use of their facilities. This tradition of the African American community providing actual school buildings and transporting students at its own expense lasted until the 1940s.

“When Loudoun County finally hired an African American supervisor of elementary schools in 1938, she immediately recognized the injustice and unlawfulness of the situation. She suggested that all parent-teacher associations come together and work under the umbrella of the County-Wide League. This organization became the educational voice for African Americans in Loudoun County. Their most pressing concerns were to get the County to provide school bus transportation and to build an accredited high school.” Thompson added, “These requests were brought before the Loudoun County

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Healing America one square at a time

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Phyllis Liedtke has lived through other national nightmares. At 95, she still can recall her fear of contracting smallpox in the 1940s, and how New York City mobilized to vaccinate residents. “It was quite amazing. Every single one of us received a vaccination within a week or so. But I don't remember anything quite like COVID.”



Phyllis Liedtke

Doing her part to help in a crisis was always Liedtke's way, and the COVID-19 pandemic has been no different for her. “People of my generation are geared to ask, ‘What can we do?’”

When she asked her daughter that question about COVID, she meant it seriously. Diane Canney—artist, technology entrepreneur, and co-owner of Sunset Hills and 50 West Vineyards—rose to the challenge.

Casting about for a compelling idea, Canney remembered the impact of the AIDS quilt, and developed the

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Painted benches around Purcellville 2020 – auction on Oct. 10

Discover Purcellville a 501 (c)(4) community non-profit, will be offering their fourth art project auction. This year focuses on Painted Benches Around Purcellville 2020. “Our artist community is amazing, and am excited about the Painted Benches Around Purcellville 2020 this year. I look forward to the bidding and seeing everyone,” said Michael Oaks with Discover Purcellville.

Up for bid will be 35 benches painted by local art-

ists. New this year – Discover Purcellville had each bench handmade by craftsman Tim Saylor of Hamilton. Money raised at the auction will go towards future community art projects & events.

This year's event will once again be held at the Purcellville Skating on Saturday Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. Attendance will be limited due to social distancing.

Tickets are \$12 in advance and include beer, wine and light food. Purchase your tickets early as a sellout is anticipated. To purchase tickets go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/user/manageevent/4716820>.

The auction will be offered online as well at <https://www.damewoodauctioneers.com/>. Online bidding will open Sept 14, so there will be two ways to bid on these works of art.



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Branchriver Road

By Tim Jon

"By God, there's an old bridge back here! (at least, I think it's a bridge ...Yup, sure Is ...)" I came to this highly intellectual conclusion very early one morning (just about dawn, actually) – at least five years after I'd first driven past the aforementioned, ancient and all-but-forgotten structure.



JON

Effectively obscured for most months of the year by foliage, this cement monolith had become a familiar landmark on my sometimes-assigned route of delivery, carrying the US Mail off Harpers Ferry Road and down the narrow, tree-lined, and curvy little rural lane known as Branchriver Road – generally following the shaded, quiet waterway aptly dubbed 'Piney Run.'

On my few brief stops along this sand, clay and gravel corridor I would experience a palpable absence (in spite of the contradiction in terms) of man-made sound (and, no, I could never forget the unmistakable roar of the mail truck answering every touch of the accelerator); I distinctly recall, many times, actually listening to – and



feeling the hush (the ever-present sighing of the trees in whatever shallow breeze penetrated the stand of wood, the friendly gurgling of the brook, the lazy summer insect buzz, and whatever bird life stirred from my visit), and taking in the fresh (or, at least fresher) air – which always felt cool even on the hottest days, in the much-welcome (except in cold-weather months), and comforting, shade.

Branchriver Road is no thoroughfare: it boasts no housing developments, no shopping centers, no traffic lights (or traffic, for that matter), and hardly a vestige of anything that could be described as public improvements. An "End of State Maintenance" sign and barely-enough-room-to-turn-around are the two subtle hints that you've reached the end of the civilized line;

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Dr. Mike,

The last few months have been hard for me with coronavirus. I work in my home office all day and haven't been to work since late March. I haven't seen a single friend. I've gained 15 pounds. I'm drinking too much, and I can't even remember the last time I worked out with my gym closing. I'm around my children and husband all the time, which should feel good but it doesn't way too often. I don't have energy. I feel sad most of the time, and I lay awake at night worrying about all the things I need to get done but can't.



DR. MIKE

I've never been depressed before, but I think I am and I don't know what to do. My husband is a good man, but he just wants me to "snap out of it." I know I live in a bubble in Ashburn, and I have so much more than so many other people, so what's wrong with me, and why do I still feel so depressed?

— Upset in Loudoun

Dear Upset in Loudoun,

First of all, please know that pandemic fatigue and depression is a very real condition. Unaddressed or untreated situational depression can range from the mild blues to more severe symptoms. Second, please know that there's nothing wrong with you, and try not to be too hard on yourself. Depression doesn't discriminate. Third, please also know that you are not alone. The preliminary research on COVID-19 and mental health conditions has shown a significant increase in depression, as well as other mental health conditions since the start of COVID-19.

Based on the problems you've listed; I recommend that you try to get control over one thing first.

Perhaps this is a good time to reach out to some friends on-line or over the phone or to get together in person with social distancing in mind. You might decide to drink only on the weekends or to take a break from alcohol for a month. Carving out some alone time every day may also help you to feel like you are more in control of things. Getting your husband to appreciate where you are emotionally and getting additional support from him as needed, will also help you to begin feel better.

Situational depression often goes away on its own, when the main stressors you've had difficulty adjusting to become more manageable. If you're not feeling better within a reasonable period of time with increased effort, or if your emotional state worsens, I recommend that you meet with a mental health professional that specializes in treating depression. Research has shown that cognitive behavior therapy, and interpersonal therapy are extremely effective treatments for depression.

Dr. Mike,

My husband and I have watched politics ruin many of our closest friends' relationships and now it's happening to us. I'm wanting to unfriend certain friends on-line because of what I see them posting, and I also don't even want to have some people in my life anymore, because their views are so different from ours. My husband and I are Christians, and we've tried to be non-critical and patient in God's light, but it's getting harder to do with everything that's currently happening. This has also been very painful for me, since some of the friends I no longer wish to have in my life are lifelong friends.

— Upset in Loudoun

Dear Upset in Loudoun,

You've probably heard the saying that you should never discuss politics, religion, and money with people, but those topics are being discussed publicly more than ever. Sure, openly sharing your views on a personally charged topic with friends can be productive, but the risk for upset and hurt can be great. But these are the times we live in, and avoiding social media or public opinion isn't always possible.

Regarding your friends with opposing political views, I recommend that you carefully assess each friendship that you want to end, rather than lumping all of your friends into a group that you need to break up with. If you're a Republican is it really the case that you can't have any friends who are Democrats or vice versa?

In assessing each friendship, I think you should carefully think through the things that drew you to that person to begin with. If you find that there are still lots of positives, and only political differences in a particular friendship, then maybe that's a friendship to continue. You can always openly discuss your concerns and differences with that friend, and even agree to disagree, without having to part ways. Just like you might have long time friends with different cultural backgrounds and/or religious beliefs, why can't you maintain friendships with others who hold different political views?

By carefully assessing each friendship of concern, you will be in a better position to determine what you should do. This exercise will help you to either accept and continue some of your long time friendships where politics could be something that your friends and you can respectfully compartmentalize away from your discussions, or it will help you to let go of others.

"I never consider a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy as a cause for withdrawing from a friend." —Thomas Jefferson

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— View from the Ridge —

Joe Friday's Purcellville

If famous TV detective Joe Friday had read former Mayor Bob Lazaro's recent op ed trashing Purcellville and Mayor Kwasi Fraser for "considering selling" the Town's utility operations, Friday might have said: "Oh, brother," ... or, more appropriately ... "Just the facts, Ma'am."

According to Lazaro's recent op ed, Purcellville residents need to be wary of Fraser. To focus, not on the mind-bending, \$40 million in utility debt that Lazaro saddled them with, but on eight (8) reasons why selling Town utilities is a bad idea. And, why, in the big picture, Fraser is leading the Town down the wrong path financially.

OPINION

Alternative facts

Ironically, just weeks ago, newly-re-elected Mayor Fraser – and a unanimous Purcellville Town Council – had vot-

ed to nix the idea of private ownership of the Town's utilities.

It was the right decision. But in August, Lazaro, perhaps just intent on making a political point, wrote the following:

"As has been widely reported, the Town of Purcellville is considering selling its utility system to Aqua Virginia ..."

"It is unclear what the benefit to the residents and businesses of the Town would be. The risks, however, are enormous."

It was not until the last few paragraphs that Lazaro stuck to the facts.

8 reasons vs. \$40 million

Lazaro, out of office for years now, gave eight reasons why the Town should not sell off its utility system.

But, as the "Just the Facts, Ma'am" box here shows, Fraser has been all over the issue for every year he has been in office ... working diligently to reduce and rein-in the Town's tens of millions in Lazaro debt.

Sell the Town's utility system, and you lose control of rate setting and sacrifice public accountability and transparency, says Lazaro. In some ways, true, but Aqua's unsolicited proposal was rejected.

Sell the Town's utility system, and you end up paying for infrastructure over and

Just the facts, ma'am

On July 14, the Purcellville Town Council voted unanimously against an unsolicited proposal from Aqua Virginia to purchase the Town's utility system.

At the Aug. 11 Town Council meeting, Aqua this time came before the body with a more detailed proposal. But, since that date, the subject of selling the Town's utility system has not been discussed by the Mayor nor any other Council Members.

A History of Purcellville's debt

In 2013, the Lazaro administration decided to refinance its 2010 Utility Enterprise debt of nearly \$40 million. The debt was incurred by then Mayor Robert W. Lazaro when he chose to upgrade and expand the water treatment plant to accommodate future growth (at the time there was a \$6 million mandated upgrade which was paid for through grants). The reason for refinance? Balloon payments due in 2021 and 2029. To date, Lazaro's choice to expand has resulted in the underutilization of the plant by 50 percent.

With respect to debt: Fraser vs. Lazaro

Lazaro's refinancing scheme extended the debt to 2034. This added \$10 million to the Utility Enterprise

debt, with new balloon payments of \$2.4 million in 2020, and \$2.97 million starting in 2021.

Before the 2014 election, Lazaro reduced utility rates (against the advice of staff) and dissolved the Purcellville Urban Growth Area Management Plan – further complicating the Town's growth/no growth/how are we going to pay for all of this debt burden.

- In 2017, Mayor Kwasi Fraser refinanced Lazaro's debt and finally made some headway. Fraser has also removed restrictions that had prevented the Town from obtaining optimum revenue from leasing its assets.
- The Town's debt term has been extended to 2038 at a cost of \$3.6 million – in contrast to Lazaro's \$10 million costs.
- The increase in payment from the 2017 refinance is \$1.3 million (starting in 2023).
- In 2020, Fraser refinanced the debt again, saving the Town \$2 million outright.

When Lazaro left office in 2014, the Town's total outstanding debt was \$61.6 million. The Town's current debt is \$53.8 million as of July 1, 2020 – reduced by \$7.8 million.

over again. Again, in some ways, true. Which is why Fraser is addressing this issue, by controlling rates, and paying down the debt – at the same time.

Lazaro argues that selling off the Town's utilities would, in the end, increase the

Town's debt. Which is why, as shown in the "Just the Facts, Ma'am" box here, Fraser found another way: "When Lazaro left office in 2014, the total outstanding debt being \$61.6 million. The Town's current

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Election and Secession

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Note to reader: I'm taking a break from land use in Loudoun and have fictionalized the overarching issues in America. One of them is our national fracture, which has become a zero-sum game of "I win and you lose." I see no pleasant solution, so I close with a draconian idea.

COVID

The New York Times broke the story May 1 with a blaring headline: "COVID CURE AND VACCINE."

Dr. E.M. Zukosky of the Cleveland Clinic was nearing the end of her post-doctoral research fellowship at the Institut Pasteur in Paris, France's equivalent to our CDC. Her focus was on RSV - respiratory syncytial virus. She found that an enzyme called Trisomy 21 killed the RSV pathogen. Zukosky tried it on human RSV with equally efficacious results and no ill effects. On a hunch, she tried Trisomy 21 on the Coronavirus. The effects were startling - COVID 19 was cured almost immediately and the enzyme also acted as a vaccine. Human trials were begun in secret under the auspices of the

OPINION

World Health Organization. The enzyme worked as hoped and two European pharmaceutical firms began expedited production of the drug, now called "Snycytavir."

Marshall Petain of the Institut and Jack Ryan of WHO met with their counterparts at our FDA and CDC and secured permission to begin sales here. The Times' headline appeared two days later.

Trump Dreams

On that news the Dow Jones erupted, closing at a record high of 31,708. Within days American companies announced re-openings, new plants, and new jobs, jobs, jobs. Governors revoked lockdown orders. Schools announced full in-person learning as the population was vaccinated. Masks became passé'.

By mid-June, the unemployment rate had dropped to 4.9 percent and was still falling. Consumer confidence was extraordinary but the national mood remained mixed. The presidential election was nearing (and Biden had solid leads in the polls), but social unrest never slowed.

In mid-October at a small outdoor rally, Biden seemed spry. A boy held out his skateboard and said, "Try it, sir!" Biden took the board, his aides' faces turning ashen. Biden climbed aboard ... and prompt-

ly fell. It was instant Internet humor, but things quickly turned very serious.

He was taken to Duke Medical Center. Scans showed a fractured skull and a cerebral hemorrhage. Biden was in ICU, comatose. Publicly his doctors said to expect a "favorable outcome" and hid the grave situation. In reality Biden remained unconscious and the physicians saw no hope. Neither did Jill Biden. With the election in three weeks, the Democratic party faced a terrible predicament. It had no choice but to name Kamala Harris as its standard-bearer.

Donald Trump carried every state except California and Massachusetts.

Biden Dreams

There was no skateboarding accident, no Trump victory. Joe Biden was energized for the campaign's home stretch. There was no stock market boom, unemployment was still high and the economy showed no signs of recovery. Social chaos was spreading, getting more violent. General discontent turned voters away from Trump.

Biden's marketing tarred Trump with all that was bad. The message stuck.

Then came the coup de grace. A Fox Network researcher gasped as he stumbled onto the real story behind Snycytavir. It was a fraud! Zukosky and some associates had bought the pharmaceutical companies' stocks before announcing the drug, then sold their positions two weeks after

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

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Hayes reappointed to the Virginia Housing Commission

Governor Ralph Northam has reappointed J. Forest Hayes of Waterford to the Virginia Housing Commission for an additional four-year term.

"Today, I proudly accept Governor Ralph Northam's reappointment to the Virginia Housing Commission for an additional four-year term. It is a great honor to serve my fellow Virginians and to play a role in shaping the future of housing and community development across our great Commonwealth," said Hayes.

GOVERNMENT

The Virginia Housing Commission exists to study and provide recommendations to ensure and foster the availability of safe, sound, and affordable housing for every Virginian. The Commission may also study and make recommendations relating to such other housing, real property, and community development issues as it may be called to consider or as may be desirable.

Hayes serves as a Senior Housing Executive in the District of Columbia Government in Washington D.C., responsible for the realignment and redevelopment of all forms of publicly funded affordable and workforce

housing.

In August of 2019, he was appointed to the Virginia Housing Commission by Governor Ralph Northam. In addition, he is the current Vice Chairman and the At Large appointee to the Loudoun County Planning Commission.

Hayes has worked in every aspect of real estate development, including site assemblage, design, project financing, and project management. As a public official, he has successfully worked on complex development issues involving entitlements, historic preservation, Low-income Tax Credits, New Market Tax Credits (public subsidies), Tax Increment Financing (TIF), and mixed-use development.

He is experienced at navigating and solving municipal and political issues that impact development projects. He has built a career on his ability to create and imple-



Forest Hayes, with the support of his family, takes the Oath of Office with Virginia Secretary of State, Kelly Thomasson.

ment public/private partnerships for the purpose of financing and completing economic development projects. Hayes spent more than eight years on Capitol Hill, serving in a variety of leadership roles for Members of Congress, specifically serving as Associate Staff for the Sub-committee on Commerce, Justice, State Appropriations for New York Congressman Jose E. Serrano (D); Chief of Staff for Texas Congresswoman Eddie Bernice Johnson (D);

Legislative Director for Indiana Congresswoman Julia Carson (D) and Staff Assistant to Indiana Congressman Peter J. Visclosky (D). As a state and local government official, he served in the administrations of Washington, DC Mayor Adrian M. Fenty; Gary, Indiana Mayor Karen Freeman-Wilson; and Washington, DC Mayor Muriel Bowser.

A condo anyplace vs. this Cape Cod in Purcellville? No contest.

Why settle for a condo when this adorable, 1940s Cape Cod awaits you in the charming town of Purcellville?

Imagine rocking on the wraparound front porch, gardening in a back yard shaded by mature trees, and cooking out on the patio on a summer evening.

REAL ESTATE

Beautifully updated and well maintained, this cozy house features hardwood floors and stairs, two main floor bedrooms and a remodeled bath. Upstairs, you'll find a generous master bedroom with built-in storage, office desk, and another lovely bath, just updated. The open-concept living area-living room opens to the kitchen and a separate dining area. You'll love all of the touches—built-in storage and custom kitchen designs that maximize the use of space.

Speaking of space, the home and its large

yard come with a sizable shed for storing all your garden and sports gear, including your bicycle. And you will definitely want to keep your bike handy and your walking shoes beside the front door because this neighborhood offers places you'll want to explore time and again.

Within a block there's a historic skating rink and baseball field, an award-winning distillery and Loudoun's favorite ice cream shop, A two-block walk takes you to Nichol's, the County's famous hardware store—and star of a documentary—which has been serving local farmers and weekend warriors since 1909. One more block and you're at the W&OD trail, a great place to work up an appetite for Magnolia's at the Mill or for that special dish you'll enjoy in your new, pretty, and perfectly appealing home.



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Price: \$450,000

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Wexton Tours Loudoun small businesses impacted by COVID-19

On Aug. 21, Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-VA-10) toured small businesses in Loudoun County to hear firsthand about their challenges with the COVID-19 crisis and how they've been helped by federal relief funding.

Wexton visited Hope Flower Farm in Waterford, Harpers Ferry Brewing in Hillsboro, and Wild Wood restaurant in Leesburg. Wexton also stopped at the Keys Gap Trailhead on the Appalachian Trail in Blue Ridge to talk about the importance of the Great American Outdoors Act to conservation efforts along the Trail.

As with so many businesses, Evan and Holly Chapple, who own Hope Flower Farm, lost most of their revenue for the year due to the challenges from COVID. The Paycheck Protection Program helped them immediately – for their employees.

Wexton discussed her work in Congress during the COVID-19 crisis to make relief programs accessible to Virginia small businesses, including her sending letters on behalf of local businesses to support their applications for federal loans and grants.

All of the small business owners that Wexton met with received federal assistance to help them through this crisis, as have thousands of businesses in Loudoun County. Wexton has pushed for transpar-

ency in the distribution of small business relief funding, and ensuring that minority-owned businesses are not shut out of these programs.

Wexton toured Harpers Ferry Brewing, taking in the amazing views and speaking with the owner Ronda, about the ways the brewery is adapting to COVID-19 and preparing in case things may need to close once again. As the founder of the bipartisan Agritourism Caucus in Congress, Wexton remarked that it was great to see agritourism businesses in Virginia's 10th Congressional District, like the farm brewery, find ways to continue doing business in a safe way.

She finished her tour at Wild Wood Pizzeria Leesburg and spoke with owner Curtis, and other staff over lunch. Like Hope Flower Farm and Harpers Ferry Brewing, Wild Wood received federal emergency loans from the Paycheck Protection Program in the early months of the pandemic, but the Congresswoman agreed those funds alone wouldn't be enough to get local restaurants through this prolonged crisis. They discussed some possible actions Congress could take, including the bipartisan RESTAURANTS Act that Wexton is a cosponsor of. It would provide emergency grants for restaurants facing financial challenges from COVID.



Above, L to R: Holly, Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton, and Evan Chapple at Hope Flower Farm.



Left: Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton, and Holly Chapple.

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Town of Middleburg announces proposal to acquire land for future town hall project

The Town of Middleburg has entered into a Letter of Intent with Salamander Middleburg MUV, LLC to acquire 0.597 acres of land, located immediately behind the existing Town Office, as a part of its plan for the future construction of a new Town Hall building on the existing Town Office site. Under the terms of the LOI approved by the Town Council, Salamander will give the Town the property for a total price of \$1. The property would be used for the construction of public parking, sidewalks and landscaping, with the new Town Hall being constructed on property already owned by the Town.

“Under the terms of Salamander’s rezoning proffers from 2007, Salamander was required to provide the Town with property for the construction of a new Town Hall building; however, the identified property was further to the north. With the cooperation of Salamander, we will be able to relocate the proffered site so it will be contiguous with our existing property, allowing the Town to contin-

ue to utilize its current location, reduce the overall cost of the project in the long term, and continue to serve residents in the most effective way possible,” said Mayor Bridge Littleton.

In 2017, the Town Council identified the construction of a new Town Hall as one of its strategic priorities. This was the result of a number of factors, including that the current Town Office, built in 1964, is too small to effectively provide services to the community and to house the Town staff; the Town is leasing separate office space for the Police Department, which is disconnected from the rest of the Town operations; and the existing Town Office building has undergone three mold remediation events, creating health concerns for those spending extended time in the space.

The Town contracted with PMA Architects to conduct a space needs study to identify how much space is required to meet the Town’s existing operational and staffing needs, to plan for future needs to best serve the public, and to provide usable public gathering spaces. The Town then explored at least eight

possible locations to ensure it pursued the project in the most viable, cost effective manner before identifying the existing location as its preferred site.

In addition to meeting the Council’s strategic initiative of the construction of a new Town Hall, the project would address needs identified by the community and included in Middleburg’s 2019 Comprehensive Plan, such as the need for more public parking, the need for a Village Green space, and the need for more public meeting space for use by all members of the community. In particular, the proposed Village Green would be made available for use by the Town for various community events and activities.

Once the pandemic has passed, the Town may have an opportunity to save money both in the form of interest rate savings and in lower construction costs that may not be experienced ever again.

“We want to make sure we position ourselves to take full advantage of any and all possible cost savings when the time is right,” said Councilmember Peter Leonard-Morgan, the Council’s community liaison for the Town Hall project.

“Doing low-cost concept planning work at this time is prudent from a long-term perspective. To that end, the Town has been working to complete the site acquisition phase of the project so we will be prepared for the future. I want to assure the community that the Council will not take any action to advance the construction project until we are confident of our revenue projections and that the timing is right. We will also plan community outreach efforts to make sure the public is informed and engaged in the design process before moving forward with any construction plans.”

The next phase of the project includes finalizing the land acquisition and formally issuing a request for proposals for architectural and engineering. At this time, all funds are coming from the Town’s Fund Balance, which has a current balance in excess of the Town’s fiscal policy guidelines. Future financings will be pursued at the appropriate time to take advantage of low interest rates.

More information can be found on the Town’s website at: www.middleburgva.gov/TownHall.



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Planning Commissioners reassert control in Purcellville “Let us do our job”

BY VALERIE CURY

The Aug. 6 Purcellville Planning Commission meeting started with Town Manager David Mekarski and Town Attorney Sally Hankins, presenting eight questions they wanted to discuss with commissioners. The questions were general discussion topics, for example, is the zoning ordinance easy to interpret and understand, and what is the biggest negative outcome resulting from the current zoning ordinance, to name a few.

Purcellville Town Council and Planning Commissioner member Stan Milan said he was under the impression that “we were going to start with the zoning,” and he indicated that going over questions would take up too much time. “It took five years to get the [Town’s] comp plan out. We need to address the comp plan and the current zoning ... and move forward ... We have been kicking this can down the road.”

Commissioner Boo Bennett said, “I really don’t want to hear the eight questions. I am very concerned about what’s going on here ...the Planning Commission is seven people and staff from the planning department.” Bennett pointed out that in the three years she has served on the Planning Commission, the Town Manager and Town Attorney have only attended meetings a handful of times, when their attendance was requested.

“We have a job to do, and quite frankly from all the emails I saw this week, the suggested reading, the pronouns “we and our,” and not from the commissioners. Let us do our job. I do not want to hear these questions ... We haven’t seen these questions beforehand. We could be here for days, and this could go on for months – when we could be addressing the zoning ordinance – which is not a comprehensive rewrite. We are amending it to the Comprehensive Plan. We are certified, and we took classes. Let us do our job, and you get involved at some point. We are appointed, and we are to serve the citizens, and we are to deal with the zoning ordinance,” Bennett said.

Planning Commissioner Nan Forbes echoed Bennett’s concerns, saying that the Commission needed to identify its priorities quickly. “Where does the zoning ordinance not fit with the comp plan? ... Let’s get started.”

Stan Milan – appointed to the PC by newly-reelected Mayor Kwasi Fraser, noted that he would have preferred that the Commission have been presented with these ideas prior to the meeting so that

the members would have had an idea of which way to go. “We will spend most of our time listening to Sally’s presentation, and then have to waste time coming back to the second meeting of this month to determine which direction,” he said. “We are going on two months now, and we haven’t even begun to look at anything. Like I said before, I was under the impression that we were choosing one district – the most vulnerable one – and bring the comp plan associated with that district, and making appropriate headway to correct those items that were in contention.

“We are not rewriting the zoning from scratch,” he continued. “If we have legal questions, we would bring in Sally and the Town Manager. The burden is on our shoulders to maintain the will of the people, and stay within the confines of the comp plan, and correct the discrepancies in the zoning.”

August 20 PC Meeting

Each Planning Commissioner chose a different Town zoning district to focus on in the recent Aug. 20 meeting, to come back with recommendations at the next meeting in September. Each Commissioner has been assigned a different district: Milan has Downtown South, Ed Neham has the West End, Nedim Ogelman has East Main Street, Chip Paciulli has Hirst East, Stosh Kowalski has Downtown North, Nan Forbes has the East End, and Boo Bennett has Hirst West.

Their goals are to look at boundaries, get familiar with their assigned area, read through the comp plan for the specific section, and look at current zoning. They will consider what the area should look like from a land use perspective, and consider anything they do or do not want to see in an area, based on citizen input.

The vulnerable areas for development or redevelopment were identified as follows:

- Downtown South – zoned C-4 and planned for Mixed Use Neighborhood Scale. This includes 21st Street where there is a site plan for Vineyard Square, and 140 W. Main Street – where the Shell Station is located (it consists of 1.25 acres). Three properties on Hatcher Street are vulnerable.
- Downtown North – zoned C-4 and planned for neighborhood scale. The area includes numbers 226, 230, 240, and 250 (The Dillon House) N. 21st Street (Cardinal Concrete).

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »



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Rust, Ashburn libraries to serve as child care centers for County employees

BY LAURA LONGLEY

In a bold and aggressive move, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors abruptly informed the Loudoun County Library Board of Trustees in late August of plans for the imminent conversion of Rust and Ashburn public libraries into child care centers, effective Aug. 31. The child care center plan will provide services to children (K-6) of Loudoun County government employees, including public school teachers, for the 2020-21 school year. County Parks, Recreation and Community Services staff will oversee the centers.

Loudoun Public Library Board of Trustees Chairman Denis Cotter said he had been told of the decision just days ago by Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) and Supervisor Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge).

According to library employees who spoke on background with the Blue Ridge Leader, the move by the Board of Supervisors was apparently intended to draw down CARES Act fund-

ing. "That is understandable, but to use the libraries—and on a week's notice to the staff—subverted any input from the library administration. The Board of Supervisors even admitted to sending in a building design team to assess the space, without notifying the branch managers they were there."

In an emergency meeting on Aug. 28, Chairman Cotter and other members of the Library Board discussed alternative solutions to the child care proposal. But the Library Board's influence is limited because it reports to the Board of Supervisors.

"Rust and Ashburn patrons will not be able to enter either branch due to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors' decision to utilize the buildings as child care facilities for the upcoming school year," the library system said.

Not surprisingly, the libraries' Facebook pages have lit up with outcries from patrons who use the libraries as spaces for work, study, and quiet.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »



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Loudoun bolsters online farm marketplace with \$20,000 Virginia AFID Grant

Loudoun farms and agriculture-based businesses got a boost on Friday, Aug. 28, as Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam awarded a \$20,000 Agriculture and Forestry Industries Development grant to Loudoun Economic Development in support of the Loudoun Made Loudoun Grown Marketplace.

The Marketplace, launched in mid-April during the COVID-19 statewide lockdown, provides a direct, online link between farmers and their customers. Farmers set their own prices, delivery, and pick-up locations, and 100 percent of proceeds go directly to the farmers.

The platform, which is powered by Local Line, charges a flat monthly fee for farms to sell on the platform. Loudoun Economic Development initially committed to sponsoring the first six months of use, which would have run through the end of September. The AFID grant funding will be used for advertising, technical assistance, and establishing drop-off locations.

To browse and shop from the Loudoun



Made Loudoun Grown Marketplace, visit LoudounFarms.org/Marketplace.

"Agriculture plays a key role within our local economy, generating jobs, fueling Loudoun's tourism industry, providing residents access to high-quality products, and giving Loudoun a unique asset within the region. But farms can't exist without customers," Loudoun Economic Development Executive Director Buddy Rizer said. "At a time when restaurants, hotels and other bulk buyers were unable to make wholesale purchases from farms, the Marketplace gave Loudoun farms access to a retail audience."

"This AFID grant allows us to expand our vendor list, increase the marketing and development, and fund more #LoudounPossible business opportunities."

More than 660 products are currently

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

Purcellville Tag Sale – Saturday Oct. 10 Rain or Shine

Save the date – it’s that time of year again for the Purcellville Tag Sale. On Saturday, Oct. 10 join the community for a day of fun, shopping, and deals. Oh, and treasures, too.

COMMUNITY

The Purcellville Tag sale is perfect for the hunter, collector, picker, and hoarder in us all. The event starts bright and early at 8 a.m. and goes to 6 p.m. – rain or shine.

All vendors wanted. Go to PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com to sign up. This year the Purcellville Tag Sale is organized by Silas Redd, owner of Nostalgia Boutique located at 142 E. Main Street, Purcellville, VA.

20132. Said Redd, “I am happy to carry on Purcellville’s tradition of the Town wide tag sale. It’s always exciting to find fabulous treasures from vendors and local businesses.”

Sign up today at PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com. The cut off day to sign up is Friday, Sept. 25. Hurry. The first 40 to sign up will be listed on the printed map. But no worries – everyone who signs up will be listed on the website. Text Silas at 540 751-8252 with questions or email him at ShopAtNostalgia@gmail.com. It’s time to get our “stuff” ready to sell at Purcellville Tag Sale, Saturday, Oct. 10 – rain or shine.



PEC’s Annual Photo Contest for youth and adults is underway

Cass Girvin taken at the Beaver Creek Reservoir in Albemarle – one of the 2019 winners.

It’s not as old as black and white film, but the Piedmont Environmental Council’s Annual Photo Contest, now in its twelfth year, has begun, with the deadline for submissions Sept. 30. In honor of the fiftieth anniversary of Virginia Scenic Rivers act, this year the

COMMUNITY

PEC has added a Wonderful Waters category featuring rivers, lakes, streams, and other waterways, along with categories for shots of native plants and wildlife, bucolic views, and downtown streetscapes.

Details for this year’s Annual PEC Photo Contest: Photos must be taken within Albemarle (and Charlottesville), Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, or Rappahannock County.

Adults may enter up to six photos in each of the following three categories:

- Beautiful Landscapes or Streetscapes
- Native Plants and Wildlife
- Wonderful Waters

Young photographers (17-years-old and younger) can enter up to six photos in:

- Youth Category (photos can be of landscapes, streetscapes, wildlife, farms, or anything connected to the environment here in the Piedmont)

The contest is open to everyone with the exception of PEC staff and immediate family. Finalists will be announced in November. The rules and guidelines can all be found at www.pecva.org/photocontest. Contestants should read the full Terms & Conditions before submitting their photos. Contestants may also email questions to photos@pecva.org.

Photos should be submitted via Flickr.com. Submitting photos via Flickr greatly increases the staff’s ability to manage the contest efficiently; and it makes the photos accessible and searchable throughout the year. Step-by-step instructions on how to use Flickr are posted on the PEC’s webpage.

After the deadline, PEC staff and guest judges will choose finalists in each of the categories. Then, the PEC will put those photos up for a public vote online to determine the winners.

Each of the finalists will receive a free PEC membership and have their work featured in upcoming online or print PEC publications. The winners of each adult category will receive a \$75 gift certificate to a nearby *Buy Fresh Buy Local* restaurant. The Youth Category winner will receive a \$75 gift card for iTunes, the Google Play Store, or Amazon.



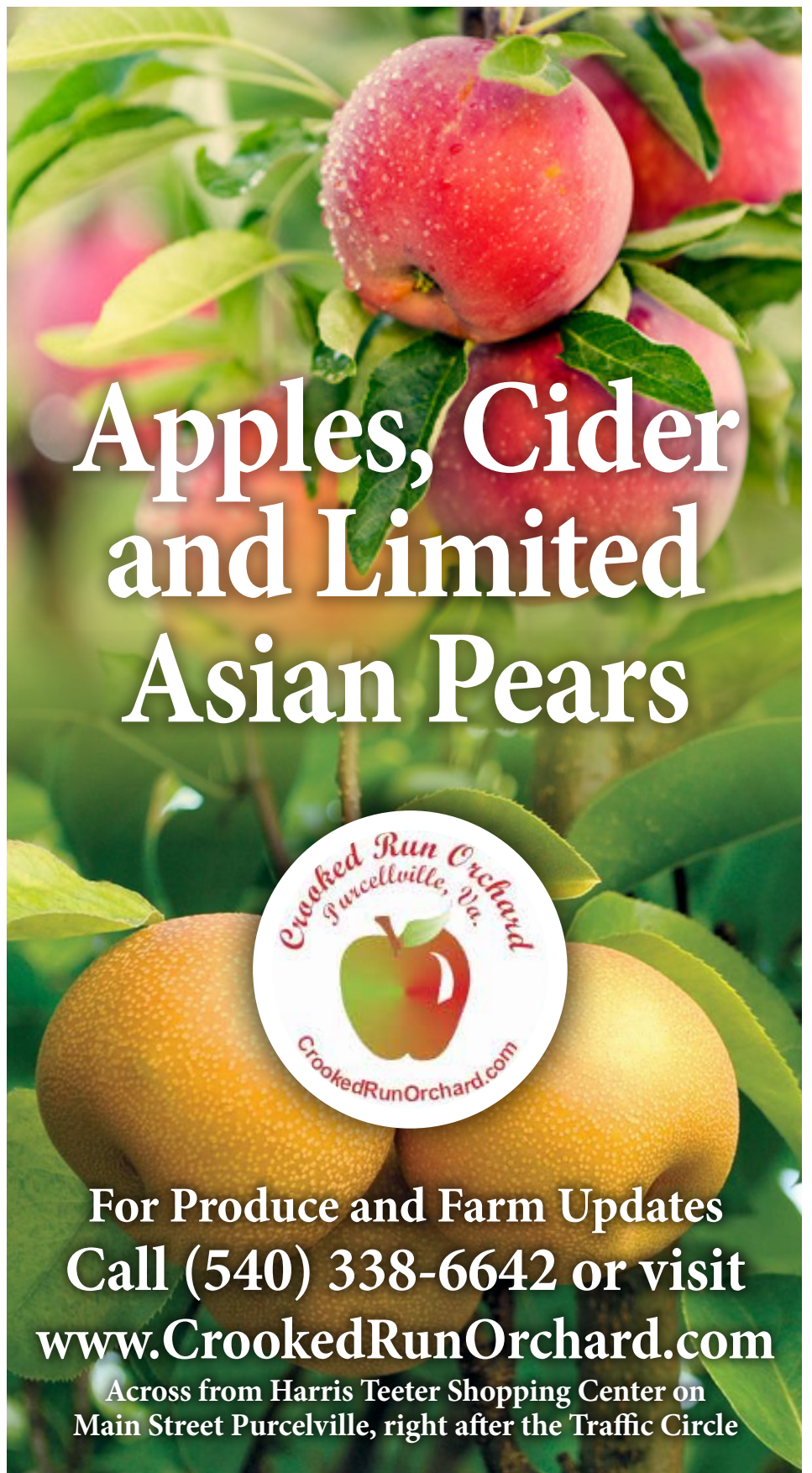
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Samuel Moore-Sobel's memoir *Can You See My Scars?* is published Sept. 1

BY LAURA LONGLEY

The Blue Ridge Leader's long-time columnist Samuel Moore-Sobel opens *Can You See My Scars?* with these words, "This is not a story I ever wanted to write ..."

It begins on the first of September 2009, a week before 15-year-old Samuel would start his sophomore year at Stone Bridge High School. He wanted to earn some extra cash, so he decided to pick up one more odd job.

A man in the neighborhood hired Samuel and a friend to move boxes and furniture from his garage to a storage unit. But when the boys arrived at the house, the work details changed. Instead of moving items from his garage to the storage unit, the man tasked them with emptying the storage unit and bringing items back to the house. That struck Samuel as strange, but he wrote it off: perhaps he'd misunderstood the neighbor in the first place? Once the storage unit was emptied, the neighbor



informed the teens that they also would be emptying the truck of certain items and then loading it with various items from his garage. Samuel's father called and said, "I think it's time for you to leave," but the man said he wanted the boys to clear out a shed. He said, "It's just five, ten minutes down the road ..." Samuel decided to stay.

Forty-five minutes later, they arrived at a woman's house across the county line. Nervous, Samuel was unsure how to extricate himself from the situation.

The house was located in a very secluded place, and the man was saying, "We have until nightfall." Then the woman opened the shed, and Samuel saw it packed to the gills with all kinds of stuff. She instructed the boys to clear it out and put everything on a concrete slab nearby. A box filled with what looked like books and hay found its way into his hands. Following her instructions, Samuel tossed the box on the concrete, and the second it hit the slab

it exploded. Instinctively, Samuel closed his eyes, and then felt a substance hit his face. He felt like he was on fire. The pain was overwhelming. His friend convinced the man to call 911. Eventually, the ambulance arrived, and Samuel remembers that as he was lifted into the ambulance, he wondered whether this would be his last day on earth.

He was rushed to a nearby hospital, then medevacked to Washington Children's Hospital.

It was there that Samuel found out what had burned him: sulfuric acid in a mason jar at the bottom of the box. "Have you seen yourself yet?" an attendant asked. A nurse nearby heard this exchange and tossed a mirror into the boy's lap, and said, "Here, take a look." Samuel was unprepared for what he saw next. His face looked like it had been caked in mud, with brown and black stains. He barely recognized himself.

At Children's, he underwent debride-



ment surgery, where doctors try to scrape off dead skin to prevent infection. Less than 24 hours later, the staff informed him and his parents that there was nothing left the doctors could do. The rest was up to him.

"My book opens with the accident," explains Moore-Sobel, "but that is simply the beginning. As my recovery unfolds,

I have to learn who I am in the wake of this tragedy. I ask questions such as, 'Who am I?' and 'Who do I want to be?' I am thrust into a situation I feel unprepared for. I eventually go to counseling and am told that I exhibit symptoms of depression and PTSD. I have suicidal ideations, and I wonder whether life is worth living.

"Yet two things get me through," he continues. "The first was the love of my parents, brother, and sister. I determined not to act on my suicidal thoughts because I didn't want to hurt them. The accident had caused them enough pain. Secondly, I was determined to survive so I could share this story with others. A few weeks after the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 19 »

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Middleburg Film Festival goes virtual Oct. 15 – 18, 2020

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The Middleburg Film Festival is approaching its tenth year. And, it has never been better.

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Nothing. This year's films include: *Green Book*, *Roma*, *The Favourite*, *Can You Ever Forgive Me*, *Cold War*, *Shoplifter*, *Capernaum*, *Never Look Away*, *Free Solo*, and *Biggest Little Farm*.

Thirty-eight Oscar nominations are among the 28 films to be screened. According to festival organizers, films, activities, and personalities will include: "Three for Best Picture and all five of the Foreign Language nominees ... Special guests [such as] actors Viggo Mortensen, Maggie Gyllenhaal, and Yalitza

Arpacio ... directors Peter Farrelly, Jason Reitman, Joel Edgerton, Nadine Labaki, and Peter Hedges ... songwriter Diane Warren ... and film composer Kris Bowers."

Organizers note that "the festival is struggling to adjust to the nationwide changes and limitations posed by COVID-19 ..."

But, MFF is resilient in its wake. "Everyone's health and safety during these uncertain and challenging times have been paramount in our planning.

"MFF2020 will be a virtual (online) festival combined with outdoor, socially-distanced screenings," they say.

"Our outdoor, evening film screenings will include at least one drive-in and a large screen on the grand lawn of the Salamander Resort in Middleburg. Both our virtual and outdoor screenings will feature the carefully curated slate that our filmgoers have come to expect – including 'Oscar buzz' films, international features, independent gems and fascinating documentaries."

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COMMUNITY



Local Hockey players sell bracelets for charity

Watson (pictured left) and Cian are selling bracelets for a charity on Main Street in Purcellville throughout September. They are Loudoun Knights 10U hockey players from

COMMUNITY

ION International Training Center in Leesburg, and have picked the charity Players Against Hate. The charity Players Against Hate, works to increase racial injustice awareness and change for ice hockey.

Said Watson, "We should all respect each other, no matter where we come from or what we look like. We love hockey, so we wanted to support Players Against Hate by selling these bracelets."

When you see them on Main Street, stop by! "No matter what, anyone should be able to play hockey. There is no hate in hockey, only fun," said Cian.





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COVID CANNEY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

COVID-19 U.S. Honor Quilt project. “For more than 200 years,” she explains, “quilts have been part of the fabric of this nation. They are collaborative in nature, community-based, inter-generational, and often represent those whom history has overlooked. By their nature, quilts are nurturing and provide comfort as in the *Mourning Quilts* and the *Quilts of Valor*.”

When she settled on plan, Canney quickly went to work rounding up support and enlisting the help of the Loudoun Arts Council and the Artistic Fuel Foundation. She is inviting local artists and community members to paint 10 x 10-inch quilt panels to honor first responders, capture the experience of the pandemic, or memorialize someone lost to COVID-19.

Once the panels are curated and volunteers have sewn them together, the quilts may be displayed outdoors in COVID-safe environments, offered at auctions to raise funds for those affected by the pandemic, or mounted in the business locations of corporate sponsors. Extra fabric can go into masks for communities at risk or those unable to get masks for protection. Canney is also working with a developer to create a database so individuals can upload



a digital panel and description of those being memorialized.

Meanwhile, Rep. Andre Carson (D-Ind.) has put forward a bill for a similar project, also inspired by the AIDS quilt, under the auspices of the Smithsonian and the National Endowment for the Arts. Bipartisan support is uncertain, but Carson’s ini-

tiative could generate valuable public interest and participation in the COVID-19 U.S. Honor Quilt.

For now, Phase I of the project is focused on an upcoming display at the Loudoun Arts Film Festival, Sept. 10-13 and 17-19, at Canney’s 50 West Vineyards near Middleburg. For more information, including templates and directions for creating and submitting quilt squares, visit covid19ushonorquilt.org. Squares may be mailed or dropped off to Loudoun Arts, 215 Depot Court SE, 2nd floor, Leesburg, VA 20175, by 5 p.m. on or before Sept. 14, for inclusion in the display. Squares will be accepted for Phase 2 of the project through the end of the year.

And so, has Canney’s quilt project lived up to her mother’s expectations?

Phyllis Liedtke calls it a “marvelous idea” even while admitting she doesn’t have a clue about quilting. Nevertheless, Liedtke has already assembled a panel with the help of her husband and residents of their Florida retirement community. It features a beach with a palm tree and a message of thanks to their caregivers.

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HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

the Snycytavir story broke. They made millions.

The Fox researcher, Matthew Elston, took the news to his boss, Tucker Carlson. Carlson fretted for a day and began his next show with a hang-dog expression as he reported truthfully about the scam. That slammed shut the door on Trump's reelection chances; Biden won.

There was, however, one more post-election event more important than the election itself.

Antifa Nightmare

Commander Leora Schwartz skippered the U.S. frigate Crommelin up New York harbor towards the Brooklyn Navy Yard. It had been a long cruise from the Pacific so at dusk Schwartz gave her crew a slow tour around the Statue of Liberty. The ship's radar and other sensors showed nothing unusual. That was fatal.

An old Boston Whaler was nearby, the boat provided by Antifa. It rode low in the water and was impossible to see in the paling light, and invisible to the frigate's sensors. Hidden under a tarp was a Russian-made 9-K32 missile. America would soon lose its iconic torch-bearing symbol of welcome. Four Antifa members, clad in black, were aboard. One steered while the others undraped the missile, raised its nose to firing level and took aim at the Statue of Liberty. Fire!

Their aim was off and missed the statue, instead plowing into the vertical face of the Crommelin's superstructure. The warhead had a delay fuse and exploded deep inside the warship. Schwartz radioed an SOS. The damage was catastrophic and her ship was sinking fast. She gave the terrible "abandon ship" order and walked to the flying bridge. If need be, she would be the last sailor off. Half the crew failed to escape and Commander Schwartz went down with her ship.

The president launched a retaliatory strike against Iran,

which the National Security Council believed had committed the atrocity. Cruise missiles rained down on Tehran, Isfahan and Qum; almost a million Iranians were dead. The president's move outraged much of the world and domestic opinion was equally divided. There were no apologies from the Oval Office, though.

Secession

Domestic chaos had diminished since the inauguration but quickly reignited. The president was startled at that reaction and needed to deflect attention. A senior aide had been thinking about the cleavage in America and presented a monumental idea to the president. It would do much more than deflect.

The United States of America would divide itself into three countries. West America would be the three Pacific states plus Hawaii and Alaska. The northeast, from Pennsylvania and Delaware north, would become East America. The remainder of the USA, the so-called Red States, had the tentative name of "the Allied States of America." There would be co-defense pacts, free trade agreements and so forth... many, many details.

The president read it three times and saw its wisdom. Rather than imposing a federal edict, the president showed a populist streak, "Let each of them work it out. They'll have to create separate constitutions, separate laws and separate economies. I don't want to micromanage all that stuff."

The president also pondered a personal question, "What will I do?"

Finally, it was clear. The first job was to sell the plan to America, making the analogy of a bad marriage heading for divorce and staying involved until the secessions were finalized and then resign. After all, the USA would no longer exist.

The plan was announced to the country in a prime-time

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

VIEW FROM THE RIDGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

debt is \$53.8 million as of July 1, 2020."

Lazaro says that selling the Town's utility system to an entity that has a lower bond rating than the Town's is not a good idea. Which is why Fraser has, again, found other ways to preserve the Town's stellar bond rating – AAA Rating from Standard and Poor's. Lazaro also brings up Aqua's poor consumer ratings, and other reports and profiles that question financial and management strength. Again, not an issue, since outside ownership of Town utilities by Aqua was nixed.

Lazaro ended his recent op ed by reminding all that the Town's utility assets belong to the people, and should not be in the hands of a private company. Again, the issue is moot, since outside ownership was nixed by Mayor Fraser and the Town Council.

We think Lazaro should explain to the people of Purcellville why he saddled them with over \$40 million in new debt ... and then step back and let the man who has reduced that debt by over \$7 million to run the show.

That \$7 million is now in the pockets of the people, with water flowing and utilities humming in Purcellville, as they always have.

At the very end of his recent op ed, the former Mayor got real, saying: "Newly-elected Mayor Kwasi Fraser, at the helm in Purcellville for a fourth term now – and obviously quite popular with resident voters – agrees, as does his Town Council. Fraser and the Purcellville gave a unanimous thumbs down to Aqua Virginia's unsolicited bid to take over..."

Those are, "Just the facts ... sir." Thanks!

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CAN YOU SEE MY SCARS? CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14
 accident, I was lying awake in bed unable to sleep—after the accident, I suffered with insomnia for years. As I lay there, it came to me: I had to write a book. It was the only way I could make something good come out of something so terrible.”

Moore-Sobel took it one day at a time. He endured more than a dozen surgeries, including reconstructive, laser, and steroid injections, which have helped his face look better than he could have imagined. And he started writing. As luck would have it, he connected with the Blue Ridge Leader when his high school newspaper, Stone Bridge’s Bulldog Tribune, ran out of room for a story he’d written on voting in his first election. He shopped it around, and after we said “yes” to the story, he came back, and asked if he might write a column. Some 80 columns later, Samuel is still engaging our readers with his perspective on our rapidly changing world.

He finished high school, went to George Mason University, where he earned a degree in government and international politics, landed good jobs, bought a condo in Leesburg, and committed to carrying on. “I wrote the book to help other people on their own journeys and to make sense of my own experience, and what happened to me.”

Epilogue: Over the last few years,

however, there was one thought that continued to trouble Moore-Sobel, now 26: Would any girl ever love him?

In December 2018, Samuel met a young woman, Megan, through mutual friends. “I know it sounds cheesy,” he laughed, “but it was love at first sight.” By August 2019, they were engaged. “I proposed to her at the top of the steps of the Lincoln Memorial, which we had visited on our first date. I’d sent my brother ahead of us to light candles, but he needed help to finish before Megan and I arrived. Complete strangers came to his rescue and stood in front of the candles so they wouldn’t blow out in the wind. When I got down on one knee and proposed, everyone hollered, “What did she say?” I turned and shouted, “She said yes!”

Can You See My Scars? was published on Sept. 1, 2020. It is available through the Mascot Books (<https://mascotbooks.com>) and on Amazon.com. Hardcover: \$24.95. Samuel Moore-Sobel is currently giving presentations on the book throughout the Washington, D.C. area. He welcomes opportunities for book readings, signings, and talks with groups on those timeless questions about identity, suffering, purpose, and ultimately what it means to be human. Readers can learn more about Samuel, and contact him by visiting his website: www.samuelmoore-sobel.com.

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NEW POLICE STATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

permanent headquarters. The process has been going on for over a period of two years said Mekarski, who has been pushing for a new police station.

Purcellville Police Chief Cynthia McAlister said, "You know its near and dear to my heart." She pointed out that the current space rented by the Town is too small and not secure for her staff. It has insufficient workstations, storage, security and space.

The Town Police Department has 23 on staff, according to the current budget document (although a few positions are currently not filled). The aim is to get to raise the staff level to 32 over several years including four school resource officers and two detectives.

The Sheriff's office patrols the Town, and the Town uses the sheriff's department for detectives and numerous other services as needed. The police department/public safety is 25.6 percent of the Town's budget (\$24 cents on the dollar goes to the department). The FY 2021 proposed budget has an increase in this department of \$347,272. The budget is \$3.027 million. Purcellville residents pay County taxes.

For the proposed permanent headquarters locations, Moseley Architects presented three: one at 36803 Alder School Road, one at 36716 W. Main Street, and one on the Stupar property. The three properties are vacant land. The plan envisions a building of 12,00 square feet. The size was determined by a questionnaire sent to the Chief and her staff to arrive "at an objective numerical value," said Bennett.

Mekarski said land is going for \$100,000 per acre in Purcellville. However residential lots the size of a quarter acre are priced upwards of \$100,000, and commercial undeveloped property is even more expensive for less than a half an acre. Two vacant commercial parcels of less than an acre sold over five years ago for nearly \$1 million.

Mekarski said that at the projected cost of \$6.5 million, a 20-year loan would have estimated yearly payments of approximately \$400,000 to \$500,000. This would amount to \$8 to \$10 million over the loan's term, not including the land cost.

Bennett presented four possibilities for leasing, either permanently or temporarily. The Town can continue to lease in the Lowers Group building and increase the space. Currently the space the Town leases for the Police Department is 4,300

square feet. The Town has an option to lease an additional 3,100 square feet for a total of 7,400 square feet.

Mekarski is estimating \$26. per square foot for leasing any space. That includes a triple net cost: maintenance, insurance, and taxes. He has also factored in an annual build-out cost of \$100,000 on any space that the Town would rent.

The other three possibilities for lease are: the Pickwick building near Kingsbridge off Main Street, Dragon Hops on Main Street (the old town hall) – which is for lease or sale (\$2.9 million asking sale price), and the Pullen House on 20th Street across from the Bush Tabernacle. The Pullen house would have to be torn down and there is not ample parking.

"A million-dollar build-out renting does not give you the same as a new building," said Mekarski. He said that the time to borrow is now. Bennett said that a police station, which is open 24 hours a day and is subject to abuse – has three times the normal wear and tear as a regular building.

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser asked Mekarski, "You just made a statement that the time to borrow is now ... how do you know that ..." Mekarski said the statement was from Davenport & Company, the Town's financial advisor. Council Member Stan Milan asked if the "estimate includes the purchase of the land," to which Bennett said, "No it did not."

At the Town of Purcellville's Aug. 25 Town Council Meeting Kyle A. Laux of Davenport & Company presented a scenario for the Town to borrow \$3 million as a line of credit – "think of it as a liquidity insurance policy" said Laux. The loan would allow the Town to draw upon it as needed and protect the Town from surprises. Laux also said that the loan could be used for the purchase of land and design for the police station.

Director of Finance, Liz Krens said, "We have over \$20 million in liquid assets at this time, so we are very, very strong..." She also said that the Town sales tax revenue for the month of June was \$117,000, which was up \$10,000 from June 2019.

Fraser said, "... It seems like the economy is improving ... So how do we sell this to the citizens that we need this insurance policy of \$3 million unless we anticipate things are going to get worse?"

Laux suggested the Council vote on the matter at the Sept. 8 meeting.

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

address from the Oval Office. Stunned silence must have been everyone's initial reaction, but slowly the country saw that the tri-partite secession would work since the only alternative was fiery, unending discord. Domestic peace was at hand.

The president, now ill and frail, was deified. Abraham Lincoln won praise by keeping the union intact while the president

won praise by dividing it.

Author's Note: If you haven't already figured it out, all of this is basically fiction. Ironically, the idea of secession has been broached for western Loudoun, first in 2005 and again in 2012.

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

LIBRARIES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

One mother of three school-age children summarized many of the comments: “I think this is a poor decision for all those in the public who would like to use the library. There are lower income residents who go to use internet. There are so many home school moms and teachers like me that use the library for teaching resources ... I think it’s sad that our local government is putting one group’s needs above other groups.”

But, as the Blue Ridge Leader went to press, it was clear that the decision would stand.

“Well, this is where I come in,” wrote Randall on social media. “The Loudoun County BOS will hear this issue at our meeting on Sept. 1. I won’t be coy; I’m voting in favor.”

“The BOS is trying to provide ‘child care’ for our County and LCPS employees who have children in grades K-6. However, the goal is more monitoring than child care. They will bring their school work, Chrome books, etc.

“Why... the majority of County employees are essential. Fire and Rescue, Sheriff’s Dept, Mental and Behavioral Health Services, Court Services and even some Administration services. Our teachers are working, virtually yes, but working all the same. Speak-

ing only for myself, we can’t require people to work yet not see after their children. We are trying to use County facilities, so we can keep down costs. These two libraries are just two of the County facilities we are using, and we have no choice but to use them if we don’t want to spend funds leasing other, non-County owned facilities. The cost will be as minimal as possible and will only cover cost. There will not (and should not) be a profit.

“The minimum adult to child ratio is 10:1 Obviously, we observe all hygiene and social distance policies put forward by the CDC and VDOH.”

Randall concluded her post by noting that any further comments can be sent to her at Phyllis.randall@Loudoun.gov

The Loudoun County Public Library system includes nine branches plus a law library. Beginning Monday, Aug. 31, the Ashburn and Rust branches will be limited to Curbside Pickup Service. Patrons will not be able to enter either branch. Curbside services at each location will be available Monday through Thursday, 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday, 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. Patrons are encouraged to place holds through the online catalog or call the Ashburn (703-737-8100) or Rust (703-777-0323) libraries for assistance.

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

some of the private residents have significantly longer drives.

The folks who live out on Buzzard Rock Lane have a list of names at the turn-off which you may – or may not – be able to find out that way; a primitive little path tangents off at this final juncture.

The last time I visited this spot, I waited there for first light – albeit in the comfort of my car – wondering what unknown creatures (some, perhaps, human!) may have been scoping out my presence in their little corner of the world. My first shots on a day like this usually come out about ‘as dark as the hinges o’ Hades,’ and these later proved the case on checking my photography; knowing I wanted more help from Mr. Sun, I took a very leisurely pace back out toward Harpers Ferry Road, and relative civilization.

The growing light allowed for some acceptable images of Piney Run curving out of the landscape, flanked by overhanging shoulders of greenery. I recalled, along the way, some of the hair-raising experiences I’d ‘enjoyed’ – or, perhaps ‘suffered’ – in trying to coax a mail truck up a number of these driveways (seemingly-impossible angles of ascent, rock-strewn, tree-obstructed, and sometimes prohibitively muddy – if you have never uncontrollably slid, backward, downhill, in a loaded mail truck – when you’re attempting to climb – well, you’ve just never really properly lived), and felt – that morning, anyway – just a little more comfort-

able in my private all-wheel-drive vehicle.

So – with my memories, and my comfort, and my few acceptable shots of the morning’s adventures, I eventually made my way back out to within just a few yards off the busier highway; I knew I’d stop here, to learn – after these many years – just what in heck that concrete-looking object was – sitting off by itself out in the undergrowth – and not far from the current right-of-way for Harpers Ferry Road. I’d never stopped here while on official delivery to check it out.

I was surprised and impressed at the solidity and preservation of the thing; no doubt, the local ‘traffic’ had – far back in the day – regularly used this one-lane, cement bridge to cross Piney Run. I didn’t stomp through the woods this time to see just where the crossing could have taken me; I knew that Butts Lane lay just to the North – a couple hundred yards off, at best – and didn’t want to encroach on somebody’s backyard.

At least I THINK that’s where the little bridge could lead to; maybe it’s just a little piece in the greater puzzle that makes up what I often refer to as the ‘Loudoun County Vortex’ – a combination of collected space, matter and time, cast into a spell to confuse us mere mortals.

Maybe it’s a good thing I didn’t go all the way across; David Lynch would have to send Agent Dale Cooper after me, in just one more Twin Peaks Episode.

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VINEYARD SQUARE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“gracious living” descriptors certainly contrast with the new concept of “workforce housing.”

The project – which has pitted Vineyard Square developers against downtown Purcellville historians, conservationists, and the public for years – now faces an expiration deadline of Feb. 16, 2021. If developers do not start the project by that date, then the Vineyard Square plan will be void. The developers would have to start with a new plan, and also adhere to the new height limit of no more than 45 feet in three stories.

Vineyard Square is in the C-4 District, located on N. 21st Street in Purcellville. It also stands within Purcellville’s Historic Overlay District.

The project was approved by the Lazaro Town Council in March 2014. The Certificates of Design Approval should have expired in March 2015. However, the Town’s Zoning Administrator determined at the time that the project had “commenced,” extending the project’s start date into 2021.



Hatcher Street showing the three houses.



A photo of 21st Street with the current rendering of Vineyard Square inset.



O Street showing not a thru street.

At the Vineyard Square location on N. 21st Street, instead of the approved 40 units, the Chapmans are proposing 70 to 80 units – double the approved number.

161 Hatcher Street. The three properties are outside of the Historic Corridor Overlay District, but are “contributing structures” to the district.

The Chapmans are now proposing workforce housing, but, want to piggyback on the original approval – although a deviation from the original plan would require additional action such as traffic studies and impacts on the neighborhood.

At the Vineyard Square location on N. 21st Street, instead of the approved 40 units, the Chapmans are proposing 70 to 80 units – double the approved number. Instead of four-bedroom condos, they are recommending two bedroom units. They would still keep retail on the bottom floor – with residential above.

Workforce housing is housing for families whose in-

Developer Casey Chapman met with the Town just weeks ago, on Aug. 17, to present his new vision for both Vineyard Square and Hatcher Street.

The Chapmans own three houses on Hatcher – numbers 141, 151, and

come is 80 to 120 percent of the area medium income. The developers would need the Town to connect O Street with Hatcher. O Street is currently not a through street. They want to take the project through to Hatcher, tearing down the three homes, and replacing them with an additional 30 to 40 units of workforce housing, and retail on the bottom floor.

This, again, would nearly double the size of the project units for Vineyard Square, while adding 30 to 40 more condos and retail on Hatcher Street.

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser expressed concern in an email on Aug. 18 over architecture look and fit, traffic congestion, infrastructure impact, and the proximity to the historic district. He also said some of the homes in the area are recognized by the state as historic.

As it stands as of press time, CaseCo will make a presentation at the first or second meeting in September.

Chasing the subsidized housing dollar

Ways for developers to find government subsidies – taxpayer cash – include the Housing Production Trust Fund through the State of Virginia. There is also the Historic Housing Tax Credit program, which helps finance the redevelopment of historic structures. There are energy tax credits, tax rebates, performance grants, special financing, and other state and federal funds. Applicants can also use funds together, by doing a funding stack – to name a few.

BLACK HISTORY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

School Board, which routinely listened to the complaint of the community and made idle promises or gave excuses, but rarely took any action.

“The idea of African Americans providing land for schools had been discussed for several years,” explained Thompson. “In 1939, the County-Wide League, on behalf of Loudoun’s African American citizens, purchased eight acres of land in Leesburg for the sole purpose of having the County build a high school. League members engaged Charles H. Houston, dean of the Howard University School of Law and legal counsel for the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, to help them. Houston was opposed to the ‘separate but equal’ doctrine, but he decided that was the best route for achieving immediate relief.”

Carver Elementary School in Purcellville, which Jett attended, came about in the same way: Lena and Joseph Cook, local African Americans, paid for the property. (White residents, of course, were not required to raise funds for land to build

their schools.)

It would be nearly three decades until Loudoun County Public Schools fully integrated in the 1969-1970 school year—15 years after the Supreme Court’s *Brown v. Board of Education* decision declared that separate cannot be equal.

Integration: a mixed blessing

For Louis Jett and many more Black students like him, integration of the schools proved to be a mixed blessing.

In his first two years of high school, Jett joined most of the Black students from western Loudoun who were bussed to Frederick Douglass High School in Leesburg. iHi “I liked Douglass a lot,” he recalls, “but I went there for only two years.

“You see, there was this girl I knew who

was going to go to Loudoun Valley High School the first year it began integrating (1968-1969). She asked me to join her, so she wouldn’t be the only Black kid there,” he said.

“I thought this would be no big deal—that you just said you wanted to make the change from Douglass to Valley. But the Board of Education made me come in and get my records and transcripts and send them to Richmond for review before I was admitted to Valley.

“I wish I’d never gone,” he went on. “It was hard to sit there and, when you turned your head, you’d see half the class rolling their eyes.

“Mostly, it was hard to learn when you faced being called the N-word all the

time. There was a lot of racial tension,” he added. “And fights. I remember squaring off with 10 or 12 students in the hallway and ending up in the principal’s office.

On Aug. 28, the 57th anniversary of the March on Washington and Martin Luther King Jr.’s “I Have a Dream” speech, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam announced the launch of an African American high school history course, an elective that is being offered this academic year to students in 16 Virginia school divisions, including Loudoun. Meanwhile, the Loudoun County School Board and superintendent announced plans to make a formal apology for the school system as one of the last in the nation to desegregate its schools.

“I also wanted to play sports but didn’t because I didn’t want to put myself in that position—even though I think I was the most gifted and qualified one there.” [Note: Jett’s children are athletes. A daughter ran in the 1996 Olympics, and son James played nine seasons with the Oakland Raiders.]

Today, Louis Jett remains skeptical of real change in race relations and equity in education. But for this self-taught historian, recipient of the Loudoun History Award, and invaluable member of the African American community through the Loudoun branch of the NAACP, the Black History Committee of Friends of Thomas Balch Library, the Edwin Washington Project, the Hillsboro Preservation Foundation, Pastor Michelle Thomas’s Loudoun Freedom Center, the Carver Alumni Association, and his own Black History Foundation, there may be a glimmer of hope.

“The other day I saw all these people standing on a sidewalk with signs that read, ‘Black Lives Matter.’ I couldn’t believe it: they were all White.” He smiled.

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FUELED FARM BREWERY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Farmwoods Brewery in Lucketts. So, was this really even a “farm” at all?

At an Aug. 25 ABC Board hearing on the license application, a dozen official objectors were represented by noted attorney and 24-year veteran Virginia legislator David Albo of Williams Mullen LLP. The Piedmont Environmental Council's Loudoun land use expert also had filed in opposition to siting the brewery next to the park.

A major problem, however, is that with farm breweries, the County has little authority to regulate, and in determining who gets a liquor license, state regulators run the show.

Issues such as outsized noise and traffic, public safety, diminished property values, and one's ability to enjoy the “quietude and tranquility” of one's home and property are involved. And, certain proposals, including projects that border a park, playground, church, school, or other public space may be disapproved by the ABC Board. Mickie Gordon Memorial Park is actually owned by the Loudoun County School Board, and could be a future public school site.

Virginia's farm brewery laws, intended to promote “farm breweries” lack enough specificity and are presenting Loudoun residents with a conundrum. People ask, what are the limitations, here? And, if you are not growing the crops you need to make your beer, are you a “farm” at all?

Opponents of the Fueled Farm proposal said it “pushed the envelope” and laid bare the inadequacies of

Virginia's laws on the subject. But it is not the first time rural Loudoun residents have faced what they consider a non-farm brewery in their midst. In a place such as Loudoun County – bristling with new wineries, breweries, and distilleries – that's a problem. Critics, faced with local authorities unable to regulate for the public safety, contend that the well-intentioned pro-brewery legislation has backfired – with neighbors not learning about the ABC application until the last minute.

The Fueled Farm project would have included a lot for 150 cars, seating for 300 people, outdoor activities, food service via a dedicated food truck, and likely outdoor music -- on just 10 acres. Existing structures would have been converted to events space and overnight lodging.

But Fueled Farm would have produced only a fraction of the beer sold there. The majority would have come from the 63-acre Vanish Farmwoods Brewery, 20 miles away in Lucketts. And Vanish would have run all operations.

Buzzelli and Yarnal presented their plans for Fueled Farm to the Middleburg Town Council in May. The partners indicated that neighbors were OK with their plan, but neighbors complained that was the first anyone heard of it. The Town Council wrote to the ABC Board to express serious concerns.

In publicly withdrawing their application, Buzzelli and Yarnal obviously took the community's sentiment to heart.

There's big money in Loudoun's growing winery and brewery and agritourism industry, of course, leading some to welcome it with open arms and almost no re-

strictions. The crowds, noise, and safety hazards that it brings to quiet rural corners of the county lead many to take a more cautious view of the topic – including where such alcohol establishments are located, how they affect their neighbors and communities, and how they are regulated.

Middleburg neighbors and community members cited concerns about noise -- especially from music and events – diminished property values, traffic and safety, and the proximity to park facilities and a potential school site. They explained this is the latest example of misuse of the farm brewery law, which was passed to help struggling farmers and to keep land in agriculture by slowing development. Too often, that's not what is happening. Instead of true farm breweries, beer bars are dropped into rural communities.

The farm brewery law envisions beer made on site from products produced on the farm. Loudoun's Economic Development Department cautions prospective brewers that such operations are expected to be “farm first and brewery second.” Opponents of the Fueled Farm proposal thanked the project's developers, Scott Buzzelli and Brian Yarnal, for acknowledging community concerns and dropping their plan. They encourage residents throughout Loudoun to press their state legislators to clarify and tighten Virginia's farm brewery law to provide more meaningful public notice and opportunity for comment, set minimum acreage requirements, and adopt standards to ensure farm breweries do not threaten the rural character of their communities.

I have received your petition, read your candid remarks, and am moved by the concerns of our community. Brian Yarnal and I are rescinding our ABC application for Fueled Farm Brewery and will terminate development of our project. Our motive for the local farm business was to provide our community with a family friendly place to fellowship and unite. It was certainly never intended to divide, nor jeopardize the many wonderful relationships that we have established through the years. The town of Middleburg and its residents are very important to me. As I want to uphold God's highest calling to love one another and live at peace with your neighbors, I feel this decision is in the best interest of us all. We appreciate you communicating your earnest concerns for our town.

— Brewery promoters Scott Buzzelli and Brian Yarnal

Community thanks brewery promoters:

Having become aware of the depth of heart-felt concerns of the community, Scott Buzzelli and Brian Yarnal have withdrawn their application for an ABC license to develop a farm brewery and event center just outside of Middleburg. The 445 people on the petition against the proposed Fueled Farm Brewery, and the official and unofficial objectors who filed oppositions at the Alcohol Beverage Control Board, wish to thank and applaud Scott Buzzelli and Brian Yarnal for doing the right thing and putting our Middleburg community first. This shows they are good citizens, mindful of the heart-felt concerns of their community and neighbors.

PLANNING COMMISSION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

- East End – This area is zoned Transition-X, and has two single family homes on two properties, the DiPalma-Kipfer and O’Toole properties.
- East Main Street – 871 East Main Street is an area that might be redeveloped – it is 1.5 acres.
- Hirst East – Commercial Neighborhood scale.
- West End – planned for Mixed Use Neighborhood Scale.

Milan ended the meeting by emphasizing that the Planning Commissioners have “a large burden as to planning.”

He said that the commissioners are “embarking on a process that will define how this Town looks for the next 15 years. “It will take diligent work and attention to detail,” he continued, “We have to look at it as our mark, our legacy for the Town. What do we want to leave for the future residents that live here? We have to keep in mind that we are setting the legacy for the Town of Purcellville.”

LOUDOUN’S ONLINE FARM MARKETPLACE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

available on the Marketplace, provided by 40 Loudoun farms. Thanks to Loudoun’s rich soil and nine-month growing season, new products are constantly cycling through the Marketplace.

Loudoun supports approximately 122,000 acres of farmland and more than 1,200 independent farms. On average, Loudoun County farms are 97 acres, with more than 50 percent of farms totaling 50 or fewer acres.

Studies of the Washington, D.C., metro area have shown that agriculture within 100-200 miles of D.C. has fallen short of meeting consumer demand.

Loudoun farmers have indicated to the county that part of the problem lies in the large amount of time they must spend transporting produce to and from farmers markets. Often farmers must visit markets three to four times per week to sell their produce, limiting their production hours and falling short of consumer demand.

“Nearly all of our farms are family-owned and operated, which forces them to wear sales and marketing hats

in addition to agriculture. The Loudoun Made Loudoun Grown Marketplace helps automate that sales process while they focus on what they do best,” said Business Development Officer for Agriculture and Business Services John Magistro. “This is a service that was born out of a crisis, but can be a powerful tool to support the Loudoun farming community moving forward.”

In addition to the \$20,000 grant, Loudoun County has already committed at least \$31,000 to marketing and administration, along with \$30,600 in staff time during the two-year grant cycle. Transactions on the Marketplace have been completed following the latest COVID-19 preventative guidance from the CDC and Virginia Department of Health, and many farms have taken the Loudoun Is Ready pledge.

Loudoun County and Floyd County were both announced as Virginia AFID grant recipients, with Governor Northam stating: “I commend the efforts of Floyd and Loudoun counties to partner with stakeholders in their communities and help local farmers adapt to the new realities of the COVID-19 pandemic.”

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