

# Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

DECEMBER 2020

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## Dr. Bill's Rx for 2020: sharing the lights of Christmas

BY LAURA LONGLEY

William "Dr. Bill" Incatasciato is a Loudoun County pediatrician who, besides specializing in the care of children, remains a child at heart. And there's no time of year

when that's more evident than Christmas because that's when the lights come on.

"Ever since I was a little kid," he recalls, "my family and I would enjoy looking at Christmas displays in our neighborhood.

Most homes up and down the street were draped in various colorful lights. Back then, it was fairly simple. There were two types of lights, the large red, blue, and green C9s and the 'newer' white mini lights. Some homes even had molded plastic figures of various Christmas themes."

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## Hey, kids! Want to win \$75, \$45, or \$25... just for being you?

Calling all kids in Loudoun County – kindergarten through grade 5.

Why not enter the Blue Ridge Leader & Loudoun Today's "Best Gift Ever!" contest?

Best Gift Ever asks a simple question. "What was the best ever gift you ever received, or gave?"

The gift can be birthday-related, or holiday-related, or whatever. That's up to you.

Just send us an email to [editor@blueridgeleader.com](mailto:editor@blueridgeleader.com) – by 5 p.m. on Mon-

day, Dec. 14, or drop us a note addressed to BRL Best Gift Ever Contest, PO Box 325, Purcellville, VA 20135-0325. Your letter must be postmarked by Dec. 14. This is open only to Loudoun County residents. Best Ever gifts come in all shapes and sizes, they can be expensive (or not); that's up to you. You can tell us about a gift you received, or you can tell us about a gift you gave to someone else. Tell us what made your heart go pitter patter when you gave or received the gift. Get creative. Be bold!

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## Watch this space ... Dulles Town Center under new management

BY ANDREA GAINES

We all know that delicious and exciting, "Yeah! I'm free! Let's go shopping!" feeling.

We've cleared our busy schedule ... or maybe taken the day off. We've had a nice, long walk and have worked up a real appetite.

Our minds are racing with anticipation ... to take advantage of that great big sale we just saw advertised, to take a look at the new shipment of merchandise at our favorite store, or buy something specific ... or browse ... unrestrained by time and our daily worries.

### The thrill of a trip to the mall is still with us

Despite all of the changes in how and when we shop, one thing never leaves us: the need to get away

for a few hours and have some fun. Centennial, an investment firm with a portfolio of shopping, dining, entertainment, and mixed-use "destinations" across the country, knows this feeling quite well.

Centennial Advisory Services, the company's third-party property and asset management division, has been awarded the management contract for the Dulles Town Center.

According to a Centennial press release, the company "will provide a full spectrum of management, leasing, marketing and accounting services for Dulles Town Center," including what it calls "a value creation strategy with the potential for a future mixed-use redevelopment of the property.

Malls have changed a lot in recent years.

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## PROPANE COSTS TOO MUCH!

**This Winter is the Ideal Time to Make the Switch.**

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

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



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# Franklin Park Arts Center

36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132  
[www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org) 540-338-7973



## Mark Forrest Classic Christmas Concert

Saturday, December 12 7:30 pm  
 Tickets: \$20 in-person; \$5 Virtual\*

International Irish Tenor, Mark Forrest, presents a Christmas concert with all of your favorite songs of the season. Featuring soloist Maureen Codelka and special guests Jennifer Timberlake and Cecilia Bracey. Limited social distanced seating in the theater; face coverings required. Virtual ticket purchase will enable you to watch a live stream of the concert via private link. Both tickets also have an option to purchase a Mark Forrest CD.

\*once purchased, the virtual online ticket allows you to watch the performance LIVE via private link.

**FACE COVERINGS REQUIRED DURING ALL PERFORMANCES. SOCIALLY DISTANCED SEATING**

### Sheila Arnold and Adam Booth: "Afro-lachian Christmas"

Saturday, Dec 19 @ 6:30pm

Tickets: \$10/person [www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org)



Storytellers Sheila Arnold and Adam Booth share Christmas and winter season songs, ballads and stories from the Appalachian and African-American cultures. This high energy program will stir memories, show shared connections between people, and warm the heart. Come ready to join in song, laugh at humorous stories and be inspired to share the joy of the season with others. This performance is partially supported by funding from the Virginia Commission for the Arts and the National Endowment for the Arts.

### Outdoor Winter Lights Walk

December 14-Jan 2 @ 5:30pm-9:00pm (Closed Dec 24, 25)

Tickets: \$3/person [www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org)

Step into Franklin Park Arts Center's gallery exhibit of Stars, Night and Winter Sky, while sipping a warm beverage. Then, continue outside to the back lawn of the Arts Center and wander among beautifully displayed lighted sculptures created by local artists. Winter Lights Walk is closed on December 24 and 25. Ticket block times: 5:30 - 7:00 pm and 7:00 - 8:30 pm to ensure social distancing. Face coverings required inside the Arts Center.

### Madcap Puppets: The Nutcracker

Adapted by Dylan Shelton

Tuesday, Dec 29 @ 3:00pm Tickets: \$5

[www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org)

(Ages 2+) Little did Maria know when she received a mysterious Nutcracker as a gift, how quickly her life was going to become an adventure. Madcap turns this classic Holiday story into a fantastically funny tale. After the puppet show, participate in Franklin Park's flashlight Candy Cane Hunt.



### Cabin Fever Film Fest

Friday, Jan 22 @ 7:00pm,

Saturday, Jan 23 @ 10:00am Tickets: \$5

[www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org)



(All ages) The fourth annual Purcellville Cabin Fever Film Festival kicks off with a slate of short films and features that highlight local talent.

Co-sponsored by the Purcellville Arts Council.

**NEW!**

### Loudoun County Artisan Gift Boxes

Bring the Arts to your doorstep! Three months of hand-made, created items from Loudoun artists, artisans and performers. At a curated value of \$250, these exclusive boxes include functional art, music, and tickets to a Franklin Park Arts Center event for a purchase price of \$180 for the 3-month subscription.

Themes: December- **RELAXATION AND SELF-CARE**,  
 January- **NEW BEGINNINGS** and February- **LOVE AND JOY**.

**To subscribe, call 540-338-7973.**





# 'Tis the season to Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays

This holiday season, one simple act will show friends, family and Loudoun businesses that you care: shop local and Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays.

Whether it's a freshly-cut tree or wreath, artisan gift or locally-sourced food, supporting Loudoun's farms and Main Street businesses keeps your shopping dollars in the local economy, reduces environmental impact, and provides the special people in your life with a unique holiday experience.

Loudoun Economic Development is partnering with Visit Loudoun and the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce to support small businesses across all industries with a refreshed version of the Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays guide.

Originally launched in 2019 to support farms and rural businesses, the 2020 holiday campaign has expanded to be inclusive of any small business in need of support during a year of unprecedented economic uncertainty.

Review the Take Loudoun Home for the Holidays guide for unique local gifts, meals, services and experiences at [TakeLoudounHome.com](http://TakeLoudounHome.com).

"Just like each of us, Loudoun County businesses have been through a rollercoaster year in 2020, and we



all deserve to finish with a holiday season to remember," Loudoun Economic Development Executive Director Buddy Rizer said. "Shopping local is about more than just convenience; this is supporting a neighbor, saving a job, and ensuring that the lights stay on for every #LoudounPossible business."

In light of COVID-19, local businesses are embracing extra safety precautions, with many in this year's guide taking the "Loudoun Is Ready" pledge to your well-being. This pledge, signed by more than 700 organizations, commits businesses to follow the latest guidance from the CDC and Virginia Department of Health.

In addition to the in-store experience, shoppers can

support businesses through gift cards, curbside and delivery options, outdoor dining, virtual events, the Loudoun Made Loudoun Grown Marketplace, and more.

"While the holidays may feel different this year, there are still so many ways to enjoy the season safely in Loudoun," Visit Loudoun's CEO Beth Erickson said. "We've made it easier than ever to buy Loudoun-made products, pick up dinner from your favorite restaurant, enjoy a craft beverage or give gift certificates to hotels, shops and spas."

While it will take years to fully understand the economic impact of COVID-19, a lot of the fundamentals of shopping locally remain the same.

Shopping from local farms helps to preserve Loudoun's robust rural tradition and decrease the environmental impacts of shipping. Becoming a regular retail and restaurant patron can help businesses budget for job creation, new lines of business and expansions. Booking overnight accommodations at Loudoun's unique bed-and-breakfasts and hotels is a great way for everyone to look forward to 2021.

"Unprecedented times have created unparalleled creativity among businesses and their customers this

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## Bravo, Woodgrove!

Had enough of holiday movies by now? Then get ready to spend a suspense-filled evening with Woodgrove High School's Grove Theatre company in "Moonshine Murders." The action plays out in a Washington speakeasy in 1928 during prohibition. What is meant to be a roaring night of fun turns into a disaster when a murder—or two—comes to light.

Written by Terry Smith, adapted by Addie Schafer Benko, and produced by Stagecoach Theatre Company, this original work was adapted for a film noir student film project. The students helped write scenes, orchestrate songs, and film the performance—all while following COVID-19 guidelines and wearing clear face shields while performing.

Mark your calendar for Dec. 10 at 6 p.m. for the one-night-only premiere at the Family Drive-In Theatre in Stephens City, VA. If you can't make it, buy the "pay-to-play" option under "items" on Woodgrove's ticketing website and watch it on YouTube from the comfort of your home. Buy tickets at <https://whsva.booktix.com/> for either option.



Woodgrove High School troupe performs "Moonshine Murders." Photo by Chas Sumser.

## Congratulations to the 2020 Algonkian's Got Talent winners

In its inaugural year, 24 outstanding students recently participated in "Algonkian's Got Talent," a virtual event created by Loudoun County Supervisor Juli Briskman to draw attention to the importance of the arts in students' lives. A musician herself, Briskman gave a performance on the viola for the competition.

The students submitted videos of their performances in five categories: Solo Instrumental, Group Musical Act, Solo Dance, Solo Vocalist, and Fan Favorite.

Josh Beyer, from Dominion High School, won in Solo Instrumental for his performance of Schubert Impromptu No. 3 in G-Flat Major.

The winner in the category of Group Musical Act was Robert Manfredi, from River Bend Middle School, and his band, Antigravity, for their performance of U2's "Sunday, Bloody Sunday."

Samantha Ankers, also from Riverbend, took home the award for Solo Dance performance.

In the Solo Vocalist category, Caroline Taylor of

Horizon Elementary School took home first place with "On My Own" from *Les Misérables*. Claudia Brohs, who also sang "On My Own," was awarded second place.

Max Garrett, of Lowes Island Elementary School, was given a Special Honorable Mention award for "Remember Me" from the Disney film *Coco*.

Ava Buchner, from Lowes Island Elementary, was named Fan Favorite, with 97 "likes" for her vocal rendition of Adele's "Rolling in the Deep."

Todd Grivetti, Jordan Markwood, Robbie Taylor, and Mindy Padworski served as judges and guest performers.

"I am so thrilled that so many of Algonkian's youth decided to participate in this event," Briskman said in a prepared statement. "I really wanted to give our young people, in this challenging time, an opportunity to perform for their peers and family, and to just have a good time. It is my hope that next year we will be in a better place as a nation, and can have this program in person."

## Sherwin Williams opens in Purcellville

On Nov. 23, Sherwin Williams held their ribbon cutting and grand opening with President and CEO of the Loudoun County Chamber of Commerce Tony Howard, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi A. Fraser, Vice Mayor Mary Jane Williams and Council Member Tip Stinnette. Sherwin Williams is located at Catoctin Corner – 1211 Wolf Rock Drive in Purcellville.







## FAQs about Water Treatment

**Question: So, do we really need water treatment? How do we know? Who do we call?**

**Answer:** An accurate source for information with low pressure sales would be the Water Care Division of JR Snider, serving Loudoun and Fauquier Counties for 38 years.

**Question: Is water treatment a gimmick or does it really work?**

**Answer:** Water treatment misapplied is a terrible thing. Our highly trained professionals will come in to your house, analyze your water, send it away to a proper lab and give you exact information on the quality of your water. We can apply the proper water treatment system that's necessary. And if you don't need any treatment we will be the first to tell you that you don't.

**Question: How do I know if my water is safe to drink?**

**Answer:** We will come to your house, properly obtain a potable water sample, send it off to a qualified lab and let you know if your water meets the state standards for potable drinking water. We can explain to you the difference in coliform, total coliform, and ecoli. We can also provide proper solutions so that you can be at peace knowing that your water is safe to drink at all times.

**Question: Why do I have these blue-green stains in my sink?**

**Answer:** The low ph of the water that covers most of our area is very corrosive towards copper, brass and metals. The blue-green stain is a sign of copper sulfate which is the thinning of copper pipes and brass waterlines from the fixtures in your house. If you have plastic pipes this is not as much of an issue but it does prematurely cause failure in water heaters, pressure tanks, faucets, ice makers, and different appliances. The issue can be easily solved with an acid neutralizer which we can explain in person with a site visit.

*Happiest holiday wishes!*

*Tap into a healthier life!*

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## From weddings to wineries to breweries – More suds in Bluemont

BY VALERIE CURY

The unincorporated village of Bluemont will likely soon be getting yet another brewery and winery. The Whitehall Estate – where “barn meets ballroom” as its website proclaims – is a popular wedding and corporate events venue. Also known as Celebrations Farm, the manor house and other amenities (including a barn) serve wedding parties, and also functions as a business center. The property encompasses some 50 acres.

The owner/operators have applied to add both a brewery, called Bluemont Station Brewery, and winery to their list of offerings. With the downturn in wedding celebrations due to COVID, one of the owners, David Weinschel was sparked to add the brewery use to the establishment's portfolio. He said they all have mortgages to pay, and adding a brewery will help them during this time. With respect to the brewery business, they have plans to add a new hops and grain garden along with a tap and tasting room. They already have a Cabernet Franc vineyard on the property. For the required steps for a brewery, a Virginia ABC Notice of Posting and Publishing application was posted on one of the doors located down a long driveway on the property, but such notices are not required at the entrance to an establishment. The neighborhood did not find out about the owners' brewery and winery plans until just a little over a week before

any objections directed towards the ABC licensing authority were due.

Around 40 neighbors showed up Nov. 23 to hear the plans from Weinschel.

Neighbors expressed concerns regarding traffic and the “beer part of the business.” Weinschel assured the community that Whitehall/Celebrations' model would be “upscale.” He said his plan is different from other breweries in the area, the goal being to focus on interior space – with most music inside – and speakers on the porches, pointing “you hear trucks now.” Weinschel again stressed that the brewery would be upscale, and “Agri-Cultured” which his Facebook page defines as “The enrichment lifestyle experience of a welcomed guest with refined taste during a socially curated activity that includes artistry and engagement of a culinary or scientific nature, rooted in a farm environment.”

He said Celebrations Farm has a “more sophisticated clientele” and the farm is more distinguished. This prompted someone in the audience to ask if he would have someone at the entrance just letting in upscale cars, such as Lexuses.

“Many of us have been burned,” said another resident – referring to another local brewery – and “Loudoun County is not respectful of the residents. What is your true intent?”

Weinschel said the brewery would be closed probably on Mondays and perhaps Tuesdays. The hours of operation would be from 11 a.m. to 9 p.m. The current occupancy load is 250, and they have had up to 650, he said.

Down the road, a popular brewery is currently advertising 10 new firepits for customers to reserve, a 15-vendor craft market, live music all weekend, three food trucks and more – all of it opening at 9 a.m. with a hard closing at 10 p.m. on some days.

### What Virginia ABC law says

With respect to public notice, relevant state ABC law reads as follows: “An ABC license cannot be issued until: “4. Any local government or citizen objections have been resolved. Code of Virginia compels Virginia ABC to afford citizens of the Commonwealth 30 days, from the date of first newspaper publication, in which to lodge a valid objection to the issuance of an ABC license.”



THE BLUE RIDGE LEADER & LOUDOUN TODAY WISHES YOU

*Happy Holidays*



— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

# Healing yourself and your relationships after the election

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Mindfulness is the concept of being 100 percent present in the moment, while accepting all aspects of what that moment is – without criticism, blame, or judgement. But with this presidential year being so contentious, and with such heated vitriol between the two major candidates and political parties, it hasn't been easy to be mindful. Throw into the mix the emotional weight and upset of COVID-19 along with the civil unrest of recent months, and the Nation has never felt more divided.



DR. MIKE

While people with conservative and liberal political beliefs have always disagreed, the rising rancor and polarization over Trump and Biden has strained and even ended a lot of personal and professional relationships.

Surveys and polls demonstrate just how divided things have become. In a 2020 survey conducted by the Pew Research Center, the majority of Trump and Biden supporters report having few friends who back the opposing candidate.

As a psychologist who has spent the last several months assisting patients with their upset regarding either candidate, I've put together a list of DO's and DONT's in hopes of helping folks to heal their damaged relationships.

**DO ...**

**Prepare.** For any kind of change, preparation is essential, so start by making a conscious decision to adopt a more open attitude and sense of purpose

in your relationships when it comes to politics. As the old adage goes, "one's perception is one's reality," and being understanding, compassionate, and open to seeing all sides of an issue first, takes preparation.

**Breathe.** Take a few deep breathes to begin to deal with the stress, anxiety and negative thoughts that have overcome you this election year. Mindful breathing will help you calm down when you become upset about how you think someone you know is wrong about Trump or Biden. So, the next time someone offends you by saying something against your candidate or political position, take some deep breaths.

**Understand.** Is it more important to be right about how good or bad you think Trump or Biden are than it is to be friends with someone you care about? You very likely didn't "Friend" – on-line or off-line – someone you care about because of their voting practices, so why "Unfriend" them now because you don't agree with them politically?

I recommend that we try to appreciate that the motivation of someone's vote is determined by several factors: our upbringing, our gender, our age, our race, etc. Even our neurology seems to play a part in how we vote. Similarities across several well-conducted research studies have found that conservatism and liberalism is correlated with specific regions of the brain. So, when it comes to red states or blue states, our gray matter may matter more than we once believed.

When you find yourself getting defensive or upset with someone over politics, think about two or three things that you

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— View from the Ridge —

# How will Purcellville Age?

BY ANDREA GAINES

Life in a small Town.

As with life on an old farm, it can be both beautiful and sad.

The beautiful part is represented by the things that many of us recognize as “the way it used to be.” Old farms, cows mooing at you over the fence, homes, walkable communities, people you know greeting you at your favorite store, home-grown goods and services, pretty places with a soothing atmosphere and a sense-of-place, a feeling of security and familiarity, old barns freshly painted and repurposed as restaurants.

The sad part is the absence of the old sign that read “Quality Service Since 1890,” no parking, every-day chain-dominated goods and services, a boarded-up window one day, and a neon sign the next.

People in a fast-growing, fast-changing place like Purcellville have likely experienced both the beauty and the sadness.

And, in Purcellville’s historic downtown they are today facing a choice.

Do we continue with the strategy of preserving the best of the past and adding the new where appropriate ... or do we simply demolish the place and start over?

This brings us to the small town trage-

dy unraveling on two of Purcellville’s most historic downtown streets – 21st Street, where Magnolia’s and Nichols Hardware are located, and Hatcher Avenue, which parallels 21st Street and crosses the W&OD Trail.

## Will Purcellville age well?

The biggest mistake people in a small town make is that they don’t believe they have a choice in the manner in which their beloved Town will age, or mature.

In fact, two massive development projects making the rounds in Purcellville right now would leave citizens with no choice in the matter. Those two projects are the never-say-die Vineyard Square and Trail’s End, either one of which would make historic downtown Purcellville unrecognizable. Developers for the projects – Casey Chapman, his brother Sam Chapman, and their friend and business partner Aaron McCleary – addressed their vision for downtown Purcellville in a recent media

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### We Welcome Your Letters To The Editor!

Submissions December be sent to:  
[Editor@BlueRidgeLeader.com](mailto:Editor@BlueRidgeLeader.com), or via mail to  
PO Box 325, Purcellville, VA 20134-0325

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.



## The Blue Ridge Mountains

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Earlier this month I wrote this story about my memories of the Blue Ridge for the Friends of the Blue Ridge Mountain’s newsletter. FBRM is a great conservation group with an arrow-like mission: protecting the Blue Ridge in our region. I couldn’t talk about trekking the Appalachian Trail since I haven’t and won’t, nor about walking trails through its forests or photographing newts.

There is historical and geologic research aplenty, so those topics were out. That left two subjects: Writing about protecting the crests and slopes of the mountains through zoning, or simply recalling my memories of the mountain range. Being a new mem-

ber of the County’s Zoning Ordinance Committee, saving these mountains will be a priority and I’ll let you know what transpires. That left one subject – my memories of the Blue Ridge, but along much of its length, not just the section that’s the backdrop for Loudoun County. Here’s what I wrote:

### My Blue Ridge

“We in western Loudoun look towards the sunset and see the Blue Ridge Mountains forming the county’s western border. Pretty, but provincial and possessive. As they say, think big.

For me, that means thinking of my life decades ago. As a child and until college days, my family decamped every summer to friends’ houses at a preserve of

some 3,000 acres atop Georgia’s Blue Ridge. Fleeing unending days of 100+ degrees in Augusta, Georgia was a relief. It was an annual time for adults to kick back, tell stories and drink Bloody Marys. We kids had it even better – there were scores of us, canoeing in the big lake, fishing for brim, diving off a twenty-foot tower into frigid mountain water and playing endless sets of tennis. Later, childish play gave way to adolescent (and teen) focus on the opposite sex.

Getting there was half the fun, from the first trip to the last. Snaking roads along mountains meant fabulous views of plains and farms, and especially vistas of ridge after ridge of the mountain range. As flatlanders we knew we were getting closer to heaven.

Several summers were spent at a boys’ camp in the Blue Ridge along the South

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— It Seems to Me —

## Electric vehicles, are they ready for prime time?

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

If you own or are thinking of buying an electrically powered vehicle (EV) there is lot you should know about the battery that powers the car. The bad news about EV batteries is they are prone to burst

into flames if not treated “gently.” The auto manufacturers know this and are doing their best to prevent this from happening but, the very nature of the materials in the battery makes them a hazard in an automobile. By “gently,” I mean preventing the battery from getting either too hot or cold, making

sure it isn’t charged too quickly, too much or too little, and making sure that accidents don’t cause hidden damage that will result in fires long after the accident event.

A recent article in the Wall Street Journal entitled “Electric-Car Battery

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# These Are NOT Just “Holiday Lights”

Dear Editor:

To those of us who live in Bluemont, and to those organizations who support this small, historic village in the westernmost part of Loudoun County, it is time to wake up, and not by the 15,000 lights currently illuminating the side of the Blue Ridge Mountains next to us. The recent commencement of the “lighting of the vines” by the Bluemont Winery and the Dirt Farm Brewery is yet another nail in the coffin of the demise of our quiet and serene way of life and is indicative of the rapid growth of commercialism, that if left unchecked, will result in our community looking like Tysons Corner.

My husband and I moved here to western Loudoun County almost 18 years ago so that we could leave behind the lights, noise, and traffic of Arlington County. We own 16 acres at the base of the Blue Ridge Mountains, and live on one of Loudoun’s historic and scenic dirt roads. We are disheartened regarding the ongoing encroachment of commercial establishments here in our small village which now threatens the serene lifestyle that we have enjoyed for many years.

Within a three mile radius of our home, we now currently have a winery,

3 breweries, 2 event type venues, and a cidery. The traffic generated by these establishments has inundated our community. Cars waiting to turn off Rt.7 west onto Clayton Hall Road are lined up on Rt.7 itself. Cars have been parking illegally along Rt.7, and people are walking along that busy highway in order to get to these businesses. It is only a matter of time before someone gets hurt, or worse yet, killed by someone who has had too much to drink.

We and twenty four of our neighbors are currently involved in litigation with the new owner of the farm next door to us. This individual, who does not even live here, is suing us because of our restrictive covenants. These covenants do not permit him to turn the farm into a “Country Inn,” which would allow him to hold multiple events over the course of a year, involving hundreds of cars, loud music, and lights.

On top of all this, the owners of the winery and brewery up on the mountain have decided once again to light up the mountain with a hideous display of fifteen thousand lights, mounted on the vines and hops. From our front porch, it looks like an airport parking lot or landing strip, and can be seen from miles away. The lights are so bright that last year, when this light show intrusion was

started, several neighbors living closer to them were unable to sleep without closing their blinds and hanging black out curtains.

Further, the lights threaten the well-being of the wildlife of this area. For example, nocturnal animals sleep during the day and are active at night. Light pollution, such as what has been caused by the thousands of LED lights placed on the vines and the hops, radically alters their nighttime environment by turning night into day. Birds that migrate or hunt at night navigate by moonlight and starlight. Artificial light can cause them to wander off course. So while the lights may draw the customers to the vineyard and brewery, they potentially can have a devastating effect on our environment.

I filed a complaint with the Loudoun County Zoning Department last year, asking that the County investigate what was clearly a violation of the County’s lighting ordinance. The County declined back then to investigate, closed my case, and said that it would permit the lights as they were for “the holidays.” The lights are back on as of last night (November 19, 2020) and we are not yet even in the holiday season.

There is no dispute that the lights violate Section 5-1504 Light and Glare Standards of the County’s zoning ordi-

nance. Moreover, there is no provision in the County’s zoning ordinance that permits the County to close a blind eye and ignore its own ordinance if the violating lights are for the “holidays.”

We have no issue with people trying to make a living, especially in these turbulent times. The owners of these establishments will claim that the lights are to support their various charitable events. That may well be, but those patrons who truly want to support the various charities for which the winery and the brewery are holding these fund raisers will come, regardless whether there are lights, or not. We have endured the gradual encroachment of more lights and noise coming from these establishments. But when the lights, noise, and traffic generated by them directly affect the quiet enjoyment of this beautiful place in which we have lived these many years, we can no longer remain silent. Enough is enough.

Loudoun County and those of us living here in Bluemont need to decide whether we want to retain the heritage of this beautiful scenic place, or whether we are willing to have western Loudoun to be another Arlington County. Turn off the lights.

Virginia A. Baxter  
Bluemont

## LETTER TO THE EDITOR

## Is 2020 Finally Over?

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

The holiday season is upon us.

For many, this is welcome news, because it means 2021 has almost arrived. For some, 2020 can’t end fast enough.



MOORE-SOBEL

For me, it’s a bit more complicated. The year 2020 has held mountaintop moments. First and foremost, I married the love of my life, Megan. Also, my book, *Can You See My Scars?*, was published after ten

long years of writing. Lastly, I earned a promotion at work that led to me a management position I’ve dreamed of for a long time. As a friend recently told me, “For such an awful year, you are making the best of it!” But I think this sentiment is true of many of us. We have made it through 2020, even in the most difficult circumstances.

The pandemic has also helped clarify my life’s vision. It’s informed my role as a husband – to treat my wife with empathy and be attuned to her needs in the midst of this challenging time. It’s informed my work as a manager –

to treat the people on my team with respect and encourage them to confront new challenges, especially in the midst of working remotely. Lastly, it’s informed the purpose of my book – to make an impact in the lives of others, and to provide tangible tools others can use when facing adversity.

I was contacted recently by a fellow trauma survivor. We spoke on the phone, and he said, “I just wanted to talk to someone who understands.” While our experiences differed, there were similarities. He asked some of the same questions I asked after the accident, such as “Who am I now?” We shared stories, and I did my best to offer words of encouragement and hope. He shared an important remind-

er: “Something good has to come out of everything, I think you’ll agree with me on that.” I do agree. Even if it is hard to find the silver linings.

The pandemic has forced many of us to spend an inordinate amount of time at home. Many of us are tired of looking at the walls of our house. As we enter these winter months, it’s likely we will continue to be confined. But I think this also presents an opportunity for us to dream and make plans for the future. My wife and I hope we’ll get the chance to travel next year, and to make the most of the early years of our love story. We hope to make new memories and have fantastic adventures, all while enjoying the life we have now.

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# Fireman's Field

BY TIM JON

I have reached a conclusion: I definitely prefer the world as seen from within the Park's boundaries to that of the 'real' outside. Perhaps one day, I shall just stay here. Having – literally



JON

– driven past the borders of Fireman's Field Park in Purcellville hundreds of times (the local landmark lies between the Town's Post Office and my five-

day-a-week mail route) – and having attended events marking important milestones for the facilities therein, you'd think I'd have a pretty good feel for the place; not so: I took my first actual perambulating ramble quite recently about the mostly-green space – skirting the baseball diamond's wire fencing, traipsing along the lower ground on the south side, up the hill to the east, northward through the massive trees, and around the old (Historic, that is) Tabernacle.

In addition to my finding a definite affinity for the place, I also concluded that – like many of the magic locations in Loudoun County – Fireman's Field seems much more expansive on the inside than one would gauge from a mere drive-by. And this series of experiences jibes quite well

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# What's up in the west

## Loudoun Coalition considers key rural issues for 2021 docket

BY LAURA LONGLEY

When representatives of 55 organizations gathered virtually for the coalition's last meeting of the year Nov. 24, the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition made clear that zoning, preservation, conservation, environmental and heritage protections, as well as data centers, traffic, and safety issues will be at the forefront in 2021.

Members took the opportunity to put forward their most pressing concerns as Valmarie Turner, Loudoun assistant county administrator, joined the meeting for the first time to meet representatives of the Piedmont Environmental Council, Loudoun Historic Village Alliance, Bluemont Citizens Association, Lincoln Community League, Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association, the Waterford Foundation, Save Rural Loudoun, Land Trust of Virginia, and more. Turner oversees the community development agencies, including the Departments of Building and Development, Planning and Zoning, Economic Development, and the Office of Housing.

Gem Bingol, Piedmont Environmental Council field officer for Loudoun and Clarke counties, summarized the group's concerns. "Over the next one-and-a-half to two years, a major priority for by-right development in the rural area will be the zoning ordinance amendment to better protect prime agricultural soils and to

improve the cluster subdivision provision. It will be important," she added, "for the public to be paying attention and providing input when County staff start their outreach efforts. Other resources protections will come from the zoning ordinance rewrite."

Among the specific issues to be addressed are the proliferation and operation of breweries and wineries with respect to impact on area residents. Of paramount importance is the safety of residents and visitors who travel backroads and thoroughfares such as Snickersville Turnpike and Routes 9, 7, and 50, where cars are routinely parked along the shoulders and customers are walking in the right-of way.

In addition, noise and dark sky pollution are increasing problems for residents' quality of life as well as the impact on wildlife habitats and bird migration.

Communication and alignment of goals between rural communities and organizations, towns, and the County are areas that will be a focus in the coming months, particularly in light of issues in the villages of St. Louis and Philomont.

For Philomont residents, a Loudoun County Fire & Rescue Department plan that came to light in September set off sparks throughout the community. Fire & Rescue was moving forward with development plans for the village's historic Horse Show Grounds on Snickersville Turnpike with the intention of vacating

the existing firehouse adjacent to the Philomont Store.

The horse show grounds are on seven acres on Snickersville Turnpike, and had been purchased with community-raised funds in 1962. It has been Fire & Rescue's intention to vacate the existing firehouse adjacent to the Philomont Store and replace it with an 18,500-square-foot firehouse to be paid for with \$21.7 million in taxpayer dollars. The community is advocating renovation of the existing firehouse to provide the amenities for the current LCFR staff of four and eventually six when an ambulance is added. Their message in general is "one size does not fit all."

After residents put forth renovation of the existing firehouse as an alternative to a new one, LCFR agreed to retain a design consultant to assess the current structure and look into renovation options. However, village representative Madeline Skinner reported in the Loudoun Coalition meeting, "Fire & Rescue is rushing community input. What we want is a fair and just evaluation. We are also concerned with Fire & Rescue's focus on accommodating oversized trucks.

"We also have learned," added Skinner, "that an additional and highly concerning piece of the LCFR vision is to change our roads to fit the large fire trucks. The expense to widen and pave our country roads to fit the fire equipment, instead of procuring smaller, more suitable equipment at applicable stations such as Philomont or Middleburg, would be at significant costs. It does tend to make one think what the future holds for Western Loudoun per County staff ideas and actions."

Meanwhile, 10 miles south of Philomont, a long contested by-right devel-

opment project in the village of St. Louis on land previously owned by developer Mojax is reaching resolution. In October, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, led by Chair Phyllis Randall, voted to allocate \$1.5 million to purchase the 16.4 acres on Snake Hill Road on which Mojax intended to construct 30 single-family homes. Mojax had already drilled 16 of the 27 wells planned for the community. Many St. Louis residents were concerned that the subdivision would decrease the water supply of the historically Black village and endanger the graveyard on the site. The County intends to place the property under permanent conservation easement for passive recreation.

While the board's move has resolved immediate concerns, issues remain around appropriate penalties for unapproved construction activities, destruction of wetlands, and lack of coordination on well drilling permits between the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the County.

The growth and location of data centers in the west also will be on the docket in the coming year, as well as improved easement management and education.

Ongoing areas of focus include: County budget context and implications, conservation easements, rural roads and bridges, watershed management and flood plain protection, comprehensive plan update, and heritage preservation.

Coalition meetings are held the last Tuesday of the month and, for the duration of the pandemic, will continue to be held virtually. There is no meeting scheduled for December 2020.

To contact the Coalition, visit [loudouncoalition.org](http://loudouncoalition.org) for details, and to indicate your interests, including attending meetings as an observer.

## Traffic signal work on Loudoun County Pkwy. and George Wash. Blvd.

Work began Nov. 30, on traffic signal work at the intersection of Loudoun County Parkway and George Washington Boulevard, weather permitting. The work will be conducted during the day, Monday through Friday,

from 9:30 a.m.-3 p.m. for about five days, ending the week of Dec. 6.

The work will include removing the existing temporary traffic signals and installing four new traffic signal poles, mast arms, signal heads, pedestrian poles and other related activities nec-

essary for the signalized intersection.

Flagging operations, lane closures and temporary traffic stoppages will be needed to safely install the mast arms and poles over traffic. Each traffic stoppage will last for approximately five minutes. Drivers should use extra

caution when traveling through the area and follow all directions from the posted signs and road crews.

More information about this project, including a link to sign up for project updates, can be found at [loudoun.gov/riversideparkway](http://loudoun.gov/riversideparkway).

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# Career Change Checklist: Are You Prepared?

If you're considering a job or career change, it's important to do some homework before you make the leap. Many benefits from your current position could be tied to specific dates and time frames. Gathering the right information can help you strategically time your exit and set yourself up for greater success. Consider these steps before you resign:



RICHARD RICCI

- 1. Decide if you'd prefer to quit now or wait until you have an offer.** This decision requires you to factor in how unhappy you are in your current position and whether you're able to live off your savings for a while. If you're in a traditional industry, such as sales, it might be better to find a new opportunity while you're employed. But if you're in high-tech, biotech, private equity, or a similar industry, there may be less risk in taking some time off.
- 2. Check your employment contract and noncompete agreement.** Have a labor attorney review any legal documents you signed when you were hired to evaluate their terms and enforceability. Some contracts may require you to pay back relocation money, education grants, or bonuses if you don't stay for a certain period of time. Others include "golden handcuffs" that mean you will lose unvested options, restricted stock, deferred compensation, and other benefits upon resignation. Still others may require waiting for a specified length of time before taking a job with a competitor.
- 3. Review your retirement benefits.** Check the vesting schedule for your employer's 401(k) contributions and profit-sharing contributions to see how long you have to work to claim your portion of the money. Many plans require you be employed on the last day of the plan year to get employer contributions for that year. You may want to wait until after the plan year ends before you terminate employment so you don't lose those contributions.
- 4. Check the terms of stock options, restricted stock, or other forms of non-salary compensation.** You may want to delay your departure if a valuable number of options will vest in the near future. If you're already vested, find out if you're still subject to the same trading windows and how much time you have to exercise your vested options once you resign. In many cases, options expire if they aren't ex-

ercised within a certain time frame—typically 90 days after your departure.

- 5. Manage your health insurance.** If you don't already have a new position or if your new employer's health plan has a waiting period, figure out where you will get coverage to fill the gap. If your company has 20 or more full time employees, you'll be able to keep your current plan for up to 18 months after you stop working under the federal law COBRA (you'll likely have to pay your share and your employer's share of the premium). You may want to compare those costs with coverage available on the government's health insurance marketplace. Remember, if you live in a state with a health insurance mandate and you can afford but do not purchase coverage, you may have a tax penalty.
- 6. Spend your FSA accounts.** If you put pretax money into a flexible spending account (FSA), try to spend down the account before you resign. FSAs typically operate on a use-it-or-lose-it basis (though you may be able to extend with COBRA). In contrast, if you have money in a health savings account (HSA), that money is yours to keep.
- 7. Consider a group life and disability insurance conversion.** If you have life or disability coverage through your employer, you may be able to convert your group policy to an individual policy. Often you have a short window after your resignation to apply with the insurer for continued coverage. This can be an especially good option if insurers consider you a risk because of your age or medical condition.
- 8. Consult a financial advisor.** Whether you're planning to take some time off or go right into to a new job, an advisor can provide valuable financial guidance through the transition.

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

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# New Statewide measures to contain COVID-19 in place

Includes limit of 25 individuals for in-person gatherings, expanded mask mandate, on-site alcohol curfew, and increased enforcement

As COVID-19 surges in states across the country, Governor Ralph Northam announced on Nov. 13, new actions to mitigate the spread of the virus in Virginia. While the Commonwealth's case count per capita and positivity rate remain comparatively low, all five health regions are experiencing increases in new COVID-19 cases, positive tests, and hospitalizations.

"COVID-19 is surging across the country, and while cases are not rising in Virginia as rapidly as in some other states, I do not intend to wait until they are. We are acting now to prevent this health crisis from getting worse," said Northam. "Everyone is tired of this pandemic and restrictions on our lives. I'm tired, and I know you are tired too. But as we saw earlier this year, these mitigation measures work. I am confident that we can come together as one Commonwealth to get this virus under control and save lives."

The following measures took effect Nov. 16:

## GOVERNMENT

- **Reduction in public and private gatherings:** All public and private in-person gatherings must be limited to 25 individuals, down from the current cap of 250 people. This includes outdoor and indoor settings.
- **Expansion of mask mandate:** All Virginians aged five and over are required to wear face coverings in indoor public spaces. This expands the current mask mandate, which has been in place in Virginia since May 29 and requires all individuals aged 10 and over to wear face coverings in indoor public settings.
- **Strengthened enforcement within essential retail businesses:** All essential retail businesses, including grocery stores and pharmacies, must adhere to statewide guidelines for physical distancing, wearing face coverings, and enhanced cleaning. While certain essential retail businesses have been required to adhere to these regula-

tions as a best practice, violations will now be enforceable through the Virginia Department of Health as a Class One misdemeanor.

- **On-site alcohol curfew:** The on-site sale, consumption, and possession of alcohol is prohibited after 10 p.m. in any restaurant, dining establishment, food court, brewery, microbrewery, distillery, winery, or tasting room. All restaurants, dining establishments, food courts, breweries, microbreweries, distilleries, wineries, and tasting rooms must close by midnight. Virginia law does not distinguish between restaurants and bars, however, under current restrictions, individuals that choose to consume alcohol prior to 10 p.m., must be served as in a restaurant and remain seated at tables six feet apart.

Virginia is averaging 1,500 newly-reported COVID-19 cases per day, up from a statewide peak of approximately 1,200

in May. While Southwest Virginia has experienced a spike in the number of diagnosed COVID-19 cases, all five of the Commonwealth's health regions are currently reporting a positivity rate over five percent. Although hospital capacity remains stable, hospitalizations have increased statewide by more than 35 percent in the last four weeks.

On Nov 10, Northam announced new contracts with three laboratories as part of the Commonwealth's OneLabNetwork, which will significantly increase Virginia's public health testing capacity. Contracts with Virginia Tech in Blacksburg, University of Virginia Medical Center in Charlottesville, and Sentara Healthcare in Norfolk will directly support high-priority outbreak investigations, community testing events, and testing in congregate settings, with a goal of being able to perform 7,000 per day by the end of the year.

For information about COVID-19 in Virginia, visit [vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus](http://vdh.virginia.gov/coronavirus).

## Second half real property tax deadline is Dec. 7

Loudoun County Treasurer H. Roger Zurn Jr. reminds taxpayers that the deadline for payment of the second half real property tax is Monday, Dec. 7.

Payments post-marked after Dec. 7, will incur a 10 percent late payment penalty. Additional interest at the rate of 10 percent per annum will be assessed. The due date will not be extended for bills where assessment questions have been filed with the Board of Equalization. Taxpayers who are having financial difficulties should contact the Office of the Treasurer's Collections Team at 703-771-5656 for

assistance.

Payments can be made using electronic check (eCheck), VISA, MasterCard, American Express or Discover. Please note that there is a convenience fee added to credit card transactions. There is no fee for eCheck.

For safety and convenience, the Treasurer's Office encourages taxpayers to make their payments online or on the phone. Payments may be made:

- **Online:** [loudounportal.com/taxes](http://loudounportal.com/taxes)
- **Through a mobile device:** The Link2Loudoun app is available for free from the iP-

hone App Store and the Google Play Store. The app allows access to [loudounportal.com/taxes](http://loudounportal.com/taxes) to pay your taxes.

- **Telephone:** 1-800-269-5971 may be called 24 hours a day. During regular business hours, call 703-777-0280. Please have your account number and credit card number ready.
- **By Mail:** County of Loudoun, P.O. Box 1000, Leesburg, Virginia 20177-1000
- **In Person:** Treasurer's Office Locations

1 Harrison Street SE, 1st

### Floor, Leesburg

21641 Ridgetop Circle,  
Suite 104, Sterling

The offices are open from 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m., weekdays. In addition, 24-hour depository boxes are located outside each office.

Anyone who has not received a tax bill or who has questions should contact the Loudoun County Treasurer's Office at 703-777-0280 or email [taxes@loudoun.gov](mailto:taxes@loudoun.gov).

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# Loudoun Supervisors loosen collective bargaining rules for public employees

In October, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted to allow representatives of labor unions into County buildings for the purpose of talking to and recruiting public employees for membership.

Prior to the passage of the new “collective bargaining” rule, Virginia law had prohibited state and local governments in the Commonwealth from recognizing

ing union and/or collective bargaining organizations. Virginia Governor Ralph Northam signed a bill in April authorizing collective bargaining for some public employees here. And, Loudoun has followed suit.

Some County employees are already members of, for example, the Service Employees International Union.

But, the issue took a dramatic turn in April when state law changed, giving

localities the authority, if they choose, to recognize collective bargaining representatives, allowing unions to negotiate on behalf of public employees.

Employees that function as what are known as “Constitutional Officers” – which, in Loudoun County include the Sheriff, the Commonwealth’s Attorney, the Treasurer, the Commissioner of the Revenue, and the Clerk of the Circuit Court – are excluded.

County Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-At Large) introduced the measure, which was approved on a 6 to 3 vote.

Republican Supervisor Matthew F. Letourneau (R-Dulles) opposed the measure, noting that just because collective bargaining had come to Virginia, didn’t mean it needed to come to Loudoun.

The presence of public unions and collective bargaining power, in general, is a complicated if not contentious issue.

Proponents point to the need to allow employees, including public employees, to organize. Opponents fear such things drive up costs, and make it more difficult to terminate bad actors.

## Report finds discrimination in Academies’ admissions policy

Virginia Attorney General Mark Herring announced that the state Division of Human Rights had found “reasonable cause” to believe the Loudoun County Public Schools system discriminated against students of color who applied for gifted and talented programs.

The decision concluded a 13-month investigation by the

Human Rights division that was prompted by a formal complaint made by the NAACP Loudoun Branch.

“Our chief complaint in this situation was actually the denial of admission of Academies of Loudoun for their Academy of Science and Academy of Engineering program, where

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# Loudoun's education news

Since last March when COVID-19 first brought schooling in Loudoun to a full stop, the community has wrestled with continuum of learning, child care, food insecurity, mental health, access to technology, and many more significant issues—not to mention a few more marginal ones (e.g., “Can we go into the school and clean out my kid’s locker?”).

## GOVERNMENT

In this monthly column by contributor Laura Longley, the Blue Ridge Leader will flag topics behind the headlines and provide dependable sources to keep you in the know. (Caveat: Please double-check all information that relates to dates and policies.)

Concurrent learning could be in your child’s future. What is it?

Does your teen have a friend who attends Riverside High School in Leesburg? If so, it’s possible you’ve heard something about “concurrent learning”?

In mid-November, several middle and high schools each welcomed six or seven volunteer teachers and 50 some students for a one-hour pilot in concurrent—also known as Hy-Flex—learning. By dividing the students into two groups—one for on-site learning, the other for remote—the exercise served as a test for possible implementation in all schools in the second semester.

“The trial was a chance for teachers to dip their toe in so they can teach other teachers the concurrent approach,” said Doug Anderson, Riverside principal. “I hope it builds excitement, like getting ready for the first day of school.”

You can learn about concurrent teaching here: <https://vimeo.com/477658803>.

“Back-to-School” dates keep changing? Who is making these decisions and how?

In November, the Loudoun County Public School Board voted to establish metrics to monitor COVID-19 levels and guide decisions on whether to implement 100 percent distance learning, expand the hybrid option, or move to an all in-class program.

Staff recommended the monitoring metrics after consulting with the Loudoun County and Virginia health departments as well as the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC).

The two main measurements are 1) incidence rate and 2) positivity rate. In Loudoun, incidence rate is when new cases per 100,000 persons within the last 14 days reach more than 200. Positivity rate is the number of new cases of a disease divided by the number of persons at risk.

An important note: Nothing in the Loudoun County School Board metrics motion precludes the superintendent from implementing 100 percent distance learning as is appropriate, i.e., should COVID-19 transmission occur within particular classes, a school, or schools. For the latest data, updated daily, you can check the district’s core indicator on the LCPS web page at <https://www.lcps.org/Page/234565#CaseData>.

Are we going to get better internet connections for remote learning any time soon?

Segra, one of the largest independent fiber network

companies in the Eastern U.S., was just chosen by Loudoun County Public Schools in early November to deploy network services throughout the school system. After a four-month search evaluating five firms, LCPS chose Segra’s wide area network (WAN) solution for the connectivity, reliability, security, and performance that the district needs to support online learning, virtual classrooms, and the County’s expected population growth.

The Charlotte, NC-based firm will supply the school district with connectivity between several network hub sites to more than 100 LCPS facilities and data centers. The wide area network also provides diverse fiber routes for redundant connectivity to ensure continuity of operations in the event of a natural disaster or other catastrophic events.

“We’re delighted to work with Loudoun County Public Schools to provide enhanced fiber-based connectivity solutions, particularly at a time when we know how critical connectivity and security is for online learning and virtual classrooms,” said Segra CEO Tim Biltz. “The wide area network deployment will serve the schools and the region well into the future by providing the reliability, scalability and performance needed for a modern, state-of-the-art learning environment.”

“With Segra’s network services deployed, we’ve already seen a marked improvement in our speed, performance, and reliability,” said Vince Scheivert, LCPS assistant superintendent of digital innovation.

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# Northern Virginia joint transportation meeting Dec. 8

Learn about agency projects

Join the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and Virginia Railway Express for virtual public meeting and listening session.

The public is invited to a joint virtual meeting on Tuesday, Dec. 8, with representatives from the Commonwealth Transportation Board, Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Northern Virginia Transportation Commission and Virginia Railway Express, to learn more about the regional collaboration that keeps travelers in Northern Virginia moving.

Per Virginia code §33.2-214.3, these organizations shall conduct a joint pub-

lic meeting annually for the purposes of presenting to the public, and receiving comments on, transportation projects proposed and conducted by each entity in Planning District 8 (Northern Virginia).

The meeting will include an opportunity for public comments following agency presentations on transportation initiatives, including:

- Virginia’s Statewide Transportation Improvement Program
- VTrans Draft Mid-term Transportation Needs
- NVTA’s FY2020-2025 Six Year Program; TransAction; COVID-19 analysis; and the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P) in partnership with the Commonwealth of Virginia
- NVTC’s Commuter Choice program
- VRE project updates

**GOVERNMENT**

6368 or by mail to Ms. Maria Sinner, VDOT, 4975 Alliance Drive, Fairfax, VA 22030.

Meeting materials and presentations will be available at [virginiadot.org/nova-transportationmeeting](http://virginiadot.org/nova-transportationmeeting).

**About the Agencies**

The Commonwealth Transportation Board, the policy board for the Virginia Department of Transportation, Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation, and the Office of Intermodal Planning and Investment, allocates public funds to highway, road, bridge, rail, bicycle, pedestrian, public transportation, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 31 »

## How did you spend your Thanksgiving?

**A message from Maine:** “We went on Zoom – 23 of us – and had a virtual, let’s catch up and ‘welcome to the family’ Thanksgiving. We called in from Maine, Colorado, Maryland, Virginia, Massachusetts, and Connecticut, six states and about ten cities and towns overall, and we ‘talked shop.’

“Who are you dating? Did you eat yet? How’s the new baby? Whose dog is that? Are you still employed?”

**A message from Maryland:** “The two of us are both dealing with ‘pre-existing condition’ issues, so we went really low-key.

“We had two neighbors over – orphans from other Thanksgiving celebrations that had been cancelled – and we spread out on three tables between our apartment building’s hallway, our living room, and our dining room. I provided the food, and we all had a great time. A new Thanksgiving tradition for everybody.

**A message from Virginia:** “We did something really differently this year. Afraid of gathering in a small, cramped apartment, two families met in a park, exchanged deserts and side dishes, and took the donations back to our own families.

“The food was great. I was so happy to have six dishes to pass around instead of my measly three. My husband loved it.”

**A message from Massachusetts:** “We had a really small crowd, just the four of us. My husband, one of his sons, me, and my son. And, no animals. “I’m a private chef, and I had made all of my Thanksgiving deliveries the day before. We didn’t eat until about 6:30, but that was fine.

“I served turkey, homemade cranberry sauce – pulverized Clementine oranges are my secret ingredient – mashed potatoes, Brussel sprouts, and pumpkin pie. I always add sausage to my stuffing for the Turkey. It was a big hit. Fun but to be honest, I’m glad it’s over.”

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## Appeal filed to stop massive Purcellville development

An appeal to the Town of Purcellville challenging the Town's Board of Architectural Review's approval of the Trail's End development plan, has been filed. Trail's End would be located near the W&OD Trail in an historic area of old town on Hatcher Avenue. The Purcellville Town Council should hear the appeal before Dec. 22.

In a 3-2 vote, the BAR in October, approved the proposed scale, architecture, and building materials for a new three-story building on the three parcels. The existing three homes are to be demolished – but as of press time have not been approved for demolition. A lot consolidation will have to be approved – since 141, 151, and 161 Hatcher Avenue are three separate lots with three single family homes.

### GOVERNMENT

The property owner envisions a mixture of commercial on the main floor with an additional two stories of more than 30 apartments. A site plan, and a zoning permit for this project have not been approved, nor have they been applied for.

Examples of uses that are currently allowed in the C-4 zoning district, according to the Town Zoning Ordinance, include a hotel, eating establishments, retail, and office. Multi-family dwellings are not a permitted use in this area. However, these uses are supposed to blend in with the neighborhood. The block of Hatcher Avenue where Trail's End is proposed – is comprised of single family houses.

Questions about the process, by which such projects are reviewed, and acted upon may be directed to Andy Conlon, Town of Purcellville Senior Planner, at 540-751-2341.

## Wow, seems like just yesterday-- Will Rockwool open?

BY ANDREA GAINES

Indeed. It does seem like just yesterday.

Despite years of controversy, tons of opposition, legal challenges, and lots of questions, the Rockwool insulation factory in nearby Jefferson County, West Virginia may finally be slated to open.

The facility would be located in the Town of Ranson, West Virginia, less than 30 miles from the state's border with Loudoun County. The plant prompted opposition here in Loudoun since it was

unclear if tall-stacks manufacturing, which can spread emissions many, many miles, might be used. Schools near the plant site objected, too.

The Jefferson County Foundation, which has, in many ways, functioned as the seat of opposition to the project, is still fighting on. The group's website describes itself this way: JCF is "a 501(C)3 non-profit organization [that] supports and promotes effective and accountable government, sustainable development, and the protection of health, heritage, and the environment in the Eastern Panhandle of West Virginia." As part of its mission, JCF educates the public and intervenes in issues related to mountain natural gas exploration, residential water testing, and how development impacts clean water, among other topics.

JCF has sought a "residential well water testing

program in advance of Rockwool ..." What JCF is looking for is a baseline of sorts. What does your water look like now and what will your water look like if Rockwool comes here, and what will it look like when or if Rockwell leaves? Water testing reveals things such as the presence of ammonia, metals, formaldehyde, coliform, E. coli, Nitrate-N, as well as pesticides and herbicides. The foundation is also exploring what it calls "the road to Rockwool" – claiming that even basic construction features such as the roads that will service the facility "had violations."

The Rockwool factory is quite the industrial undertaking. The company runs 45 factories in 39 countries. It is the world's largest "stone wool manufacturer". The manufacturing of the company's Ranson insulation product will be done with natural gas, helping to reduce harmful emissions.

Two local politicians who opposed the Rockwool plant went down in defeat in the last several years: County Commissioner Ralph Lorenzetti and Del. Sammi Brown. But, another incumbent, Del. Paul Espinosa, who supported Rockwool, won re-election. Espinosa was a Rockwool PR manager at the time. Analysts see this possible scenario playing out: opposition will continue, but Rockwool will open just the same.



*Thank you  
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(past and present) for this year's blessings.  
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### Wood You?

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### Bond, James Bond

This piece is soon to be seen on Mr. Bond in the new release movie, *No Time to Die* (2021). The sunglasses are finished with 007 inscribed metal temple and come with a limited edition 007 case and cleaning cloth.



### She GSD

This card case/mirror combo gift is a delight for every woman's handbag. Card case is suitable for ID, CC and a bit of mad money for a quick dash out.



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## Tips to prevent frozen water pipes

With freezing temperatures coming, the Leesburg Department of Utilities would like to remind everyone to drain and protect outdoor water connections:

- Be sure pipes in unheated parts of your home, including crawl spaces, are insulated.
- Remove hoses from outside faucets and be sure they are drained and shut off.
- Advise all household members where the main shut-off valve is located in case of an emergency.
- If you will be away from home for an extended time, shut off the water supply and drain the system. Keep thermostat set at 55 degrees.
- During extended periods of below-freezing temperatures:
- Open doors to any cabinets with water supply lines, such as under kitchen and bathroom sinks, to allow warm air to circulate.
- Keep a trickle of water running from the faucet highest in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 36 »

## Rt 9/Rt 287 roundabout project moves forward

In his Nov. 25 update on the two-lane roundabout construction project at the Rt 9/Rt 287 intersection, Blue Ridge District Supervisor Tony R. Buffington reported that Loudoun County's design consultant has been working with the Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure to further improve the design. The project consists of approximately one mile of roadway improvements, including the roundabout.

In September, comments on the design, which is 90 percent completed, were received from the Loudoun County

Building and Development department and the Virginia Department of Transportation. The County's design consultant is expected to submit the completed design for consideration by all agencies in December.

Meanwhile, utility coordination is proceeding. Right-of-way acquisition is estimated to begin next spring with construction scheduled for Summer 2022.

To view animated traffic model videos of anticipated roundabout movements, visit <https://www.loudoun.gov/5214/Route-9-287-Roundabout>.

## Construction hours extended for new Loudoun County Courthouse

The contractor for the new Loudoun County Courthouse is planning to pour concrete slabs for the building's basement. Due to the size and complexity of these pours, extended work hours are required.

Construction will start before, and potentially end after, the contractor's current allowable work hours of 7 a.m. to 9 p.m., Monday through

### GOVERNMENT

Friday. Construction activity on-site will begin at 6 a.m., at which time the crews will set up concrete pumping equipment. Concrete for the pour will be scheduled to arrive at approximately 7 a.m. Construction crews are expected to be completed with their work by 9 p.m.; however, due to the need to complete concrete pours of this nature once they have started, work may extend later into the evening until complete, but not lasting past midnight.

Loudoun County has received the required approvals for the change in the work hours. Weather permitting, and barring any unexpected circum-

stances, construction for the first two of five planned concrete pours are:

- Pour #1: Thursday, Dec. 3, with a backup date of Dec. 8.
- Pour #2: Wednesday, Dec. 9, with a backup date of Dec. 11.

Residents should expect to hear increased construction noise, including truck back-up alarms, and they should also expect to see extra lighting during the early morning and evening hours.

Visitors to the Loudoun County Courthouse will continue to have access to the existing building. Free parking is available in the Pennington Lot and Pennington Garage, which is located off Church Street, approximately two blocks from the courthouse.

For more information about the courts, visit [loudoun.gov/courts](http://loudoun.gov/courts), and for more information about the new courthouse construction project, including contact information, and to sign up for email and text updates on the project, visit [loudoun.gov/courts-expansion](http://loudoun.gov/courts-expansion).

## AS YOUR PURCELLVILLE COMMUNITY VOLUNTEER FIRE AND RESCUE COMPANIES, WE ARE COMMITTED TO KEEPING YOU AND YOUR FAMILY SAFE

**This year, due to the COVID-19 virus, we've all been extra careful... social distancing, avoiding large crowds, wearing face coverings and being extra vigilant in our day to day activities.**

As we approach the Holiday Season, we are even more focused on your safety. And that's especially true for our traditional annual Christmas Tree sales fund raising activities.

This year, we have put into place protocols that are designed to keep you safe as you shop for your perfect, fresh cut Christmas Tree.

- We have expanded our tree lot and will limit traffic to keep everyone safe
- Our volunteers will tie your tree onto your vehicle
- You will have the option of touchless, curb-side tree shopping

Trees will be available for sale beginning Friday, November 27, starting at 10 am and we will be open until 8 pm

### REGULAR TREE LOT HOURS ARE:

- Wednesday, Thursday and Friday 5-8 pm
- Saturday and Sunday 10 am – 8 pm

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# DAR's Kettoctin Chapter gives patriots a proper burial site

To the sharp crack of musket fire, the Kettoctin Chapter of the Daughters of the American Revolution paid tribute to patriots Charles and Elizabeth "Betty" Lewis Carter with a celebration marking their restored graves at North Hill Estate, Berryville, on October 31.

**COMMUNITY**

The event marked the culmination of two years of historical research, fundraising, and restoration work after North Hill's current owner, Tim Lindsey, discovered the blackened and cracked Carter graves, their brick burial vaults sunk into the ground. Upon learning of the graves and their condition from Lindsey, Kettoctin member Gina Blake called on the chapter for help.

"The preservation of the cultural American Revolutionary War heritage is one of the core objectives of the National Society Daughters of the American Revolution," Kettoctin Chapter Regent Kecia Brown told the event guests, including direct Carter descendant Victoria Daly. "So, we are proud to have played a role in helping repair and preserve this piece of not only Clarke County and Virginia history but also American history."

Before acknowledging restoration supporters, Brown brought to life the storied past of the Carters and North Hill, which sits above the Shenandoah River at the Virginia Route 7 bridge crossing.

Charles and Betty Carter were descendants of several of America's most renowned families and Revolutionary War patriots, including the Washingtons, Carters, Lewises, and Fieldings. Betty Lewis Carter (1765-1830) was the daughter of Fielding Lewis, a Revolutionary War officer and a relative of explorer Meriwether Lewis, best known for the Lewis & Clark expedition. Her mother, Betty Washington Lewis, was George Washington's only sister to live to adulthood. Charles Carter (1764-1827) descended from Tidewater's Robert "King" Carter, who, as agent to Lord Fairfax, accumulated vast wealth and lands. Charles's relative and contemporary, George Carter, founded Oatlands Plantation and built the mansion there.

Married in 1781, the Carters moved

to North Hill in 1807, while Thomas Jefferson was serving as president, and remained there until 1813, when James Madison occupied the White House.

"Later," Kecia Brown explained, "the Carters lived for some time at Deerwood Plantation in Culpeper. Charles passed away and was buried there in 1827. Betty then moved to Audley Farm, the home of her brother, near North Hill. When she died in 1830, she was interred at North Hill where three of the Carters' seven children had been buried. Eventually, Charles would be re-interred here in the 1960s."



Ken Fleming, Kecia Brown (Regent Kettoctin chapter), Virginia State Regent-LeAnn Turbyfill, and Tim Lindsey.

Graves Restoration: When Lindsey and the DAR decided to restore the gravesites two years ago, they called on Kenneth Fleming, an eighth generation Loudoun County Virginian who has been recognized with numerous awards for his restoration work, including the graves of 100 veterans and their family members.

Fleming set about restoring the marble capstones and reconstructing the vaults with local 18th century brick. He also erected monument stones in memory of the three Carter children buried there. And, with the help of Chase Schneider of Round Hill, Fleming restored and installed a wrought iron fence and gate.

On behalf of the Kettoctin Chapter, Kecia Brown recognized Tim Lindsey and Ken Fleming with Excellence in Historic Preservation Certificates given to individuals who save and preserve local history. She also acknowledged the financial and/or in-kind contributions of Tim Lindsey, Kenneth Fleming, Kettoctin DAR chapter, the Bank of Clarke County, Loudoun Lumber, and Kettoctin member Carol Browning and her son, Jeff, of Browning Equipment. Tim Richards donated a 30-foot flagpole.

A new DAR commemorative marker now adds to the historic significance of North Hill, which is listed on the National Registry and Virginia Registry of Historic Places for its association with the Civil War Battle of Cool Springs.

The Colonel James Wood II Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) presented the colors, fired the musket salute, and played taps. Among the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 »

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# Christmas in Purcellville event calendar

Celebrate the holidays in Purcellville. Several changes have been made to the traditional Christmas in Purcellville festivities to help reduce potential risks related to COVID-19. Information about the festivities and how businesses, organizations, and residents can participate are listed below.

**COMMUNITY**

**Town Tree Lighting, Friday, Dec. 4**

The Town Tree Lighting will be held Dec. 4 at 6:30 p.m. through a Facebook live event. Citizens will be able to watch the traditional start to the holiday season from their homes. Additionally, an in-person event is also being planned, though that may change depending on circumstances. Registrations are required to attend in person, and space

is limited. Details will be provided to those who register. Should circumstances change, this may only be a Facebook Live event, and those who have registered will be notified.

**Reverse Parade on Hirst Road, Saturday, Dec. 5**

This year's parade will be held on Saturday, Dec. 5 on Hirst Road from 6 p.m. to 9 p.m. It will be a reverse parade with participants lined up on the west side of Hirst Road with decorated floats and vehicles. Those who wish to view the parade will drive by the stationary units to enjoy the decorations from their vehicles. The reverse parade will be a wonderful way to kick off the tour of homes and town businesses that are decorated for the Holiday Lights Tour.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 »

# Cooking safely during the holiday season

The holidays are full of excitement, good food and fun times with family. As preparations for the busy holiday season are underway, the Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System encourages residents to follow safe cooking practices. Cooking is the leading cause of residential fires during the Thanksgiving holiday and throughout the year. Take a few moments to review these safety tips and ensure your holiday is memorable for all the right reasons.

Stay in the kitchen while cooking on the stovetop. If you leave the kitchen, even briefly, turn off the stove. If baking, roasting, or broiling, set timers to remind you food is cooking.

Keep combustibles, such as oven mitts, wooden utensils, food packaging, towels or curtains, away from your stovetop.

Maintain a three-foot safety zone for kids and pets around stove and hot appliances. Turn pot handles away so young children are less likely to get burned.

Fried turkey fan? The Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System recommends buying one from a grocery store or restaurant, or consider an oil-less turkey fryer. Hot oil from a turkey fryer can cause serious burns and destroy property.

If you do have a fire:

On the stovetop, slide a lid on the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 »

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# Call for submissions for Cabin Fever Film Fest

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

**Quiet on the set.** Regional filmmakers are invited to submit films (short and feature-length) and home movies for the fourth annual Cabin Fever Film Festival sponsored by Franklin Park Visual and Performing Arts Center and Town of Purcellville Arts Council. The festival highlights local tales and talent films, student productions, and vintage home

movies, with emphasis on films made in Purcellville, or by residents in the Purcellville area. Break that cabin fever in late-January and enjoy the fourth year of Purcellville's only film festival.

**Roll sound.** Entries should be no longer than 90 minutes and a minimum of one minute. All films should be in digital format on a flash drive or on a DVD. Any subject matter is acceptable keeping in mind that the Cabin Fever Film Festival is a family-friendly event. Films can include live action, stop motion, animation, etc. Entry fee is \$10 for first film entry, \$5 for each additional film entry. Films should be dropped off to Franklin Park Arts Center (36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville, VA 20132) anytime between Tuesday, Dec. 1 and by 5 p.m. on Wednesday, Dec. 16. An application and fees can be com-

pleted at the time of film drop off. A copy of the application can be found at [www.franklinparkartscenter.org](http://www.franklinparkartscenter.org) with a link on the home page. All films will be reviewed and filmmakers will be contacted shortly after the submission deadline as to their acceptance and scheduled showing time block.

Show times will be Friday, Jan. 22, from 7 – 9 p.m., Saturday, Jan. 23, from 10-11:30 a.m. or 12:30 – 2 p.m., depending on the number of entries. Admission will be \$5 for either day. Due to current circumstances, there will not be a reception during the Friday evening showing. Tickets must be purchased in advance, and a maximum for 75 tickets will be sold for each day. The full schedule will be posted online at the beginning of January 2021. If conditions at the time don't allow for an in-person

event, the festival will be postponed and may be held outdoors at a later date.

**Marker. Important festival dates:**

Dec. 1 – 16: submissions accepted  
Dec. 18: review of the films  
Jan. 4, 2021: announce the slate of films  
Jan. 22 and 23: Festival

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

Questions should be directed to Elizabeth Bracey, Manager, Franklin Park Arts Center [Elizabeth.Bracey@loudoun.gov](mailto:Elizabeth.Bracey@loudoun.gov) or 540-338-7973, or Suzan Mardis of the Purcellville Arts Council at ([sbmardis1@fcps.edu](mailto:sbmardis1@fcps.edu)).

## COMMUNITY

# Working smoke alarms and a closed door kept family safe

An Ashburn family of three was awakened suddenly by their smoke alarms just after 1:15 a.m. on Monday, Nov. 9. When the smoke alarms sounded, the resident discovered a small fire burning in a second story bedroom and

immediately closed the door, called 9-1-1 and evacuated. The simple act of closing the bedroom door before evacuating placed a critical barrier between the residents and the fire, slowing the fire spread to the rest of the home and

allowing precious time for firefighters to arrive.

Fire and rescue crews from Moorefield, Brambleton, Dulles South, Ashburn, Lansdowne and Leesburg responded to the fire located in the 21,000 block of Awbrey Place. First responders arrived on scene and observed fire and smoke conditions on the second floor and located all occupants safely outside. Firefighters immediately made their way to the second floor where they quickly found and extinguished a fire inside a bedroom.

The Loudoun County Fire Marshal's Office investigation determined that the fire was accidental, caused when a lit candle came in contact with nearby combustibles. All three residents were displaced. Damages were confined to the second story bedroom with no further extension throughout the home and estimated at \$100,000. There were no injuries to civilians or first responders.

The Loudoun County Combined Fire and Rescue System joins UL Firefighter Safety Research Institute to encourage all residents to "Close Before You Doze". By adopting the lifesaving practice of closing bedroom, bathroom and basement doors before going to bed, you are providing a critical safety barrier that in the event of a fire, will give your family more time to escape. A closed door is another safety tool, like smoke and carbon monoxide alarms, that can provide an added layer of safety in your home.

There are safety measures to increase your risk of survival in the event of a fire in your home. They are the following:

- Close your doors at night. Sleeping with a closed door can protect you and your family by slowing the spread of a fire, reducing toxic smoke levels, improving oxygen levels, and decreasing temperatures, dramatically increasing your chance of survival.
- If a fire ignites and you can get out of the burning structure, do so quickly and close every door behind you as you exit. If you cannot safely evacuate, put a closed door between you and the fire to buy yourself valuable time. Never go back inside a burning home.
- For parents worried about hearing their child through a closed door, simply place a baby monitor in the child's room.
- Make sure your smoke and CO alarms are in working condition. Install smoke alarms in every sleeping room and outside each separate sleeping area. Install alarms on every level of the home and test them monthly. If you need assistance, visit [www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms](http://www.loudoun.gov/smokealarms) or call 703-737-8093.
- Finally, have an escape plan. Identify two ways out of every room, designate a meeting place outside and be sure to practice your escape plan as a family.

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# Catoctin Creek Distillery earns 3 Loudoun small business awards

For the nine winners of the 26<sup>th</sup> Annual Loudoun Chamber of Commerce Small Business Awards, there was nothing unlucky about Friday, Nov. 13, even though the celebration had to be converted to an all-virtual event for safety precautions due to COVID-19. It was an especially good night for Catoctin Creek Distilling Company of Purcellville, which received three awards—for Main Street Business of the Year, Small Business of the Year, and People’s Choice Small Business.

Founded in 2009 as the first legal distillery in Virginia since Prohibition, Catoctin Creek is unique, says general manager and co-founder Scott Harris, “because we source from local grain. We mash, ferment, and distill it ourselves in very small batches. Then we distill it in copper pot stills and age it in 30-gallon white oak barrels. That is a production method that was the same 200 years ago. A lot of the big whiskey producers today are doing a lot more automated production, and we decided not to do that.”

The 27 finalists and nine winners were selected by blue-ribbon committees of local business leaders and industry experts, who carefully examined the award applications to select the 32 award finalists in six industry categories. “Loudoun County’s small business community has faced unprecedented



A chemical engineer, Becky Harris is co-founder and chief distiller of Catoctin Creek Distilling Company. She recently was elected president of the board of directors of the American Craft Spirits Association.

challenges in 2020,” said Tony Howard, Chamber president and CEO. “Yet, these business owners and entrepreneurs continue to persevere and make invaluable contributions that define Loudoun’s world class quality of life.”

Learn more about each business as well as the event sponsors by visiting <https://www.loudounchamber.org/events/sba/> for the event program.

The 2020 Small Business Awards sponsors include: Signature Sponsor, Atlantic Union Bank; Platinum Sponsors: Backflow Technology, Bank of Clarke County, BCT The Community’s Bank, The Claude Moore Charitable Foundation,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 35 »

**People’s Choice Award Winner – Catoctin Creek Distillery**

**Finalists for Main Street Business of the Year:**

- Catoctin Creek Distillery – **WINNER!**
- Joe’s Pizzeria
- MI-Box of Northern Virginia
- The Marketing Management Group

**Finalists for Superior Service Business of the Year:**

- 37 Media & Marketing Group – **WINNER!**
- Advanced Corrective Chiropractic
- Extraordinary Transitions – Long & Foster
- Woofie’s

**Finalists for Virtual Business of the Year:**

- Anonymous Assistants
- IntegratIT
- TextP2P – **WINNER!**
- Yield Bookkeeping

**Finalists for Health and Wellness Business of the Year:**

- The National Sports Medicine Institute – **WINNER!**
- Greenheart Juice Shop
- Temple Training
- The Fitness Equation

**Finalists for Loudoun Destination Business of the Year:**

- Bear Chase Brewing
- Restaurant at Patowmack Farm
- The Conche – **WINNER!**

**Finalists for Nonprofit Organization of the Year:**

- Crossroads Jobs – **WINNER!**
- Friends of Loudoun Mental Health Inc.
- Loudoun Literacy Council
- Ryan Bartel Foundation

**Finalists for Loudoun’s Top Entrepreneur of the Year:**

- Thereasa Black – Amore Congelato
- Pam Jones – Extraordinary Transitions
- Tony Stafford – Ford’s Fish Shack – **WINNER!**
- Mary Ellen Taylor – Endless Summer Harvest

**Finalists for Small Business of the Year:**

- Loudoun Free Clinic \*
- The Conche
- 37 Media & Marketing Group
- Text P2P
- National Sports Medicine Institute
- Crossroads Jobs
- Catoctin Creek Distilling – **WINNER!**



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# Snow business and back talk

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Do you remember Snowmageddon? The 2010 storm when Mother Nature dumped 32.4 inches of the white stuff on Dulles Airport—the heaviest single-storm snowfall ever recorded in the region? Ten years later that record still stands. Back then, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration's current generation of satellites were still in development. Now, when monster snowstorms like Snowmageddon threaten the U.S., scientists and forecasters can track and predict them.

Fortunately, weather forecasters aren't predicting a repeat of Snowmageddon this winter, just some wet snow early in the season. Still, you're going to be faced with the unpleasant task of shoveling your sidewalk and driveway. And that means you're also facing the risk of throwing out your back.

Are you ready? If you've been cooped up with remote work and teaching your

children remotely, chances are you're not as limber as you were this time last year. To help you avoid low back pain—the leading cause of disability worldwide—we offer a critical caution, and four useful tips from Science-Based Chiropractic's Dr. Damon Hendrickson of Ogden, Utah.

#### How not to shovel snow:

Head to the garage and get the biggest shovel you can find. Bend over and make sure you keep your knees locked as you scoop up a heaping pile of snow. "As abruptly and forcefully as you can," Dr. Hendrickson writes, "twist and throw the snow over your shoulder. Repeat this 50-100 times and you're done! Now that we have the perfect recipe for throwing out your low back and racking up a big pile of medical bills, let's take a step backward and learn how to clear the snow out of your driveway without clearing your wallet of all your hard-earned cash."

#### How to shovel snow the safe way:

Start with the right shovel: Consider investing in a plastic ergonomic shovel with a small to medium bucket and contoured design. It will help you keep upright and avoid lifting with your back. You can find these shovels online or at any home supply store, starting at \$20 and up.

Use the proper technique: "Lift as little snow as possible," Dr. Hendrickson recommends. "Pushing rather than scooping snow will significantly reduce the level of stress on your body. Use your legs. Bend slightly at your hips and squat down with your legs keeping your low back straight. This will take pressure off of your low back and allow you to lift without straining a muscle or injuring a joint."

Make a smart plan and an early start: Figure out where you're going to put the snow. It's no fun to shovel it a second time just because you blocked your neighbor's car the first time. And as tempting as it may be to build a cozy fire and watch the flakes flutter down,

best to bundle up and get started. As Dr. Hendrickson points out, "Shoveling the snow early, before it has had a chance to melt, re-freeze, and glue itself to your walkway, will make your job much easier. Pushing two inches of dusty snow off your driveway three times is much easier than shoveling six inches of packed ice. This will also help to avoid driving your car over the snow and packing the ice down further." If you can't get a head start on the snow as it is falling, limit yourself to 15 minutes of shoveling at a time.

Corral the neighbor's kid: Why not avoid a costly injury altogether? Give the neighbor's kid \$10 to shovel your driveway. As the good doctor advises, "It's a much better alternative than taking on the task yourself and ending up with an expensive injury. In all seriousness, this is a fantastic option. Most of us would do almost anything to get rid of pain once it's started, so why not just avoid it in the first place?"

## Purcellville Arts Council features exhibit by Mark V. Walker

The Purcellville Arts Council is featuring photography by Mark V. Walker through Dec. 31, in Purcellville's Town Hall. Meet the artist virtually with a video recording of an interview and discussion of the photographs that are on display at Purcellville Town Hall. Watch the interview online on the Purcellville Arts Council page of the Town website. The public is welcome to view the show during regular Town Hall office hours (Mondays, Wednesdays, and Friday from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., except holidays). Face coverings are required to enter Town Hall.

Mark V. Walker is local fine art and commercial photographer specializing in landscape, architecture, and portraiture photography. The collection of twelve framed fine art photographs at Town Hall capture natural scenes and architectural subjects from the greater Washington D.C. region, including monuments on the National Mall, Great Falls Park, and Harpers Ferry. The exhibit highlights Walker's unique artistic style, which produces vivid and organic images with striking contrast, pronounced geometry, and nuanced textures.

Walker's early photography aimed to capture and reproduce the natural form and beauty in the world exactly as

he observed it. Whether a Patagonian glacier field, an ancient Mayan ruin, a Moorish architectural design in Spain, or a Hawaiian coastline lava flow, Walker sought to share scenes from around the world using still imagery. As his artistic style evolved, it moved from reproductive to transformative, from a precise observation to a creative vision infused with candor, depth, and feeling.

His work has received recognition from nationally recognized periodicals, routinely showcases on corporate websites, and is on display in personal galleries from San Francisco to New York City. His images have recently featured in the Purcellville Art Gallery, and were selected as part of the 2020 Western Loudoun Artist Studio Tour.

Walker is currently working on a photobook documenting of all the U.S. National Parks. He has visited 28 of the 61 parks, including Yellowstone, Death Valley, Yosemite, Carlsbad Caverns, and Redwood Forest, and he is looking forward to a

journey to Alaska. Walker's portfolio can be found on his website at [www.markvwalkerphotography.com](http://www.markvwalkerphotography.com).

The first floor corridors of Town Hall have a gallery-caliber hanging system which creates and opportunity for local artists to exhibit their work. Art exhibitions in Town Hall ensure that all members of the public have access to art. The Purcellville Arts Council is accepting submissions for future shows. All artwork is decided upon for suitability by an outside jury. Please send inquiries to the Town of Purcellville, attention: Arts Council at [arts@purcellvilleva.gov](mailto:arts@purcellvilleva.gov).

#### DISCRIMINATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

African American students were often left out of the admissions process," said NAACP Loudoun Branch President Pastor Michelle C. Thomas.

"They actually only accepted maybe between one in three African American applicants a year," Thomas said. "Some years there were actually zero applicants accepted."

LCPS is reviewing the report while continuing to implement the school board's current plan to combat racism.

## Pottery Sale with LoCo Potters Dec. 12

Maple Cottage Pottery in Bluemont, will hold a studio sale on Dec. 12, from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Also in attendance will be the varied works of LoCo Potters, a collective of Loudoun County potters. Offerings include functional works for the home and as gifts, as well as one of a kind art pieces.

Maple Cottage Pottery is located at 18301 Clayton Hall Rd., Bluemont, VA 20135. From Rt 7, turn right into the long-paved driveway just before the "Welcome to Bluemont" sign. For more information contact, [maplecottagepottery@gmail.com](mailto:maplecottagepottery@gmail.com).







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# Ban on phone use while driving in Virginia starts Jan. 1

A new Virginia law banning the use of cellphones while driving goes into effect Jan. 1, 2021.

The mandate was signed by Gov. Ralph Northam on July 8, making Virginia the 22nd state to ban the use of handheld devices while driving. The law now prohibits drivers from holding any personal communication devices while driving a moving vehicle on the state's roadways.

Though the ban has officially been Virginia law since July, it will be enforced beginning Jan. 1.

According to the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles 2019 crash statistics, distracted driving caused 23,246 accidents and 120 fatal crashes. Those figures represent 18.1 percent of all crashes and 14.5 percent of all fatalities on Virginia roadways.

Virginia DMV statistics from 2018 revealed that the jurisdictions with the most distracted driving crashes were Fairfax County, Prince William County, Virginia Beach, Hampton and Newport News. The counties with the most fatalities were Prince William, Fairfax, Fauquier, Hanover and Spotsylvania.

"Thousands of Virginians are involved in crashes every year, and distracted driving is a factor in many of those crashes," said David Tenenbaum, Virginia Farm Bureau Mutual Insurance Co. actuarial manager and treasurer of Drive Smart Virginia.

"Manipulating a cellphone while driving increases your crash risk by 2,300 percent because it involves all three kinds of distractions—manual, visual and cognitive. Help us save lives by putting your phone down."

Drivers who violate the new law will be subject to a \$125 fine for the first offense and \$250 for each subsequent offense. Violations that occur in highway work zones also will carry a \$250 fine.

It still is permissible to use hands-free technology to make or receive phone calls while driving—the ban only prohibits drivers from directly handling their devices. If drivers must use their phones while traveling, they must be lawfully parked or stopped to do so.

Drivers using a handheld device to report an emergency are exempt, as are the operators of emergency vehicles who are engaged in their official duties. Motorists also may handle amateur, or citizens band radios.

# Va. farmers grow millions of poinsettias for the holidays

Besides fresh Christmas trees, few florae exemplify the holiday spirit like poinsettias—and local growers are ready for the season.

Poinsettias are cultivated in all 50 states and are one of the top-selling plants in the nation. The 2018 U.S. Department of Agriculture Floriculture Crops Summary showed potted poinsettias accounted for \$149 million in U.S. floriculture sales that year. In Virginia, about 2.2 million poinsettias with a wholesale value of \$10.3 million were raised commercially in 2018.

"Many consumers may not be aware Virginia is fortunate to have a number of poinsettia growers around the state," said Tony Banks, senior assistant director of agriculture, development and innovation for Virginia Farm Bureau Federation.

Banks said the plant's popularity is an additional income opportunity for nurseries and farms during late fall. Vegetable and tobacco farms also can utilize their greenhouses between seasons to raise the flowering plant, he noted.

Stephanie Black, a grower and manager of Atlantic Growers in New Kent County, said she begins selling poinsettias Thanksgiving week, and most people start buying them right after that holiday.

"It's just tradition," she said. "It's one of the [plants] that's reliably the red color that everybody associates with Christmas—with the pretty green leaves underneath."

Poinsettias come in a variety of dazzling colors and patterns, but the



CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »

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**POINSETTIAS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 28**

solid reds remain bestsellers. Black said her customers marvel over varieties that are cream, pink and Red Glitter—one that has red leaves with white splotches—but most of them buy the red.

While buyers enjoy their poinsettias during the holidays, most don't save the plants afterward because they can be challenging to care for.

"They are extremely sensitive," Black said. "[People] will just throw it away and wait until next year."

Though they're associated with winter-time holidays, poinsettias are tropical plants that prefer warm temperatures. To ensure poinsettias thrive during the holidays, an indoor temperature around 65-70 degrees is ideal.

To nurture a poinsettia for next year, Virginia Cooperative Extension recommends cutting the plant back to about 5 inches from the soil surface and repotting in fresh soil once the leaves—or bracts—fade or fall. Set the plant where it will receive indirect light and temperatures around 55-60 degrees, and water sparingly. When new growth begins, place in a well-lit window and pinch new growth to produce more stems.

In addition, the poinsettia needs continuous periods of darkness—at least 12 hours—each night to grow its colorful bracts.

# PEC announces 2020 Photo Contest winners

This was another spectacular year for the Piedmont Environmental Photo Contest. The public decided the winners by popular vote, and for PEC staff, that's a welcome process: They confess it would have been too difficult for them to choose.

**COMMUNITY**

All of the 25 photos submitted were taken in one of the Virginia Piedmont counties represented by the Piedmont Environmental Council: Albemarle, Charlottesville, Clarke, Culpeper, Fauquier, Greene, Loudoun, Madison, Orange, or Rappahannock.

Without further ado, here are the winning images and photographers:

- "Brambleton Barn Sunset" by Chris Hamilton
- "ZZZ"—Black bear taking a nap by Matt Huntley
- "Beaver Creek Nuclear Sunset" by Cass Girvin
- "Two Fox Kits" by Alana Mauritzen

The four categories and all finalists are:

- *Beautiful Landscapes and Streetscapes*: Katie Hickson, Cassidy Girvin, Nick Palastro (2 submissions), Chris Hamilton
- *Native Plants & Wildlife*: Dorothy Kray, Cassidy Girvin, Matt Huntley, Malcolm Andrews, Robin Eshleman
- *Wonderful Waters*: Cassidy Girvin (2), Nat White, Bob Golub, Travis W. Rogers

- *Youth Category*: Charlotte Clements, Tobin Yates, Claire Ke, Alana Mauritzen, Quinn Nelson

All finalists receive a one-year PEC membership and



have their work featured in PEC's upcoming online SlideShare website (see below). Winners in each adult category receive a \$75 gift certificate to a nearby restaurant participating in PEC's "Buy Fresh, Buy Local" program. The Youth Category winner receives their choice of a \$75 iTunes, Google Play, or Amazon gift card.

You can view the work of all of the finalists at PEC's SlideShare site: <https://www.slideshare.net/pecva/pec-photo-contest-finalists-2020>.

The Piedmont Environmental Council thanks everyone who submitted images and who voted.

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IT SEEMS TO ME, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Fires Complicate Wider Rollout” describes challenges that EV manufacturers have had with Lithium-ion batteries that power the car. As a result of unexplained battery fires, General Motors is recalling 69,000 Bolt cars worldwide. The article states that “Bolt owners shouldn’t park their cars in their garages before bringing their vehicles to dealerships to limit the batteries’ charging capacity to 90 percent until a permanent fix can be found ...” Hyundai, Ford and BMW have also issued recalls for new battery powered cars in recent months.

EV car fires are still very rare, statistics show that car fires are 20 to 50 times more prevalent in gas driven cars. This I explained by the fact that EVs represent approximately 1.5 percent of cars on the road in the U.S. but, it is sure to increase as the numbers of EVs increase. Almost all gas powered car fires are the result of a collision, they don’t just burst into flame sitting in the garage.

Don’t get me wrong, I love EVs. To plug my car in overnight and drive away in the morning without worrying about getting gas is a great idea. Unfortunately like all new ideas, the hard details of owning an EV will eventually intrude into your life. Battery manufacturers are doing their best to make batteries smaller, lighter and have greater mileage between charges.

They are also trying new combinations of materials to meet these ends. The science of battery design is continuously in a state of improvement. Any mass market product like a car places many constraints such as cost, reparability and safety on car designers. There is a learning curve in manufacturing a new component such as a lithium-ion battery for automobiles.

Car manufacturers have been building internal combustion powered vehicles for over 100 years and have ironed out most the problems over the years and now produce a reliable and safe car. The same can’t be said for EVs. We are at the beginning of the learning curve and new problems will pop up out of nowhere that have to be solved to make EVs a safe choice for everyday living. Forcing consumers to buy only EVs when California’s law comes into effect, doesn’t help, because many problems with EVs safety still have not yet been solved.

In this article I will only discuss the battery problems with electric cars. There are other problems with a full replacement of the internal combustion engine car with an EV. Considerations such as cost, battery life, driving range, resale value and reparability of an EV will be left for a future article.

All modern EVs use a Lithium-ion battery. This battery is composed of cells that are made of various met-



Fire fighters battling an Electric Vehicle Fire. Photo Credit: Website, WonderfulEngineering.com, “This is how you handle a fire in an Electric Vehicle” April 21, 2019.

als, plastics, graphite and a very flammable electrolyte. The materials are usually in the form of a long strip that is rolled up into a broom stick width and stuffed into a metal tube, sort of like longer “C” cell that we are all familiar with. As noted previously, battery chemistry is in a state of flux with different manufacturers trying different combinations of materials to get a maximum energy density in a small size. The energy density of a battery determines the number of miles the car will travel before a recharge is needed.

So how many individual cells make up a battery in an EV? The answer is as many as 7,100 in a Tesla Model S. Its battery pack which weighs 1,200 lbs. is placed under the body of the car and represents approximately 22 percent of the cost of the car. The GM Bolt has a smaller number of batteries, 288 cells. These battery packs have to be cooled by air or liquids to prevent overheating. They also need to be heated in low temperature environments in order to prevent degradation.

So what is causing battery fires? These fires are caused by what is known as “Thermal runaway.” If one of the 7,100 cells is overloaded either by an internal manufacturing defect, an internal short circuit caused by aging, excessive heat or cold or damaged in a collision, the cell overheats, bursts and catches on fire. The electrolyte is flammable and the fire soon spreads to the adjoining cells, which causes a chain reaction that engulfs the entire car. Temperatures over 1,000 degrees are typically produced in such fires.

Firefighters are faced with unique problems with EVs. In some cases, putting out an EV fire requires jacking up the side of the car and flooding the underside with water. Contacting a live battery is a hazard. The battery cells are hooked up in such a manner to produce approximately 400 volts of Direct Current for the car’s motors. This is less than the 600 volts of the Metro third rail line but will kill you just as quickly.

Collisions are especially insidious, there may be no apparent damage to the vehicle but the battery cells may be internally damaged and burst into flames hours or days later.

Operating the battery under temperature extremes, excessive charging or discharging cycles or just plain aging changes the internal battery chemistry which can lead to fires. In some cases, batteries develop what are called “dendrites.” These are miniature deposits of

metal in the insides of a battery cell. It’s a microscopic version of stalagmites that develop on the floor of caves. These dendrites silently grow inside the battery until they pierce an insulator and short circuit the battery cell. Then the battery catches fires and undergoes thermal runaway.

These are some of the problems of EV batteries. Many resources on the web are available that explain the state of the art of EV battery development. I suggest you review them if you are seriously considering owning an EV. There is no doubt in my mind that many of these problems mentioned can and will be solved but, as evidenced by the recent recalls of many different EV models, more extensive research and development is needed before a safe and reliable EV is sold to the general public.

*Joe LaFiandra writes a regular column, “It seems to me” for the Blue Ridge Leader.*

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

with my assessment that there’s something funny going on between reality, relativity and parts of our locality – at least to my finding. Things are never quite what you (or at least I) would expect them to be: distances can be misleading, time can speed up and slow down, and bend between the past and present; the feeling of *deja vu* is commonplace – and I love living and reliving the reverse phenomenon of the Heisenberg uncertainty principle: rather than being the catalyst for change in my environment, I constantly find that my experiences and surroundings make a profound effect on me. I distinctly recall these sensations on visiting the George Marshall Home – Dodona Manor – in Leesburg, from my first visit 20 years back to a recent photo tour.

But – time and space, again, agrees to dance in our rhythm and we slip back to our main theme, Fireman’s Field in Purcellville. I’d heard of the place before I’d even entered Loudoun County; as the incoming News Director at Wage Radio in the summer of 1997, I’d listened (on

an old-fashioned cassette tape sent through the mail) to some of the latest newscasts by the young man I’d be replacing – Butler Cain, who had served a year and graduated to greener pastures: one of his stories told of the Babe Ruth League World Series coming to Loudoun County – to Fireman’s Field in fact – and that seemed about the biggest thing since cereal in a box. So this place came to cast a sort of mystical sparkle-dust about the air each time I’d hear – or speak – its name. I had to learn more.

Some of the locals filled me in on a bit of the history and unique character of the park and its facilities. Public use of the space dated back to the late 1800’s, with the Bush Tabernacle’s construction a few decades later, used initially for temperance meetings and religious gatherings. The Town’s Volunteer Fire Department took custodianship of the Park in the late 1940’s – hence the popular name we still use today – even though the first responders – within the past generation - handed ownership over to the Town. Lots of history, events, dates and more attendees answered a call to this spot than estimation could provide. One local news source told

me emphatically that Patsy Cline had once appeared at what many now call the Purcellville Skating Rink. And the Ball Field: those involved in the Babe Ruth World Series Organization called the sporting shrine a ‘miniature Camden Yards’ – a veritable Field of Dreams. And so, it must be – having hosted – at least to my count – about a half-dozen of the youth baseball championships.

So; little wonder, then, that my first official hike around these hallowed grounds gave me so much fodder for thought, feeling, memory and imagination. I marvel at the number of souls having visited this spot over the past century and more – the activities engaged in, the energy expended in organizing and carrying out the events – and the emotions of all the people who enjoyed – or at least experienced – the gatherings.

I’m telling myself that I’m not the first to have undergone what I describe as the reverse Heisenberg uncertainty principle; lots of folks have changed – mostly for the better, I’m guessing – for their visits - formal or informal – to the acreage and facilities off South Nursery Avenue and 20th Street in Purcellville.



**TRANSPORTATION**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15  
 transportation demand management projects. Virginia's SMART SCALE scores projects on factors of safety, congestion reduction, accessibility, land use, environmental quality, and economic development.

The Virginia Department of Transportation and the Virginia Department of Rail and Public Transportation are state agencies reporting to the Secretary of Transportation, focused on the movement of people and goods throughout the Commonwealth. VDOT is responsible for building, maintaining and operating the state's roads, bridges and tunnels. DRPT's primary areas of activity are rail, public transportation, and commuter services, working with local, regional, state, and federal governments, as well as private entities to provide support projects and programs. The agencies will provide information on the draft FY 2021-2026 Six-Year Improvement Program.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Authority is a regional body focused on delivering real transportation solutions and value for Northern Virginia's transportation dollars by bringing Northern Virginia jurisdictions and agencies together to prioritize projects and implement solutions. The Authority will provide information on the recently adopted FY2020-2025 Six Year Program; the update to TransAction, Northern Virginia's long-range transportation plan;

COVID-19 Transportation Impacts and Opportunities; the Regional Multi-Modal Mobility Program (RM3P); and NoVA Gateway, a new tool that allows streamlined search capabilities for real-time NVTA-funded project status updates.

The Northern Virginia Transportation Commission advances a robust and reliable public transit network to support communities in Northern Virginia. NVTC will provide updated information about the Commuter Choice program, which makes the Northern Virginia transportation network better for commuters by investing toll revenues into public transit and other multimodal projects along two expressway corridors, I-66 and I-395/95.

The Virginia Railway Express has been providing commuter rail service between Central and Northern Virginia and the District of Columbia since 1992. As a participant in the commonwealth's \$3.9 billion Transforming Rail in Virginia program, VRE has many station-improvement and maintenance-and-storage facility projects at various levels of implementation. VRE will provide an overview of its projects and highlight several that have received financial support from funding agencies participating in the Dec. 8, regional transportation meeting.

If you need more information, or special assistance for persons with disabilities, or limited English proficiency, contact VDOT Civil Rights at 703-259-1775.

# We can Social Distance and Still have Fun!



*"We don't stop playing because we grow old; We Grow Old because we stop playing."*

- George Bernard Shaw

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HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

and North Carolina line. I remember its coolness, but even though we were near the top of Cedar Mountain, the counselors had us focused inward on swimming, learning to shoot a .22 rifle and for some reason, making lanyards. The camp highlight was tackling Sliding Rock, sitting on our backsides and letting the cold water race us to a swimming hole some sixty feet away. My shorts were shredded.

I followed the Blue Ridge to college, spent in Lexington in the Shenandoah Valley. We'd often take dates and blankets to the Blue Ridge Parkway and watch the sun set over the Alleghenies to the west. Mystical times, but chill set in quickly at that elevation so sunset-viewing soon gave in to fraternity life back in town.

Flash forward some thirty years and I'm in Virginia with the Blue Ridge in sight every day. I've often said that Loudoun is the best location in the country, given its proximity to bay and mountains, history and metropolises. We've found that it's also a great jumping off place for short excursions. Skyline Drive is an obvious one we've done several times, most recently with a friend from near Middleburg. We were exercising sports cars but the 35-mph speed limit boredom quickly gave way to gawking happily from overlook to overlook, eastward to farms and villages, and westward across the Shenandoah to the Alleghenies. These were special sights, looking down at the endless valley and outward to high ridges to the west.

Closer to home is Bears Den and standing atop its huge boulders, taking in the vast scenery and perhaps dreaming. A bit further and to the north, right on the Mason-Dixon Line is Pen Mar Overlook. A spur of the Blue Ridge carries the Appalachian Trail to a scene similar to Bears Den. The panorama is of rich farmlands in Pennsylvania, carefully tended and prosperous looking. They stretch endlessly and remind us that man can touch the earth gently.

Not so gentle was our downhill drive from the top of the Blue Ridge to its bottom, down near Tazewell in southwest Virginia. The 30-mile stretch of road is called "the Back of the Dragon" (with its own Wikipedia page.) It depends on how you count them, but there are somewhere between 260 and 438 turns, almost all of them cambered hairpins. The camber, or banking, means that one can take the curve at higher speeds, but few dare. It was a blast, as was a shorter downhill stretch closer to home, leaving Skyline Drive downwards towards Luray. We will definitely do that again.

The Blue Ridge are among the oldest mountains on earth, conveying softness. We see them every day from our front porch. As the sun sets, there's a glow over the Blue Ridge. Often the entire western sky is golden. Other times there's a narrowing sliver of red, marking the sun's final descent over the Blue Ridge Mountains."

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

VIEW FROM THE RIDGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

interview. They are, notes the article, "the next generation" of Father John Chapman's companies, and are "launching a few projects of their own."

"Their latest undertaking," continues the article, is Trail's End, and they are proud to have gotten the Town's Board of Architectural Review to "approve" the project's design. But, a site plan for Trail's End – which would show how it would impact its residential, Hatcher Avenue neighborhood, why it's prudent to demolish three old homes, and the wisdom of locating a 54,285 square-foot, three-story building in a residential neighborhood – has not been submitted.

#### Please go away

The Vineyard Square project (an approximately 150,000-square-foot mixed-use building for commercial and condominium space) is even more massive and disruptive, with the developers still seeking financing, and going this way and that to keep the project going for some five to ten years, now. Is this how citizens – old and new – want to see Purcellville age? The developers laid out their vision for historic downtown Purcellville in that recent high-profile media interview. This is, simply, "infill" they say. The perfect replacement, for "vacant or under-used parcels within areas that are already developed." Well, not really. The two projects, it is argued, are replacing an aging historic downtown with new stuff, avoiding Town annexations, reviving "under-utilized" space, to "better utilize" an "already developed downtown." But, again, is this how citizens – old and new – want to see Purcellville age? Today's center of historic downtown, with a few gathering places, and sections of open space, Nichols Hardware, a beautiful old barn that is now the successful Magnolia's at the Mill restaurant, and the lovely old train station looks pretty good to us. The developers of Vineyard Square and Trail's End say the area is "in desperate need of rebirth." But does rebirth need to be so big, so disruptive, and so destructive? The developers are also asking that the streetscape that has been in place for well over a hundred years be changed, "extending" O Street so they can get the density they want, at great cost to the taxpayers. The developers say that, on some issues, they are just waiting for "demolition permits to be signed by town staff ... [that] The mayor and the county have on record expressed support for more housing options similar

to the project we are proposing. We are trying to be part of the solution." In truth, particularly vis a vis the mayor, no such "support" is forthcoming. Please. Slow the heck down!

#### Development Details: The "Vineyard Square" development

In September 2020, the Blue Ridge Leader reported that "Developers" were seeking a "last minute redo" of the Vineyard Square project. As we reported at the time, "Trying to beat the expiration date of their approved project, Vineyard Square, the developers of the project are looking to change their plans from 'luxury living in the heart of Virginia's wine country' to 'workforce housing.' This, [we noted] according to a meeting requested by a Vineyard Square representative, Casey Chapman..."

Instead of the approved 40 housing units [our article continued], the Chapmans are proposing 70 to 80 units – double the approved number ... The project – which has pitted Vineyard Square developers against downtown Purcellville historians, conservationists, and the public for years – now faces an expiration deadline of Feb. 16, 2021 for their Certificates of Design Approval. If developers do not start the project by that date, then the Vineyard Square plan will be void.

#### The "Trail's End" development

As the BRL reported in October, Casey Chapman and partners have presented a rendering of a second major new residential/commercial development on Hatcher Avenue. This one is located near where Hatcher meets the W&OD Trail. The area marks the start of the old part of Town, and is just about behind Magnolia's. Called Trail's End, the project would demolish three homes on Hatcher and replace them with commercial on the bottom floor, and dense residential on the top two stories. Chapman is also asking that the old street and avenue configurations in the area, present pretty much since Purcellville was founded, be changed to speed vehicle access to the dozens and dozens of new residences and businesses that he hopes to bring in as buyers and renters.

#### A false choice

In his recent media interview, Sam Chapman said, "The developers also see the project as contributing to the Agri-tourism industry in western Loudoun ... We are creating a gathering place. Hopefully by doing these projects it creates a reason to come into downtown Purcellville and spend

more time ... You have two options, you can either annex land into town, which is sprawl, or you can choose infill development. We chose very intentionally not to go out and buy farmland and to focus on infill development."

The two options described here, are, indeed, a false choice. Purcellville can continue to revitalize its historic downtown, for sure – but, by replicating and growing the Magnolia's, train station, open space, etc. scenario ... not by razing everything and starting over with development projects like Trail's End and Vineyard Square – aka, Anywhere USA.

#### A recent Town staff report said this of Trail's End:

"The scale is out of character for the streetscape in the immediate vicinity of Hatcher Avenue. The proposed single three-story building has much greater mass than the three individual principle structure it seeks to replace."

Treasured history from [www.loudounhistory.org](http://www.loudounhistory.org)

Purcellville was part of a land grant by Lord Fairfax in the 1700s. Men named Dillion, and Vickers, and Taylor were the early "business prospectors" here, with at least one opening an "ordinary" – a combination store and inn. ([www.loudounhistory.org](http://www.loudounhistory.org))

One New York Times correspondent didn't see the appeal, writing, in 1862, that the Town "cannot be dignified with the title of a village, consisting of a few straggling houses [on the turnpike heading west from] Leesburgh" [original spelling] ...

Stagecoaches arrived in 1841, a railroad stop came in 1874. Town public schools date back to 1883. The Town suffered a number of devastating fires in the early nineteenth hundreds.

Magnolia's at the Mill restaurant has taken over the original Orchard Grass Seed Mill owned by Contee Adams Lynn, Sr., (aka "Mr. Orchid Grass"). The grass seed was used as packing material (including for WWII munitions), and animal feed, among other things. The old railroad depot, now the end of the WO&D bike trail, was once the next to last stop on Washington & Old Dominion Railroad. "Contee Adams loved people and history. One of his favorite reminiscences was when, as a teenager, he picked up John Singleton Mosby at the Marshall railroad station and drove the aged Confederate veteran to the Cobbler Mountains, a few miles southwest of Marshall. Mosby was trying to remember where he had hidden a mountain howitzer, and neither could I and a search party in the late 1980s [find it]..."



**DR. MIKE.** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

have in common with that person.

**Accept.** Gaining insight and self-awareness around problems allows you to make the important changes you might want to make in your life, including being more accepting of your family members, co-workers, and friends when it comes to politics. Getting yourself to a place where you can accept differences, will lead you to experiencing more positive thoughts, and you will be a much more agreeable person.

**Let go.** Deciding to let go of something very upsetting usually takes patience and time, but after working on acceptance, it will be your next step.

**DON'T ...**

**Rub it in.** Nobody likes a know-it-all. So, reminding others that you are right about Trump or Biden will only upset those with opposing views.

**Keep fighting.** There's also little to no value in continuing to debate, argue or fight over Trump or Biden. Fighting will only cause you more conflict in your relationships and more negative emotions. The election is over. We will all need to figure out a way to get along after things are finalized, regardless of who we voted for.

**Overdose on news.** Given that this is an election year, the media coverage has been non-stop. It seems that Fox News and CNN, for example, report something controversial and attention grabbing about Trump or Biden or members of the Republican or Democratic Party every five minutes, and we've all been conditioned to check-in way too frequently.

**Take the bait.** The next time someone says something disparaging

about your candidate or political party, reacting emotionally may seem like the right thing to do, but defense on defense will just escalate things. Instead of reacting to an attack such as "Trump's a narcissist," or "Biden's senile," simply be aware of how you're feeling emotionally.

**Beat up on yourself for taking the bait.** Practicing mindfulness requires effort and patience. So, the next time you react strongly to someone for challenging your political position, don't spend too much time punishing yourself. Allow yourself to become aware of what happened and why, and then forgive yourself.

While mindfulness as a practice will likely help you with many of your Trump or Biden woes, it's not a panacea. It's also okay to have friends who you disagree with politically. Only you can decide on that.

The significant political disharmony between conservatives and liberals we've sadly become accustomed to likely won't go away any time soon. How you manage yourself internally and in relation to others is in your control. Guided meditation is a wonderful way to practice mindfulness. American author and teacher of mindfulness, Susan Kaiser Greenland, created a wonderful 7-minute guided meditation on how we all have something in common. If politics continue to upset you, perhaps Ms. Greenland's meditation could be helpful: <https://soundcloud.com/susankaisergreenland/just-like-me>.

*Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. "Dr. Mike" 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.*

**MOORE-SOBEL.** CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

As a teenager, I loved watching the television show, *Scrubs*. I've been re-watching the show lately, and doing so has reminded me of how far I've come since I watched the show last (right after the accident where I sustained second- and third-degree burns). The Season 8 finale, when J. D. (Zack Braff) says goodbye to the hospital he's worked at for eight years, is especially poignant.

"As for the future...it could be whatever I want it to be," Braff says at the end of the episode. He then proceeds to watch his vision of the future unfold in front of him, to the tune of "The Book of Love." "The book of love is long and boring..." Marriage. A beautiful celebration of Christmas with his new family. I used to watch this montage and long for what I saw unfolding

on the screen. This Christmas, I'll be marveling that 11 years later, my wife and I will be celebrating our first Christmas together. I'll be reflecting on this sad, challenging year, while also recognizing that it has been one of the happiest of my life because of my marriage. I think we can hold these two feelings in tandem—the intense grief over all this year has brought us, including the deaths of more than 245,000 Americans, and counting, due to Covid-19, as well as the unique joys and gifts this year has given us—even if it means we have to look a little harder for them than usual.

*Samuel Moore-Sobel is the author of Can You See My Scars? You can find his book on Amazon – it makes a great inspirational gift for the holidays.*



**DULLES TOWN CENTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

But, that change didn't occur by accident. It occurred because companies like Centennial – a team that has stoked-the-retail-fires for more than half a century now – has the ability to make great things happen. You want it? We got it! That's the way they get things done.

**The Dulles Town Center's Loudoun County link**

"We're honored that Centennial has been selected to manage a property in such a vibrant and high-growth location," says Whitney Livingston, COO of Centennial.

"At Centennial Advisory Services, we specialize in transforming shopping centers into redefined spaces well-suited to the lifestyle of tomorrow's consumers – something we look forward to doing at Dulles Town Center as well."

In that recent press release, Centennial also said: "From strategic merchandising plans to an experience blueprint, innovative experiential marketing and customized place-making solutions, Centennial has a unique vision for the future of retail real estate that has led to the successful repositioning and redevelopment of retail properties in key markets from coast to coast.

"The robust services platform Centennial has built perfectly positions the firm to help retail real estate owners navigate today's complex post-COVID recovery period while also planning for future value creation."

Said Chuck Taylor, Senior Vice President, Client Services, Centennial Advisory Services, "Centennial is a thought leader with extensive experience in asset management and transformation within the retail real estate market, which is why shopping center owners and developers in top markets throughout the country are entrusting their property management to our dedicated Advisory Services team ... we will be working hand-in-hand with the shopping center's existing tenants to help them through the difficulties COVID has posed, and to institute a new hospitality-themed focus and customer experience that we expect will ultimately attract new tenants to the property ..."

Dulles Town Center is Loudoun County's only super-regional mall. The center includes more than 160 fine stores and restaurants featuring Macy's, JC Penney, LA Fitness, Regal Dulles Town Center 10 Cinemas, Dick's Sporting Goods, and Sears. The two-level center features a dominant selection of highly desired national brand names including Forever 21, H&M, The Cheesecake Factory, Ann Taylor, Pink, Bare Minerals, Banana Republic, Francesca's, Pandora, Victoria's Secret, Hollister, LOFT, Abercrombie & Fitch, and more.

**Welcome, change**

People in the know are very clear that there is a transformation taking place in this industry. Shoppers

and consumers are changing and the places they go for goods and services are changing, too.

Livingston explained the company's point-of-view on this issue: "Top-level industry insiders have been asking about the future of retail now more than ever before. We all knew there would be a shakeup over time. The industry is overbuilt, and changing consumer demands require retailers to innovate, something some retailers simply can't do in time to remain at the top of their game. Now, however, COVID-19 is creating an expedited version of Darwin's 'survival of the fittest' theory in the retail industry.

"So, while there absolutely will be financial fall-out from temporary shopping center and retailer COVID-19 shut-downs, we feel confident the retail industry as a whole will rebound. And, when the smoke clears, malls and retailers with the vision to deliver what consumers want will not only survive, but thrive."

**Centennial: retail – and change – run through their veins**

Rooted in retail since 1997, Centennial is focused on shaping the evolution of American retail by creating a superior multi-faceted shopping experience.

The website [www.Centennial REC.com](http://www.CentennialREC.com) lauds the company's "50 Years of Real Estate Heritage," and highlights "7 Dominant Properties in 6 States," "7.3 Million Square Feet tailored to Communities," and "1,144 Retail Partners."

The company's CEO, Steven Levin, is immersed in what the website describes as "the joys and nuances of retail." Levin took his father's "value-priced women's store" (Margie's, founded in 1953), and grew it into "60 stores throughout the Southwest ...

"Drawing from an authentic heritage and a retailer's perspective, Centennial has the expertise and desire to create modern, community-centric destinations for the next generation," notes the website.

Centennial's portfolio includes Brazos Mall in Lake Jackson, Texas, Connecticut Post Mall in Milford, Connecticut, Fox Valley Mall in Aurora, Illinois, Hawthorn Mall in Vernon Hills, Illinois, MainPlace Mall in Santa

Ana, California, Pueblo Mall in Pueblo, Colorado, and Vancouver Mall in Vancouver, Washington.

Centennial also likes to highlight its popular SEE Centennial sustainability/efficiency environmental program. "At Centennial," says the company, "we believe the next evolution of a shopping center is a greener one. Our commitment to being a responsible community member drives us to understand and positively influence our ecological footprint ... " ... In order to live our values, we've developed an internal sustainability roadmap, branded as SEE Centennial. With a focus on Sustainability, Efficiency and the Environment, it guides how we approach new projects and manage our existing properties day-to-day.

**Looking Forward**

While Centennial is in the very beginning stages of developing a future Dulles Town Center plan, it will likely re-purpose some underperforming retail space with complementary mixed uses, as it has done successfully with its own properties nationwide.

One of the hallmarks of Centennial's success has been the ability to envision what's possible for a property, and to create an action plan that will help transform the asset into an even more dominant player in its market. Dulles Town Center is in a stellar location that is convenient for people to visit while in the Washington area, and it has long served the area well.

Centennial also knows that, while Dulles Town Center is poised for growth, that growth depends on re-imagining a future that appeals to the lifestyle of tomorrow's shoppers. That's Centennial's specialty – it's what this company does best, and it's why it was hired for the job.

Said Livingston, the Dulles Town Center endeavor is a "special project" for her company. "It's a really exceptional location," she continued, "one of a kind," and everyone is "committed to create something that matches its uniqueness."

"This is a complex, complicated effort that requires a solution unique to the property," she said. "We have a discovery process which takes a holistic approach, looking at every aspect of the property in an innovative way. We listen to the community, including community groups. And, we remember that yesterday's malls were built for a very different consumer. It's our job to take those 'bones' and reinvent them for tomorrow's consumer, something I consider our company's 'secret sauce' for the location.

"We call that 'placemaking,' and it's the convergence of inventive design, activation, and accretive merchandising. There may be parks, plazas, whatever creates the perfect fit for the community. Dulles Town Center won't fit into any 'cookie cutter' model. What works for the Dulles Town Center must be unique to this particular property, which is why we look at the space as 1.3 million square feet of opportunity."

**BEST GIFT EVER CONTEST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

We will be handing out cold, hard cash – \$75 to first place, \$45 to second place, and \$25 to third place.

It's free to enter. Please make sure you include your name, address, and phone number. Please make sure it is legible. Can't wait to hear from you, kids.

**TAKE LOUDOUN HOME, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

year, and we couldn't be more proud. But we aren't out of the woods yet," Loudoun Chamber of Commerce President and CEO Tony Howard said. "This holiday season, please think about the businesses that make your life special: the restaurant on the corner, the farm you drive past every day, or your

favorite store across town. To ensure their survival and success in 2021, please make plans to take Loudoun Home for the Holidays."

To review a full list of participating tree farms, artisan gift shops, locally-sourced food, restaurants, retail, accommodations and more, please visit [TakeLoudounHome.com](http://TakeLoudounHome.com).



**BURIAL SITE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21**

other ceremony participants were State Regent LeAnn Turbyfill and District VIII Director Margaret Stromberg; Ketocin Chapter officers Nancy Watford, Gail Lataille, Joan Whitener, Stacey Bassett, Erin Smith, and Sandra Hodges; Stone Bridge Chapter Regent Sherryl Belinsky, Cameron Parish Chapter Regent Shawn Beyer, Fort Loudoun Chapter Regent

Sara Boppe. The Sons of the American Revolution were represented by officers Bill Schwetke, Charles Jameson, Jim Simmons, Leamon Duncan, Ken Bonner, and Dale Corey. Chaplain Pat Brouwer gave the invocation. David Weiss represented the Clarke County Board of Supervisors, and Nancy Watford, Lindsey Hope, Melody Cavicchi, Joan Whitener, Susan Webber, and Linda Sittig served as hosts.

**COOKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22**

pan to smother the flames and turn off the burner. Do not remove the lid until the pan is completely cooled. Remember, never pour water on a grease fire.

For an oven fire, immediately turn off the heat and close the oven door.

When in doubt, get out then call 9-1-1.

Close the door behind you to help contain the fire.

Working smoke alarms save lives. Never disconnect the smoke alarms in your home, especially while cooking. For additional fire prevention information visit [loudoun.gov/firemarshal](http://loudoun.gov/firemarshal) or contact Lisa Braun, Public Education Manager, at 571-258-3222.

**EVENTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22**

**Holiday Lights Tour, map available on Saturday, Dec. 5**

Sign up to have your home or business on the annual Holiday Lights Tour map. Homes and town businesses that are signed up will be added to a map that will be made available on the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Facebook page, the Christmas in Purcellville Facebook page, and the Town website in the Events and Activities section. Unfortunately, bus tours won't be provided this year.

**Virtual Holiday Market, Dec. 6 – 12**

This year's market will be held virtually. Local businesses, and those who have participated in the market will be featured on the Christmas in Purcellville Facebook page.

**Virtual Ornament Workshop, Saturday, Dec. 12**

The holiday ornament workshop will

be virtual this year. Watch for a video that will show you how to make ornaments on your own. The video will be published on the Christmas in Purcellville Facebook page as well as the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Facebook page on Saturday, Dec. 12. There will be a list of the supplies you need along with step-by-step instructions about how to make pretty ornaments for your home.

**Virtual Lego Train Display, Saturday, Dec. 12**

Since the public will not be able to view the Lego Train Display in person, staff is planning a video of the popular display. Watch for that on the Christmas in Purcellville Facebook page and the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Facebook page on Dec. 12.

For more information, visit the Events and Activities page of the Town of Purcellville website.

**SMALL BUSINESS AWARDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 25**

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**PREVENT FROZEN PIPES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20**

house. This trickle should be a steady stream the size of the lead in a pencil.

- If your pipes freeze, never thaw a pipe with an open flame or a space heater. A hair dryer can be used if there is no standing water in the area.

If there is no water throughout your house and you have determined that it is not a frozen line within the home, your water meter may be frozen. Contact the Leesburg Department of Utilities at 703-771-2750 (Monday through Friday, 8:30 a.m. to 5 p.m.) or the Leesburg Police Department non-emergency number at 703-771-4500 outside of regular business hours for assistance.

**DR. BILL'S LIGHTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

As the years went by, displays became more and more elaborate—some synchronized to music played on a radio frequency, animated displays, and inflated Santas, reindeer, sleighs, and elves. And there were those houses with so many lights piled on them that surely astronauts could see them from the International Space Station.

When he lived in Fairfax, Dr. Bill and his wife would make the rounds of neighborhood displays with the invaluable assistance of a website called Holly's Tacky Christmas Lights. But after moving to Loudoun, when the couple started out to view the lights, they had no map to guide them to the best and the brightest. So, in 2017 he started a Facebook page—Loudoun Christmas Lights—complete with a map.

What Bill Incatasciato has learned as the page and community enthusiasm have grown to 100 posts and 8,000 followers is just how much the real delight of the season comes from enjoying one another's creativity. And at no time in recent memory has that been truer than this year of COVID-19, Zoom video conferencing, and divisive politics.

To relieve yourself of stress and anxiety this holiday, Dr. Bill's 2020 tour of Loudoun's lights might be just the right

medicine. "The light displays and tours of them," he says, "help us take a brighter view of the future and make us realize that things will get better."

Everyone is invited to participate in Loudoun Christmas Lights by:

- liking, following, and sharing the page,
- sending photos and locations of light displays, and
- visiting the displays and appreciating the effort put into them.

To access the gallery of displays and maps to them, visit the Loudoun Christmas Lights Facebook page at <https://www.facebook.com/LoudounChristmasLights/>. There you can view a gallery of decked-out homes and find them on a Google map where you can also organize your personal driving tour.

"The magic of the displays isn't who made them or why, but that when we look at them, we get to enter a world of imagination," as Dr. Incatasciato reminds us with a song from *Willy Wonka & the Chocolate Factory*:

*Come with me and you'll be  
In a world of pure imagination  
Take a look and you'll see  
Into your imagination  
We'll begin with a spin  
Travelling in the world of my creation  
What we'll see will defy explanation...*

**PROPERTY TAXES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12**

category of Alert Loudoun at [loudoun.gov/alert](http://loudoun.gov/alert). You can also text the word "TAXES" to 888777 to receive text messages about tax-related information, including upcoming deadlines.

For information regarding Real Property Tax Exemptions and Deferrals, contact the Exemptions Division of the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office at [tcor@loudoun.gov](mailto:tcor@loudoun.gov), by phone at 703-737-8557 or visit [loudoun.gov/taxrelief](http://loudoun.gov/taxrelief).

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