

# Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

JANUARY 2021

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## County considers expanding Gable landfill

BY ANDREA GAINES

Despite years of controversy and unanswered safety questions, the trucks drove in and the trucks drove out, dumping their loads and earning the property owner potentially millions of dollars in dumping fees. And it's all being done under the guise of a "personal recreational field" use.

The site, on Gable Farm Lane, is part of a large private farm in Hamilton that has accepted what is known as "excessive fill," or, simply, "dirt." Refuse from construction sites, demolition and road projects, and other activities.

The dirt stockpiles had started growing on Gable Farm in 2016, and had been the subject of many complaints, and worries in the neighborhood. The issue has been with the County attorney for over a year, with little to no communication with the neighboring community.

"What disturbs us most is that the County has not taken any steps to monitor groundwater and surface water on the landfill and neighboring properties," said adjoining neighbor Joyce Harris. "The County needs to commit to moni-

toring over a period of several years. We have asked them to do this on numerous occasions. They have a duty to protect the public."

**Yards and yards of dirt and debris. And now it's starting to slide**

To date, the dumping has totaled up to as much as 34,000 truckloads and 500,000 cubic yards of refuse, by some estimates. It is a landfill of more than 18 acres, on a property that is zoned "Agricultural Rural."

Dumping and grading at the site was non-stop, and a huge high flat field-like structure was formed. The waste was piled higher, more than 10 feet higher than allowed by the County. The debris included soil, liquid waste, cinderblock,



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broken bits of PVC pipe, plastics, rocks, gravel, and big chunks of asphalt.

The owner had all of the required permits for what is known as a Personal Recreational Field. But everything has its limits, of course, and, in this case, the owner was trucking in so much stuff that neighbors raised the alarm.

Details and video of the landfill are at [www.loudounrurallandfills.com](http://www.loudounrurallandfills.com).

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**The Blue Ridge Leader appreciates your support, and wishes everyone a Happy New Year!**

"Year's end is neither an end nor a beginning, but a going on with all the wisdom that experience can instill in us."

Hal Borland - Journalist and Naturalist

## BOS adds 144 homes to TPA – 'Buffer' between suburban east and rural west melting away

BY ANDREA GAINES

As it closed out the 2020 legislative session, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted 7-1-1 to add 144 new housing units to the Transition Policy Area.

Supervisor Kristen C. Umstadd (D-Leesburg) was the only no vote.

Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-Chair At-Large), Supervisors Koran T. Saines (D-Sterling), Juli E. Briskman (D-Al-

gonkian), Michael R. Turner (D-Ashburn), Tony R. Buffington (R-Blue Ridge), Sylvia R. Glass (D-Broad Run), and Matthew F. Letourneau (R-Dullies) all voted yes. Supervisor Caleb A. Kershner (R-Catoctin) was absent.

**Suburban-style densities by legislative fiat**

The BOS gave the Planning Commission fewer houses than it wanted in the Comp Plan. Then, just weeks

ago, the Board approved an application known as Hogan Kent Greene (HKG), turning 38 acres planned for a mix of one home per acre, or one home per three acres – into to 26 houses, 42 duplexes, and 76 quadruplexes (19 units with 4 units each). The result is a project with nearly four units per acre ... more than five times the originally planned residential density.

The TPA's 50 percent open space requirement was preserved, and, as County staff noted in recommending the change, the project includes 20 "Affordable Dwelling Units" (ADUs).

The ADU program was finalized after the Comp Plan, but, before the County's upcoming rewrite of the zoning ordinance. However, "affordable housing," a euphemism for higher densities, while centered in the suburban east and around new metro stops, is already popping up in the TPA. Recent Board votes have also moved TPA land into the Rural Policy Area.

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# Blue Ridge and J.L. Simpson Middle students code solutions – For NASA’s future deep space journey

Students from Blue Ridge and J. L. Simpson Middle Schools have teamed up to create an App that provides solutions for NASA’s Deep Space Mission.

Students at Blue Ridge Middle School in Purcellville and J. L. Simpson Middle School in Leesburg are participating in NASA’s App Development Challenge (ADC) ([www.nasa.gov/education/appchallenge](http://www.nasa.gov/education/appchallenge)), led by the Johnson Space Center’s Office of STEM Engagement ([www.nasa.gov/stem/nextgenstem](http://www.nasa.gov/stem/nextgenstem)). NASA’s App

Development Challenge is a computer coding challenge, part of the agency’s Next Gen STEM Project. In it, NASA presents technical problems for future exploration missions to middle and high school students.

By responding to the App Development Challenge, students take part directly in the Artemis Generation endeavors to land American astronauts, including the first woman and the next man, on the Moon by 2024. In this ADC, students have worked to de-

velop an app that visualizes the South Pole region of the Moon, and displays essential information for navigation and communication.

Mrs. Angela Fraser, CAMS (Coding at Middle School) teacher at both schools, organized assistance from Dr. Patrick White, the Lab Director at Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology. Mrs. Fraser’s students, “Team Moon Landing,” used

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## BRMS chorus students share virtual concert

Blue Ridge Middle School eighth grade chorus students shared their talent and joy with Purcellville’s nursing home residents this holiday season.



Chorus 8 worked on a project this quarter in which they created their own audio/visual concert with recordings of themselves singing. The BRMS PTO President, Danielle Kabban, coordinated with Grace Guiney, the chorus teacher, to turn these projects into a joyful gift of holiday music for senior homes in the community.

Kabban said, “I’m delighted that our BRMS students can offer some holiday cheer through some lonely times.” Guiney added, “I am so proud of the hard work my students put in on this project. While we were all disappointed about missing our usual winter performances, this has been a very special project we wouldn’t usually have time for. In choir class, I rarely have the opportunity to hear my students sing alone; I am grateful for the opportunity for my students to shine as individuals in these projects.”

Brion Bell, principal of Blue Ridge Middle, commented, “If we can share our musically talented singers with the community to help assuage the stress of this time in any small way, I am glad we are doing it.”

This educational outreach activity is part of the larger Loudoun County Public Schools Project Learning initiative. Students address problems and questions with solutions that integrate the Virginia Standards of Learning.

Picture: Blue Ridge Middle Choral singer, Montana Cochran, records a holiday song at her home for a school project. The project created a winter performance virtually, in lieu of a typical in-person winter performance.

## A gift that will last many, many lifetimes

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Sometimes the best gifts don’t arrive under a Christmas tree all wrapped in glittery paper: they’re just too big. After all, it would be quite a challenge for Santa to stuff 200 acres of prime farmland down the chimney.

Essentially, that’s what a conservation easement is—a gift to everyone who enjoys a breathtaking vista, a pristine forest, a clean stream, a historic site, and open space with nary a McMansion on it.

Meanwhile, the owner can keep the property, sell it, pass it on to heirs; what they can never do is develop it.

### Who gives up the right to develop valuable property?

Typically, people think of scions of wealthy families or techies who made it very big in the ‘90s. Truth is, they are also local farm owners like Claire Abraham, who placed her 75-acre Hidden Covey farm near Lovettsville in easement with the Northern Virginia Conservation Trust, or the Chatfield-Taylors, who wanted to honor their mother by preserving her 60-acre farm with its 1850 farmhouse.

“A few nights after our mother died,” remembers Constance, youngest of the six Chatfield-Taylor siblings, “I was looking for pictures



From L to R: Mary Owen Chatfield-Taylor and her daughter Constance.



CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 » The 60-acre Chatfield-Taylor farm

## Woodgrove’s Moonshine Murders a big hit

BY AIDEN WILBUR – THOMAS WOOTTON HIGH SCHOOL

Murder may be afoot; and Woodgrove High School killed this show. Their production of Moonshine Murders was full of comedy, suspense, and emotion, and the students created a thrilling narrative from beginning to end.

Moonshine Murders tells the story of Violet Sanata, a singer in a 1920s speakeasy. Amidst a series of murders all around Violet, it is up to the police to figure out who did it, before the tensions between two rival gangs bubble into an all-out war. The show was originally produced by the Stagecoach Theatre Company and was adapted by Woodgrove High School to fit their production

needs; they worked with the playwrights to add characters and original musical numbers wherever necessary.



L to R: Eliza Prymak and Emily Reeps.

The entire ensemble gave an incredible performance throughout the production. They remained engaged and reactive to the scene around them and were present during the musical numbers as well. They attacked each line with a poise and flair that was evident of hard work and rehearsal. Maintaining an accent for an entire show can be a challenge, but each member was able to pull it off extremely well. As a whole, the ensemble created a believable, absorbing, and thorough world of the show.

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# The Importance of Planning

Between the COVID-19 pandemic, widespread social protest, various natural disasters, and several hotly contested elections, the year 2020 was one pretty much impossible to even begin to predict. Such



RICHARD RICCI

a volatile and uncertain environment may make setting and sticking to an investment plan seem like an exercise in futility. Yet the best investment plans are usually precisely the ones that have anticipated in advance how to adapt to changing conditions. It all starts with planning.

### Why planning can make a difference

In its 2019 Retirement Study, Wells Fargo found that investors with a planning mindset felt they had greater personal control over such matters as personal debt, investment performance, career, and their overall financial life. The planning mindset was defined according to four key components:

1. "I am able to work diligently toward a long-term goal."
2. "In the last six months, I have set and achieved a goal or set of goals to support my financial life."
3. "I prefer saving for retirement now to ensure I have a better life in retirement."
4. "It makes me feel better to have my finances planned out in the next 1-2 years."

According to the study, approximately one-third of workers have the planning mindset. Those workers are nearly twice as satisfied with their overall financial life as those without a planning mindset, nearly twice as confident that they'll have enough money saved for retirement, and five times more likely to have a plan for dealing with the unexpected.

### Steps to becoming a better planner

The good news is that all investors have the ability to develop or strengthen planning skills that can help them improve their financial outlook.

The first step is to obtain general financial education, which could include reading books or listening to podcasts on personal investment planning, taking a course online or at a local college, or talking with a financial advisor.

Next come the simple (although not always easy) steps to spend less and save more. Financial apps can help with tasks such as budgeting and tracking spending. Automated nudges – such as a yearly increase in the 401(k) savings rate – can help keep savings plans on track. Just remember that it can take time and prac-

tice to change financial habits. Beginning with smaller steps can reinforce the new habits and build confidence to move to the next level.

Then focus on developing a long-term investment plan, including contingency plans to help deal with the unexpected. Tools such as vision boards – a collage of images that represent future desires – can help investors flesh out goals such as home ownership or retirement preferences. Once the basic plan is in place, continual updates allow investors to adapt to changes in the economy and their own circumstances. A plan should be documented and should be living and breathing – not something you create and forget. Life changes and your plan should keep pace.

In particular, tax changes could trigger updates. Recent years have brought several changes to tax and estate law, including the Tax Cuts and Jobs Act of 2017, the Setting Every Community Up for Retirement Enhancement (SECURE) Act of 2019, and the Coronavirus Aid, Relief, and Economic Security (CARES) Act of 2020. The acts collectively brought changes to IRA withdrawal policies and the estate tax exemption, as well as other changes that could significantly alter how an investor will manage their investment plan.

With education and effort, investors can use a planning mindset to help achieve long-term financial health and the life that they desire the most. Now is the time to review your plan and make necessary adjustments to strengthen your efforts toward achieving your ultimate goal.

*Wells Fargo Advisors is not a tax or legal advisor.*

1. Workers refers to working adults who participated in the survey. On behalf of Wells Fargo, The Harris Poll conducted 3,918 online interviews of 2,708 working Americans 18-75 or older and 1,004 retired Americans, surveying attitudes and behaviors around planning, saving and investing for retirement. Working Americans are age 18-75 or older and working full-time (or at least 20 hours if they are working part-time) or are self-employed. Retired Americans self-identified as retired regardless of age.

*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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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

# Making positive change happen in 2021

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

On a societal and global level, COVID-19 has made this year a difficult one in so many ways. Worldwide, close to 1.7 million people have died, and close to 80,000,000 people have become sick with the virus. Statistics on COVID-19 are also imperfect given testing limitations and the lack of consideration of those who may have it but are asymptomatic, so the number of cases is likely higher. And the virus has impacted us all individually in so many profound ways – how we work, how we go to school, how we socialize, how we have fun or vacation, how we celebrate holidays and how we feel. There is no denying that this has been an emotionally exhausting year, and for many, perhaps the worst year ever.

As a psychologist in private practice, the topic of COVID-19 and its impact has come up in my work in various ways with patients all year, with self-care being a main area of concern. Understandably, it is hard to take care of yourself with all of the adjustments and changes we have had to manage, but it is important to try. One approach to improve self-care and wellness is to eliminate something bad in your life and to replace it with something better...and to make that something a habit.

Research on habit formation has shown that achieving a goal takes practice and repetition, where eventually the goal becomes less important and the new behavior becomes an acquired habit. For example, if you watch too much TV and want to get in shape physically, you may

have the goal of going to gym every day, which will probably take great effort initially. However, after consistently going daily for a few months, working out will become automatic or second nature. Is it because you are more in shape? Is it because your spouse tells you that you look better? Is it because you have more energy? Is it because you are two belt holes thinner? Is it because you feel a sense of pride and accomplishment? It is all of those things inasmuch as putting the TV remote down and throwing yourself into something new, created an unfolding process of change.

So, as we enter 2021, I invite you to think about one thing that you would like to change about yourself and one thing that you plan to do to replace that behavior in the coming year. Here are a few things to consider:

- Drinking too much alcohol has become a way to cope with things this past year for many people, so perhaps abstaining from alcohol for a month would be a good goal. Dry January or Sober January has become increasingly popular, and research has shown that there are a lot of health benefits that come with taking a month off from drinking. So, instead of drinking in the evenings or over the weekend this January, think about how you want to enjoy using that time instead.
- For many, taking a break from the news in January might be a good goal. Regardless of your political beliefs, too much CNN or too much Fox News can be emotionally

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— View from the Ridge —

# Can Loudoun's historic villages be saved?

Loudoun County's rural villages are irreplaceable, and yet, somehow, we seem determined to let the present destroy their past.

"Their buildings and settings document Loudoun County's history, through war and peace, growth and decline, changes in commerce, agriculture, and transportation. The social and cultural heritage they represent, and their vitality today, make them a vital part of the overall character of rural Loudoun," the Loudoun Historic Village Alliance notes on its website.

It's the job of the County to serve as steward of these historical assets, but without the intense involvement of villagers and conservationists, the villages are becoming increasingly threatened.

That fact is due in large part to break-

downs in the management of day-to-day work around County planning, zoning, environmental health, and transportation.

## Brinksmanship seems to be the operating methodology for County management of villages.

The best example at the moment is the County-Mojax developer's deal involving the villages of Saint Louis and Aldie. This situation has come about in the wake of two separate community struggles: 1) Saint Louis's attempt to push back against Mojax and prevent construction of a 30-house subdivision that would impact the village's water supply, and 2) resolution of a multi-year struggle between the County and Aldie over a new firehouse that the County has wanted to put right in the middle of the village. One of the pawns in the game was the abandoned Aldie Tavern, which was almost demolished or moved in the

match. Today, if all goes well with a public meeting on Jan. 13, we may see a swap of land and interests between Aldie and Saint Louis, brokered by the County and Mojax.

Meanwhile, up the road, an under-the-radar effort by Loudoun Fire and Rescue to build a big, brand new firehouse in the little village of Philomont moved briskly through County channels with a surprise \$25 million in funding added to the ballot last fall. Another village, Bluemont, is under assault by breweries—rural bars—that not only create noise but spill tipsy patrons out onto the backroads. Safety has become a serious concern.

An especially disconcerting aspect to the County's lack of village protection is its enthusiastic embrace of these special places for promoting tourism. Visit the VisitLoudoun.org website and read the entry for the Aldie Mill; the new firehouse would have been its neighbor.

Or check one of the three entries about Lincoln, which begins this way: "The small picturesque Quaker village known as Lincoln is located just south of Purcellville. Visitors can tour the village that features some of Loudoun's most endearing and endangered treasures..."

The County's latest example of Lincoln endangerment occurred on Nov. 9, 2020, when the Historic District Review Committee approved a "Certificate of Appropriateness" for a 5,250-square foot house—double the size of homes in that historic district of Loudoun. It is to be built just a few hundred yards from the modest 1817 Goose Creek Friends Meeting House.

## Is there a way for Loudoun County to hold off threats to the historic villages?

After a thorough review of the Loudoun County Zoning Ordinance Rewrite Consultant Code Audit—please

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Please include your name, address and phone number.

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



## Bubba

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Every publication will have a lengthy year-end retrospective on COVID and on 2020. This is a different story.

Bubba was my father's first cousin, and hence my second. Bubba had no siblings, no wife, no children. As a bachelor, his closest relations were my two brothers and me. We were very close. Bubba died in 1970.

He had worked in my grandfather's business, fished in fecund farm ponds, trained beagles, hunted quail, and sat in a recliner watching the news. A simple life for a man's man, but Bubba did have strong opinions. They were not learned at a fancy university, nor in fashionable salons. His opinions were just part of life as he knew it. These days when

my brothers and I talk about things of the day – politics, whatever – one of us would utter a faux-mournful, "What would Bubba say?"

One balmy October day I was enjoying a post-breakfast interlude and pondering the state of the world, often thinking, "What would Bubba say?" Then, zounds! Bubba returned to life! In the flesh! For real! Right here. He looked like a strapping man in his early fifties. He had his old pipe, a tin of Prince Albert tobacco and a simple question, "What year is it?"

October, 2020, I told him and he startled. "Tell me about it. Show me around. Have no idea how I got here but it's mighty good to see you, Hotshot." (Bubba had nicknamed all of us. Mine was embarrassing so I'll use "Hotshot" here.) It was mighty good to see him, too. We hugged, something we'd never done when he was alive.

I said brothers John and Will were in Georgia doing well, and asked him how long he'd be here. He replied, "Don't know."

Neither did I, so I wanted to show him 21<sup>st</sup> Century life before he might be gone. "I'll show you around. This is Loudoun County, about fifty miles west of Washington."

"Too damn close."

I went on. "We're in the western part of the county. Lots of farms, foxhunting, the Blue Ridge to the west. The Scots-Irish came though here on their way south, and many stayed. We may have some very distant relations here."

I led him through the house. "I'd introduce you to my wife but she's at a horse show. She'd give anything to see you." Bubba nodded. (He was generally taciturn and each nod had nuance.) He saw the big flatscreen television and

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— It Seems to Me —

## Only you can prevent fake news

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

If you are a Democrat or Trump hater, don't bother reading any further; this piece doesn't apply to you. If you are a Conservative, Republican, or independently minded person who wants to see and hear the

truth from the press and visual media, read on.

Freedom of the press is guaranteed in the First Amendment to the U.S. Constitution. As long as they are not profane or libeling someone, members of the press can pretty much say or write anything they want. The

courts have also ruled that the standard is even more flexible if the press is talking about politicians.

The Founding Fathers were so concerned about government control of the press they went out of their way to guarantee freedom of the press.

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# Wastewater-based epidemiology – A window into the health of our communities

BY PURCELLVILLE MAYOR KWASI A. FRASER

Two years ago, I invited the leadership of Biobot, a biotechnology start-up, to present their testing and research in the area of opioid consumption in a community. Owing to the disastrous impact of opioids within our society and the ongoing litigations, it was important to have ways to measure and to monitor the before-and-after impacts.

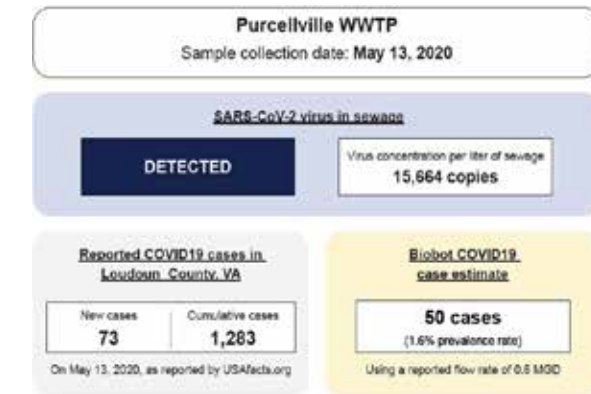
Impressed by the Biobot opioid solution, I saw merit in using it to justify funding for corrective action plans within communities from the future settlements. Essentially, with the Biobot opioid solution, municipalities could produce data to show the efficacy of response strategies to the opioid crisis. Further engagement with Biobot, however, was placed on hold as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic.

In April 2020, I engaged Biobot to discuss its wastewater-based epidemiology surveillance initiative in collaboration with researchers at MIT, Harvard, and Brigham and Women’s Hospital for the detection of SARS-CoV-2, the virus that causes COVID-19. As with their opioid testing and research solution, I was impressed with their solution for SARS-CoV-2 and, in particular, its potential to be used as an early warning indicator of the virus’s spread in our community.

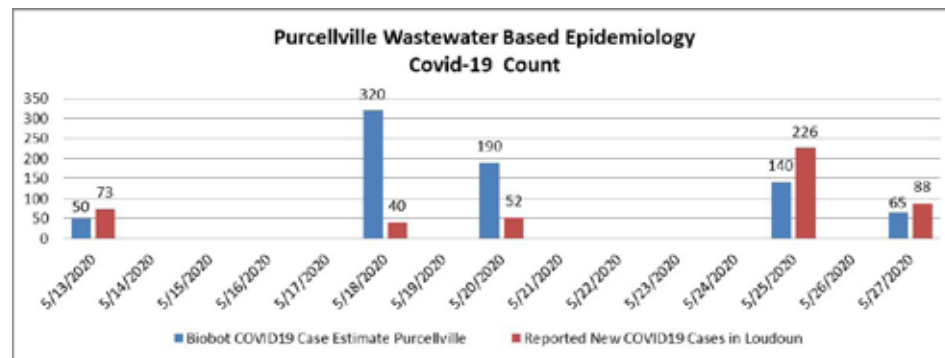
Equipped with such a solution, elected officials and Health Department leaders will be better prepared to make strategic and tactical decisions. In addition, this capability will be of immense value as vaccines for COVID-19 become available, since it will monitor and present the before-and after-states of a community’s health.

Subsequently, upon obtaining commitment from a contractor, Inboden, to collect and ship the 24-hour influent sewer sample from our treatment facility, I convinced the Purcellville Town Council to allow our wastewater treatment facility to participate in the Biobot COVID-19 pilot project.

Inboden was used because of its expert capability and willingness to support our Town with the pilot, and to alleviate the concerns of our Town Manager about staff contracting COVID-19 from exposure to raw sewage. With Inboden engaged with scheduled access to our wastewater treatment plant and in coordination with Biobot, the Town Council unanimously voted to



support this pilot.



The May 13, 2020 first round of testing estimated 50 cases in Purcellville. That estimate then spiked to 320 cases one week later, but decreased to 65 by the end of the month.

That spike in cases was similar to a verified spike in new COVID-19 cases in Loudoun County, according to its health department.

Like all municipalities during the COVID-19 pandemic, we face ongoing fiscal constraints, and although we saw the value of the COVID-19 research, other items took priority and required funding, so we decided to suspend the testing. During that time, I applied for a grant from RADx to continue this research pilot, but its reviewers opined that, it did not meet the Project Review Criteria of the RADx solicitation as presented in the application.

Over the past several months, I have continued to follow the progress of wastewater-based epidemiology and also have championed the knowledge transfer and awareness of it among my peers in the National League

of Cities, representing 1,900 cities in the United States. Recent analysis and quantification demonstrate the early warning indicator capabilities of this solution.

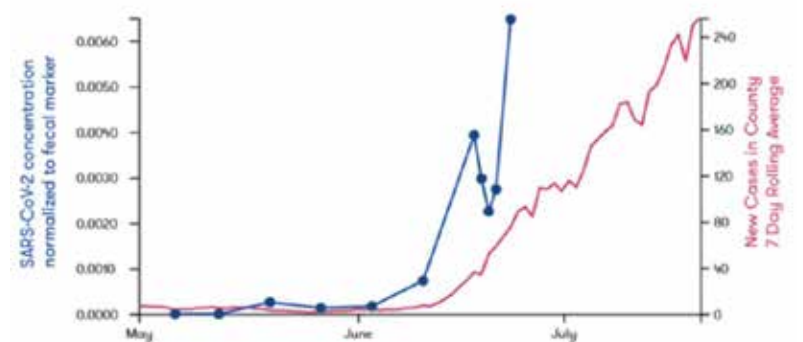
In fact, there is compelling evidence that the COVID-19 virus sheds in stool in advance of symptoms being materialized. As such, due to the early onset of viral shedding, along with an additional delay between the presence of symptoms and clinical test results, wastewater data has been shown to be a reliable leading indicator of COVID-19 cases.

In short, wastewater provides an early warning for cases that will be diagnosed and reported in a community several days later. This is significant, given the fact that current testing and hospitalization data does not account for asymptomatic cases which are believed to represent a high proportion of any given infected population.

According to Dr. Anthony Fauci, 20 to 40 percent of infected people display no symptoms. This means that the majority of folks who are asymptomatic are not represented in the current testing being done because they don’t know they have the virus and are not likely to get tested.

The current testing and hospitalization data provide a narrow and delayed view into the spread of the virus within a community, whereas wastewater surveillance presents a broader view into current and future states of the virus spread within a community.

Based on wastewater analysis reports, the below chart from Biobot, shows the virus concentration in



wastewater (blue lines) increased a few days before new cases (red lines) showed a similar increasing trend in each corresponding location.

The current testing and measurement system relied

CONTINUED ON PAGE 9 »

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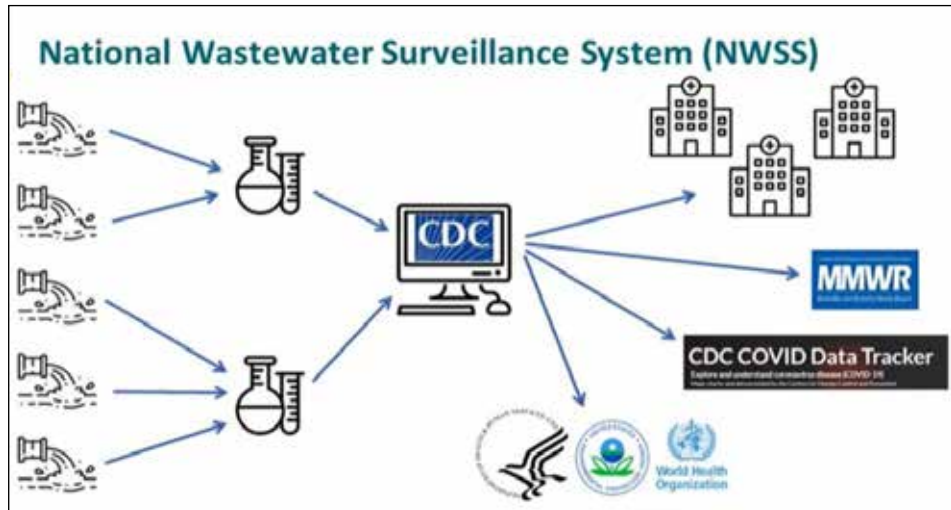
**WATER-BASED EPIDEMIOLOGY**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8 upon by our communities is reactive and based on symptomatic individuals, hospitalization, and sadly, deaths. It fails to account and to prepare for the potential severity of the outbreak. Wastewater-based epidemiology is proactive and complementary to the current testing systems, providing a response system that prepares us for future outbreaks and a solution for the current limitations in our national data infrastructure so we have real-world evidence in real-time.

Armed with this predictive indicator of the number of COVID-19 cases within a community, leaders will be better informed to make important decisions like reopening businesses and schools

responsibly and safely.

Now more than ever, I am convinced of the consequential value of this early warning indicator, and I am driven to support efforts to develop a nationwide network of sewer systems and labs, like the one envisioned by the Center of Disease Control, to become the windows into the health of our nation during and after COVID-19.

To make this a reality, I am committed to partnering with each of the 1,900 cities represented in the National Leagues of Cities, certified labs, Health & Human Services, CDC, and other key stakeholders. Below is a depiction of the National Wastewater Surveillance System envisioned by the CDC.



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## Market Station

BY TIM JON

Yeah – it was those balconies that got me; no, I’m not simpering about losing my heart on Bourbon Street: I’m just going back, about 20 years or more, to the first time I walked into the courtyard area at Market Station in Downtown Leesburg. A group of ‘theatre people’ took that initial tour in scouting possible staging venues for a local production of Shakespeare’s *The Taming of the Shrew*; I had been selected to direct the venture after I’d assembled a cadre of actors for weekly workshops focused on bringing the words of the Immortal Bard to life in our times.



JON

Now, I had worked as an actor for more years (decades, in fact) than I care to admit – never becoming rich or famous, yet accumulating a wealth of experience, a treasury of friendships, and more fun than I could ever relate; I had taken only one theatre directing class in college, and hadn’t been sufficiently interested to fully apply myself to the craft. But this was different: I had a group of people who had my trust, and the only way they were ever going to experience Shakespeare, on their feet, in front of an audience, was through my effort and leadership.

So, this was the weighty responsibility I bore shoulder-wise as we looked over the mostly-wooden materials making up the oddly Renaissance-like (to me) space-in-the-midst-of-shops at Market Station. I fell in love with all the vertical space: it seemed there were balconies in every direction – I could surround the audience with living characters in a compelling story, and have a

great time doing it while working out-of-doors.

Whoa, Baba Looey: you can’t just place your actors wherever you want ‘em – you need to think about the audience’s ability to see and hear, without twisting their heads off their shoulders in trying to view your play! So – I had to actually start thinking like a real theatre director – from the perspective of the spectators; I did, to the best of my abilities, and still had (for the most part) a great time. And we used every one of those three-tiered balconies – stacked upon each other one-two-three. One important lesson learned in my school-of-hard-knocks theatre training was: the performance must use the entire playing space: if not, it shouldn’t be there in the first place.



So, the Market Station courtyard played host to a full-length (albeit after some judicial cutting for clarity and expediency) Shakespeare production in the summer of 2000 – September, if I correctly recall. So – experiences were had, friendships were formed and strengthened, and, did we have fun?

Yes, we did. So much that the core group of those involved formed our own local theatre company – Not Just Shakespeare – because, as I used to say, “That’s what we

do!” And I think we staged a total of five shows in that space (All’s Well That Ends Well we moved to the southern end of the complex) and did a couple more in the former Round Hill Elementary School, another pair at Morven Park – and even utilized the Franklin Park Performing Arts Center. And those were just the Shakespeare shows; we also put up some Neil Simon, Sam Shepard, Thornton Wilder and Robert Harling’s *Steel Magnolias*. More experience, more friendship, and more fun.

And during the entire run of all this frolicking, I was serving full-time as News Director at Wage Radio in Leesburg – a position in which I, true to form, grew neither rich nor famous, but reveled in my experiences, relationships and love of the work.

Now, the airwaves are silent, I deliver mail to pay the bills, and our theatre company is no more than memory. And these have been good changes, in many ways; I now frolic with a rough-and-tumble group of 21st Century Cowboys. We complain with the best of ‘em, but we generally love the actual work. Transformation can be a positive thing.

But – on my last visit to the Market Station Courtyard, I could still hear, and I could still see, and I could still feel – snatches of performances by my wonderful friends – some of whom I’ve never seen again in the flesh after all these years.

I hope the wooden complex in downtown Leesburg always remains – to me, at least – as a reminder that magic and poetry once filled the air – and sometimes – just sometimes, they still do.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

## When Washington worked

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

Since the onset of the pandemic, I’ve been able to dedicate more time to reading. One of my favorite books of 2020 was *The Man Who Ran Washington*, a biography of James A. Baker, by Peter Baker (no relation) and Susan Glasser.



MOORE-SOBEL

“Any chronicle of the modern presidency would find [James] Baker at the heart of virtually every chapter” the authors write. James Baker was at the helm of five

Republican presidential campaigns between 1976 and 1992. He served as White House chief of staff, secretary of the treasury, and secretary of state. He also shaped policies and world events that still affect our lives today.

James Baker’s time as secretary of state was likely one of the most exciting times to serve in the role. The Fall of the Berlin Wall, the reunification of Germany, and the crumbling of the Soviet Union were just some of the world events dominating the headlines during those heady days. As the Soviet Union crumbled, James Baker helped

ensure that the new world order transitioned peacefully.

He mastered the art of relationships, building a strong friendship with his contemporary in the Soviet Union, Eduard Shevardnadze. This led to an unprecedented alliance between the United States and the U.S.S.R. when it came to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait in 1990. He and Shevardnadze gave a joint press conference in Moscow condemning Hussain’s invasion. “The Cold War breathed its last at an airport terminal on the outskirts of Moscow,” James Baker wrote afterward.

Baker was also instrumental in assembling an international coalition to wage the Gulf War, and was integral in arranging the Madrid Conference

in 1991, which gathered Israeli, Palestinian, and other officials from Middle Eastern countries, serving as an important first step toward brokering peace agreements in the Middle East. “I’m going to the White House to help the president get reelected,” James Baker said, “but then I’m coming back and we will do the peace treaties.” He never got the chance.

Regardless of political leanings, I think we can all learn from the leadership style of James Baker. His work ethic was unmatched. During his efforts to secure support for the Gulf War, the authors write that James Baker traveled 100,000 miles in just ten weeks. He was apparently known for repeating the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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# Keep Loudoun history alive

Dear Editor:

At a recent Loudoun County Board of Supervisors meeting earlier this month, a motion was passed to rename Rt. 50 John Singleton Mosby Highway to another name which does not celebrate a “traitor” as stated by Vice Chairman Koran T. Saines. It seems as though the members of the board have been “Cherry-picking” their version of history, or maybe they have neglected their constituents’ best interest by not completing a sufficient enough research on John Sin-

**LETTER**

gleton Mosby before casting a vote.

While leading many Loudoun County men through a difficult conflict, John S. Mosby did fight for the Confederacy during the Civil War, often operating in Loudoun as a Partisan Ranger. For this latest fact, Saines calls Mosby a “traitor” and, in fact, displays a certain lack of research required by the Board when actively trying to erase Loudoun’s unique history. To be a “traitor,” one must be convicted of treason. Mosby was not only never tried on this charge, but was even offered a personal pardon from President

Grant.

Mosby persevered after the War and continued to serve the country as he helped to reunite both North and South as a campaign manager in Virginia for the Republican Grant. At the time, many Virginians remained staunch Democrats, which was trouble for Mosby.

Some retaliatory acts included burning his boyhood house, and at least one assassination attempt on his life. Mosby then utilized his civilian career as a lawyer, and became a U.S. Consul to Hong Kong for the Grant Administration. Later in life, he served as a U.S. Government Attorney for President Roosevelt.

Mosby’s years of dedicated post-civil

war Government service demonstrates his loyalty and service to the United States; more importantly, it serves as an example of reconciliation between North and South, which was needed during Reconstruction after the Civil War.

It appears that this lesson is needed again in the present. To rename Rt. 50 solely because of Mosby’s association with the Confederacy, is to miss the opportunity to teach current and future generations that reconciliation is possible, even in regard to one of the most brutal conflicts of our nation which pit brother against brother.

*Colin Wilson  
Round Hill*

# Public hearing set for Jan. 13

County-developer proposal and purchase offer put two villages at center of controversial deal

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Aldie and St. Louis, two historic villages threatened for years by controversial projects, are now caught up in another proposal for a complex land transaction between the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and local developer John “Jack” Andrews.

And, at press time, a surprise offer for three Aldie parcels that are key to the County-Andrews deal has just been sent to the County.

The outcome of the developer’s deal and/or the straight purchase will likely determine the villages’ future livability and historic fabric.

**The St. Louis proposal**

In a proposal put forward by the County last fall, Andrews’s Mojax LLC agreed to abandon plans to build a 30-house cluster development on 16.4 acres on Snake Hill Road in St. Louis, located in western Loudoun. The Supervisors agreed to purchase the land, known as Middleburg Preserve II, from Andrews for \$1.5 million.

But the deal fell through soon afterward, due in part to a Virginia Department of Environmental Quality consent order, which involves a civil penalty of \$32,275 to Mojax, LLC, the purchase of 0.6 acres of wetlands credits, and restoration of those wetlands.

Eager to spare St. Louis from a development that could jeopardize community wells and water table, Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis J. Randall put a new proposal from Andrews before the Supervisors on Dec. 1. They agreed to go forward.

**Enter Aldie**

Acting on a suggestion from Andrews and his adviser, Loudoun developer and Aldie resident Leonard “Hobie” Mitchel, the County took under consideration a proposal in which Mojax would convey its Middleburg Preserve II property to the County in exchange for:

- payment of \$1.5 million to Mojax for the St. Louis property
- conveyance of three Aldie village properties to Jack Andrews’s Aldie Community Development Company LLC (ACDC): and
- \$600,000 for restoration of the abandoned Aldie Tavern on one parcel with a dollar-for-dollar match that would make possible a new road to 60 Andrews-controlled acres above the village.

The County paid \$1.6 million for the three parcels called the Aldie Assemblage. That grouping was the second of three sites that the County purchased in and around Aldie for construction of a new fire station.

In 2009, the County acquired 7.6 acres of land off Rt. 50 in the Little River Farms subdivision, but a judicial finding prevented its use as a fire station.

In 2015, the County purchased the three village parcels totaling 6.3 acres. However, in 2019, due to community opposition, the County had to purchase a third site—11.7 acres on Rt. 50 at Gilbert’s Corner. Planning for the facility is underway.

Andrews wants to acquire the Aldie Assemblage for a development described as “Aldie Park.” He has provided a concept plan that is currently under staff review for its development.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »

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# County to hear appeals on Jan. 11

## New houses approved for Lincoln threaten historic Quaker village

BY LAURA LONGLEY

On Jan. 11, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and the County's Historic District Review Committee will each take up appeals on the County's approval of two applications to build two new homes, both in the center of the historic Quaker village of Lincoln. They should expect two contentious hearings.

### GOVERNMENT

On one application, the Board of Supervisors will hear the appeal of 20 Lincoln residents challenging approvals of a new house by both the Department of Planning and Zoning and the Historic District Review Committee (HDRC).

Meanwhile, the Historic District Review Committee will face an appeal regarding a second house that has been approved by the Planning and Zoning staff. The residents hold that the application is incomplete and inaccurate, and should be referred back to Planning and Zoning.

Ultimately, the concern the community and conservationists are raising is: What is the future of this village?

As Phil Daley, a Lincoln resident for 40 years and president of its Lincoln Community League for 17, said in the HDRC meeting of Nov. 9, 2020, "A new home hasn't been built in the village's historic center in 50 years. Now we have two. We have only one chance to get this right. This is our last chance."

### Getting it right

To the neighbors, "getting it right"—doing right by the village's history and sense of place—would require changes to both of the houses' applications. They are located in the area of the village that served the Goose Creek agricultural community. It had two general stores, a post office, a forge, feed suppliers, the village hall, and others. Eventually, the County assigned these properties "Commercial" zoning, a category the County would change to "Rural Commercial" (RC) in 1993 to clear up confusion from wording in the 1972 ordinances.

Fewer than 10 parcels around the Lincoln post office still have that zoning. The two lots in question for construction of new houses are among them. They are situated within a few yards of the original post office, the postmaster's pre-Civil War home, and the 1765 and 1817 meeting houses.

The larger lot—2.17 acres—is adjacent to one of the general stores, now a home, on the west side of the vil-



Pictured here is a typical home in Lincoln, on Lincoln Road.

lage's "main street," Lincoln Road. The lot had been the site of a three-bedroom, one-bath clapboard-over-log house that was once the home and forge of the village blacksmith. There was a small, three-sided pole shed behind the house. All of it burned in a midwinter fire a few years ago, which is how the lot became available.

### The house proposed for the lot next to the 1908 general store

This parcel is owned by Adam and Megan Rafalski. It is located between a modest 1935 home and the 1908 general store.

The house the applicants propose would have five bedrooms, four full baths, and 5,250 square feet of living space, which is more than double the size of the homes in the Historic District in Lincoln, covered porches not included. The septic permit application they submitted, which Planning and Zoning approved, is based on the existing three-bedroom, 450 gallons-per-day-flow system.

What is Rural Commercial zoning and why does it matter here?

Both properties are zoned "Rural Commercial." According to the 1993 Loudoun County Zoning Ord-

nances, the "Rural Commercial" District "is established for the conversion of existing commercial properties zoned C-1 under the 1972 Zoning Ordinance which are located sporadically in rural Loudoun but deemed appropriate to be retained as a more preferred development pattern."

The zoning ordinance "Purpose" statement continues: "The district is also established in other areas to allow for residential and commercial uses where existing settlement patterns provide a unique opportunity for a variety of permitted and special exception uses. Uses in the RC District shall be compatible with existing village and neighborhood scale and character and allow local, neighborhood related commercial uses to be developed."

Applicant Adam Rafalski told the Historic District Review Committee, "We followed RC zoning. We hope you will make a decision that is actually within the guidelines. We do that not to skirt corners, but it would be impossible for us to design a house with someone else's hope of where policy might go." He added, "We want to improve upon the lot and the village."

### What are Historic District Guidelines and do they matter?

The built environment of each of Loudoun County's six historic districts is to be governed by County-established guidelines that cover structural mass, size, siting, materials, setbacks, and spacing that align with established village patterns, and architectural styles faithful to the village's historic period. It is the job of the HDRC to apply them.

In their Nov. 9, 2020, meeting with the HDRC for review of the applications, Adam Rafalski pointed out aspects of the proposed home that fit within the guidelines. He also noted that when you walk down Lincoln Road with its 13 small Victorian homes built between 1870 and 1900, you'll find something unique about each house. Therefore, he asserted, the "uniqueness" of his "folk Victorian" will be "additive" to the village.

### Responses to the application

Karl Riedel, chair of the Historic District Review Committee, found the Rafalskis' plans and application lacking. In the HDRC meeting, he observed, "I think there's insufficient information to review, think about, let the public see what it is you plan on using, and then respond to. So, with regards to coming to a conclusion tonight, it's not my call but I'm thinking we're early. There should be information provided, there should

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »



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# Chapman announces Loudoun Leads Initiative; will not run for Governor

Loudoun County Sheriff Mike Chapman has announced, "Loudoun Leads", a public safety initiative to increase transparency and enhance collaboration with government entities such as Mental Health and Substance Abuse along with an expanded number of community-based stakeholders.

While the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office has been recognized nationally for its leadership in mental health and Crisis Intervention Training (CIT), School Resource Officer and student educational programs such as Drug Abuse Resistance Education, and has earned perfect scores on two recent professional accreditations, Chapman believes the elevated scrutiny of law enforcement nationwide should prompt everyone in the profession to be introspective and strive for higher standards.

The LCSO is no exception. Sheriff Chapman recently increased the use of body worn cameras for greater transparency and is conducting research to place the Adult Detention Center on the path to Medically Assisted Treatment. In addition, he is currently working with the Virginia Department of Health by training medical practitioners at the Adult Detention Center to fight COVID by having the ADC facility registered to receive, store, and administer COVID vaccines. More initiatives will follow.

"A harsh economy, coupled with isolation, idle time, increased drug use and overdoses, and the potential for increased crime is not only affecting the

nation at large, but also taking its toll in Loudoun County," said Chapman. "This is no time to take our foot off the gas," he added.

Chapman has spent over 40 years in law enforcement, the last nine as Loudoun's elected sheriff. Under his leadership, the LCSO has been designated as a "model agency" in the Commonwealth of Virginia. The LCSO was one of the first in the region to deploy body worn cameras and its expansion of de-escalation training, with nearly 100 percent of its deputies and dispatch personnel trained in CIT, has produced "use of force" numbers that are near zero. Loudoun has the lowest crime rate in the Washington Metropolitan area, and the LCSO has a citizen satisfaction rating of around 90 percent.

Additionally, the LCSO has hired over 80 certified law enforcement professionals in the past two years from police departments in surrounding areas.

As an Executive Board member and Vice President of Homeland Security for Major County Sheriffs of America, and as a Board member of the National Sheriffs' Association, Chapman is engaged in regular discussions about best practices. In many cases, LCSO's efforts are setting the bar, and this has been recognized independent of partisan politics.

Chapman was invited to speak on Capitol Hill when the Excellence in Mental Health Act was passed, has addressed Congress on issues from community policing to gang task forces, participated in White House discussions on the First Step Act, and has been part of discussions

with President Trump, President Obama, and Vice President Biden on gang violence, police-community relations, drug trafficking and opioid overdoses.

Chapman said he will focus on his responsibility as Sheriff and not seek the Office of Governor next year, as many have asked him to do. "While flattered by the encouragement I have received from so many, I feel it is best for me to

keep my focus on public safety, reducing crime, and further enhancing our already outstanding relationship with the Loudoun community – especially during these difficult times," he said.

"Our success in Loudoun is a model for Virginia and the nation," said Chapman, "and there's much more we can do as part of Loudoun Leads," said Chapman. "I am also grateful for the opportunities to examine best practices across the nation and apply effective and proven methods here in the Loudoun County Sheriff's Office, in what is considered a premier law enforcement agency," he said.

**GOVERNMENT**

## Loudoun offers community water and wastewater project assistance

The Loudoun County Water and Wastewater Program has begun accepting applications for County assistance with community water and wastewater projects since Jan. 1.

The Water and Wastewater Program is designed to support Loudoun County communities experiencing issues with deficient or non-existent water and/or wastewater systems with funding and other resources. Properly functioning water and wastewater

systems help to assure a cleaner and healthier community.

Communities that need assistance are encouraged to learn more about the program at [loudoun.gov/water-projects](http://loudoun.gov/water-projects). Applications will be accepted from Jan. 1 through March 31.

Additional information, including the application for assistance, can be found at [loudoun.gov/water-projects](http://loudoun.gov/water-projects) or by contacting Loudoun County Environmental Program Specialist Scott Fincham at 703-771-5520 or [Scott.Fincham@loudoun.gov](mailto:Scott.Fincham@loudoun.gov).

**GOVERNMENT**

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# Beware of COVID vaccination scams

While many people are eager to receive a COVID-19 vaccination, the Purcellville Police Department would like to warn the public about several emerging fraud schemes related to these vaccines. The Federal Bureau of Investigations has recently received an increase in complaints of scammers using the public's interest in COVID-19 vaccines to obtain personally identifiable information and money through various schemes. Please review the tips below from the FBI to help ensure you don't fall victim to a vaccination scam.

## GOVERNMENT

**The public should be aware of the following potential indicators of fraudulent activity:**

- Advertisements or offers for early access to a vaccine upon payment of a deposit or fee.
- Requests asking you to pay out of pocket to obtain the vaccine or to put your name on a COVID-19 vaccine waiting list.
- Offers to undergo additional medical testing or procedures when obtaining a vaccine.
- Marketers offering to sell and/or ship doses of a

vaccine, domestically or internationally, in exchange for payment of a deposit or fee.

- Unsolicited emails, telephone calls, or personal contact from someone claiming to be from a medical office, insurance company, or COVID-19 vaccine center requesting personal and/or medical information to determine recipients' eligibility to participate in clinical vaccine trials or obtain the vaccine.
- Claims of FDA approval for a vaccine that cannot be verified.
- Advertisements for vaccines through social media platforms, email, telephone calls, online, or from unsolicited/unknown sources.
- Individuals contacting you in person, by phone, or by email to tell you the government or government officials require you to receive a COVID-19 vaccine.

**Tips to avoid COVID-19 vaccine-related fraud:**

- Consult your state's health department website for up-to-date information about authorized vac-

cine distribution channels and only obtaining a vaccine through such channels.

- Check the FDA's website ([fda.gov](http://fda.gov)) for current information about vaccine emergency use authorizations.
- Consult your primary care physician before undergoing any vaccination.
- Don't share your personal or health information with anyone other than known and trusted medical professionals.
- Check your medical bills and insurance explanation of benefits for any suspicious claims and promptly reporting any errors to your health insurance provider.
- Follow guidance and recommendations from the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and other trusted medical professionals.
- If you believe you have been the victim of a COVID-19 fraud, immediately report it to the FBI ([ic3.gov](http://ic3.gov), [tips.fbi.gov](http://tips.fbi.gov), or 1-800-CALL-FBI) or HHS OIG ([tips.hhs.gov](http://tips.hhs.gov) or 1-800-HHS-TIPS).

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# Between Middleburg and Purcellville, the perfect place to hang your hat

BY LAURA LONGLEY

What could be better than living just 10 minutes from Purcellville, western Loudoun County's hub for shopping and schools, with easy access to Leesburg, the Greenway, and Dulles Airport? Or how

## REAL ESTATE

about living just 15 minutes from Middleburg, the heart of Virginia horse country and home to delightful shops and restaurants? Middleburg is also home to the historic Red Fox Inn and the five-star Salamander Resort and Spa, a luxurious place to put up your visiting family. But who needs to book a grand hotel or an Airbnb when you have your own commodious, custom-built quality home surrounded by more than 21 private acres of open and wooded land?

This large home, built in 1998, features a main level with a spacious, comfortable living area with hardwood oak floors, a custom kitchen, master bedroom, full bath, and a bonus room that would make an ideal office—all with breathtaking views of



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Upstairs are four additional bedrooms with baths, and on the lower level, accessible by a separate entrance, are a bedroom, full bath, all-purpose room, and more space to finish if you need it. The house also includes an oversized two-car garage.

Outside, a large deck welcomes you to enjoy the breezes through the trees and step down to a gardener's paradise. The property features a stone patio and walkways, garden paths and a greenhouse, as well as a fenced backyard.

A John Deere tractor with attachments conveys with an acceptable offer.

The current owner purposely did not paint or replace carpet in a few upper rooms so the buyers could make their own color and carpet choices; that decision is reflected in the price.

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# Purcellville debates height limits for historic downtown

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Dec. 8 Purcellville Town Council Meeting, the Council moved forward to decrease the maximum height of buildings in the C-4 District. The district includes Hatcher Avenue and 21<sup>st</sup> Street and parts of Main Street – and is referred to as the old downtown area.

The Town Council voted 5-2 to direct staff to prepare a motion on the subject, with Council Members Joel Grewe and Ted Greenly voting no.

Currently, the height limits are three stories/45 feet. The Planning Commission had voted 7-0 to reduce the height of the C-4 District buildings to two stories/30 feet. The Town Council could approve additional height by special exception. This would allow for the public to weigh in, and have a voice on a potential project – if the proposal were to be above two stories/30 feet.

Any legacy buildings, such as Magnolias (an old mill), would be grandfathered in, and would not be affected, if they had to be built over in the same style. But, if a legacy building were to change the style completely, then it would have to adhere to the current zoning of the area.

## Town Council discussion and background

Last June 30, the Purcellville Town Council voted to adopt the Town's new Comprehensive Plan. In accordance with the new Comp Plan, the Planning Commission developed a work plan to focus on zoning regulations for the Town's seven focus areas. In a Sept. 3 email, Town staff identified priorities of properties that were inconsistent with the new Comp Plan.

Said Town Attorney Sally Hankins, "Since the adoption by the Town Council of the Comprehensive Plan on June 30, 2020, the Planning Commission has started the large task of ... amending the zoning ordinance, so that the zoning ordinance can give us that vision that was laid out in the Comp Plan.

"The Planning Commission has developed a work plan for this task ..., They have prioritized the focus areas ... [including] Downtown South [the C-4 District]," said

Hankins. She explained that the height regulations were a result of this priority.

Planning Commission Chair Nedim Ogelman took a survey of the building heights in the area to see what would be compatible, and the unanimous consensus of the Planning Commission was "that the existing maximum heights in the C-4 District are out of scale with the existing development in that area," said Hankins.

"Because the vision of the Comp Plan is to maintain the existing character of the Town, the Planning Commission recommendation is to initiate a height zoning amendment to reduce the height in the C-4 zoning district from 45 to 30 feet. However, they would like to preserve an option of 45 feet and three stories with a special exception or special use permit process," said Hankins.

Ogelman said, "Your Planning Commission voted unanimously to support this resolution, and we believe it provides a good way to achieve ... what the new Comp Plan is asking for ... the principal of do no harm to the small town character ... We looked at 92 properties ... The heights of those buildings were in the low twenties, to the high teens. The number of stories above ground from the street were either two stories or something between one and two stories."

Ogelman said the Comp Plan does recognize that there are some taller buildings, but he noted the Comp Plan says "these are not the heights to be emulated." He said that "height should be at the characteristic of our small town, in the Historic District – which is two stories and below 30 feet." He pointed out that if someone wants to build something three stories high, they would have to apply for a special exception, thus giving the citizens a chance to weigh in on the process.

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser stressed that an applicant can apply for a three-story height. "You are not saying no to three stories ... You just need to go through a special exception process to build higher."

Ogelman agreed, "We are not saying no to three stories ... we are saying not without our permission as citizens of the Town ... because we the citizens of the Town

incur the risk for anything that happens."

Council Member Stan Milan said, "We don't want a structure that is out of feel with the area it is going to be placed in."

Council Member Joel Grewe said he had problems with the change, saying it targets a proposed new development. The current proposal includes tearing down three old homes on Hatcher and consolidating the three lots which are next to the W&OD Trail, on a street with single family homes – commercial on the main floor and two floors of 30 apartments, or assisted living.

Council Member Ted Greenly concurred: "It seems to me we are targeting a specific area, so I have ... an issue with that."

Council Member Tip Stinnette had the same concerns. He was also concerned about existing properties that would not conform with the new change. This however, would not be a problem, since they would be grandfathered in.

Hankins responded that she has spoken with the property owners, and they said that they are aware of the zoning ordinance process which the Planning Commission is tasked to review.

Milan said, "If this corresponds to someone's proposed development of a property, that does not fit into that area and just so happens that a height limitation is implemented – this has no bearing on anyone doing anything surreptitiously. It is to maintain the character of Purcellville.

Planning Commissioner Nan Forbes said that the natural outcome of having a new Comp Plan is that "we develop a zoning ordinance ... By definition that means there will be changes in the zoning ordinance. Changes in the zoning ordinance might make some land owners happy and some not so happy. That doesn't mean the zoning ordinance doesn't get changed in order to conform with what our Town Council has approved in the Comprehensive Plan."

Fraser said, "There are only two people who would see this as retaliatory. In this position, we can't please everyone. People will make their assumption whether it is based in fact or not; and so, we need to make a decision that we believe is right, and of course, we believe any risk would be addressed. The Planning Commission has taken into consideration what a developer might make. I am putting my trust in the Planning Commission."

The Town Council and Planning Commission will hold a joint meeting Jan. 12 to discuss the issue.

## Loudoun Health Department to coordinate COVID-19 vaccination – for health care workers not already signed up

The Loudoun County Health Department is seeking to identify any health care offices or providers, that are part of the Virginia Department of Health's Phase 1a group for COVID-19 vaccination, but are not already signed up to receive vaccine.

Health care providers have been defined by the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and by the Commonwealth of Virginia as being in the first group that should be vaccinated against COVID-19.

All paid and unpaid persons serving in health care settings who have the potential for direct or indirect exposure to patients or infectious materials, including body substances, such as blood, tis-

sue and specific body fluids; contaminated medical supplies, devices and equipment; contaminated environmental surfaces; or contaminated air are eligible for vaccination.

"The vast majority of these workers should be signed up for this free vaccine by their employers; however, we do not want any members of this top priority group to be missed," said Health Director Dr. David Goodfriend. "We encourage people who believe they should be receiving vaccine now due to their jobs to first verify with their employers whether their organizations will be signing them up, and if not, to then contact the Health Department."

Loudoun County has received Moderna COVID-19 vaccine that can be provided to Loudoun

County-based health care offices and providers in accordance with VDH guidelines. Health care offices and providers interested in receiving COVID-19 vaccine should email [health@loudoun.gov](mailto:health@loudoun.gov), and note whether they are making a request for an office or an individual not associated with an office. The Health Department will work with health care offices to enroll their eligible staff to receive vaccine.

Health care offices in jurisdictions other than Loudoun County should contact the Health Department in the county or city where they are located for information on how to sign up for vaccine.

More information about COVID-19 vaccine is posted at [loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine](http://loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine).

GOVERNMENT

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~ Remembering ~

## Shirley Rae van Buskirk

Shirley R. van Buskirk, 73, of Purcellville, passed away Monday Dec. 14, 2020 at Waltonwood-Ashburn. She was born March 1, 1947 in Goshen, IN., and was the daughter of the late Harold E. and Phyllis (Bemenderfer) Shriner. She was predeceased by her sister, Sharon Jean Williams.

She was a 1965 graduate of Benton Harbor (MI) High School and served in AmeriCorp VISTA programs in Hawaii, California, and Nevada. Van Buskirk raised three children, earned her nursing degree then worked at The Jackson Foundation, hospitals in Washington, DC and Maryland, before managing HIV/AIDS research projects at Westat in Rockville, MD. She retired in 2009, and enjoyed nurturing her granddaughter, Mia.

Van Buskirk liked playing Canasta and good pinball machines, attending Pro-

fessional Bull Riding events and watching Hard Swimmin' Fish performances. She loved the water and beaches, from Hawaii to First Encounter to Baby Beach, Aruba. Family gatherings were her greatest joy.

She is survived by her husband, Daniel F. van Buskirk of Purcellville, two daughters; Keir N. Lewis of Silver Spring, MD and Erin Lewis Roberts of Broadlands, VA; one son, Demian Che Lewis of Lovettsville, VA; two stepsons, James van Buskirk of Madison, WI, and Thomas van Buskirk of Georgetown, TX; her granddaughter, Mia Rae Roberts, who is attending New York University; as well as extended family and many personal friends. She was a nurturing force for all who knew her, and she will be dearly missed.

A memorial service will be planned for a future date.



~ Remembering ~

## Donald Arewood Nesselrodte

Donald Arewood Nesselrodte, aka, Smiling Donnie, 84, of Winchester, VA passed away Sunday, Dec. 13, 2020, at his home.

Nesselrodte was born in 1936 in Petersburg, WV, son of the late George and Beatrice Nesselrodte. He was a Lineman with Richardson-Wayland Electrical, from where he retired. After retirement, he worked odd jobs as a mechanic, and operated a tree care business. He was a former member of the Fraternal Order of Eagles in Winchester, and the Winchester Moose Lodge. He loved singing karaoke and working at Purcellville Tire with his son, Donnie. He was a car fanatic, he loved NASCAR, with Earnhardt, Sr. being his favorite driver.

Nesselrodte could be seen driving through Winchester in his Firebird, socializing with friends – he never met a stranger. He enjoyed going to cruises, talking about cars, and giving hugs to all those who affectionately called him "Pops". His greatest accomplishment was being a father. He considered himself the luckiest man in the world because of his children, who thought of him as their hero, even in their adult lives.

Surviving are daughters, Irene Coleman (Charles) of Stephens City, VA, Donna Nesselrodte Whitt of Martinsburg, WV, and Mary Ann Pascual of Lakeland, FL; son, Donnie Nesselrodte (Heather) of Purcellville, VA; many grandchildren and great-grandchildren; sisters, Juanita Armel of Winchester, VA, Darlene Kesner of Petersburg, WV, and Opal Jenkins of Berryville, VA; and brothers, Bill and June Nesselrodte of Winchester, VA and Merl Nesselrodte of Petersburg, WV.

Nesselrodte was preceded in death by brothers, Larry, Curt, and Bud Nesselrodte.

The family would like to express their heartfelt appreciation and gratitude to Kristi, Sunni, Rori, Ginger, Grace, Becca, Sam, Cece, Georgia, and Charlotte for their loving care given to Donald during his final years. All of you made him comfortable and made him smile.

A visitation was held on Friday, Dec. 18, at Omps Funeral Home, Amherst Chapel. A service will be held at a later date in Petersburg, WV. Interment was at the Nesselrodte Family Cemetery in Petersburg, WV.

Please view obituaries and tribute wall at [www.ompsfuneralhome.com](http://www.ompsfuneralhome.com).



# County seeks public input on Linear Parks and Trails System

On Jan. 17, 2019, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors directed the Loudoun County Parks, Recreation and Open Space (PROS) Board to develop a detailed implementation plan for an interconnected, county-wide linear parks and trails system.

PROS subsequently appointed representatives from key stakeholder groups to the Linear Parks and Trails Subcommittee to advance the initiative.

The project, awarded to Design Workshop in Raleigh, North Carolina, was initiated November 2020. The timeline for completion is six to eight months, with completion by May 2021. Full execution of the plan will take several years.

The interconnected, countywide linear parks and trails system will provide a variety of functions and benefits, including recreation, alternative transportation, wildlife habitat, water quality protec-

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »

# It's time to weigh in on 7/690 Interchange

Loudoun County is seeking public comment regarding the proposed Route 7/Route 690 Interchange Project. Information related to the project, including an exhibit and comment form, is available at <https://www.loudoun.gov/5179/Route-7-690-Interchange>. The deadline for comments is Jan. 16. You may submit your comment by email at [DTCI@loudoun.gov](mailto:DTCI@loudoun.gov) or by the comment form.

The project funds the design, right-

of-way acquisition, and construction of an interchange at Rt. 7 and Rt. 690 in Purcellville, located approximately two miles west of the Rt. 7/Rt. 287 interchange and approximately two miles east of the Rt. 7/Business Rt. 7 interchange near Round Hill. The proposed 7/690 interchange is designed to provide additional connectivity to the roadway network around Purcellville, reduce traffic in downtown Purcellville and on Rt. 287, and provide a more direct route to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »



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## Cochran's Annual Sheep Walk in Lincoln

### We love you, Mr. Cochran!

BY ANDREA GAINES

Allen Cochran, two willing assistants, and his border collies drive his herd of sheep through the village of Lincoln on Jan. 2 each year. It is one of Loudoun County's most sweet, enduring, and captivating New Year's rituals.

Allen is a direct descendant of the original Goose Creek Quakers meeting members. Raised in Lincoln, he owns and operates Cochran's Stone Masonry and Timberframing. He lives in the village with his wife, Nancy,



Stirling Rasmussen

their daughters, and a passel of sheep and other critters at Stone Eden Farm.

## Salad for breakfast

A touch sweet and very flavorful

BY ANDREA GAINES

New Year's is the perfect time to both try something new and to get back to old promises.

The new can be trying new foods, and the old promise just might be eating in a more healthful way.

A few years ago, I fell in love with the classic chopped salad. It is typically a savory dish, and not everything in it is all that good for you – eggs, bacon, maybe some sliced cheese, and lots of mayo! – you get the idea.

One morning, having had my version of a healthy chopped salad for dinner the night before, I made myself a Chopped Breakfast Salad. You will probably recognize it as a fancy kind of fruit and nuts oatmeal, with some sweet greens and vegetables thrown in.

A great way to start the new year and start your mornings with something healthy.



### Chopped Breakfast Salad

*Ingredients:*

1 cup mix of basil and mint leaves – tossed with a pinch of sugar

¼ cup finely shredded fennel bulb (avoid the core, the leaves, and the stalks)

½ cup of this toasted oats mixture (rolled oats, slivered almonds, shredded or flaked coconut, and sunflower seeds pan-sauteed/toasted in a teaspoon of coconut oil with a tablespoon of maple syrup)

¼ cup of dried cranberries and raisins

¼ cup of shredded carrot (chilled in the dressing overnight)

Dried mint, ginger, and grapeseed oil

A pinch of fine salt and freshly ground pepper for taste (added after the salad is tossed with the dressing)

### For the dressing:

Mix almond milk with a dash of sweet vinegar, a tablespoon of grapeseed or a mild oil, a half teaspoon of dried mint and ginger, and the shredded carrots.

Make the dressing ahead, and chill in the refrigerator overnight: Shake well – 'til frothy – and mix well into your breakfast salad. You can also use your choice of yogurt as a base for the dressing.

Dice any other fruits you have lying around and/or add to your salad any berries you have.

### Improvise:

This salad is all about a diversity of ingredients, and the chance to try something new, and/or clean out the fridge!

# Everyone is a winner!

Congratulations to the four winners of our Best Gift Ever writing contest.

Chloei of Round Hill won first place, Landon of Leesburg and Rilyn from Round Hill tied for second, and Tavian of Hamilton won third place.

A big thanks to our judges – Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser, and Purcellville Vice Mayor Mary Jane Williams.

Said Fraser, “They were all great, and I was touched by the family-focused gifts.”

“I am impressed that COVID allowed students to think outside the box. All the entries showed love for the families, and making new traditions,” said Williams.

Everyone is a winner ... and we mean that. We so enjoyed reading about the

gifts that made you happy, and the gifts that you gave. Again, in our eyes, everyone is a winner.

Here’s a rundown on the gifts highlighted by the winners: Chloei’s best gift ever was her little brother who was “super cute,” when he was born. “That was a while ago now. He is four, and still a little cute.” Rilyn’s best gift is her family, including her dog, Olive. Landon’s gift was an extra special crane toy set complete with remote control. He loved the movement and he “never had one before.” And, Tavian’s best ever gift he gave someone was a painting he, along with his siblings, made for his mom. He wrote that she put it in her office, and she smiles at it every day.

# “Saving Grace” says Never Say Die – Never

BY ANDREA GAINES

They have been working on restoring the old building for ten-plus years. They said to themselves, we must never give up ... and, they didn’t.

“They” are local African Americas whose families have been here for hundreds of years, the Lincoln Preservation Foundation, and the Friends of Grace (building trustees).

The 1885 stone building has stood unused for almost 75 years, as the team struggled to keep it from collapsing. The goal: raise the cash to keep it alive as a Grace Heritage Site. This is history, craftsmanship, love, and hard labor all rolled into one. With a few bird nests, arrowheads, old joists, church pews, and vision tossed in. Never. Say. Die. Never.



Jeffrey Jackson, building trustee, LPF leader, and decades-long project supporter comments on remnants of old stove, and the pews.

See a five-minute “Saving Grace” video at [www.lincolnpreservation.org](http://www.lincolnpreservation.org).

### Blood, sweat, and joy

One of the project’s earliest supporters (call her Betty) went to the building early one morning to see the new floor. When she arrived, she saw that several old timers, some in their eighties, had repositioned the 100-year-old joists that would form the base ... These old guys wanted to make things easier for the volunteer contractor. And, Betty saw, they had performed a modern-day miracle. They had brought in the original pews, stored in a nearby barn for some 20 years, polished them to perfection and arranged them just as they would have been in 1885. Betty fell to her knees and wept.

### You know who you are – thank you

Hundreds of individuals and organizations have helped bring this stunning building back to life. Back to life from certain ruin. They are contractors, archaeologists, people with a few extra hours on their

### Project Chronology and looking ahead to 2022

- 2003/2004: Site secured for preservation, Saving Grace video, publicity, meetings, photographic documentation, new driveway, doors & windows protected, research.
- 2005 to 2006: Archaeological dig, church bell and belfry removed, new flooring/ceiling.
- 2007 to 2018: Repoint stonework, clear title, shore up roof, fix steps, give public tours, complete first floor, excavate, complete dig, replace rotten wood.
- 2019 to 2022: Replace floor joists and install wide-plank sub flooring, bring back original church pews and “Bishops” chairs, open the place to the public.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 29 »



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**HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

looked quizzically at me. “That the TV?” He got bug-eyed at the clarity and size of the picture.

Bubba usually shook his head or nodded, signaling amazement or approval, depending on the context. He was vocal about things he didn’t like, though, as when I pointed to some of our contemporary art. “You must be crazy, Hotshot.”

On the way to the barn, I hopped onto the zero-turn mower. I sped off, twirling and mowing right and left, then heading back towards Bubba. He slowly shook his head, this time meaning that he liked it. I showed him our pet goats and donkey and patted the three Border Collies. “Nice dogs, Hotshot. Only saw a few in Georgia but they were good dogs. Smart.”

Two barn cats meowed at seeing me; Bubba moved back a step - cats not being among his favorite animals. We walked down the barn’s center aisle and looked at horses in their stalls. I saw him happily inhaling their aroma. At an empty stall I explained, “This is the horse she took to the show.”

“You ride?” he asked me.

“Used to. I did show jumpers and fox-hunted.”

“We’ll, aren’t you fancy!” Bubba kidded.

“Let’s drive around some,” I suggested.

“Virginia has villages and hamlets, which Georgia doesn’t,” I said on the way to Waterford. “We also have what developers call ‘clusters.’ They’re just an excuse to cram more houses onto a piece of land.” We turned into one of them, where the big houses looked identical. Fake wood. Fake stone. Styrofoam cornices. Plastic window frames.

“This is junk, Hotshot. Horrible. What a waste of pretty land.”

“Some of us are trying to stop clusters, at least ones like this,” I said.

“How much do they go for?”

“A bit over a million.” Bubba looked pole-axed.

“You’ll like this old village,” I said, entering Waterford.

He did, very much.

“We’ll head for Leesburg. Used to be small but not so much now.”

On the way Bubba kidded, “Hotshot,

**VIEW FROM THE RIDGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

forgive the government gobbledygook—Maura Walsh-Copeland, chair of the Loudoun County Preservation and Coalition Zoning Committee, began looking for ways to solve the County vs. villages conundrum. The 2019 Comprehensive Plan—approved 18 months ago—clearly laid out the path for how to preserve historic villages. The consultant’s Code Audit now provides more details for how to modify zoning to ensure that preservation. The audit is due to be closely reviewed by the County and the Zoning Ordinance Committee with public input starting this month.

The Code Audit was presented to

this is a fancy car. I said you were fancy, didn’t I?”

“It’s a V8. A system with maps and navigation. Run-flat tires. Power everything. Mood lighting inside - you can choose from about ten colors. Listen to music from a satellite over ten speakers. Make phone calls by talking towards the steering wheel. I get around 30 miles to the gallon.”

“You’re out of your mind, boy!” (I’d not been called that in a long time.) “With all that stuff, how do you get that mileage?”

“Government law.”

Bubba snorted derisively. Fifty years had not moderated his conservatism.

That showed again as we slowly drove through Leesburg, “That girl has blue hair! Whoa, she’s kissing that other girl!” It was nothing unusual to me but clearly Bubba was not woke. “Don’t stare, Bubba, they’ll see that as a microaggression.”

“I’d like to show ‘em a macroaggression.” He noticed guys with beards and others with tattoos. “Hotshot, that’s more like it. Good to see men with beards, and lots of my platoon got tattoos in the war.” Bubba was woke after all, but not for this century.

“Nice town,” he observed. “Nice shops, houses.”

We headed east on Market, through its section of older shopping centers and car dealerships. “Places like this aren’t

the County’s Transportation and Land Use Committee at its Dec. 16 meeting and recommends that the County “replace the existing Village Conservation Overlay District and the underlying zoning districts for the Traditional Villages with Neighborhood Conservation Districts based on the existing historic development patterns of the villages.”

Currently, that overlay district applies to a general, one-size-fits-all approach, which may not recognize individual village development patterns. The intent of the new ordinance would be to rectify Place Type boundaries and the Village Conservation Overlay District, and implement a new regulatory mechanism, such as a Vil-

lage Conservation District, that would recognize and perpetuate historic development patterns of individual villages. In Loudoun that means Aldie, Bluemont, Lincoln, Paeonian Springs, Philomont, Saint Louis, Taylorstown, Unison, and Waterford.

lage Conservation District, that would recognize and perpetuate historic development patterns of individual villages. In Loudoun that means Aldie, Bluemont, Lincoln, Paeonian Springs, Philomont, Saint Louis, Taylorstown, Unison, and Waterford.

The Code Audit begs this question for the County: Is there any will/or any way to begin implementing some of the procedural recommendations to sync new zoning to the Comprehensive Plan, and give staff the proper authority and tools sooner, rather than waiting another full year due to the COVID-19 delays of the rewrite?

For the sake of our endangered villages, we sure hope so.

good for the soul,” Bubba declared.

Minutes later we parked at Wegman’s. The big supermarket stunned him. “That whole aisle is nothing but bottles of water. Can’t you use your taps? He saw racks of beef jerky, energy drinks, more meat than at a butcher’s, wine departments, fewer cookies than in the old days. He reacted with just one sentence, “I saw non-alcohol beer. What’s the point in that?”

“What’s Woolworth’s like now?” Bubba next asked.

“Gone.”

“K Mart?”

“Gone.” Bubba looked a touch sad when he heard that. I needed to cheer him; show things he’d like.

He liked Walmart and Target. He loved Home Depot.

On the way home he asked, “Is the USSR still a problem?”

“Gone.”

“Good.”

I told him about Amazon and that you could get stuff delivered the next day, right to your door. “That helped during the toilet paper crisis.”

“The what?”

I replied, “Yeah. I’ll tell you about it later. At least government is clean here.”

“If it was that good, why didn’t stop all that building near Whatsman’s? Or the cluster things?”

He had a point.

We drove back the long way. Bubba loved the old stone walls, manicured pastures, the grand estates, our little farm. “We definitely aren’t in Georgia,” he allowed.

“Nope,” I said.

“This land is special,” observant Bubba said as we drove down the unpaved road. “You better take care of it.”

We went home. The electronic world amazed him. “Here’s Google; it finds things.” I typed in “Beagle.” Bubba smiled over my shoulder, read some, looked at hound photos. He nodded approval. I showed him Yahoo, Facebook, Twitter, Instagram. I opined, “Some of these are plain stupid, but it’s what people do.”

“FooIs.”

I showed him a smartphone; he liked what it could do. Then I told him about selfies and texting, which he didn’t.

“Lots of new stuff, Hotshot. But you’ve got to be thankful for what you have. Protect the countryside most of all.”

I nodded at that statement with my eyes closed. When I opened them, Bubba had vanished.

*Charles Houston developed office buildings for an Atlanta-based firm. He lives in Paeonian Springs (etc.) and misses Bubba, who was a real family member.*

**MOONSHINE MURDERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

Some outstanding performances came from Violet Sanata (Emily Reeps), Buggy Moronski (Luke Murtaugh), and Snowy Fox (Samantha Huffer). Violet and Buggy both sang beautifully and in a style that matched the 1920s setting of the production, and in their duet “Turn Off Your Light Mister Moon Man”, their chemistry was palpable and the two played off of each other wonderfully. Snowy Fox also gave a notable performance. As the owner of the speakeasy, her acting felt very mature and fitting of the time period, and her singing was full of emotion, especially during her duet “Bugsy is Bumped” with Divella

Show (Mila Matic).

The crew overcame a massive obstacle of creating a virtual show and managing to produce a stellar piece of theatre in every aspect. The set crew (Jacbo Siecinski, Jillian D’Errico) and costume crew (Casey Murphy, Wyatt Kunkel, Mila Matic, Ella Hardy) both worked to create detailed and accurate pieces, from feather boas to bar bottles, all of which contributed to the atmosphere and realism of the show.

In addition, the editing crew (Makenna Buhler, Julian Fratterola, Bethany Folks) outdid themselves, stitching together takes in a way that highlighted exactly where the focus of the scene was. They created overlays, such as a clock between scenes or shots

fading into each other during songs, which was an interesting effect that would not have been achievable with conventional theatre. All these tech elements converged to make the show feel like it was being performed live, even though it was through a computer screen.

Woodgrove High School assembled to create a thoroughly enjoyable show. Moonshine Murders brought laughs, gasps, and the occasional chill as the story unfolded. Brought to life by a competent and passionate group of actors, musicians, and technicians, it is easy to speak highly of this speakeasy show.



**BOS ADDS HOMES TO TPA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

**Many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip'**

When the County adopted the new 2019 Comprehensive Plan, that was just the beginning of the process for deciding how, when, and where Loudoun County would grow ... and how we'd pay for it all.

The newly adopted plan retained the County's big-picture suburban east, transitional middle, and rural west growth strategy, with the TPA, at least in principal, a lower-density and open space "buffer" between east and west.

But, there's many a slip 'twixt the cup and the lip,' as the old proverb says. Throughout the three-year long Envision Loudoun process, the public lobbied strenuously to keep a lid on growth in the TPA. But, here we are.

**We had no choice but to approve**

Individual Board members gave illuminating reasons for their 144-unit, HKG vote.

Turning things over to Letourneau as soon as County staff finished its presentation recommending approval of the project, Randall said: "There [are] not a whole lot of ways to get affordable units if you don't build homes ... I'm good."

Letourneau, too, seemed to say that approving the development was the only option. Citizens, of course, saw things differently during the three-year Envision Loudoun process, pushing for fewer new homes; period. But, while he expressed sympathy towards "folks in the immediate vicinity [of the development]," acknowledging they "are not thrilled with the application ... The developers have addressed every concern the County had ... from 'U-turn' dangers, to 'parking.' The ... Applicant is not only meeting [Comp Plan] policy but exceeding plan policy ... 50 percent open space is preserved ... [and] While quad units were not contemplated by the BOS ... Our choice here is really only to support it."

**ADU policy drives Comp Plan policy as individual Supervisors, acquiesce**

The ADU program – and perhaps Comp Plan fatigue – seems to have given some Supervisors a reason to approve things not contemplated when the Comp Plan passed in 2019.

But, Briskman really didn't like the HKG project. She noted that based on an AMI (Adjusted Median Income) of \$126,000 for a family of four, the units to be built would not be affordable. "I'm not going to fall on my sword," she said, but "... according to staff, it really doesn't address affordable units according to the general plan."

Buffington was on the fence, too, pointing out how long it had taken

the Board to get through the HKG application. He also said he agreed with both Letourneau and Brickman's comments. But, while voting to approve the rezoning, he also said he disagreed with the process, not liking addressing the affordable housing units' issue through specific applications. He favored addressing the affordable issue "holistically, and through the zoning ordinance process that we are coming up on ... I don't think the market is going to fix the problem on its own." He continued, "I definitely look forward to the Board fixing this issue but not through this application ..." Still, Buffington, as did six other Supervisors, voted to approve.

Umstattd said, "I just can't pass up the opportunity to be very predictable in my statements ... As you have all heard before, I continue to be concerned about the impact of more residential units on the year-to-year operating cost of schools. Even when there is room in neighboring schools, you still cannot pay for the impact on the schools of this large a residential rezoning ... Unfortunately, I'll have to oppose this." No other Supervisors spoke to the application, even while voting to approve the rezoning.

**Randall, others show Comp Plan fatigue**

Randall closed the vote session by praising the work everyone had done on the KHG rezoning application, now, a done deal.

This is when she said, "There is not a whole lot of ways to get affordable units if you don't build homes ... there's just not ... I always wish there were more units ... you don't get affordable homes if you don't build homes ... it just doesn't happen.

"The first thing you always ask is 'What can the infrastructure absorb?' ... All of us ... all of us ... push developers to make sure that the development does not impact the infrastructure ... but, unless we say we're not building more homes, we are building more homes ... [and] at some point we have to decide what we are doing here ..."

After the very exhausting Comp Plan process, there is probably some truth to the idea that everyone is a little frayed at the edges.

Letourneau elaborated on that issue by discussing how there was some ambiguity about how large, or not, new residential units should be, seeming to intimate that the developers were doing the best they could.

"If we didn't have this kind of compact housing, large townhouses would have been built here, townhomes such as those in "Dulles South." The bottom line to Letourneau – this housing is cheaper, even if not affordable. But he said, "This is what we've asked for."

**COUNTY TO HEAR APPEALS**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

have been information provided in the application that is not yet in our hands.”

He added that from the application, he wasn't sure of the materials being used. “The windows are an unknown. The columns on the front are an unknown. The doors at the back are not consistent with guidelines.”

Also, the proposed house is set at a skewed angle to the road, which is not consistent with the rest of the homes in the village, which face the street with small front yards, and have a consistent setback that creates a rhythm along the street.

Plans for a two-car garage attached by an ell to the main house occupied most of the lengthy discussion. The kind of stone for the exterior chimney and foundation came under discussion

and led to one awkward exchange. In response to queries about stone, applicant Adam Rafalski suggested employment to board member Allen Cochran, a noted local stonemason, saying, “I'm working through the nature of the look . . . Happy to speak with you further, too . . .”

Cochran immediately stopped it with, “Well I'm not sure that's what we should be talking about.”

Another board member, Frances Fetzer, noted that she was a friend of the applicant and wondered aloud whether she should participate. Nonetheless, she joined the discussion and voted to approve the application. HDRC bylaws do not permit participation if the member has a personal or financial relationship with an applicant.

Cochran recommended that the Rafalskis consider amending their applica-

tion by removing the garage, and instead submit the garage separately in a year or two. Toward the end of the meeting, these views were expressed by other members:

“Let them do whatever they want with the back of the house . . . I'm for you building it the way you want.”

“If you own the land, dammit, you oughta be able to do something with it if you want.”

The HDRC members unanimously approved the plans, without the garage for now, which means the Rafalskis will be issued a Certificate of Appropriateness (CAPP), so they can proceed with construction.

**What's next**

The 20 signatories to Lincoln's appeal suggested this language for a motion to

be made by a supervisor on Jan. 11:

“I move that the Board of Supervisors rescind the approval of Certificate of Appropriateness 2020-0012 as approved on the November 9, 2020 Historic District Review Committee meeting. It is requested the applicant revise the house's design to maintain consistency with the architectural style, scale, properly placed elements, finishes, setback and massing to fit with the character of The Village of Lincoln as the guidelines intend to impact.”

*Disclosure: Laura Longley has lived in Loudoun County for 27 years, 14 of them in the Goose Creek Historic District. In that time, she has owned and renovated five historic properties in western Loudoun. She has worked with all Loudoun County departments that involve planning, zoning, environmental health, construction, and historic district guidelines.*

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

Permit violations in 2017 and 2018 lead the County to issue a Stop Work Order – but to date there has been no public remedy. Now neighbors are seeing a sliding failure in one area on the steep slopes of the landfill.

**County Consultant says some fill should be in a liner-equipped landfill**

Wood Environment and Infrastructure Solutions, Inc. was hired by the County to double check two reports to “determine if the imported fill material contains contaminants considered harmful to human health and the environment,” according to an analysis dated Oct. 21, 2020.

Wood reviewed 17 soil borings, conducted earlier on the 18 plus acre landfill, each approximately 20 feet deep. Most of the borings did not reach the bottom of the landfill, and groundwater was not collected from any of them. The boring soil samples had been analyzed for a range of contaminants but not for pesticides or herbicides.

Wood concluded, “Two of the soil samples contained TPH concentrations exceeding 50 ppm, and as such, these concentrations would characterize this material as Category C which would exclude them as unrestricted clean fill, and instead, require appropriate disposal of this soil at a permitted and approved landfill equipped with liners and a leachate collection system.”

**History of the landfill**

Gable's Rural Economy Plan for a “Personal Recreational Field” was approved in 2015 – almost six years ago. According to the “Approved Plan Sheet,” the owner stipulated that the site would “Not be open to [the] public or used for any commercial purposes . . .” There are no public records documenting the contents of the dumped waste, including remnants of what is, clearly, liquid waste.

Recently, the County has done one water quality test across the road at Scott Jenkins Park. The results of the test showed no contaminants. However, there has been no testing of water at the 18 plus acre dump site, nor at



“There could be many more such landfills in Western Loudoun if the County does not change its regulatory practices.” – [www.loudounrurallandfills.com](http://www.loudounrurallandfills.com). Editor's note: There are several personal recreational fields in the County – one being in Hamilton, on Hamilton Station Road – that has been sitting under a Stop Work Order since 2015, with no remedy to date.

any of the neighbors' properties. The normal protocol is to test a particular site over time (not just once), ensuring that hazardous conditions are not developing as water percolates through the site.

**Can something like this, “fail?”**

There are no County regulations specific to the siting, height, extent, volume or contents of “Personal Recreational Fields.”

A “dirt stockpile” having exactly the same physical characteristics would not be permissible on this site without a special zoning exception process.

The landfill is potentially harmful, and, as concerned neighbors are now thinking, possibly unstable, too.

Sliding failures are beginning to show in one of the landfill's steep slopes, perhaps indicating that, due to the weight, height, and water content of the soil and debris, things may be beginning to slip.

No engineering studies were required to ensure the stability of this massive structure. Over time, the infiltration of rainwater into the landfill can increase both the weight of the fill and the water pressure, thus weakening parts of the fill. This could lead to failure of the face of the landfill.

**County considers landfill expansion as a remedy**

The Gable Farm personal recreational field has been on the County's agenda for over five years now, and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality visited the site on Feb. 22, 2019.

In an answer to email questions posed by the Blue Ridge Leader in early March 2019, Richard Douchette, Land Protection and Revitalization Program Manager said they conducted “a visual inspection of the surface and the side slopes of the fill material,” but “did not take any samples of the landfill materials or the surrounding water bodies.” Also, they “would not certify that the landfill does not contain hazardous materials.”

The issue itself has even prompted recent state legislation related to Hazardous Waste Management Regulations

controlling what can be dumped, and for what use. The Blue Ridge Leader reached out to Loudoun County's Assistant County Attorney Wahaj Memon to check the current status of the Gable landfill and what action the County has taken to remediate the issue.

Glen Barbour, Public Affairs and Communications Officer, promptly responded to our inquiry, giving an update as to what had unfolded in 2020.

“The County has been working with the property owner to abate the notice of violation. The property owner has proposed to spread out the excess fill on their property (as opposed to removing it from their property) in order to come into compliance with the approved permit.

“However, prior to this abatement action, the property owner recently had a soil analysis done. Last month, this analysis was forwarded to the Virginia Department of Environment Quality (DEQ) for comment. Currently, the County is waiting for DEQ's response, which may come within the next few weeks. DEQ's response will provide insight into the County's next steps toward achieving abatement.”

In a recent email to neighbors from the County addressing “abatement” responsibilities, the County offered the following: “... The primary goals of the

**BLUE RIDGE MIDDLE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

teamwork, collaboration, and programming skills over a seven-week period to create and submit their app designs for consideration by NASA.

Teams with favorable submissions advance to present their app in an interview with engineers and scientists working with NASA's Space Communications and Navigation (SCaN) team. SCaN provides communications services that are essential to the operations of NASA's space flight missions. After interviews, NASA will select the Top Team(s) for a virtual culminating event in February.

"Projects that allow collaboration between schools and directly apply

course standards in real world application exactly defines our division's project-based initiative. I am so impressed with the work of these students, their teacher, and our consultant, Dr. White," said Brion Bell, Principal of Blue Ridge Middle School.

Said J.L. Simpson Middle School Principal Lenny Compton, "We believe students should have an empowering education with exceptional experiences. A project like this with the depth of understanding, collaboration, and application will have an indelible impact in our students' belief about how they can continue to impact the world -- and beyond. Thank you, Mrs. Fraser and Dr. White!"

**GIFT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

for a slide show when I came across an album titled 'House,' filled with photos of every room, including all eight bedrooms. The wonderful, long, southern-facing porch with its sagging wicker furniture. Favorite fall maple trees, the barn with fences that needed fixing, drenched in sun. The front hall with the door open, the screen door probably letting in a cool summer breeze. And animals. Her old lab in front of her desk. The white cat curled up in a basket on the kitchen table. Horses grazing over the fence just off the back porch. Cattle in the field. The photos were fading and old, but they captured what she loved about her house—its warmth, her animals, her home.

"My mother had lived in Virginia for most of her long life and had a real appreciation of old houses and how they 'fit into the countryside.' The relation of the house to the barn, the way the light moved through the seasons, the garden—the landscape as a whole. How it works together, how it fits. 'And this house, this farm?' she said. 'It's perfect.'

"The Quaker village of Lincoln was perfect, too, and wrapped its arms around our mother. She went to Christmas parties and ice cream socials, and always was a judge in the 4<sup>th</sup> of July parade. In 2019, at the age of 100, our mother was the Grand Marshal, riding in a red convertible throwing candy and holding flowers from a neighbor's garden, leading the parade of chickens, ponies, dogs, kids, and bicycles.

"When she was 99, we were sitting in the dining room, a fire going. We talked once again about putting the farm in easement, but she told me that all of her six children had to agree, and that was still not the case. 'What would you like to see happen to the farm, how do you want it to look when you are not here?' I asked. She sat quietly looking toward the old orchard on the other side of the fence. 'I would want to be able to look out the

window and see horses and cattle, pretty much as it looks now."

**A legacy of land**

"Our mother left us on February 18, a quiet winter early evening, surrounded by family, light filtering through the windows. Beyond, the pandemic was ramping up, a mere mention in the news; 100 years earlier, she was born near the end of another. Down the road, the community had gathered for a meeting at the Quaker Meeting House. The chalkboard at the edge of town had held details of the meeting. At the conclusion, an announcement was made. 'Mrs. Chatfield-Taylor passed away earlier this evening. She will be missed.' As people left and walked home, our mother was driven slowly, with flashers on, through Lincoln for the last time. Some neighbors raised a glass of wine while one visited the chalkboard and changed it to read, 'Bon voyage, Mrs. C-T.'"

In the months following their mother's death, Kassie Kingsley, the eldest sibling, spearheaded the conservation easement effort and set up a meeting with the Land Trust of Virginia to see what the process entailed. The family would need appraisals, a lawyer, and an accounting specialist, but the Trust would walk them through the process, which took about three and a half months. The easement has been approved, and possible tax credits may be coming, which could offset the expense of setting it up.

"With the preservation of her farm," says Constance, "we believe that our mother's vision will live on, and a green 'link' will be forever provided to her much-loved village of Lincoln."

*If you are considering making a gift that will last forever, the Land Trust of Virginia can offer guidance and answer questions about conservation easements. Go to [landtrustva.org](http://landtrustva.org), or call Sally Price, executive director, or Ashton Cole, director of conservation and stewardship at (540) 687-8441.*

**PUBLIC HEARING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11**

In addition, He currently has control by contract of the Aldie Mountain property located behind the Aldie Assemblage, and he says he wants to sell or donate it at some time to the County or NOVA Parks for a public park.

Andrews also has requested that the County initiate rezoning of the A3 Aldie Mountain property to Rural Commercial to allow Aldie Park to be developed per his concept plan. The rezoning of the property would require public input through a separate public hearing.

The proposed agreement contains terms that require ACDC to make the necessary improvements to the historic tavern and construct an entrance road to the back 60 acres. The County's deposit of \$600,000 in escrow would be used to reimburse ACDC dollar-for-dollar for its expenditures improving the tavern and road.

**Another offer on the Aldie Assemblage**

As we go to press, another offer for the Aldie Assemblage has just been made and sent to the Board of Supervisors. It comes from a member of the Aldie community who owns a successful commercial business in the village.

Active in several preservation and community organizations, the prospective purchaser would not seek rezoning, a monetary match, or a road. The new offeror's intention is to restore the buildings to their previous conditions and to appropriate rural village uses.

**Aldie and St. Louis in tough situations**

This new offer and Andrews's proposed deal put Aldie and St. Louis residents and preservationists once again in difficult situations, as they are left to weigh the options, the County's stance, and what these could mean for the future of both historic villages and the Rural Policy Area.

The Friends of St. Louis wrote the following to the BOS, "... The citizens of St. Louis have lived in fear and uncertainty because of the devastating impact the

Mojax development will have on our community, chiefly our water supply, our tax base, and our fragile eco-system. It is not our wish nor our intention that Aldie be adversely affected by the new agreement with the developer, and its citizenry has every right to want to protect their village just as we have ..."

In an email to the Blue Ridge Leader, Aldie resident Katie Johnson wrote, "We recognize that the objective here is not to assist one village by seriously impacting another, but we're concerned that Aldie might experience collateral damage if detailed professional analysis and strong community involvement are not maintained. Ideally, we'd like to see independent solutions for both villages. We want a positive outcome that preserves historic structures, and is sympathetic to the historic nature of both St. Louis and Aldie.

"We believe the County shares this goal—of a strong and vibrant future for our communities—and we're concerned that this proposal jeopardizes that future for Aldie," continued Johnson. "We're ready and willing to work with the County to reach a mutually desirable solution for the properties it owns in Aldie Village, and we ask that sufficient time, transparency, and opportunity for public input be allowed to achieve this objective."

Since the proposed conveyance would be part of the agreement for the County to purchase the St. Louis property, the Board must first hold a public hearing and approve the conveyance of the Aldie Assemblage. Approval of an interim lease would allow Andrews's company to begin investigations and work on the property prior to closing.

Meanwhile, the County has time to consider the new offer by the Aldie resident.

Andrews's Aldie plan will be available online 72 hours prior to the Jan. 13 public meeting. For further details and instructions for remote participation in the meeting, visit [loudoun.gov](http://loudoun.gov).

**LANDFILL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 26**

abatement approach are: 1) to reduce the height of the fill dirt to the level that was depicted on a previously approved rural economy site plan; and 2) to prevent the negative impacts caused by numerous dump truck trips on the roads that would be necessary to remove all of the excess fill dirt from the property.

"A grading permit application will be submitted by the property owner that will propose to move the off-site fill dirt that is in excess of what was approved on the Rural Economy Site Plan (REST) to another area of the property.

"The area where the dirt will be moved is a recessed area of the property and will not be visible off-site."

The County has not provided a plan for this possible abatement, and it is not clear how it would be feasible to move thousands of truckloads of 'excess fill dirt' to another area of the property without violating existing County regulations. That "other" area is presumably subject to the same County regulations that are violated by the existing landfill.

The County has not issued a public notice for any hearings about this abatement approach.

**MOORE-SOBEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10**

phrase, "Prior preparation prevents poor performance." But he wasn't necessarily fully prepared to take on the roles in which he served. The authors write that before assuming the role of treasury secretary, his only economic training consisted of a single economics course in college. Regardless, he succeeded in the role. Baker's life is a lesson in determination and the ability to learn on the job, regardless of educational pedigree.

It also seems that Baker himself longed to hold the top job as president, even though he never won elected office. (He lost his race for Texas attorney general in 1978.) His relationship with President Bush may have sometimes been influenced by this tension. "When Baker pushed too hard," the authors write, Bush would apparently respond by saying, "If you're so smart, how come you aren't President?"

Baker himself did explore the possibility of running in 1996 but opted to remain in retirement. "I knew I could do that job," Baker said after he left government service. "So why didn't I run for president? Because I was too damn worn out." Yet the rightward lurch of the Republi-

**TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10**

And this story is offered with the proviso that I don't often travel down memory lane, and when I do, I seldom stay in one place very long; living in the past, one can often miss out on the present.

And you'll notice I singled out no individual actors, technicians, designers or others involved; suffice to say that at least 50 individuals offered some kind of service to each production. If you want to get to know a lot of people, get involved in theatre.

And, I recall that the very first story in this series

of specific locations (now in itself dating back over 10 years) focused on the historic Old Stone Church site in Leesburg: I used to sit – my first summer in Loudoun County – on the bench at that spot just off South Wirt Street and read my Shakespeare among the tombstones, trees, birds and squirrels. I hardly dreamed that I'd be directing full-cast productions of the Bard within a couple of years – just a couple of stones' throws from that place. Funny how time, space and us mere mortals can sometimes fit together just right.

can Party might have also influenced his decision-making. "He probably couldn't have gotten the Republican nomination because he wasn't far right enough," his stepdaughter, Elizabeth Winston, said.

In today's polarized age, Baker's ability to work across the aisle to get things done seems all the more impressive. He knew how to influence members of Congress and world leaders to gain support, such as when he helped secure passage of the Tax Reform Bill of 1986.

His success might have been a result of his penchant for compromise, likely due to his lack of deep-seated political ideology. "I didn't have any overarching paradigm for politics," Baker told the authors. "My view was you try to get things done." If only those currently serving in Washington had the same perspective.

*Samuel Moore-Sobel is the author of Can You See My Scars? For more, visit his website: [www.samuelmoore-sobel.com](http://www.samuelmoore-sobel.com).*

**IT SEEMS TO ME, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

Unfortunately, like many things in society, this right is being taken advantage of, by a group of leftists who now control the Main Stream and Social Media.

The so called "Newspapers of Record" in New York, Washington, and other major cities in the U.S. have turned sharply left. What's worse, they have joined with the Democrat Party to provide an unceasing flow of false news. This false news includes made up conspiracies (Trump and Russia, Russia, Russia ...), lack of reporting on true stories (Hillary and the phony dossier, Hunter Biden Ukraine and China corruption), and delaying stories until after the election (Hunter Biden and the IRS investigation) for starters.

In these papers, there is no distinction between editorials and news stories, most of which contain lies by omitting key facts. A recent cartoon in The Washington Post is a latest example of how far journalism has declined. The cartoonist created a full page of 100 Republican lawmakers – depicting them as rats. This was so offensive, that a major Jewish Holocaust organization condemned the cartoon as being strikingly similar to the images the Nazis used to portray Jews in the 1930s.

All the major three-letter television networks, are likewise leftist biased. They make no attempt to present both sides of the story. In fact, the chief executive of a network was caught on audio telling his employees to get Trump.

The big social media are also part of

this leftist agenda, by censoring information from Republican and Conservative sources. This censoring is done in very sophisticated manner by leftward slanted search results from a major search engine, and selective rejection of so called "offensive text" from social media websites.

This leftist control of television, internet, and print media was used in the last election to sway the results of the election to defeat Donald Trump. This media bias, the outright stuffing of the ballot boxes, and more in key swing states were enough to pull Joe Biden over the finish line. But that's another story; this piece is about Fake News and what you can do about it.

What you can do to stop Fake News brought to mind a radio Public Service Announcement I heard when I was kid. Smokey The Bear always stated at the end of his announcement, "Only you can prevent forest fires." Here I was in a tenement in the South Bronx with no trees visible for blocks. How was I going to prevent forest fires? As I grew up, I realized that what Smokey was trying to say was, if we band together as a group and act in unison, we can stop something bad from happening.

The same is true when it comes to Fake News. You have the power to stop Fake News. Like when I was a kid, you may ask how can I prevent or stop Fake News. The answer is very simple, yet will be difficult for you to implement. Nature provides an answer to how to do it. Consider Maslow's hierarchy of needs. At the base

of Maslow's hierarchy of human needs are the physiological needs: air, food, water, and shelter. These basic needs, in varying degrees, apply to any living thing on the planet.

Like air, water, and food for a living organism, media organizations have similar needs to stay in existence. The dirty little secret is that the media must have advertising revenue to exist. When companies pay good money to advertise in any media, they expect results. Companies measure sales results from various media ad placements. Ad placements that don't generate sales are stopped, and redirected to media that produces increased sales.

You have the power to control what newspapers you read, what television stations you watch, what internet search engines and social media you use, and what products you buy. For example, if you and millions of like-minded individuals stopped using the Fake News media, they would die on the vine. Fake News needs you to live on.

Between 70 and 80 million people voted for President Trump. If every one of these voters followed this principle, it's over. The problem is that the Fake News Media, by their sheer domination of communication, make it difficult for the average person to find alternatives.

Unfortunately, the ease of using social media makes it seem like a necessity, and you become addicted. By using these media, you encourage advertisers to support them to the tune of billions of dollars.

These billions of dollars are used to slant and censor the news, and prevent the truth from coming out.

Be aware that there are alternatives in all fields of communications; you don't have to settle for leftist media. As far as major newspapers are concerned, you should stop all subscriptions to the major metropolitan newspapers. Even though you may like to read the science, style, or metro sections of the newspapers, there are many independent sources available on the web for such information.

Good sources of news on television are Fox News and Fox Business. Recent up-and-coming networks are One America News and Newsmax. Fox News has lost some viewers recently because these viewers have sensed the start of a left leaning slant on the news.

You should stop your use of the mainstream social media, and replace it with email and smart phone texting when possible. If you absolutely need social media, Parler.com, has a true conservative base with over ten million users. You should be using Firefox as a web browser, and DuckDuckGo as a search engine. They don't track you like many of the more popular ones do. You should also use an encoded email like ProtonMail and a virtual private network (VPN) such as ProtonVPN to limit tracking that is present in all the well-known internet services. Both the email and ProtonVPN services have a free component.

So that's it, stop consuming Fake News and it will go away.

**7/690 INTERCHANGE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21**

destinations north and northeast of Rt. 7, including Woodgrove High School and Mountain View Elementary School.

The Rt. 7/Rt. 690 Interchange project is in the design phase. Construction of

the proposed interchange is anticipated to begin in 2023.

For more information about the 7/690 Interchange project, visit the project page at <https://www.loudoun.gov/5179/Route-7-690-Interchange>.

**SAVING GRACE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23**

hands on a Saturday or Sunday, rich folks, poor folks, blacks, whites, area Quakers and members of other religious organizations, local businesses, neigh-

bors, school kids, retirees. They, are you. Join in the joy. Contact Carol Morris Dukes; 703-727-5576, [mycompost@aol.com](mailto:mycompost@aol.com), [LincolnPreservationFoundation@gmail.com](mailto:LincolnPreservationFoundation@gmail.com).

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

upsetting and tiring. So, instead of getting worked up about the latest “Breaking News” moment, think about how you want to enjoy using that time instead.

- If you find yourself spending too much time on social media or with other forms of technology, taking a break might be the thing to do. So, instead of being preoccupied with screen time, think about how you want to enjoy using that time instead.

Keep in mind that January is only one month, and as you take positive steps forward, you will likely start to feel good about the changes you are making. Your favorite beer or wine or news show, as well as Facebook, video games, YouTube

and your smartphone will still be there after January; and, you can return to those things after with a more balanced mindset and with a healthy new habit or two.

I also encourage you to take stock over the holiday season of all that you have to be grateful for and all that you have learned about yourself over the past year. Even in these trying times maintaining optimism and positivity will help you, and those around you, as we wait for life as we knew it to return. With the vaccine on the way, there is light at the end of the COVID-19 tunnel, and we have much to be grateful for.

*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.*

COUNTY SEEKS OPINION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

tion, flood hazard reduction, aquifer recharge, erosion prevention, property value enhancement, economic development and scenic beauty.

Public engagement is a vital part of this planning initiative. Over the next several months, citizens will have opportunities to participate, including virtual meetings and surveys.

Residents are encouraged to complete an online survey, submit comments and find more information about the Linear Parks and Trails system project at [loudoun.gov/linearparksandtrails](http://loudoun.gov/linearparksandtrails). Inquiries and comments can also be sent by email to [lp@loudoun.gov](mailto:lp@loudoun.gov).

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