

Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

17th ANNUAL PURCELLVILLE TAG SALE See p.18

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SINCE 1984

Sparks fly in historic Philomont over surprise plans for new firehouse

BY LAURA LONGLEY

As fires continue to rage on the West Coast, a blaze has ignited in Western Loudoun County over the proposed construction of a new Philomont Fire Station on the village's beloved old Horse Show Grounds.

Not surprisingly, this fire's been lit by a

failure to communicate.

First brush fire

Early in September 2020, residents of Philomont, located seven miles south of Purcellville, received a "Winter 2020" newsletter from their Philomont Volunteer Fire Department with an unexpect-

ed announcement: "Loudoun County Fire and Rescue is currently in preparation for an information briefing to the greater Philomont community. The purpose of this briefing is to inform the community of their early planning for a new Fire Station to serve the Philmont

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30»

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It's the most wonderful time of the year. Just ask Stella!



This photo of an adorable pooch hiding in the leaves is your cue to let your buddy out for a run around—or into—the leaf pile in your yard. If he needs coaxing after too much time in quarantine, plop Man's Best Friend in front of a screen

and join the 5 million viewers who've already watched a yellow lab named Stella conquering the leafy peak in her backyard. Just Google "Stella's Best Leap Jumps of All Time." Your canine companion will thank you!

Chipping away at charm ... one brick at a time



The building is designed "to evoke a neo-traditional commercial and row house feel," according to the staff report.

BY VALERIE CURY

What happened there? ... a new – or old resident of Purcellville might say.

In recent weeks, well-known local developer Casey Chapman, with Martinsburg Plaza LCC and Loudoun West Investments LLC, presented a rendering of his vision for a major new residential/commercial development on Hatcher Ave. in Purcellville. Most residents would consider Hatcher Ave. to be the start, so-to-speak, of the old part of Town.

The proposal is called Trails End, LLC, and proposes to tear down three homes on Hatcher, replacing them with commercial on the bottom, and dense residential on top of the brick structure.

All three properties – older homes – are official "contributing [historic] structures" through the Virginia Department of Historic Resources and are part of Purcellville's Historic Overlay District.

Currently, the plan is for one large three-story building to be built on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28»

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Left to right: Wendy Dunn, Ahmad Momen, Kristina Reed, Joe Litterio, Mike Marsden, Doug Ward, Alex Saidii, Joyce Stabile, Mary Liz McCauley, Cheryl Cook and Shehnila Iqbal. Not pictured - Chris Rieley, Matt Wainman, Lisa Harden and Anne Bartgis.

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Pastor Michelle C. Thomas and family join forces with Hope Floats Foundation

Pastor Michelle C. Thomas and her family have joined forces with Hope Floats Foundation following the accidental drowning of her son, Fitz Alexander Campbell Thomas.

The Fitz Scholars Fund and Hope Floats Foundation will raise money to provide scholarships to expand access to swim lessons for children in need.

On June 4, Fitz Thomas who was 16, drowned while he was swimming with friends in the Potomac River near Leesburg.

The Fitz Scholars Fund at Hope Floats will raise funds to expand access for children from disadvantaged families to participate in swim lessons, helping prevent such tragedies from happening to other families.

Pastor Thomas said, "The Fitz Scholars Fund at Hope Floats represents the best of what can happen when we rise to the challenges of our times. I may not be able to bring Fitz back, but I can help save the lives of others."

SwimKids Swim School co-owner Cindy Tonnesen in Leesburg, who is also board chair of the Hope Floats Foundation founded in 2016 said, "Although Pastor Michelle has lived every mother's worst nightmare, she hasn't given up hope. She and her family are dedicated to preventing this terrible tragedy from hap-



Pastor Michelle Thomas and her son Adrian at SwimKids Swim School in Leesburg at the announcement of the Fitz Scholars Fund on Sept. 18.

pening to others. The Fitz Scholars Fund at Hope Floats will embody Fitz's values of love and optimism by saving the lives of countless children in his name."

Drowning is the leading cause of accidental death for children under the age of five and the second leading cause of death for children under the age of 14. The equivalent of 13 school buses full of children die each year in the United States due to drowning. Children from marginalized populations are more at risk. Children from low-income families have a higher risk of drowning, and Black children in the United States drown at rates as much as 5.5 times higher than White children. Studies show that swim lessons reduce the risk of drowning by 88 percent.

To make donations to the Fitz Scholars Fund at Hope Floats, go to www.HopeFloats.Foundation/Fitz.

A gift of \$50 provides three weeks of swim lessons for a Fitz Scholar, a gift of \$100 provides six weeks of lessons, and a gift of \$200 provides a full 12-week session of swim lessons. To apply for a scholarship, go to www.HopeFloats.Foundation/apply-for-assistance.

Painted Benches Auction Oct. 10 at the Purcellville Skating Rink

You've likely seen them around town for some while now, but soon they will be going up for auction. The painted benches will go up for auction Saturday, Oct. 10 at 7 p.m. at the Purcellville Skating Rink. Doors open at 6 p.m. Tickets are \$12, and include beer, wine, and light food. To purchase tickets, go to <https://www.brownpapertickets.com/event/4716820>.

With social distancing in mind, attendance will be limited. An online auction will open the first week of October and will be live at the same time as the in-person auction. To place an early bid, go to <https://www.damewoodauctioneers.com/>. Said



Michael Oaks with Discover Purcellville, "I am so glad we can have the auction during these trying times. With social distancing at the skating rink, plus being live online, I know we'll have a successful event. I am looking forward to seeing everyone on October 10. A big thank you to all the talented artists, to Hamilton craftsman Tim Saylor, and to all our sponsors."

Up for auction this year are 36 painted benches, all created by Loudoun County artists who donated their talent. The benches were built by Hamilton craftsman Tim Saylor. Proceeds from the auction will be used for future community projects in Purcellville. Some of the past projects funded by the previous auctions include the Welcome to Purcellville Mural, the Purcellville Art Gallery, the Purcellville Halloween Block Party, the Purcellville Tag Sale (two years) and the 300 Easter Baskets giveaway this past April.

The painted benches auction is sponsored by Discover Purcellville, a 501(c)(4) community non-profit. For more information, email dpurcellville@gmail.com or text 540-383-0009.



Purcellville Town-Wide Tag Sale –Saturday Oct. 10 rain or shine –

Save the date – it's that time of year again for the 17th Annual Purcellville Town Wide Tag Sale. On Saturday, Oct. 10 join the community for a day of fun, shopping, and deals. Oh, and treasures, too.

The Purcellville Town Wide 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.

For more information and to view the map, vendors, and home yard sale participants, go to PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com. 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." The 17th Annual Purcellville Town Wide Tag Sale is sponsored by Bank of Clarke County and Abernethy and Spencer Greenhouses.

Text Silas at 540 751-8252 with questions or email him at ShopAtNostalgia@gmail.com. Get ready to join in all of the fun at this annual community event, and see all that Purcellville has to offer in the way of dining, shopping, and recreation. Purcellville Tag Sale is Saturday, Oct. 10 – rain or shine. Go to www.PurcellvilleVATagSale.com.

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Gilbert's Corner

BY TIM JON

It's imperative – it seems to me – that, as you head into a crossroads, you possess some type of knowledge or desire regarding your destination or chosen direction upon exiting this physical transition. I guess in simpler (Yogi Berra-inspired) terms – “When you come to a fork in the road, take it.” In more



philosophically challenging nomenclature, (something I always tried to embody during my decades in professional and community theatre) sometimes you need to leap off the cliff in order to discover your wings.



JON

Now, I pondered no such intellectual or spiritual conundrums on my most recent visit to Gilbert's Corner: I simply negotiated the 21st century roundabout without striking any other motor vehicles, curbs or road signs, turned off onto the mostly-vacant gravel lot on the northeast quadrangle of the spot, and set about trying to capture a

few images that I felt may inspire some type of essence of the location.

I recalled the numerous times I'd passed by and noted the presence of seafood vendors offering their wares to hungry commuters; I also remembered the almost daily references to traffic conditions at this crux of Routes 50 and 15 – still echoing in my head and soul, from 10 years covering local news on the airwaves at Wage Radio (sadly, just a mere echo in itself), “long ago and far away” in Leesburg. Yup, Gilbert's Corner was – and still is – an important crossroads – situated several miles south of our County Seat, just east of Middleburg, representing a major

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Divorce rates spike after COVID-19: some tips for couples

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

COVID-19 has had a profoundly negative impact on many married couples. The combination of working from home, virtual learning for our children, social distancing, financial hardship, stress, less quality time to relate, illness or the deaths of a loved one, etc., has been difficult for a lot of people with divorce rates spiking as a result.



DR. MIKE

Research has shown that divorce rates typically increase in response to natural disasters and crises, and even the strongest relationships can fail during unprecedented, unpredictable and overly stressful times.

According to the research group Legal Templates, divorce rates were up 34 percent between March and June of 2020, compared to that same time in 2019. Their data also showed that

marital unhappiness and the desire to separate peaked on April 13, during the time of quarantine and state lockdowns. The group pointed out that this occurred due to the “disillusionment phase” of disaster – a time when people were most discouraged, negative and stressed out by COVID-19. Moreover, Legal Templates found that certain segments of married couples that usually fair better during crises have divorced at higher rates (e.g., newlyweds and couples with younger children).

Certainly, in my work as a psychologist in private practice I have seen an increase in couples seeking therapy since the pandemic started; interestingly, several of these couples are wanting guidance with divorcing correctly (for their children and for themselves), as opposed to wanting help to improve their problems. On the other hand, a number of the couples I see have seen

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29»

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Lessons from a Board of Supervisors Meeting

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

The Board of Supervisors met Sept. 15. It was a lesson in civics, civility, and on how to persuade others to support one's idea.

It started with the Pledge of Allegiance; the audience stood respectfully. After introductory remarks by Chair Phyllis Randall, citizens could speak for several minutes on agenda items or on anything on their minds.

OPINION

One agenda item was controversial, and generated much citizen comment. An area just west of Leesburg is annoyed at the sound of frequent gunfire to its west. As you know, anything even hinting at limiting Second Amendment rights brings howls of anger from some quarters.

I am going to dispense with formality and call some Supervisors by their given names, since I consider them friends.

This also should humanize them, which is a good thing.

Phyllis actually went to a house in that neighborhood to hear the guns for herself. Yes, it was annoying, she reported. The Board then asked for advice from the County Administrator and the County Attorney, as to any relevant zoning provision. There was none. Supervisors, one at a time, asked questions or made comments. They were limited to three minutes each, and the meeting moved along efficiently. One Supervisor then made a motion to restrict the shooting. As is the Board's practice, there was a round of questions about the motion, also time-limited, followed by a vote. The vote was tied four to four and the Chair, Phyllis was last and had the tie-breaking vote. Even though she supports tighter gun controls, Phyllis voted against the motion on the pragmatic grounds that it was a Constitutional issue and County intervention would lead to a sinkhole of litigation.

There were 17 other items on the agenda and most were not political, or very controversial. On each the Board followed the same routine of questions, motions, comments and voting. Meetings are efficient, but there are always

many items to cover, and thus meetings are never short.

I was interested in Item 15 of the agenda, put forward by the Ashburn Supervisor, Mike Turner. I'm deeply involved in land use issues and while Item 15 did not deal with any specific land use problem, it was Mike's plan to improve the way the County deals with them. It was not controversial and was elegant in its design. However, it was complex. The way he handled it was a tour de force but before I tell you about that, I'll reminisce about the boneheaded way I handled an idea some years ago.

I developed large office buildings for a large Atlanta-based commercial developer. I personally developed six million square feet of office space, the largest of which was 1.2 million square feet. My clients included AT&T, UPS, Coca-Cola and even the Duke of Milan, Italy. Any developer, of any project of any kind, starts with an idea. And I had a big one: To build the tallest building in the country. The site was perfect. Two anchor tenants were nearby and we could layer more floors of office space, a hotel, luxury apartments and so on. Television antennas would be added and integrated into the architecture. The building

would then be around 1,400 feet tall. It was a big idea that could become real.

A few days after these things coalesced in my mind, I was in an executive meeting. During a break in the agenda I announced, "I have a great idea. Let's build the tallest building in the country!" Reactions ranged from "Are you kidding?" to "No." I had done no homework or produced even a typewritten summary. Most importantly, I had not met with any of the others to discuss my idea. I had done neither homework nor preparation and I blew it.

Mike Turner most clearly did not blow it. He began his presentation with just a handful of simple slides that explained what he wanted to do and why. He kept it short, and Supervisors then offered their comments. Every one began with heaping praise on Mike for his work. I've attended many Board meetings and have never seen such effusive and enthusiastic compliments. They were deserved.

One could look behind the scene and draw an important conclusion. The first is that Mike had obviously talked in advance to every Supervisor, explained his idea and answered questions. I knew their reactions were positive when

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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Please include your name, address and phone number.

We reserve the right to edit submissions as necessary.
Deadline for print edition is the third week
of each month, or, online any time.



Why I'm Voting Blue

Dear Editor:

We live in dangerous times. More than 200,000 Americans have been killed by COVID-19, the economy is in shambles and climate change continues to wreak havoc in the form of unprecedented fires and weather events. My fears about our future propel me to support an experienced, compassionate Democrat ticket: Joe Biden for President, Mark Warner for Senate and Jennifer Wexton for the House.

LETTER

Rather than deny climate change like the current president, Joe Biden has a plan to combat climate change while addressing the economy by creating new clean energy jobs. Rather than lie about the severity of the coronavirus crisis, Biden will listen to and work with scientists to help Americans move past the threat of COVID-19. He brings decades of effective leadership to these challenges.

Mark Warner brings a wealth of business and technology experience to the Senate. He would work side-by-side with President Biden to address our current economic crisis. But just as important to people like me who

were denied insurance in the past, he will continue his work to provide every American access to affordable healthcare.

Likewise, Jennifer Wexton has worked in Congress to help businesses stay in business and to make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all Americans—two issues especially important during this pandemic. Wexton also recognizes the importance of fully funding education for all American children—something else the pandemic has shown a spotlight on.

The things that keep me up at night—climate change, systemic racism, affordable healthcare, quality education, national and local economies—are all issues that have been addressed and will continue to be addressed by these experienced public servants, all three of whom have earned reputations for both listening to and caring about every one of their constituents. That's why I'll be voting for Joe Biden, Mark Warner and Jennifer Wexton in this critical election.

Jody Brady
Round Hill

Wexton supports issues that matter to me

Dear Editor:

On Nov. 3, I will be voting for Jennifer Wexton for Congress, because she fights for the things that matter to me. As a retired teacher, I care about education, and our public schools. Jennifer is committed

LETTER

to guaranteeing that our schools get the federal funding that they need. I know that this is personal to her, too, as the mom of two sons who attend public school. As the wife of an Army veteran, I care about our military and veterans. Jennifer has voted for policies that support the military and provide for the VA.

Living in rural Loudoun County, I care about our farms and small businesses. Jennifer co-founded the Congressional Caucus on Agritourism, which formulates policies and supports programs that enhance local businesses while preserving beautiful rural areas. She has also cosponsored the Paycheck Protection Act for Small Business as well as the Flexible Financing for Rural

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »

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I support the first female former marine for Congress

Dear Editor:

This year, Virginia's 10th District voters have a choice of who will represent them in Congress for the next two years. The choice couldn't be more fundamentally clear.

Aliscia Andrews is a Marine, a mom, and a national security expert. After being elected on Nov. 3, she will be the first female former Marine in the U.S. Congress.

LETTER

After the Marine Corps, Aliscia continued honing her analytical tradecraft in the public and private sector. She earned her MBA and Cybersecurity Strategy Management Certificate, and worked on challenging government problems as a strategic management, analytic, and policy advisor in and out of the intelligence community. She and her team provided

critical analytical support to the capture and killing of Osama Bin Laden, the mastermind of the tragic 9/11 terrorist attacks.

The Covid-19 pandemic has tragically killed over 200,000 Americans. Aliscia mourns with each and every person who has been affected by the loss of a family member, loved one, or friend from this devastating disease. But Coronavirus lockdowns have devastated Virginia's businesses and families.

Aliscia will prioritize reopening businesses, getting Americans back to work, safely reopening schools, all while implementing common-sense precautions to protect those most vulnerable to Covid-19.

She will champion businesses, fight to lower taxes, reduce regulatory burdens, and bring back the record-setting historic economy that President

Trump's policies brought to our country. She will work across the aisle to bring back the millions of pre-pandemic jobs – jobs which brought the lowest unemployment rate in U.S. history. She will fight to promote more competition amongst health care providers, more access to care including covering preexisting conditions, lower prescription drug prices, and will hold insurance companies accountable.

Aliscia is a fighter and a leader, but ultimately one of us. She has a love of family, a love of country, and a rugged determination to succeed and persevere.

We need Aliscia, a skilled, life-long dedicated public servant who is uniquely talented, and ready to serve each and every one of us.

*RJ Hall
Leesburg*

Four more years

Dear Editor:

The loss of over 200,000 American lives to the deadly Coronavirus is a tragedy like we've never seen in our lifetimes. President Donald J. Trump took bold early action to stop flights into our country from China, close our borders, and invoke the Defense Production Act to protect and provide what

LETTER

Americans most needed during this unprecedented pandemic.

Sadly, while President Trump was protecting Americans from the virus, the Democratic Party, led by the Democratic-run House of Representatives including Jennifer Wexton, along with Joe Biden's support, voted to oppose our President's actions to protect Americans and save lives.

At the height of the crisis, the President's bold leadership and quick action insured that not one person who needed a ventilator went without one, the hospital ships sailed away unused, our ICU beds and hospitals were never overwhelmed, nor did we have a shortage of PPE. Today, we are testing record numbers of people with a rapidly declining death rate.

The restoration of our economy to the pre-pandemic historic greatness is breaking records that economists never expected to happen this fast. The stock market is recovering quickly, jobs are being created at a record pace, and the housing market is

booming. These record economic achievements are being accomplished despite Democrat governors who continue economy-crippling excessive lockdowns.

Before the pandemic, President Trump's economy lifted more than 11 million Americans out of poverty, the most effective anti-poverty program in U.S. history.

President Trump has been a proponent of minority communities like no President before him. The President's First Step Act criminal justice reforms reduced mandatory prison sentences that disproportionately harmed Black Americans. He increased funding for Historically Black Colleges and Universities by more than 14 percent, earning him the Bipartisan Justice Award at an historically Black college.

Prior to the recent violent riots that have rocked our country, violent crime had fallen every year under President Trump's administration. As we watch the rioting and looting in Democrat-run cities, President Trump's commitment to our men and women is unwavering. Without strong law enforcement, our country is nothing more than a third world country on the brink of ruin.

I support the reelection of President Donald J. Trump – let's give him four more years.

*Chris Karanski
Round Hill*

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Your slant is to the right

Dear Editor:

I read this morning's edition of the Blue Ridge Leader including Charles Houston's fictional imagining of the next few months' events. In it, two paths are imagined, one where the Democratic candidate injures himself through foolishness and dies, and one where the Republican candidate – through no fault of his own, for who knew pandemics were so complicated – is hurt by hanging all of his re-election hopes on a vaccine rather than dealing with the problems we have.

LETTER

Oh, and Tucker Carlson tells the truth. And Antifa for some reason wants to destroy the Statue of Liberty, but instead hit a ship, and this same lame duck

president who had nothing at all to do with his election loss, goes ahead and bombs Iran for the heck of it, then is hailed as a Lincoln-esque hero of the grandest proportions for splitting up the United States into three countries; one presumes to go on to become President for Life of the COVID states where herd immunity rules, and no one cares if a million or so people die when a new virus erupts.

It's pretty clear that the paper's slant is to the right, but is it really useful to publish stories that do nothing but demonize the left in a purported effort to deal with the "divide" in America? I wonder where all the division is coming from.

*Rob Martin
Leesburg*

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Four reasons you may want to convert to a Roth IRA

Market volatility this year may have prompted you to review your investment plans, including your retirement goals. As you look at them, you may want to consider converting from a traditional IRA to a Roth IRA.

Roth IRAs possess characteristics that make them generally attractive planning tools; for example, they are not subject to required minimum distribution (RMD) rules during the life of the original account owner, which means you can use them as an estate planning tool for passing money to your heirs. A combination of tax law changes and market conditions might make Roth IRAs even more attractive now, especially to investors who are in a position to pay taxes due upon conversion with non-retirement plan assets.

Here are four reasons why now might be a good time to convert:

1. If market volatility has depressed your portfolio's value, you may owe less in taxes. When you convert to a Roth IRA, you will owe taxes on any tax-deductible contributions you made to the traditional IRA as well as any tax-deferred earnings that may have built up in the account over the years. A lower account value would typically result in a lower tax bill.
2. If you expect your portfolio's value to recover in the future, converting now could shield future earnings from taxation. After conversion, any assets in the Roth IRA could potentially grow on a tax-advantaged basis and qualified distributions would be tax-free.*
3. If you expect future tax rates will be higher when you begin to take distributions, converting and paying a lower tax now might make economic sense. Moreover, qualified distributions would be tax-free.*
4. Your nonspouse designated beneficiaries can let an Inherited Roth IRA continue to potentially grow, taking no distributions until year 10 when they fully distribute the account with no tax consequences. After the passage of the SECURE Act in late 2019, nonspouse designated beneficiaries generally must distribute an Inherited IRA by the end of the 10th calendar year beginning the year after the IRA owner dies.

If your employer's qualified retirement

plan (QRP), such as a 401(k) or 403(b), offers a Roth designated account option, you also may want to consider making contributions to this account. Designated Roth account assets can be rolled over only to a Roth IRA or another employer's designated Roth account, if that plan accepts the rollover.

It's important to remember that you can no longer recharacterize or undo a Roth IRA conversion. This is an important decision, so contact your financial advisor to discuss if a Roth IRA conversion is right for you.

*Qualified Roth IRA distributions are not included in gross income. Roth IRA distributions are generally considered "qualified" provided a Roth IRA has been open for more than five years and the owner has reached age 59½ or meets other requirements. Withdrawals may be subject to an IRS 10% additional tax for early or pre-59½ distributions.

Roth IRA conversions are not suitable for all individuals. Wells Fargo Advisors is not a tax or legal advisor. Please consult your financial, tax, and legal advisors before taking any action that may have tax or legal consequences and to determine whether a Roth conversion is suitable for your specific situation.

Please keep in mind that rolling over your qualified employer sponsored retirement plan (QRP) assets to an IRA is just one option. Each option has advantages and disadvantages, and the one that is best depends on your individual circumstances. You should consider features such as investment options, fees and expenses, and services offered. Investing and maintaining assets in an IRA will generally involve higher costs than those associated with a QRP. We recommend you consult with your plan administrator before making any decisions regarding your retirement assets.

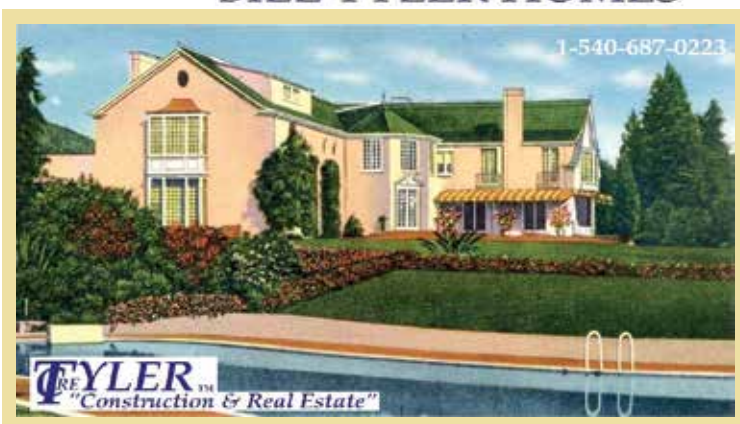
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What month is it?

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

It's hard to believe we've reached October. The ongoing pandemic makes it hard to distinguish between the days of the week, much less which month on the calendar we've reached.



MOORE-SOBEL

It has been a busy few months for me. In August, I married the love of my life. In September, my new memoir, *Can You See My Scars?*, was released. Last but

not least, October marks my 27th birthday.

But despite these exciting milestones, the pandemic rages on, as do wildfires, racial tensions, election angst, and continued economic uncertainty. We collectively find ourselves asking, When will it ever end? It's hard not to feel discouraged in the face of this onslaught. I've heard from others about challenges they face during the pandemic: isolation, loneliness, and mental health struggles that this nearly seven-month long sojourn has created. Often, the news headlines only serve to reinforce the feelings of hopelessness. We are in desperate need of hope.

For me, this experience of being confined to home is reminiscent of my experience in the aftermath of the accident I was in 11 years ago. In the opportunities I've had to share my book with audiences as of late (mostly via Zoom), I've frequently talked about the aftermath of the accident that required that I stay at home for the first few months. In effort to prevent infection, doctors urged me to stay at home. As my classmates were returning to school, I spent months on homebound tutoring, trying my best to learn outside the classroom. I felt lonely and miserable. I was unsure what the future would look like. Everything felt uncertain.

At the time, so many people told me that everything would work out. They urged me to be patient, and painted a picture of what the future might one day look like. I can tell you 11 years later that it did work out. But that wasn't the most helpful advice for me to hear at the time. Whenever I heard this oft-repeated refrain, I wanted to respond by pressing the fast-forward button so that my circumstances could catch up to the life I envisioned for myself. What I truly needed was for others to hear me, to empathize with me, and affirm my feelings of frustration over the struggles I was experiencing through no fault of my own.

So, to those of you tired of this pandemic and suffering as a result of this global crisis, I'll refrain from telling you that everything is going to be okay. I think history tells us that it will be okay—but that's beside the point. I think it's more helpful to say: I empathize with you, and I wish you well as you plod this uncertain terrain. Let's lend each other a listening ear, offer words of encouragement, and do what we can to support each other. This is a time to come together, not drift apart. To see the positive in these circumstances; to appreciate the opportunity it might provide us to reflect. To hit the reset button. To evaluate what was working in our lives before the pandemic, and to adopt a plan of action for what our lives will look like after this pandemic has lifted. I believe we all have what it takes to make it through these trying days—we just have to take it one day at a time. Even if we aren't quite sure what month it is.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is the author of Can You See My Scars? His book is available on Amazon. For more, visit www.samuelmoore-sobel.com

Discover Purcellville's 10th Annual Halloween Block Party postponed to 2021

It's with much sadness that community nonprofit, Discover Purcellville, has announced the postponement of the 10th Annual Purcellville Halloween Block Party to 2021. They look forward to seeing everyone Saturday, Oct. 30, 2021, for the biggest block party yet. It's never too early to start thinking about the costume contests!



ReThink9: safety first during Safety Week

The Town of Hillsboro's *ReThink9* road and infrastructure project participated in national Construction Safety Week (Sept. 14-18), joining with project contractor Archer Western to reflect on and emphasize the importance of a daily commitment to safety. To ensure safety fundamentals remain top of mind for all workers, Archer Western coordinated early-morning presentations related to trench safety, tool use, rigging safety and tree/brush clearing safety. Loudoun County Fire & Rescue joined workers and project management on Wednesday, September 16 with a digital fire extinguisher demonstration.

Hillsboro's Mayor Roger Vance, also acting as *ReThink9* Project Manager, said "The nature of the *ReThink9* project has inherent risks yet productivity and efficiency remains high and we're proud of the work Archer Western has done to keep the project incident-free to date."

David Johnson, Archer Western Senior Project Manager, said "The tight constraints of the Town, with little separation of these well-preserved historic properties from the work zone, mean we must continue to be diligent for safety of our workers and the residents at all times."

Vance said Archer Western keeps safety in mind when working with an extensive assortment of materials, from underground structures and conduits to above-ground appurtenances, retaining walls, curbing and sidewalks, all being built within feet of open travel lanes. He noted the contractor adheres to approved guidelines for placement and storage of those materials while providing safe single-lane, one-direction vehicular passage every day of the week.

"The workers," said Vance, "display ex-

traordinary skills—and exceptional patience—as they operate extremely large and heavy equipment within the Town's narrow corridor of historic structures while being mindful residents accessing their homes."

Matt McLaughlin, Director, Utility Management Services at subcontractor CES Consulting, noted "The utility poles throughout Town are old and fragile, with the potential for dislodging or breaking as trenches for buried utilities are cut close to them. The nimbleness of project management to quickly authorize field adjustments on this project has greatly decreased the risks to workers and property. This could only be achieved through a collaborative effort between the Town, Volkert, Archer Western as well as Dominion Energy and Verizon."

The challenges posed by such tight constraints demand that safety continue to be paramount for the workers, residents and motorists. Safety, in the broader sense, is in fact at the core of each element of the *ReThink9* project:

The traffic calming features will reduce speeds and congestion, improving the safety of thousands of motorists every day and for pedestrians who will be able to walk from one end of town to the other.

The completely new drinking water system provides safe drinking water, ending a decades-long Boil Water Notice.

The underground stormwater management system will direct millions of gallons of stormwater off the roadway and away from homes.

Wastewater management infrastructure will protect the health of citizens and the environment by replacing aged and failing private septic systems.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »



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Daniel Gade

Daniel Gade is a 1997 West Point graduate and retired Army lieutenant colonel who was awarded the Legion of Merit, Bronze Star, and two Purple Hearts during his 20-year career. He taught at West Point from 2011 to 2017, and now is a professor at American University in D.C. He served in President George W. Bush's administration, working on veteran issues and military healthcare, and has since served on several national-level policy councils, including the National Council on Disability and the VA Advisory Committee on Disability Compensation. He resides in Alexandria with his wife Wendy and their three children.



Blue Ridge Leader: How does your tax policy differ from your opponent?

Daniel Gade: Now more than ever with the COVID-19 pandemic, Virginia families and businesses need as much relief as they can get. Senator Warner is bad for business and has been since his time as Governor. Though Warner had promised not to raise taxes in order to balance the state's budget, Virginia passed a \$1.6 billion tax hike in 2004. However, Mark's a flip flopper, so it's not surprising. For example, "Flip" Mark says he is pro-business, "Flop" Mark voted against the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act, which would have cut taxes and spurred growth for millions of Americans in 2017.

People thrive best when they are deciding what happens with their money, not out of touch career politicians and Washington bureaucrats. In the Senate, I will fight to lower taxes, create a simpler tax code and fight for tax incentives that help families and businesses as our economy recovers from COVID-19.

BRL: The nation's economic health is in flux. What is your approach to turning things around to benefit the State of Virginia?

Gade: Let's be clear, American families are suffering and dying because China lied and people died. Now our businesses need help, our healthcare capacity is being strangled and parents are seeing firsthand what's going on in our kids' schools.

I am in this race to solve hard problems like these. Career politicians like Mark Warner yell and scream a lot that we have to "do something", but when given the chance to give much needed relief to Virginia families, additional testing and vaccine funding – he voted to withhold relief from Virginia families. Career politicians view this crisis as a tool to push a partisan agenda, fund pet projects and send Virginia's tax dollars to California, New York and Chicago.

Once we win this war, I will fight to

regain our record economic growth, reform a healthcare system that puts patients first, and ensure our education system meets the needs of a post-Coronavirus America.

BRL: What is the best way for the federal government and the state to work together to beat COVID-19?

Gade: The Federal government has unique abilities. First, the CDC, DHS, and other Federal agencies can leverage their expertise and resources to assist the local leaders who are at the front lines of COVID. Second, the Federal government can direct emergency resources to local governments- Mark Warner, remember, voted AGAINST that just a few weeks ago, hurting Virginia and Virginia families. Third, the Federal government can and should secure our borders, rethink the nature of our relationship with China, and prepare for the next pandemic by securing our supply chain for pharmaceutical products and PPE.

BRL: How do you see the connection between fossil fuels and environmental health?

Gade: There are issues where Republicans and Democrats aren't going to always agree, but one thing we can agree on is that our environment is critically important. It's not just important to us, it's important to our children, and our children's children and future generations to come. We should look for solutions that are market based and embrace technological change to solve global challenges. The future economy is not the same as this economy, but we know that demand for clean, plentiful, and inexpensive energy is not going to abate. Left and Right can come together around common-sense, growth-oriented policies, but must reject nonsense like the Green New Deal.

BRL: What's your personal reason for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »

Mark Warner

Mark Warner, first elected to the U.S. Senate in 2008, is Virginia's senior Senator, and is running for his third term. He is currently Vice Chair of the Senate Intelligence Committee. Before becoming Senator, Warner served as governor of Virginia from 2002 to 2006. Before his term as governor, Warner was involved in telecommunications-related venture capital; he founded the firm Columbia Capital. He lives in Alexandria with his wife and they have three grown daughters.



Blue Ridge Leader: How does your tax policy differ from your opponent?

Mark Warner: I am committed to making sure that Virginians have the tools they need to succeed in a rapidly changing economy and job market.

What pushed our country to trillion-dollar deficits was President Trump's tax cut for large companies. I've said it before and I'll say it again, this was the worst piece of legislation we have passed since I arrived in the Senate.

As Virginia's governor and now as Virginia's senior Senator, I have worked to expand opportunities for small businesses and ensure that workers have access to training opportunities, while fighting against tax increases for the middle class. I have also worked hard to make sure that the rapidly growing number of gig economy workers and independent contractors in Virginia and across the country are adequately supported by our social safety net and have fair access to the benefits they need.

BRL: The nation's economic health is in flux. What is your approach to turning things around to benefit the State of Virginia?

Warner: Tens of millions of Americans have lost their jobs because of the Covid-19 pandemic. My entire career has been about job creation, as a businessman, as governor, and as United States Senator.

During the virus, I led the effort to get relief for small businesses so they can stay open. I made sure independent contractors can get unemployment benefits. And this pandemic has shown that universal broadband is an economic necessity – not a nice-to-have.

These things have helped a lot of people and businesses stay afloat, but we need to do more. I have a bill that will increase access to capital for the Black, Latino, and women-owned businesses

that have been hit hardest.

And just last month, the President signed a piece of legislation that I wrote, the Great American Outdoors Act, that will create 10,000 jobs in Virginia.

BRL: What is the best way for the federal government and the state to work together to beat COVID-19?

Warner: We're six months in, and the truth is, it didn't need to be this way. In January, before a single case of Covid was confirmed in Virginia, I asked the Trump Administration if they needed more funding to fight the virus.

As the President continued to mislead the American people about the severity of the virus, I delivered relief to small businesses and expanded free Covid testing. I made it possible for freelancers and independent contractors to file for unemployment.

I still believe that we need to implement a national testing strategy, as well as a strategy to ensure our health care workers have adequate PPE.

I'm open to another round of stimulus relief checks, but it's my hope the focus of this next bill will be more targeted relief. I believe we ought to focus on those who have been hit the hardest, rather than just broad stimulus efforts.

BRL: How do you see the connection between fossil fuels and environmental health?

Warner: The science surrounding climate change unequivocally supports the need for policy solutions. And we know we've got to balance those solutions with the need to keep all sectors of our economy viable.

As your Senator, I fought to fully fund Chesapeake Bay's clean-up efforts, protecting 43,000 Bay-related jobs that pump \$8 billion dollars into the economy. I've successfully pushed for prioritizing federal funds

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »

Elementary school students to start hybrid classes Oct. 27

Slowly but surely, in accordance with public health and education performance data, several groups of Loudoun County students will begin spending at least two days a week in the classroom beginning Oct. 27, if their parents/guardians have chosen the hybrid model.

COMMUNITY

Some students have already returned to the classroom. They include 900 students at Monroe Advanced Technical Academy and 264 students with disabilities who receive instruction through the Aligned Standards of Learning.

Oct. 13 marks the day that 583 additional students—those with disabilities in self-contained programs—may return.

Oct. 27 is the start date for 165 pre-K children, 2,100 kindergartners, 2,500 first graders, and 2,300 second grade students.

In Stage 3, tentatively set to begin either Dec. 1 or 8, the hybrid model will go into effect for all elementary, Academy of Engineering & Technology, and Academy of Science students

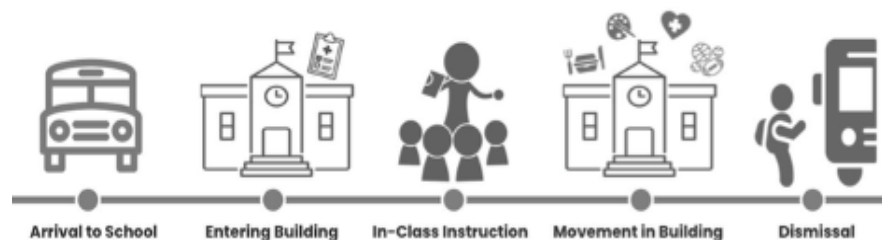
whose parents/guardians selected it.

Most secondary students will continue to learn virtually for the first semester.

Since most families in the school district will continue full-time distance learning until Oct. 27, LCPS is busy creating instructional resources for teachers. Elementary schools have already prepared schedules to simultaneously operate both distance and hybrid models. In addition, to ensure effective instruction of English Learners, special education, and K-2 students, transition teams are meeting weekly to discuss transportation, routing, and scheduling.

Until the school district is ready to transition to Stage 3, most secondary students will continue to learn virtually.

Information regarding the five data categories that determine the transitions between stages can be found on the LCPS website's Return to School 2020 Planning section. It is available for downloading as a pdf at <https://www.lcps.org/Page/234386>.



The Loudoun County Public Schools graphic, above, illustrates the simulations school personnel are currently practicing.

Operation Warm buys new coats for kids in need

The Rotary Club of Sterling is again raising funds for its Operation Warm to buy new coats for kids in the Title 1 schools in Sterling. “Last year we delivered nearly 300 coats to schools in Sterling, for children who were in need.”

COMMUNITY

This year, we plan to double that gift,” said Lynne Ast, past president – 2019-2020. “Operation Warm is more than a coat,” she continued. “Operation Warm provides warmth, confidence, and hope to children in need through the gift of brand new winter coats. A brand new coat offers a child physical and emotional warmth, the confidence to socialize and succeed, and hope of a brighter future. Go to sterlingrotary.org to donate. Twenty dollars buys one coat.



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Alicia Andrews

After her Marine Corps career, Alicia Andrews worked in both the public and private sectors while completing her MBA (2015) and Certificate of Cybersecurity Strategy Management (2016). She has worked primarily on finding solutions to government problems, as a strategic management, analytic, and policy advisor in and out of the intelligence community. She served on the Loudoun County Criminal Justice Board, and works with PTOs, disadvantaged children's groups, church ministries, youth sports leagues, as well as mentoring transitioning veterans. Andrews resides in Aldie with her husband and three children.



Blue Ridge Leader: How do you see the role of the United States Congress in addressing the nation's economic challenges?

Alicia Andrews: It's up to Congress to pass legislation that helps people get back on their feet, as well as get the economy back on track. There are millions of small businesses struggling thanks to lockdowns, with more and more going under every day. The failure of Congress to stop this is disgraceful. President Trump led the greatest economic boom in our country's history, but now Democrats are trying to fund their socialist pet projects instead of providing everyday Americans with much needed economic relief. Congress' role is to put the partisanship aside and pass legislation that will put America back on the path to economic prosperity. As your Representative, I will sponsor and support legislation to get government out of the way of your success.

Blue Ridge Leader: What is the bigger problem for today's college students: unmanageable debt or the expense of college? How would you fix it?

Andrews: I don't think it's one or the other. Today, the cost of college is at an all-time high, with some universities charging north of \$50,000 or even \$60,000 a year. For students who need to take out loans, they're stuck with incredible debt that takes decades to pay off, and serves as a barrier to purchasing a home or starting a business. I believe the main reason for the increasing expense of college is the federal government's involvement in student loans. By paying whatever price a college asks, the government allows these colleges to continue to raise their already exorbitant price tags, without improving the quality of the education. The school knows this money is coming from the government and that the debt will not impact the student until after they leave campus, making it no

longer the school's problem.

We need to reexamine the way we pay for college as well as rein in these colleges and universities. We also need to educate students about the costs of their education and how to manage it once they have graduated. If you're going to take on debt like that, you need to pursue a degree that will cover the costs. Further, there are options other than expensive universities, and students should be aware of these options before making a decision. We should break the narrative that every student needs a four-year degree, and educate our students on the value of a trade school education. Often times a trade school education leads to better paying jobs, with either none or a fraction of the debt. We should also make this choice available in public high schools through private partnerships that allow students to get on the vocational path before graduation so that they can complete their education faster and more efficiently.

BRL: How would you make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all?

Andrews: First, we need to promote more competition amongst healthcare providers. This is simple economics, the more choices consumers have, the greater the variety in supply. We shouldn't penalize people or force them into purchasing something they don't want or need. As more and more companies expand their healthcare options and allow people to select plans tailored to their lifestyle, healthcare will become more affordable and accessible. We also need to promote more access to public health facilities, such as FQHCs [Federally Qualified Health Centers], and advocate telemedicine, both of which are great resources for more affordable healthcare. Further, we need to lower prescription drug prices and hold insurance companies accountable.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

Jennifer Wexton

Jennifer Wexton was first elected to the U.S. House of Representatives from Virginia's 10th District in 2018. Before that, she served the people of Northern Virginia for two decades as a prosecutor, an advocate for abused children, and a state Senator. She lives in Leesburg with her husband, two children, and two Labrador retrievers.



Blue Ridge Leader: How do you see the role of the United States Congress in addressing the nation's economic challenges?

Jennifer Wexton: The COVID-19 crisis has left hundreds of thousands of Virginians out of a job and forced many of our small businesses to shut their doors for good. Since before this virus even made its way to our Commonwealth, I've been fighting to get assistance to those in need and keep our community safe and healthy.

Congress has a responsibility to ensure that no one gets left behind in our efforts to make our community whole as we recover from this crisis. That's why I helped pass the bipartisan CARES Act which included direct stimulus to families, funding for testing and our public health response, enhanced unemployment benefits, and more. I'm proud that my Retirement Protection Act was signed into law as part of the CARES Act as well. This has helped safeguard the retirement savings of families by eliminating the annual withdrawal requirement for many retirement plans during the COVID-19 financial crisis. Also included in CARES was the Paycheck Protection Program, which has been a lifeline for Virginia-10 small businesses and helped save an estimated 193,000 jobs here in our district.

I've spent the past few months meeting with our district's small business owners to hear about the challenges they're facing. I've led the effort in Congress to provide oversight and transparency of the loans that have been a lifeline to these businesses to make sure taxpayer dollars go to mom and pop shops in need, not big corporations. In my position on the Financial Services Committee, I pushed to extend enhanced unemployment insurance and get critical funding to our states and localities to prevent this recession from becoming a depression.

Many working families faced challenges before the pandemic, and COVID-19 has only made things worse.

In my first term in Congress, I voted to raise the minimum wage, fought back against tariffs that have put undue burdens on local businesses, and founded the bipartisan Agritourism Caucus to support local farmers and small business owners here in the 10th District.

BRL: What is the bigger problem for today's college students: unmanageable debt or the expense of college? How would you fix it?

Wexton: Both the skyrocketing cost of college and burden of student loan debt have increased barriers to higher education for our young people. In Congress, I've supported legislation that would make college more affordable by increasing federal student aid including Pell Grants, and streamline and simplify the process to take out and repay student loans. It would also provide relief for borrowers by giving access to more generous repayment plans, lower interest rates, and an expanded Public Service Loan Forgiveness Program.

I've also fought to crack down on predatory for-profit colleges, voting to block a Department of Education rule from Secretary Betsy DeVos that would make it harder for defrauded students in Virginia to get the relief they're entitled to.

Finally, because there are many paths to a good-paying job here in our community that do not require a four-year higher education, I've worked to support career and technical training programs and free community college for those pursuing in-demand jobs here in Virginia.

BRL: How would you make healthcare more affordable and accessible for all?

Wexton: Fighting for affordable, quality health care for all Virginians has been one of my top priorities throughout my public service career. The proudest vote that I ever took as a state Senator was to pass Medicaid Expansion in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

Public profanity and smokescreens

What's bothering Tip?

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Sept. 25 Purcellville Town Council work session, discussions were going as planned according to the agenda when proceedings were interrupted by a vulgar tirade by Town Council Member Tip Stinnette. Stinnette was seated on the Council in 2018.

Stinnette seemed to be annoyed by the slow-moving nature of Town business.

Or, maybe something else was on his mind. The project being discussed is no favorite of his.

At any rate, this is what sparked his outburst.

According to the agenda, staff was giving an update on a timeline for the Nutrient Credit and Carbon Sequestration Program for the Town's Aberdeen property. Nailing down the Nutrient Credits program had been a priority for the Town Council for many months, as a way to raise money by monetizing Town assets.

When it came time for the update, Town Attorney Sally Hankins said, "I really don't have an update, except to say I am unfortunately no farther along than I was at the last meeting. The next meeting,

I should have some good information to report."

Council Member Chris Bertaut said it was his understanding "that you were going to come back to this body with a time frame when the RFP [Request for Proposal] could be put together."

Council Member Stan Milan said he thought the Council would be provided a time frame at the meeting, as was discussed at the previous meeting.

To which Hankins asked, "A time frame for ... the RFP?" She then indicated she was aiming for November, "and that is still a realistic estimate."

Town Manager David Mekarski said that in November the Town will not hold any meetings – this decision was made due to COVID. (*Usually the Town does not hold meetings in August, but due to COVID the Town held meetings that month.*) Mekarski then indicated that at the first meeting in October, staff could have a draft of an RFP for the Town Council.

"Wait, what?" asked Hankins.

Mekarski repeated that a draft RFP would be ready at the Oct. 13 Town Council meeting. "No, can I interject?" asked

Hankins. "I said the earliest would be a month out, but November is what I wrote on the timeline, and that is more realistic ..."

Mayor Kwasi Fraser asked how the Town could accelerate the RFP process.

"When I look on the bid board, our procurement analyst is not busy because we have no procurement projects in work right now. It says zero bids, right? So, I am saying, "David, do you have the resources to give us a draft RFP for the Nutrient Credit Program and the reason I am pushing this nutrient credit is because we keep on hearing about a [staff-proposed] \$3 million dollar loan, and I see the nutrient credit – although it is not going to wipe out our debt – it will potentially bring in over \$700,000 to the Town of Purcellville ... if we can increase the velocity of getting it to us through the RFP process, that would be good for the community. So, my question is how can we accelerate that process based on the resources you have?"

Mekarski said he wasn't prepared to answer the question without assessing the procurement officer's projects and priorities. "There are multiple RFPs we

are working on, and one is the RFP for the Planning Commission to work on the zoning ordinance."

The Planning Commission has told the Town Manager that it does not want an RFP for a consultant at this time, however.

Fraser said he would rather have the staff work on an RFP for the Nutrient Credit Program than the one for zoning.

Stinnette was paying strict attention to Fraser at this point – just listening.

Bertaut said he understood from the last meeting that management would come to the meeting "with some notion of what your workload was." That way Council could prioritize the nutrient credit RFP if necessary, he said. "But, it doesn't sound as if you have that level of detail available to us."

Hankins said she didn't realize that Council wanted to get an "update and reprioritize." Hankins also said, "I am not someone who has written a lot of big RFPs, so I am going to be meeting with our procurement specialist, and understand what that framework looks like." She also mentioned that she needs a priority list. The

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 >

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Patio nightmares

BY ANDREA GAINES

The music was so loud the homeowner (call her, Sarah) could make out the lyrics of the song from just about every room in her house – sing along! if she wanted. It was deafening. After a long week at work, all she wanted to do was settle onto the back patio with her family, give the dog a run-around in the yard, and enjoy a nice quiet dinner.

She and her husband had enjoyed years and years of those kinds of peaceful moments, and the kids had grown up with them, too.

But, since the perfectly legal “Farm Brewery” – an open-air beer bar, really – had opened up next door, the family had been unable to enjoy more than a night or two of peace a week in good weather.

Hundreds of cars and trucks lined up and parked on their two-lane country road two, three, and four nights a week to get into the establishment – overflowing the parking lot and sometimes making a simple turn into her driveway difficult.

Walkers and hikers from a nearby outdoor recreation area were forced to weave their way past the cars, as were bicyclists.

Live-and-let-live, Sarah said to herself. Everybody’s got to make a living.

But this was getting a bit ridiculous, she realized, clearing the air of the smoke wafting towards her family from the numerous open fire pits at the beer bar.

Bar vs. residential vs. farm vs. some weird combination of the three

Several homeowners had already cashed out from the neighborhood – leaving their dream home of the life they thought they had bought into when they first came to Loudoun County. People whose families had been here for generations had left, too. And, Sarah wondered – will we be next?

Situations like the one described here have become more and more common in rural, residential parts of Loudoun County, including its most treasured and historic villages – from Round Hill to Bluemont to Hillsboro to Middleburg.

The concept, from a let’s-not-Fairfax-Loudoun perspective, started out as a good one.

Seeing rural Loudoun County slipping away, advocates for the place – public and private – pressured government to do something.

Building on the economic success and cache of our area as “DC’s Wine Country,” state leaders started promoting the concept of Farm Breweries, allowing lots as small as ten acres to retain their “farm” character and legal status, grow hops and other ingredients used in the crafting of beer, and open a Farm Brewery.

Rules were pretty lax, and breweries took advantage of that.

Along with the concept, came the promotion of such establishments as destinations, and part of a Loudoun County Ale Trail – with live music, food trucks and light snacks, fire pits, and open-air, enjoy-the-view kinds of gatherings. Overnights were made available, and the places were also opened as wedding venues.

As an industry, Farm Breweries, to put it simply, worked.

But, because a good deal of their appeal comes from Loudoun’s wonderful history, views, and outdoor spaces – the same things that make this such a wonderful place to live – conflicts with neighbors are popping up just as fast as the breweries themselves.

To complicate matters, ABC licenses are a state issue; and local authorities don’t really have the zoning authority to keep Farm Breweries from overwhelming residential areas.

Homeowner suffering, and fears

One of the Bluemont area’s most involved residents said the following: “... What an uproar this [– one of the most popular and successful Farm Breweries in the County –] has caused to our community.

“... It was almost worse when indoor restaurants were still closed because they were the only game in town then.

“The commuter lot ... [for that popular recreation spot] used to be where hikers parked for the Appalachian Trail, which they access through government property. It’s now an overflow parking lot for the bar, with people constantly walking up and down this narrow country road.

“[One concerned neighbor] had to call the police to get advertising banners removed that were distracting drivers and creating more danger ... this is not normal; the bar is in the middle of our neighborhood and has taken over our community!”

Who you gonna call?

Joe Donovan, president of a local civics group, told the Blue Ridge Leader that the problem had gotten so big, and was so constant, that neighbors had worked out a system and a plan to call the authorities ... carefully [logging] each instance just in case the worst thing happened.

Donovan and neighbors don’t want to stifle a person’s ability to make a living. But, is it appropriate, everyone is wondering, to have to move your family dinner inside because of the smoke that is drifting in from a firepit and the live music and gatherings of dozens of people right next door? Donovan lives quite a ways up the road from one popular Farm Brewery. He and others have noted that the negative impacts of the crowds tend to drift down from the mountain to a nearby historic village.

Virginia legislatures recently clarified (some say loosened) state ABC laws to allow “licensed distillers to include in samples, spirits or vermouth not manufactured on the licensed premises, provided that at least 75 percent of the spirits used are manufactured on the distillery’s premises ...”

Laws that apply to “special events” have also been relaxed for distillers, as have those that apply to “mixed beverage licenses ...”

The Virginia Alcoholic Beverage Control Authority is quick to point out that it “... is a major source of revenue for the commonwealth, contributing more than \$2 billion to the general fund in the last five years. The agency currently operates 371 state stores. Its Bureau of Law Enforcement oversees more than 18,000 ABC licensed establishments while the Hearings and Appeals Division considers more than 700 cases each year. The agency also provides alcohol education and prevention programs for people of all ages ...”

In other words, you need us, and we need you.

Who can be held accountable?

Just last month, everyday homeowners in Middleburg – the people, you see mowing their lawns on a Saturday morning – stopped a brewery from coming to their neighborhood. Ironically or not, it was the two owners of the proposed Farm Brewery that provided resolution ... by withdrawing their proposal before it was approved – as it likely would have been.

Neighbors had strenuously objected in great numbers, and, they showed up in force at a preliminary ABC hearing in Alexandria to make their views known.

That particular situation laid bare the weakness of the ABC approval process, including that it is the state, not the local authorities, that are in control.

The organizers of the brewery had done everything by the book. But, the simple truth is that neighbors usually don’t understand what is happening until that family dinner on the patio gets started and the traffic piles up.

The simple truth is: the laws need to be changed. There is money to be made in these kinds of businesses. Rules and regulations allow them to be located in a residential area. The drawbacks had not been widely recognized until the impacts were more clearly understood by all.

All over Loudoun County – not just in Middleburg – residents are taking action. Said one, “This past week I emailed various Loudoun Dept. heads with a [copy of a video documenting the situation in my neighborhood] to make them aware of what often happens along [my road] on lovely weekends ... including our district sheriff, fire marshal, health dept., planning and zoning, etc. ...”

Coming to a farm near you?

Craft breweries are a major Loudoun County market, and Loudoun is one of the most vibrant craft beer destinations in the US. Here is a list of some of Loudoun’s breweries:

Adroit Theory Brewing, Purcellville
B. Chord Brewing Company, Round Hill
Barnhouse Brewery, Leesburg
Bear Chase Brewing Company, Bluemont
Betty Love Brewing Company, Purcellville
Beltway Brewing Company, Sterling
Black Hoof Brewing Company, Leesburg
Black Walnut Brewery, Leesburg
Crooked Run Brewing, Leesburg
Dirt Farm Brewing, Bluemont
Dog Money Restaurant & Brewery, Leesburg

Dynasty Brewing Company, Leesburg
Harpers Ferry Brewing, Hillsboro
Hillsborough Winery, Brewery & Vineyard, Hillsboro
House 6 Brewing Company, Ashburn
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Loudoun Brewing Company, Leesburg
Notaviva Craft Fermentations, Hillsboro
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Phase 2 Brewing, Leesburg
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Rocket Frog Brewing Company, Sterling
Solace Brewing Company, Sterling
Sweetwater Tavern, Sterling
The Craft of Brewing, Ashburn
Twinpanzee Brewing Company, Sterling
Vanish Framwoods Brewery, Leesburg (Lucketts)
Wheatland Spring, Waterford

Gov. Northam announces refinancing plan to save Virginia colleges, universities \$300 million over next two years

Gov. Ralph Northam has announced a higher education refinancing plan that will save Virginia's public colleges and universities more than \$300 million over the next two years. The Commonwealth of Virginia will take advantage of low interest rates by refinancing bonds issued by the Treasury Board of Virginia and the Virginia College Building Authority, that institutions of higher education use for capital projects.

"The COVID-19 pandemic continues to have tremendous impacts on higher education, including the fiscal health of our colleges and universities," said Gov. Northam. "Families all over the country are taking advantage of record low interest rates to refinance their home mortgages, and we want our public institutions to benefit as well. Refinancing will free up millions of dollars in savings, allowing our colleges and universities to make critical investments, meet the needs of Virginia students, and continue

offering a world-class education."

Virginia has successfully avoided cuts to higher education during the pandemic. The Commonwealth has worked hard to maintain its valued AAA bond rating, which has allowed the state to be eligible for these favorable interest rates.

Under the plan, institutions will make no principal payments on their VCBA bonds through fiscal year 2023. The proposed restructuring will also extend institutions' payment plans for two years beyond their current schedule, for both VCBA and TBV bonds.

Gov. Northam will work with the General Assembly to allow additional flexibility for higher education refinancing during the 2021 General Assembly session.

The following savings are expected:

- Christopher Newport University: \$14.4 million
- George Mason University: \$58.3 million

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 >

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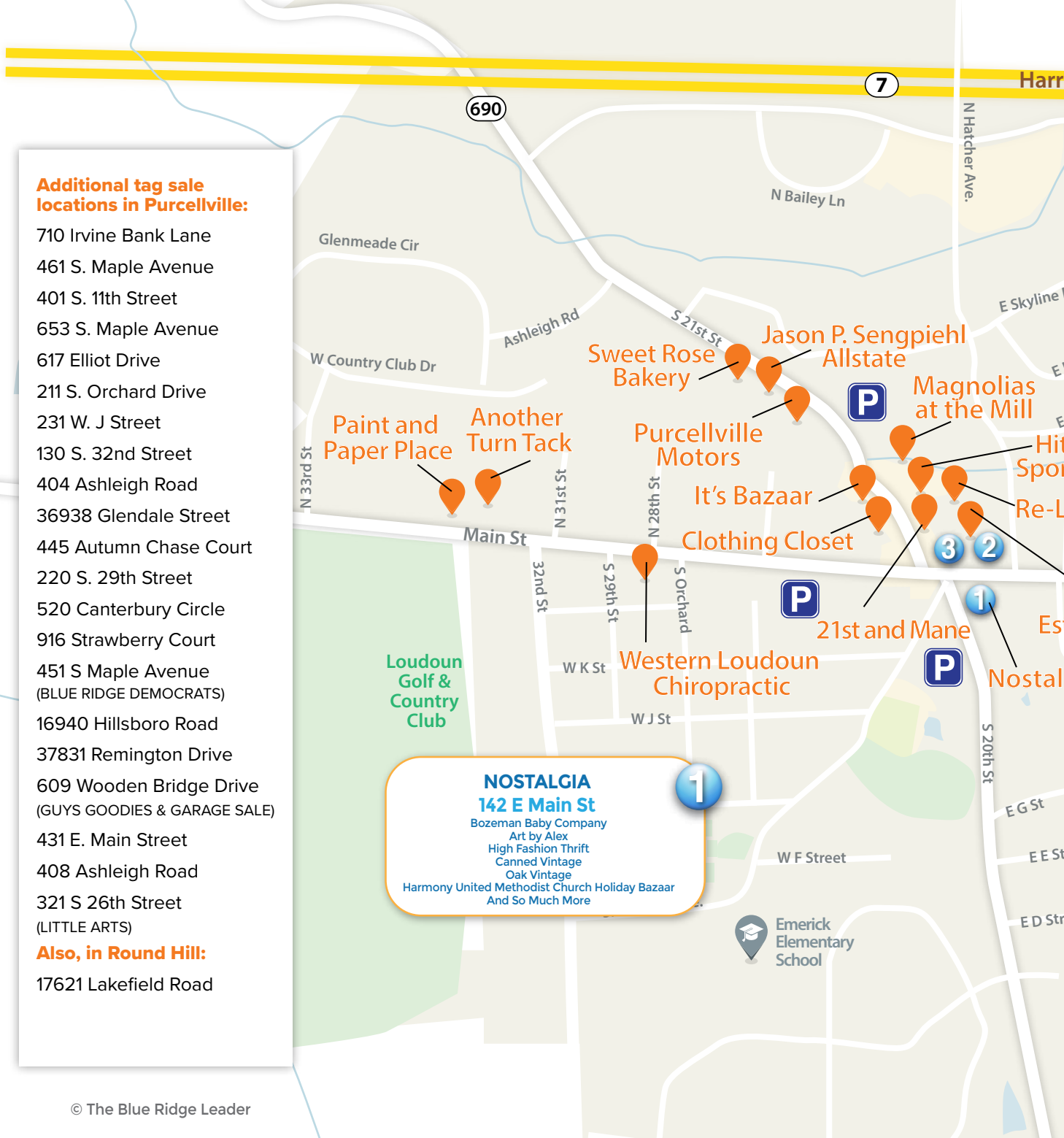
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- 404 Ashleigh Road
- 36938 Glendale Street
- 445 Autumn Chase Court
- 220 S. 29th Street
- 520 Canterbury Circle
- 916 Strawberry Court
- 451 S Maple Avenue (BLUE RIDGE DEMOCRATS)
- 16940 Hillsboro Road
- 37831 Remington Drive
- 609 Wooden Bridge Drive (GUYS GOODIES & GARAGE SALE)
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Let them play high school sports

A rally calling for Virginia high school fall sports to resume as soon as possible was held at the Loudoun County Public Schools Administration building in Ashburn Sept. 25.

Parents and athletes joined Pastor Michelle Thomas, President of the Loudoun Chapter of the NAACP and mother of Fitz Thomas, an athlete who drowned this summer, Tristan Leigh a football player at Robinson High School, Holly Wiles, the organizer of the event, former Washington Redskin and owner of MASE Training, high school football coach Eddie Mason, former Del. Tag Greason (R-32), and Del. Dave LaRock (R-33), among others.

Virginia is one of 10 states not playing high school sports, even though thousands of games and events have taken place. Student athletes are missing out on college opportunities, while club sports are taking place all over the state. Many school districts are even renting out their facilities to club teams. "Let the kids play!" was the recurring theme of the rally.



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Are you planning to vote this year? Not sure if you are registered?

Visit www.elections.virginia.gov/voterinformation to check. The deadline to register to vote or update your address is Tuesday, Oct. 13. Using a valid Virginia driver's license, you can apply to register to vote or update your address. If you are new to Virginia and don't have a Virginia driver's license yet, you can find a Virginia Voter Registration Application online at www.elections.virginia.gov/registration/voter-forms.

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Please note: A court decree has waived the requirement for a witness signature on Envelope B (Oath Enve-

lope) for the November 2020 election. All ballots returned without a witness signature will be counted as long as the voter has printed their name and address, signed the envelope, and placed their marked ballot inside.

Vote Early: Early voting is now available to all registered voters in Loudoun County. You do not need to complete an application or apply in advance. Just remember to bring your ID with you when you go to vote.

Early voting is now being conducted at the Office of Elections in Leesburg (Suite F) weekdays from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. The office will open satellite locations on Saturday, Oct. 17, at 9 a.m. Visit www.loudoun.gov/voteearly to learn more about the locations, dates, and times.

Please note: If you have requested a ballot to be mailed to you and decide you'd rather vote early; you must bring the ballot with you to trade in for a new one.

Vote on Election Day: All county polling places will be open on Tuesday, Nov. 3, from 6 a.m. until 7 p.m. for those who wish to vote on Election Day. You can find more on Election Day voting at www.loudoun.gov/voteonelectionday.



Alert: Peacock Crossing

The neighborhood children have named them Hagrid and Dumbledore. Their parents are starting to call them a nuisance. The subjects of this delight and despair, are a pair of peacocks that have taken up residence in the Goose Creek area south of Purcellville. Peacocks are beautiful birds, well known for their vibrant feather fans. On the oth-

er hand, they are also renowned for, er, pooping, whooping, and screaming. In fact, some zoos have sent them packing. It's unlikely the locals here will banish them. But they do caution all who travel on Sands, Foundry, and Lincoln Roads: Hagrid and Dumbledore are fearless in their strolls across the road – drive with caution.

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Onward, Opal Lee, “Grandmother of Juneteenth”

On September 23, 93-year-old Opal Lee delivered to Congress a petition signed by more than 1.54 million people seeking to rally senators and representatives to support legislation that would make June 19—“Juneteenth”—a national day of observance.

Juneteenth celebrates the date Union soldiers enforced the Emancipation Proclamation freeing all remaining slaves in Galveston, Texas, on June 19, 1865. After the Civil War, Texas was the last state in rebellion to allow enslavement. Although the rumors of freedom were widespread prior to this, actual emancipation was not announced in Texas until General Gordon Granger came to Galveston and issued General Order #3, on the “19th of June,” almost two and a half years after President Abraham Lincoln signed the Emancipation Proclamation.

In remembrance of those two and a half years, Opal Lee began her campaign for a Juneteenth holiday by planning to walk two and a half miles a day to get to Washington from Texas. Although that feat fell by the wayside, she pressed on with the campaign—even after delivering the petition to Congress.

The following day she traveled to Loudoun County and visited historic sites connected to segregation, such as Waterford’s Second Street School. In Leesburg, she met with local officials, including Phyllis Randall, chair of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, and Kelly Burk,



Opal Lee, “Grandmother of Juneteenth,” center, meets with Steve Williams and Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk. Opal Lee received a proclamation from the Town of Leesburg. Starting in 2012 Juneteenth will be a Town holiday.

mayor of Leesburg, urging them to make Juneteenth a meaningful day by offering communities the opportunity to explore past, present, and future issues of race.

In June 2020, Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam (D) signed an executive order making Juneteenth a permanent paid state holiday in Virginia.

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Phyllis Randall said something like, “This will end up passing.”

The proposal was to dissolve a land use advisory panel called ZOAG (Zoning Ordinance Action Group) and replace it with a new body called ZOC (Zoning Ordinance Committee.) Sounds esoteric and boring, right? Actually, it’s a very good idea that eliminates some overlaps between ZOAG and the Planning Commission, addresses some membership issues and makes other refinements. It was apparent that there were many devils in the details: One Supervisor said too many real estate interests were represented, while another said there were too many conservation groups. Then, would ZOC report to the Planning Commission or directly to the Board?

These and other comments were amiable, but it was becoming clear that a lot of details needed resolution. A motion was made to defer a vote until their Oct. 6 meeting. While Mike said he thought the vote could be taken then (It was 11:43 at the time), a wrinkle in his brow acknowledged that he saw the inevitability of the short delay, so he seconded the deferral motion. I’m sure he’s already refining his motion, and as Phyllis said, “I’m confident his idea will pass.”

With much chagrin, I wonder how my Atlanta skyscraper idea would have fared had I done my homework and preparation.

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

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Rock painting workshops add color to Chapman DeMary Trail

The Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board and the Purcellville Arts Council co-hosted rock painting workshops at the Chapman DeMary Trail Sept. 27. Local artist Marion Esposito, who painted the rocks for the Purcellville Rocks scavenger hunt, led two one-hour workshops to teach participants how to paint rocks. Each of the two workshops were limited to six families, who were provided supplies.

The rock painting is a continuation of the monthly nature walks which, from March through August, had been canceled due to COVID-19. The resumed walks and activities are required to comply with current guidelines, held in smaller groups with two sessions each time, and reservations required.

The weekend was also the last weekend of the Purcellville Rocks scavenger hunt. By Sept. 28, a total of 20 painted rocks were hidden in various parks, trails, and places in Purcellville. Since Aug. 15,

clues and photos for each rock have been posted on the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Facebook page on Mondays, Thursdays, and Saturdays.

The Chapman DeMary Trail is a 10-acre area considered to be the last stand of old-growth forest in the Town of Purcellville. It runs along the South Fork Catoctin Creek, part of the Chesapeake Bay Watershed. The area is open to the public for environmental recreation, exploration, and education. The Town of Purcellville holds the conservation easement for the privately-owned property. The entrance and parking for the Chapman DeMary Trail is behind the building at 205 East Hirst Road in Purcellville.

The Discover Nature's Secrets guided nature walks and activities are held the last Sunday of each month and hosted by the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board. Learn more on the Monthly Nature Walks page in the Events and Activities section of the Town of Purcellville's website at www.PurcellvilleVa.gov.

COMMUNITY

JK Moving invests half of net profits into employees' 401K and profit-sharing

JK Moving Services, the nation's largest independently owned and operated moving company, made a significant investment in the long-term future of its employees. In September, the company distributed nearly \$2 million into eligible employees' 401K accounts as part of its profit-sharing program. Over the lifetime of the program, JK Moving Services has disbursed more than \$25 million into eligible employees' accounts.

"I saw how hard it was for my parents to save for retirement. When I started JK, I wanted to help my employees have an opportunity to build wealth and afford to retire. Our employees commit to us and our customers, and our profit-sharing pro-

grams are part of our commitment to them," explained Chuck Kuhn, founder and CEO, JK Moving. "This year, it took longer to become profitable, but with sacrifices and hard work across the enterprise, we are again thriving."

Made during the same month as National 401K Day—a national day marking the importance of retirement programs, JK's annual investment represents 5.5 percent of annual salary for eligible employees. This breakdowns to 3 percent into the safe harbor 401K program and another 2.5 percent from the profit-sharing component. JK was able to continue this commitment by taking measures during the pandemic to cut costs and manage expenses, including members of the executive team taking a pay cut.

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- George Bernard Shaw

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K-6 distance learning child care program

The Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services is offering all-day child care for children in grades K-6 while they are in distance learning.

At the Sept. 15th Board business meeting, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted to revise the county's K-6 distance learning Child Care Program. The program was reevaluated after it launched with lower enrollment than expected.

The program was developed to support working parents who have an unexpected need for child care this fall due to the LCPS decision to begin the 2020-2021 school year with all distance learning. The original scope of the County's plan was based on surveys of parents in the community who expressed a significant need for the service.

Below are the details of the revised program:

Cap the number of children in the program at 600, which eliminates the need for libraries and community and recreation

center locations for the program. The service will continue to be offered at 11 elementary schools and two leased buildings.

Reduce program fees. The new monthly rate for the five-day, full-day program is \$690, which is 70 percent of the original rate. The new monthly rate for the five-day, school day program is \$345, which is 50 percent of the original rate. LCPS Free and Reduced Lunch Program participants receive a 50 percent discount; and employees of Loudoun County government and LCPS receive a 10 percent discount.

Increase the flexibility of the program by offering it for two or three days a week in addition to the current five-day program at commensurate rates.

The BOS also lowered the cost of the program by reducing total enrollment and adjusting the program's funding that comes from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act and fees from participants.

Registration for the K-6 distance learning Child Care Program continues on a

rolling basis. Parents who are interested in the service may find program details and registration information at www.loudoun.gov/DLchildcare, and go to loudoun.gov/webtrac to register.

Throughout the school day, staff will monitor students as they engage in both synchronous and asynchronous distance learning. The daily schedule includes time for lunch in the classroom, recess (outdoor, weather-permitting) and short breaks. The program will operate with 10 students in a "pod" who are grouped according to age. Lunch is provided.

Staff will create a warm, welcoming environment for students. While they are not teachers and won't teach any material, staff will direct students to log on and complete their virtual work. They will manage student behavior, using the CASA Program Positive Behavioral Interventions and Supports strategies. Staff will also build a sense of community within their individual groups.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »

WEXTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

2018, which has since helped more than 400,000 Virginians get access to health care and has been a lifeline for so many during COVID-19.

I believe that health care is a right, which is why I have worked to improve and expand on the Affordable Care Act, not tear it down. One of the first votes I took in Congress was to allow the House of Representatives to enter into the legal fight to save the ACA and maintain protections for those with pre-existing conditions. I've supported major legislation in the House of Representatives to lower the cost of premiums, deductibles, and other out-of-pocket costs and help stabilize health care markets.

I also cosponsored and voted for a bipartisan bill that passed the House last year to lower the cost of prescription drugs, including allowing Medicare to negotiate the prices it pays for these medications.

I've also introduced the Health Savings for Families Act to remove burdensome tax penalties and help Virginia families save money on their health care costs, after the issue was brought to my attention by affected constituents.

Now more than ever, the COVID-19 crisis has exposed the importance of access to affordable health care. Ensuring that every Virginian is able to access testing and treatment for this virus without burdensome costs is something I've fought for since the pandemic first began.

BRL: Everybody wants to "fix our broken immigration system." What is your number one priority to get that done?

Wexton: Immigrants are our friends, neighbors, coworkers and community members. Our diversity here in Virginia-10 makes us stronger and the attacks on immigrants are detrimental to our nation.

It's an issue that is critical across our district. I've heard from our apple growers, winemakers, and other farmers that they're struggling to get workers here on temporary visas. I've also heard the fears of so many DREAMers and TPS [Temporary Protected Status] holders as the programs that have allowed them to find a home in our community are under threat from this administration.

In my first term in Congress, we've taken important first steps to fixing our broken immigration system. I was proud to cosponsor and vote to pass the bipartisan Dream and Promise Act that would offer a pathway to citizenship for DREAMers, those eligible for TPS, and other immigrants in similar situations who have lived in the U.S. for much of their lives. I also voted to pass the bipartisan Fairness for High-Skilled Immigrants Act which would help address the backlog of employment-based visas and green cards. This issue has impacted many workers in our district and removing these barriers is important to our local tech economy.

I also believe we need to support smart and effective border security measures. That's why I've voted for a bipartisan budget bill that would fund opioid detection equipment, air and marine assets, and new border security technology.

Many of these policies have wide bipartisan support, but we've been lacking the political will at the top to get the job done. I'm hopeful that in a new admin-

istration next year we can move forward with these long-overdue improvements to our immigration system.

BRL: What in your personal and career background prepares you for the job in the United States Congress?

Wexton: I've spent my career fighting for Virginia's kids and families. As a former prosecutor and experienced legislator, I've been able to find success by working across the aisle to fight for the issues that matter to our community and support our local economy. I've followed through on the promises that I made when I first ran for Congress to work to make health care more affordable, keep our kids safe from gun violence, and stand up for our federal workers -- all while holding this administration accountable. Now I'm working harder than ever to make sure our district gets the federal support we need to get through this pandemic.

During my first term, I've prioritized being accessible and delivering strong constituent services. Since being sworn in, I've held 16 town halls and counting. My team has closed more than 3,000 constituent cases and returned over \$4 million to taxpayers in our district -- more than the operating cost of my office.

As a prosecutor, public servant, and most importantly as a mom, I understand that now more than ever our community needs someone who can get the job done and help us weather the unprecedented challenges we're facing. It has been the honor of my life to serve as your representative in Congress these past two years, and I look forward to continuing to fight for our district in Washington.

ANDREWS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

We must eliminate cumbersome and unnecessary FDA regulations that slow down the path of prescription drugs, and make them more costly to produce. Finally, we must stop influence peddling by Big Pharma and other healthcare companies that is not in the best interest of the patient. As your Representative and a Mom, I will put patients first in every decision.

BRL: Everybody wants to "fix our broken immigration system." What is your number one priority to get that done?

Andrews: Securing our border. I've worked with CBP [Customs and Border Protection], I can tell you firsthand that illegal border crossings are in fact happening where we do not have a secure border. And it doesn't help that we have radical leftists telling illegal immigrants that if they come here, we will give them free healthcare and college.

We need to pass laws that say the complete opposite of this, and make sure those who want to enter our country illegally know they will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law for committing this crime. Hundreds of thousands of Americans came to this country as immigrants, but did so through the proper channels. There's no reason illegal immigrants can't do the same. Once we can get our border under control by giving DHS the much-needed resources to do so, we can focus on reforming our immigration laws.

BRL: What in your personal and career background prepares you for the job in the United States Congress?

Andrews: The first thing that comes to mind is my career in the Marines. Not only did the Marines turn me into a better leader, I gained an understanding of American values that I think more Americans need. I served all around the world; and our country isn't thankful enough for the system of law and order and values that have been instilled in our fellow countrymen. On top of that, being a mother has inspired me to fight like hell to make sure my children grow up in the best country in the world. As the woke mob continues to promote anarchy and revisionist history, it's more important than ever that we fight back and protect our American way of life for future generations.

PUBLIC PROFANITY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

Town's procurement specialist works "two days a week. She doesn't just do RFPs that get posted to the bid board, every single purchase – pens, paper, computers ... goes through her office."

Fraser suggested a project management framework, something he has suggested in the past. Interrupting, Hankins said, "Yes, we do." Fraser suggested a free software he recommended four years ago.

The discussion about this issue seemed to bother Stinnette.

After Council moved on to the next discussion, Stinnette said, "... I want to roll in on this one here and just say Bull****," yelling now, he continued ...

"We cannot ask these guys to put together a budget, the last three quarters and do two rounds of CARES Act stuff, then turn around and figure out the water privatization issue, the CPAC issue, and Aberdeen. They just don't have the capacity.

"It was an embarrassment watching Stan and Chris beat the staff up over Aberdeen."

Now banging his hand down on the table, Stinnette said, "There is no question to my mind right now our priority is on the budget and the CARES Act."

Banging his hand down on the table a second time he said, "Stop ... we have got to get those done; if we do not get the budget done, we are at risk from a legal perspective ..."

This outburst left some in the chamber uncomfortable. The air was thick.

The Town budget had at this point not been discussed since it was further down on the agenda. Prior to the nutrient discussion, the CARES Act had been discussed.

Outbursts by Stinnette are not unusual. But, this was the first time he used foul language and banged on the table.

Loudoun officials offer guidance for a safe halloween

Loudoun County officials recommend that residents do not engage in traditional door-to-door trick-or-treating this Halloween or other activities that risk transmission of COVID-19.

"We all have a role in making Halloween as safe as possible this year by taking precautions that limit the spread of COVID-19 in our community," said Loudoun County Health Director Dr. David Goodfriend. "We encourage parents and anyone planning to participate in Halloween-related events to take actions to protect themselves, their children and others from the virus that causes this disease."

Halloween activities that are considered high-risk and are not recommended include:

- Traditional trick-or-treating where treats are handed to children who go door to door.
- Trick-or-treating at houses where individuals are not wearing a face covering and where 6 feet of physical distance is not maintained between individuals.
- Trunk-or-treating where treats are handed out from trunks of cars lined up in large parking lots.
- Events that involve large gatherings, such as crowded costume parties held indoors and any events where social distancing is difficult to maintain.
- Indoor haunted houses where people may be crowded together and screaming.

For those who are planning to participate in Halloween events, officials urge these precautions:

- Stay home and away from others when sick.
- Stay at least 6 feet from others at all times.
- Wash your hands before and during trick-or-treating or handing out candy. Use hand sanitizer when soap and water aren't available.
- Wear a cloth face covering under costume masks. Halloween masks may not fit snugly and may not protect against inhaling respiratory droplets from other people.

If you choose to offer candy, hand out candy outside and from a distance. Consider setting up a table and placing individually-wrapped treats so that multiple people do not have to reach into the same bowl. For trunk-or-treating, create distance between cars by parking in every other space.

Haunted houses that choose to operate must strictly follow Phase 3 Guidelines for Entertainment and Public Amusement settings.

For more detailed information, including suggestions for low-risk Halloween activities for families, visit loudoun.gov/safehalloween.

- Visit loudoun.gov/coronavirus for more information about how to protect yourself and your family and to sign up for email and text updates on COVID-19.
- Opt in to receive text message updates regarding the COVID-19 pandemic: Residents with questions about COVID-19 may call 703-737-8300, or send an email to health@loudoun.gov.

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CHIPPING AWAY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

three separate lots. Trails End, LLC will be consolidating the three properties into a single parcel.

This approval process is handled by Town staff. And, that's where the "chipping away" comes in.

Splitting hairs ... or maybe not ... Chapman has filed demolition permits for each of three older properties, and as of press time, the permits have not been issued. But, according to staff, since the properties are not included in the Town of Purcellville Historic Corridor Overlay [Zoning] District, the proposed demolition does not require Board of Architectural Review approval, even though the properties are in the Historic Overlay District.

Town of Purcellville Design Guidelines state that the "guidelines are applicable to all non-residential and non-agricultural development within the Town limits of Purcellville as well as historic residential structures in the Historic Overlay District. Scale, orientation, relationship and character of the built environment make up its context. The existing makeup of the Town, its buildings, streetscapes and landscaping, all assist in establishing a frame of reference for context and compatibility. Submissions to the BAR [Board of Architectural Review] should take the following into consideration: a) Scale, placement and character of proposed buildings or building additions [and] should blend well with its neighboring structures."

Semantics? Double speak? Details that

Casey Chapman is proposing a 54,285 square foot, three-story building with retail and commercial on the main floor and 34 residential units on the two top floors. He wants a parking lot with 48 spaces and an additional 9 spaces on Hatcher Ave.

The proposed building is an "L"-shaped plan with 196 feet of wall fronting along Hatcher, and 124 feet of wall fronting along the W&OD Trail. The building is designed "to evoke a neo-traditional commercial and row house feel," according to the staff report.

don't really matter? Hair splitting? Maybe. But, bit-by-bit, things like this have a way of chipping away at a Town's charm. They sure do.

The Board of Architectural Review has taken the initial position that there must be a compelling reason to tear down or relocate a significant historic structure

in the Town's Historic Overlay District. It has previously re-emphasized that keeping structures is important to maintaining the scale and character of a neighborhood. If a house is a contributing structure in the Purcellville Historic District, this must be considered.

The newly-adopted Town of Purcellville Comprehensive Plan wants this area to "Limit the bulk of redevelopment and infill in the district to small footprint buildings similar to existing buildings."

It also wants to "allow single-family homes or residential-style office buildings along the borders of the district as an appropriate transition to existing residential areas."

Consider the sense of quiet, style, and history you get driving around the area dominated by the old, and well-preserved mill (Magnolia's restaurant) on 21st street. Somebody did development the right way, there.

The guiding statement in Purcellville's Comp Plan for this area says, "Any other buildings that are replaced or built as infill should reference the scale, proportion, style, and bulk and massing of the existing buildings ..." The section of Hatcher in question is comprised of single-family homes that have a commercial/residential use. The zoning in this area is C-4 (Central Commercial).

Apartments are a permitted use in the C-4 District and there are approximately four on 21st Street and a few on Main and 20th Streets. However, Multi-Family is not a permitted use in this District. "As Acting Zoning Administrator, I struggle to explain the difference between the two terms describing essentially the same use," wrote Andy Conlon in the Staff Report.

Chapman has filed the Certificate of Design Approval application before submitting a site plan. A site plan would consider traffic impacts, pre- and post-development drainage, permeable and impermeable surfaces, and possibly extending O Street E to Hatcher. Traffic impacts are not considered with a Certificate of Design Approval Application.

The BAR has not issued the Certificate of Design Approval for Trails End, LLC and has asked them to return with a more detailed plan.

NORTHAM, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

- James Madison University: \$43.7 million
- Longwood University: \$8.2 million
- Norfolk State University: \$8.2 million
- Old Dominion University: \$29.8 million
- Radford University: \$5.1 million
- Richard Bland College of William & Mary: \$320,000
- University of Mary Washing-

ton: \$9.3 million

- University of Virginia: \$344,000
- Virginia Commonwealth University: \$23.1 million
- Virginia Community College System: \$9.7 million
- Virginia Military Institute: \$2.8 million
- Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University: \$40.1 million
- Virginia State University: \$12.8 million
- William & Mary: \$33.7 million

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

milestone in the daily travels for many workers, students, homemakers and slightly crazed individuals, like myself, who feel compelled to get out and explore their surroundings.

And, getting back to that initial advice – about knowing where you want to go before you get there and all – sometimes one requires a compass or some other type of navigational device in order to determine your desired heading when changing course. Now my Dad, having survived the duration of World War II in the South Pacific, swore by the use of such tools (not sure if he ever had the need to glance at one – he always seemed to know where he was going), and I tried my best to learn the procedure for implementation of like articles; but, not being entirely mechanical (or even mildly practical, for that matter) I opted for my own – inner – devices in tracking my exploits. Some people say they have a ‘gut feeling’ about a particular subject, or they lean toward a certain cause, perhaps in a magnetic – or, even, cellular – sense; I always kind of felt I had my own emotional and spiritual (not to mention intelligent) navigational tool inside my own rib cage. I called it my heart.

It had, after all those beating years, chosen the specific location of Gilbert’s Corner for the subject of that morning’s photo session (and today’s story), guided me south of Town, around the paved circle and off into the little parking area to get out and stretch the legs. And it got me home.

Sounds pretty simple and obvious, I know; but I can look around as I write (and proof-read, and edit, and review) this little piece and point out scores of individuals (local, national and in-between) who have obviously lost their way (to my way of thinking) to what-

ever destination they had in mind (if they ever possessed one – including a mind), and seem to have no clue as to how to find their way back to familiar ground. The term ‘lack of a moral compass’ comes to mind actually, hardly scratches the surface), and then some – at least to mine – and this coming from one hardly positioned to lecture on morality – or intelligence.

Now, I’ve known about Gilbert’s Corner pretty much since I arrived in Loudoun County; it’s a well-known intersection of two major highways in the region. I’ve never passed through this spot without having decided – long before I’d even opened my car door upon leaving home – whether I wanted to head north, south east or west as I exited the crossing. And, being a prominent crossroads, I always gave myself a little pat on the back for ‘doing the right thing’ in getting through the pass.

Now, some decisions – like negotiating a traffic corner – require scant consultation with my interior compass; others require a bit more work – like a need to ‘sleep on it’ in making bigger choices. Sometimes the more elusive answers can be extremely difficult to ascertain; some never arrive.

But – whether it’s Gilbert’s Corner or the fate of mankind – I at least have an idea about how I – with my limited abilities – would attempt to come up with some type of acceptable resolution. I hope I always do.

And, in a lighter shade, one of these days, I’ll have to stop and patronize the offerings of the seafood vendors at the little gravel parking area off Routes 50 and 15, and make a mental note to return for the weekend Farmers Market at the same location; when I do, I know I’ll feel good on the drive back home. And, I’ll keep my compass handy – just in case.

Loudoun to hold virtual public meeting Oct. 5 on Aldie Fire & Rescue Station



Loudoun County is hosting an online public meeting to share information about the Aldie Fire and Rescue station project Monday, Oct. 5, from 6 – 7:30 p.m.

GOVERNMENT

The meeting will be conducted by the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure and the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System. Members of the public are invited to join the virtual meeting to learn and ask questions about the project.

Login information and links to meeting materials are available for review at loudoun.gov/aldiestation and loudoun.gov/remoteparticipation.

Meeting materials include detailed site layout plans, a speaker sign-up form and a comment form. Members of the public must sign up in advance to ask questions during the event by 12 p.m., Friday, Oct. 2. Online

participants may also send questions to the project team as chat messages, which will be answered during the meeting as time allows.

This project is located along the Rt. 50 corridor west of the roundabout intersection with Rt. 15 on an existing undeveloped property. This project will construct a new 23,000-square-foot fire and rescue facility in the Aldie area, which will replace the existing Aldie Fire and Rescue Station. Additional site improvements for this project include two entrances off Rt. 50, access and parking areas, a well and septic field, lighting, landscaping and a stormwater management pond.

For more information about the Aldie Fire and Rescue Station project, including a link to sign up for updates about the project, visit loudoun.gov/aldiestation.

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

their relationships improve during the pandemic, and are now stronger than ever.

If you find yourself struggling as a married couple, I offer the following tips to support positive change:

Communicate with your spouse in advance of important things or at the front end of problems to avoid confusion, hurt and upset.

Connect daily and support your spouse through attentive and active listening.

Do things together – going for a walk or exercising, cooking and eating meals together as a couple or family, doing home improvement projects, and having date nights are just a few suggestions for quality together time.

Expand your support system.

Drink in moderation or not at all since excessive alcohol use can lead to distorted and exaggerated negative emotions and responses and poor judgment and impulse control.

Maintain a healthy work and personal

life balance and try not to let your work or work stress spill into your time with your spouse and family.

Be spontaneous and plan something fun (e.g., a surprise date night or your next family trip).

Support your spouse in active co-parenting and strive to agree on how you engage, reward and consequence your children as a couple.

Maintain healthy self-care and have a routine.

COVID-19 has been stressful for married couples with divorce rates subsequently on the rise. It’s okay to feel what you’re feeling in response to all that is happening, and it’s also okay for your partner to do the same. Struggling and overcoming together is the goal, no matter how challenging things get, if you want your marriage to last.

Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. is a clinical psychologist in private practice. He can be reached at (703) 723-2999 and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.

WEXTON SUPPORTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

America Act. Clearly, she understands the needs of the rural economy, and the role of public policy in supporting it.

I want a representative in congress who listens to our concerns and is accessible to us. By holding several town hall meetings, and working with constituents throughout the district, Jennifer has proven that she is that person. Through her work on other important issues that matter to the voters of Virginia’s 10th District, including protec-

tions for federal workers, improvements in healthcare and protecting the environment, Jennifer Wexton has represented us well.

Her previous work as a children’s advocate, Commonwealth’s Attorney, and State Senator, gives her the knowledge and leadership experience to continue to be the smart and effective voice we need in Congress.

I will proudly vote for Jennifer Wexton for Congress.

*Madeline Murphy
Aldie*

PHILOMONT FIREHOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Community and the surrounding area. They will delve into their estimated design and construction timeline as well as possible locations, if applicable.”

This headline also raised eyebrows: “Philomont Horse Show Retiring.”

To express their concerns, several community leaders attended the Sept. 15 meeting of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, where they were astonished to learn that the Supervisors were also in the dark.

However, nothing prepared local early voters for this item on their ballots:

On the ballot

Public Safety Projects

QUESTION: Shall the County of Loudoun, Virginia contract a debt and issue its general obligation capital improvement bonds in the maximum principal amount of \$29,516,000 to finance, in whole or in part, the costs to design, construct, and equip a Fire and Rescue Training Academy Expansion; the costs to design, construct, and equip Philomont Fire and Rescue Station Replacement; and the costs of other public safety facilities approved in the County's Capital Improvement Program?

Yes

No

Lloyd McCliggott, who served as chairman of the board of the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department for many years, tells the backstory from the villagers’ point of view: “Unbeknownst to the community, Loudoun County Fire and Rescue has been planning to build a new 18,500 square-foot firehouse at the site of the Philomont Horse Show Grounds in the village. The County’s FY 2021 adopted budget has allocated \$21.6M towards the replacement of the current firehouse and is part of the \$29.5M question on the current ballot.

“All this has been accomplished without one citizen meeting or, for that matter, any other outreach to the residents of Philomont,” McCliggott added.

Madeline Skinner, chair of the Loudoun Historic Village Alliance and the Philomont Village Foundation, voiced the community’s “overwhelming desire to retain the existing firehouse as it currently exists.”

According to Skinner, “Our firehouse has been the subject of County-funded studies related to building condition, air quality, septic, and well inspections. All studies and inspections found the building and its infrastructure to be in good shape and free of hazardous conditions. It is efficient and part of what makes Philomont a charming village.” She also noted that the Philomont firehouse is fewer than nine miles and 15 minutes (at posted speed limits) from four other western Loudoun firehouses—Aldie, Middleburg, Purcellville, and Round Hill.

“What’s more,” Skinner said, “locating a firehouse on the Horse Show Grounds on Snickersville Turnpike, and with historic homes in very close proximity, would be dangerous. The community would prefer to keep their green space and have a park for all to enjoy.”

The view from the firehouse

Of course, the management and staff at the Philomont firehouse see things differently.

Administrator Chris Young explains, “Since the Phi-



lomont firehouse was built more than 60 years ago—with \$17,000 raised by local volunteers—its needs have grown but volunteering has not kept pace.” With fewer volunteers, the fire department has had to fill its personnel needs with 24/7 Loudoun County Fire Department career staff.

Doug Frost, Philomont fire department’s board chair, wrote in the current newsletter, “The fire department board of directors and [fire] company executives anticipated these changes back in 2015 and formally requested that Loudoun County plan for the eventual takeover of the fire and rescue needs of our community. The County subsequently added a budget placeholder in the Loudoun County Capital Improvement Plan to fund the construction of a new County-owned fire and rescue facility, somewhere in Philomont.

“Our [existing] facility cannot be reconfigured to meet the latest County standards,” Frost added. “Thus, in about five or six years, we will see the construction of a new LCFR facility to meet the anticipated future needs of our ever-growing community. We are offering the County a building site on the old seven-acre horse show grounds at no cost. We are also tentatively reserving a couple of acres for future use by the community.”



Philomont Horse Show Grounds on Snickersville Turnpike.

Real cost and the Comprehensive Plan

In the long run, the real cost of the proposed firehouse in the historic village will be incalculable, say Western Loudoun residents.

The zoning committee chair of the Loudoun County Preservation & Conservation Coalition, Maura Walsh-Copeland, raises this key question for the Loudoun County Supervisors and other officials: “How does the size, scale, and type of community involvement for this new firehouse meet the policies of the Comprehensive Plan as approved by the Board of Supervisors, with the full support of the Loudoun Historic Village Alliance?” (The Alliance brings together the unincorporated villages of Aldie, Bluemont, Lincoln, Lucketts, Paeonian Springs, Philomont, St. Louis, Taylorstown, Unison, and Waterford on issues of mutual concern.)

Walsh-Copeland points to relevant policies approved by Loudoun’s Supervisors: “Development and uses in Rural Historic Villages must be compatible with the historic development pattern, community character,

Middleburg’s fire station award-winning renovation



Middleburg firehouse, before and after renovation: winner of Firehouse magazine’s Station House Gold Renovation Award.

In November 2014, Middleburg’s fire station won Firehouse Magazine’s Renovation Gold award for transforming “a severely undersized and outdated facility compromised with a structurally failing roof and regular water damage in the apparatus bays” and cramped residential wing into “a compact 16,000-square-foot design with a new two-story wing, providing space for 14 semi-private bunkrooms. With the bunkrooms on the second floor,” Firehouse explained, “the main level is dedicated to operational spaces and a shared training/community room. The apparatus bays were retained and expanded with new bay support spaces and a training mezzanine.

“The exterior character of the building,” noted Firehouse, “benefits from a simple, yet carefully considered palette of residential materials intended to blend into the neighborhood, while subtly announcing its presence as a civic building.”

The station was built on the watch of Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue Department Chief W. Keith Brower, Jr., now retired and replaced by Keith Johnson. Paul R. Erickson of Reston-based LeMay Erickson Willcox Architects, working with Bowman Consulting Group, designed the facility. Ehlert Bryan managed structural engineering.

Total Cost (in 2014 dollars): \$4,306,000.

visual identity, intensity, and scale of the individual villages.” The policies also stipulate that the County will “work with Rural Historic Villages to develop community plans that will support their community goals and address issues related to land use and zoning; economic development; natural, environmental, and historic resources; community facilities and services.”

These Rural Historic Villages policies, Philomont residents agree, apply to the Horse Show Grounds. In its early years, the spring horse show had been held at a nearby farm, but when the owners sold and moved on, the show needed a home for the newly organized fire department’s benefits. So, the community came to the rescue, raising some \$6,000 for the PVFD to purchase the seven privately held acres in the village. This is the same land the PVFD intends to give to the County for the proposed fire station.

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PHILOMONT FIREHOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 30

New vs. renovated fire stations

In its efforts to bring Western Loudoun's firehouses up to current standards, the Loudoun County Fire Department has worked with local departments in Hamilton, Purcellville, Round Hill, and Aldie to construct new stations that are located outside historic areas.

Meanwhile, similar needs of two other stations—Middleburg in 2014 and Leesburg-Plaza Street this year—have been met with modest expansions and successful renovations on their existing sites. Both certified by Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design, these stations have acquired new kitchens, dining areas, restrooms, locker rooms, and training/exercise spaces, as well as additional office spaces and bunkrooms.

As the Blue Ridge Leader goes to press, officials of the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue Department and the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department are preparing to present their plans at the first community meeting to date. Residents have been advised that they may not give their own presentation but only ask questions. It is scheduled from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m., Wednesday, Sept. 30, at Woodgrove High School and by virtual participation.

K-6 DISTANCE LEARNING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26

When the school day ends, students will enjoy an after-school recreation program that includes age-appropriate outdoor/indoor free play, arts and crafts, STEM-based activities and socially-distanced games or physical activities

Parents or guardians must send their

child to the program with the following:

- School supplies
- Face covering
- Laptop
- Earbuds or headphones
- Two snacks (morning and afternoon)
- Refillable water bottle

DANIEL GADE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

running for the U.S. Senate from Virginia?

Gade: Throughout my life, I have faced many challenges and forks in the road. I've always tried to do the hard right thing instead of the easy wrong one. I was an Army officer for many years, and gave a leg in combat. But there's much more.

I have a Masters and a PhD in public administration and have been a college professor and have applied those skills in tough, bipartisan policy areas: like helping formulate wounded warrior policy at the White House during a time when Congress and the White House were in different hands. And serving on the bi-partisan National Council on Disability, shaping policies that help the most disadvantaged members of our society. These are not right vs. left issues. They are American issues.

And as I've campaigned around the

commonwealth for the last 15 months, I've consistently heard that the old, stale ideas aren't working for Virginians. Because we face tough challenges right now, and it will take a true commitment to working with people across the aisle to solve them.

Recovering the economy and our health after COVID shouldn't be a partisan idea. We all breathe the same air and drink the same water. And the Veteran suicide crisis has gotten worse, not better, under the same old people with the same old ideas. And the contrast between me and Mark couldn't be more clear. I'm a career servant with a mortgage and the everyday worries of middle class life.

Mark is a career partisan who made millions off of political handouts, and who cynically talks about reducing insulin prices for diabetic children while taking ¾ of a million dollars from big Pharma in campaign contributions.

So if you're sick of career politicians, let's choose a different path.

RETHINK9, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

During the COVID-19 pandemic, the construction industry had been classified as essential and asked to keep working. The Town of Hillsboro and VDOT recognized that the dramatic decrease in traffic and the fact schools and many businesses were closed, and thus agreed to implementing a full road closure that began May 4 and extended to Aug. 14. As a result, resequencing of work has helped push forward most of the underground utility placements. Since Aug. 14, a single direction one-lane of travel has been open to motorists on a limited schedule for travel through the work zone on weekdays and weekends.

The Town also initiated safety improvements, road repairs and a reduced speed limit along the Hillsboro Local detour route. The *ReThink9* Compass advisory group has recommended ongoing repairs and maintenance to these. Additional safety signage is posted throughout the area and region to make the partially open limited schedule clear and defined for all motorists. Within the work zone, an abundance of directional signage has been erected. Project Management continues to work with the State Police and the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office and Fire and Rescue for monitoring the detours and the work zone to keep motorists safe when in Town and along the detour routes.

MARK WARNER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

for projects in communities threatened by sea-level rise. And I've been a leader on energy efficiency throughout my time in the Senate.

When you run a business, you look at all possible options – no solution is too big or too small. As Americans, we must utilize solar, wind, bio-fuels, nuclear energy, next generation battery technologies, and investment in research that focuses on using carbon capture technology so

we can continue to use our domestic resources, such as coal, more responsibly.

BRL: What's your personal reason for running for the U.S. Senate from Virginia?

Warner: We all know that these are challenging times for Virginia and our country. I've spent nearly 30 years in business here, creating jobs in Virginia. Then, I went into public service because I wanted to get stuff done. And to do that, you

need to be willing to work together.

When I was governor, Virginia was the best managed state and the best state for business. As your Senator, I'm proud to have gotten 55 of my bills signed into law. Laws that cut red tape for small businesses, supported our ship building industry in Hampton Roads, and improved Medicare. Just last month, the President signed my bill to make a record investment in National Parks that will also create over 10,000 jobs in Virginia.

Right now, we need to save lives and fix our economy by stopping the Coronavirus. And that means following the science. But the truth is: even before the pandemic, our economy was changing. It's been the honor of my life to serve Virginia, and I am running for re-election because we need leaders that are focused on making sure Virginians succeed in our new tech-driven economy. And that's been my focus my whole career.

Say Goodbye to the Quarantine 15

As if the stress of working from home and teaching the kids at the same time weren't enough, many of us are now wrestling with the Quarantine 15—those extra pounds we've put on since March.

Maybe you've been one of the lucky ones, but if you're seeing a muffin top rise over the waist of your jeans, you might want to clear your cupboards of the cookies and check out the local fitness centers.

Most of them are back in business now that we are in Phase 3 of the COVID-19 lockdown. The best way to check their current days, times, distancing, and mask requirements is to visit their websites or Facebook pages.

Anytime Fitness in Purcellville has just reopened in its new location at 609 E. Main St. near Advance Auto Parts. As a coaching facility, Anytime Fitness offers personal training in a group setting. Their professional coaches encourage and motivate you to get the most out

of every workout and provide as much support as you need. Membership includes a free consultation, global access to more than 4,000 gyms, and always-open 24/7 convenience. You can visit during staffed hours or call for an appointment at (540) 441-3930.

Catoctin CrossFit: If you've never visited a CrossFit "box"—the term for gym—be sure to ask plenty of questions to be sure it's right for you. CrossFit is a form of interval training that provides a strength and conditioning workout made up of functional movement performed at a high-intensity level. You begin with a warm-up to get your core body temperature up and prime your muscles for movements and joint mobilization. The movements are actions that you perform in your day-to-day life. Many workouts feature variations of squats, push-ups, and weight lifting that last for predetermined amounts of time to help build muscles. This varies from a traditional workout that may tell you

how many reps to do over any period of time.

CrossFit may be an effective workout for losing weight, building strength, agility, flexibility, and improving your aerobic fitness. If you'd like to check the program out in person, give Catoctin CrossFit a call at (571) 499-0193 for a "No Sweat Intro."

Olympus Gym at 201 N. Maple Ave. gets high marks in online reviews and comments. It offers state-of-the-art fitness equipment, fitness classes, and personal training. You can also sign up for family fitness sessions. Among its amenities are men's and women's locker rooms with showers and an extra private bathroom. All fitness classes are free with gym membership. To learn more, email staff at olympusgym201@gmail.com or call (540) 751-1050

You'll find other fitness facilities as well as yoga studios in the area. It's wise to call first to check their COVID-19 regulations and hours.

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