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FEBRUARY 2021

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A New Deal for Aldie and St. Louis: Can these rural villages survive it?

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Tangled in real estate deals between Loudoun County and developers, the fates of two small rural villages—St. Louis and Aldie—are now in the hands of the County's five-member finance committee.

From Supervisors' comments at the Board's Jan. 13 public hearing on the developers' proposal, it's not unreasonable to ask whether Aldie will have a fair shot at warding off a 35,000-square-foot commercial "gateway" to western Loudoun at the village's eastern edge.

What's the deal?

The deal now under Board of Supervisors finance committee review is an

expansion of an earlier proposal first made by the County to John "Jack" Andrews (who works with Leonard "Hobie" Mitchel)—Mojax, LLC. That proposal would have paid them \$1.5 million to put a conservation easement on their 16.4 acres in St. Louis, slated for a 27-house, by-right development, and to use the 16 dug wells to augment St. Louis's subpar water supply. The County would create a passive recreation area and protect an old cemetery in this historically African American village.

All seemed well until Mojax learned that Virginia's tax credits might dry up in 2021, so the company backed out of the deal.

After Mojax withdrew its approval, the

developers returned to the County to explore alternatives with Loudoun County Attorney Leo Rogers. What emerged from those discussions and a closed, Dec. 1 midnight session of the Board of Supervisors was an expanded deal that would bring into play 6.3 acres in three parcels in nearby Aldie known as the "Aldie Assemblage."

Mojax attorneys laid out the whys and hows for that deal in the January hearing. Jim Campbell of Leesburg-based Campbell Flannery PC explained to the Board: "The reality is our clients have \$2.7 million out of pocket in St. Louis, but the current appraised value is \$3.4 million. But this project"—the gateway the developers call "Aldie Park"—gets us back



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to whole, and allows us to do something we've had passion about for decades."

As envisioned and presented to the Board in full renderings, the "gateway to the west" would feature a brewery, retail shops, offices, an administration building, possibly an artist studio, and an 1820s tavern renovated into a high-end

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23»

Loudoun's Brandon Michon gives voice to frustrated parents everywhere

BY LAURA LONGLEY

If you didn't check your social media feed or cable news network the week of Jan. 26, then you missed out on Loudoun County's first viral moment of the year.

That Tuesday evening, Jan. 26, Brandon Michon, a frustrated parent of three and a Loudoun Valley High School graduate ('05), stepped up to the podium at the Loudoun County School Board meeting and let the members know

exactly what he thought of their performance in managing the schools and their decision-making skills throughout the coronavirus pandemic.

"You're a bunch of cowards hiding behind our children as an excuse to keep our schools closed. Figure it out or get off the podium," he said. "You should all be fired from your day jobs, because if your employers knew you were more inefficient than the DMV, you would be

replaced in a heartbeat... There are people like me who will gladly take your seat and figure it out!"

Within hours, he had been interviewed by local news channels, Tucker Carlson on Fox, the *Daily Mail*, *The Guardian*, CNN, and others.

After emotions had abated a bit, Michon opened up about his feelings and those of fellow parents in the County and across the country.



"These parents are hurting. They have no idea how they can go on managing their children's school and their own work when the School Board has not come up with a plan. That's what frustrates me most. We need to get the children back to school learning, being

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21»



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



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February is Black History month

BY ANDREA GAINES

As we celebrate Black History month, look around you. Loudoun County is a rich, rich, rich depository for African American historic sites and activity.

You'll find special places in Leesburg (including the Thomas Balch Library and Underground Railroad sites), Middleburg, Purcellville, Waterford, the Village of Lincoln, Aldie, and other places. Lots of self-guided tours, too.

Do you know the name Billy Pierce? Billy Pierce, born in Purcellville, was a famous choreographer who eventually opened a dance studio in Brooklyn, NY. One of his students was the one-and-only Fred Astaire.

See www.VisitLoudoun.org for more info – it has a great listing of Black History Month events. The Loudoun Visitor Information Center (corner of Loudoun and Harrison Streets in Leesburg) is a great place to start, too. See also www.balchfreinds.org, and events at the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg.

Celebrate the times.

This Moses Webb Family photo comes to us courtesy of the Thomas Balch Library; we thank Norah Schneider for helping us source it. Webb appears to have been a freedman; his name, however, does not appear on historic documents, including Loudoun County Slave Papers 1757-1865, Slaves Issues: Births 1853-1859, Free Black Papers 1757-1865, Enslaved Issues: 1757 to 1866, and Free Negroes: 1844 to 1861.

A "\$100 Reward" advertisement for a runaway "negro man" named Moses, 21 years old was placed by one Amy (Amie/ Amiee Jane?) Claggett, administrator for her late husband's estate (Dr. Samuel Claggett, Fauquier County,



death "unknown." Her "part owner" was Charles B. Adams. Patty's owners were listed as "Frances Adam's heirs." Her parents were "unknown."

Valentine's Day is Feb. 14

Romance is what you make it. Get going.

BY ANDREA GAINES

We think of Valentine's Day as a day of love.

And, although the day might actually have had some pretty unloving origins – two Roman dissidents met their demise at the hands of Emperor Claudius II on this day – my view is that we all have a well-established right to show our love on this special day, Feb. 14. There is also the Feast of Saint Valentine's connection.

The tradition is thousands of years old. So, savor it. Love is what you make of it.

What's a bird got to do with it?

In the 1800s, people were told to pay attention to the first bird they saw on this lovely day. Tradition had it, that if a sparrow was the first bird you saw, you were going to marry a poor person – but you'd still be happy. Here are some of the other happy and sad bird signs:

- A woodpecker: you'll remain single that year; bluebird: you'll marry a happy person; blackbird: you'll marry a member of the clergy; goldfinch: you'll marry a millionaire; robin: you'll marry a sailor; hawk: you'll marry a soldier or brave person; owl: your love will die young; cross-bill: you'll marry an argumentative or bad-tempered person; a flock of doves: you will have a happy marriage.

More fun

Directed at single women, obviously, here are some other Valentine's Day musings. Quite romantic, and fun.

- In some cultures, you would marry the first eligible man you see that day.
- Others say you should write the first name of the first man you see on a



piece of paper; that's the first name of the man you will marry. You can also note the first name of the first man you hear on the radio, or see on TV.

- Cut an apple in half. The number of seeds you see is the number of children you'll have.
- If you find a glove on the road, your future love will have the missing glove.
- Put a silver coin under your pillow, your true love will propose to you by the end of the year.
- If you tie a blue satin ribbon around your ankle, you'll be kissed by day's end.
- If you pin a bay leaf to each corner of your pillow ... you will dream of your future love.

Valentine's Day cards and sentiments

The passing around of Valentines' Day cards is not as old as the day itself. Cards started showing up about 600 years ago.

This tradition may have started thanks to an old gent imprisoned in the Tower of London. He wrote a love note to his wife one year (in 1415).

They say that some 80 percent of people send at least one Valentine's Day card.

In medieval times, "suiters" would read poetry or sing to the object of their affection.

If you want to get really romantic, and old-timey, try using what is believed to be a traditional greeting to one's beloved, addressing them as "My right well beloved Valentine."

Cupid – with his/her bow and arrow – gave a little malicious edge to Valentine's Day, while the heart symbol on Valentine's Day cards is probably of religious origins.

Originally, cards (with 190 million sent each year in the US) were made with real lace and ribbons. Paper lace was introduced in the mid-1800s. Flowers, chocolates (Cadbury), and the giving of other gifts started in the late 1800s and early 1900s.

LWC's Year-end bird count

Twenty-five years of love, wonder, and reverence

BY JOE COLMAN

In spite of the pandemic, 110 observers came out for the 24th Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count as 2020 came to a close. Sponsored by the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy (LWC), the bird count will celebrate its 25th anniversary this year. My, my, my what an accomplishment.

LWC excels at what is known as citizen science. Wildlife monitoring by everyday citizens is a deadly serious business. It can make your heart soar ... or it can smash

it to pieces.

In my personal experience, it does both; it's no easy job to record the loses you see, but, something about it keeps you going. Our area's wildlife needs me, so I keep going.

We are so glad you are still here

The 2020 Bird Count found 94 different bird species and 37,439 individuals – all higher than our 24-year



Great Horned Owl

Photo by Michael Scioritino

count average.

And, while the primary purpose of the Christmas Bird Counts, the world's longest citizen science project, is to study the population dynamics of birds, it's always fun to find rare and unusual birds ... and this year provided several.

One was a Western Kingbird, a very rare visitor to our area. We also observed a Golden Eagle, only the second for this count. Both were in an area northeast of Leesburg, which is rich in natural areas.

Cackling Geese were found for only the third time in the history of this count. A Palm Warbler that was found in western Loudoun a little south of the Goose Creek was only the fourth time for that species. A

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Estate Planning

It's time to create or update, estate plans

If you, your adult children, or other family members haven't created an estate plan or have one but the documents may be outdated, today's unprecedented times are a reminder of how vital having an up-to-date plan can be, particularly a health care directive that you may need if you're temporarily incapacitated.



RICHARD RICCI

Here are five of the most important documents for many estate plans:

1. Will

A will provides instructions for when you die. You appoint a personal representative (or "executor") to pay final expenses and taxes and distribute your assets. Remember that beneficiary designations on 401(k) plans, IRAs, insurance policies, etc., supersede what you have in your will. If you have minor children, a will is the only way to designate a guardian for them.

2. Durable power of attorney

A power of attorney lets you name an agent, or attorney-in-fact, to act on your behalf. You can give this individual broad or limited management powers. Choose them carefully because they will generally be able to sell, invest, and spend your assets.

A traditional power of attorney terminates upon your disability or death. However, a durable power of attorney will continue during incapacity to provide a financial management safety net. A durable power of attorney terminates upon your death.

3. Health care power of attorney

A durable power of attorney for health care, also called a health care proxy, authorizes someone to make medical decisions for you in the event you are unable to do so yourself. This document and a living will can be invaluable for avoiding family conflicts and possible court intervention if you're unable to make your own health care decisions. Remember to review this document regularly to ensure the right person is designated to make any necessary medical decisions.

If you are a parent, be aware that once

a child turns 18, you need a health care power of attorney for them so you can engage with their medical professionals.

4. Living will

A living will express your intentions regarding the use of life-sustaining measures in the event of a terminal illness. It expresses what you want but does not give anyone the authority to speak for you.

5. Revocable living trust

By transferring assets into a revocable trust, you can provide for their continued management during your lifetime (when you're incapacitated, for example), at your death, and even for generations to come. Your revocable living trust lets trust assets avoid probate and reduces the chance that personal information will become part of public records.

Along with working with an attorney to create or update these, and possibly other estate planning documents, remember to:

- Make sure your loved ones are able to access your documents or know whom to contact (such as your attorney) when they need them.
- Go over account titling, powers of attorney, and successor trustee provisions to be certain the right individuals have access to funds.
- Determine who should have information on electronic passwords and online banking access so they can access information, update automatic payments, etc.

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

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Dr. Mike,

My husband has gone on an insane health kick that is causing us a lot of problems. I don't know what to do. He's lost his mind with diet and exercise; and it started in April after he started working from home because of COVID-19.

He's lost 65 pounds on the Keto Diet and he exercises all the time. I guess I should be happy for him, but we don't see him anymore. He won't eat meals



DR. MIKE

with us because of his diet, and we hardly see him in the evenings or weekends due to his exercise routines.

Our children miss their dad, and I miss my husband. I've told him how I feel, but he tells me that I'm the one with the problem. He says it's absurd that I'm punishing him for being healthy.

He's training for an Iron Man, trying to get to a 10 percent body fat content. How does someone change all at once like this?

— *Help in Loudoun*

Dear Help,

It's one thing to prioritize wellness, but it's entirely another thing to have diet and exercise dominate your life; extremes usually aren't good, and extreme behaviors oftentimes have an underlying cause.

You haven't provided any background information, so it's impossible for me to fully analyze the possible contributing factors to your husband's sudden and drastic commitment toward health.

COVID-19 has been challenging, and it's possible that he's compensating with diet and exercise to cushion the associated stresses. Vaping and alcohol consumption is way up, and like people who are engaging in these behaviors excessively to feel better, your husband could

be doing the same with diet and exercise.

The inability to do normal things, the lack of personal space and too much togetherness, are some of the factors that have strained couples during COVID-19, so this may be the main culprit here.

I think you should sit down with your husband again to let him know that you're happy about the healthy changes he's made in his life, and that you support his pursuing a healthier lifestyle. But you have some concerns.

Rather than sharing that his behaviors are excessive, I would focus on your feelings and needs. Let him know that family meals are important, and that it would mean a lot to you and the children for him to be present for them. He can prepare his own food, but you'd like to eat as a family. You could let him know that his presence during family activities in the evening and on weekends is also missed.

If he's not receptive, schedule a consultation with a couple's therapist, to help the two of you bridge your communication and respective expectations.

Dr. Mike,

My husband has been offered a promotion to a new position on the West Coast, but his company needs him to relocate by March. If he doesn't accept, they will give him a severance package, and then he will be without a job.

The move would have a higher salary, but I know for certain that moving abruptly will be difficult on our three children. It will be especially difficult for our two older children in high school. My parents live in NOVA and my husband's parents live two hours away. So the children will lose their connection to their grandparents.

He wants to go; and I don't. His point is that he has a very high position (VP), and jobs like his don't come along

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ZOC

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

ZOC - pronounced "zock" - is the County's new Zoning Ordinance Committee, which is charged with helping to write a new zoning ordinance for the county. It's important to you and I'll explain why.

Zoning Matters

Zoning is generally a vague concept for people. They might be totally unaware of Loudoun's 1,025-page zoning ordinance until the beautiful pasture next door is attacked by the bulldozers of some creepy homebuilder. For him, it's all about the Benjies and to heck with you. Often a small group of panicked neighbors will then start digging into things and find that the creepy homebuilder can build his lousy houses "by right," essentially meaning that neighbors can do absolutely nothing to stop him. At that point you understand that zoning matters.

OPINION

Zoning has a mutuality. The homeowner next door can't decide to turn his house into, say, an auto repair shop, and that protects you. However, you are similarly constrained - no auto shop for you, either.

How Zoning Happens

Zoning ordinances are laws passed by a location's governing authority. Here, Loudoun's Board of Supervisors often passes amendments to the existing zoning ordinance (over 90 amendments to the current ordinance), and periodically passes an entire new ordinance. That's what's happening now and that's why ZOC was established.

Citizens elected a good Board of Supervisors in 2019. There are some very bright members and a lot of thoughtful ones. I initially thought it might be pro-conservation and against more growth, but it's actually turned out to be pretty balanced on land use issues. Conservationists can live with that; it simply means that they must present solid data and logic to support their views.

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— It Seems to Me —

Raising the Minimum Wage

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

The new president has implemented a series of progressive executive orders. Other actions are in the wings, including asking Congress to enact an increased minimum wage of \$15 an hour, from the \$7.25 (in Virginia) an hour presently in effect. What I am going to present in this article are the consequences of this action.

OPINION

If you think this is a good idea, why stop at \$15, how about \$20, or even \$50? It doesn't feel right, does it? Why not? You're right, who is going to pay for it, and are there unintended consequences when you mandate a higher than justified minimum wage for the economy.

In economics, as in the more exact sciences such as physics and chemistry, there are laws of nature that can't be violated. We will examine what is going to happen based on history. As

someone once said, "There are no free lunches." The truth is the minimum wage was never intended to be a living wage but, a starter base for workers.

Getting back to the \$15 an hour minimum wage, Bloomberg News noted that "A team of economists, including the University of Washington's Jacob Vigdor, have been studying the employment effects of Seattle's move to increase its minimum wage to \$15. In 2016, Seattle, a high-wage city, had hit a \$13 minimum, on its way to \$15. The economists found that this led to a nine percent reduction in low-wage jobs.

"The pay increase it generated didn't make up for the reduction in employment, and earnings fell for low-wage workers overall." In addition, the Congressional Budget Office stated that, "Raising the federal minimum wage to \$15 an hour would result in an estimated 1.3 million jobs lost

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Fake news? Beyond the pale

Dear Editor:

I'm writing this from the perspective of two days after a violent mob attacked the United States Capitol, resulting in several deaths, significant damage to our Capitol building, and irreparable damage to the stature of the United States.

This mob was driven by the spread of lies. Lies that were spread intentionally, for the purpose of inflaming a group of people, so they would donate money to Donald J. Trump and those allied with him.

How could so many Americans, undoubtedly many of whom care deeply for our country and its people, come to the point that they were willing to smash windows, destroy offices, and threaten

LETTER

our Congress and their staff – all while chanting, laughing, and high-fiving one another on social media?

One of the reasons is exactly the kind of social and information, isolation, and disengagement being promoted by Joe LaFiandra in your paper. He makes numerous claims in his article which have been roundly dismissed as untrue by reputable sources. He promotes "news" organizations that are proven regularly to have significant bias, of the sort he blames reputable news organizations of having. And he encourages disengagement from curated news, in a way that will further intensify the echo chamber currently being experienced by people.

If we don't hear alternative points of view, or we don't believe anyone, ever,

who contradicts our point of view in the slightest way, or if we don't ever accept that there is nuance and grey area between viewpoints, we will continue to divide as Americans, and drift further and further apart until we can't talk at all. Violence is all we would have left.

The answer to our current situation is more engagement, locally and nationally, with each other, with others who have varying points of view. None of us is right about everything, or knows enough about everything to have an opinion about everything.

We trust our representatives to do exactly that, represent us, in matters great and small, because we cannot know everything.

I trust the election officials who certified our elections, because I cannot demand that everyone prove to me

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Violation of Ethics Policy and Rules of Order

Dear Editor:

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors' resolution last week urging Delegate Dave LaRock to resign was a purely political stunt, a direct violation by the Democrats of their individually signed Ethics

Policy, and two violations of their own Rules of Order, which each one of them agreed to at their first meeting in January.

LETTER

Item 11 of their own individually signed Ethics Policy states that they will "use county resources, county staff or staff that is in anyway financially compensated by the county ONLY to conduct county business..." Nothing in the resolution is related to official county business.

They also violated their recently adopted "Rules of Order" in Section IV. E. 4 on Resolutions and Proclamations, which states that "due to the nature and pur-

pose of Board Resolutions, they should NOT be controversial, and it is preferred that all resolutions be approved by a UNANIMOUS vote from the dais."

Additionally, they violated their Rules of Order ignoring another requirement of Section IV. E. 4. Resolutions and Proclamations, which states that "Board Members SHALL notify County staff of such Resolutions for the agenda two weeks

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County, Purcellville talk major development projects

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Jan. 21 Town of Purcellville Planning Commission meeting, staff presented the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors' request for zoning amendments affecting an 86.13-acre portion of a 226-acre parcel, rezoning it from Transition X to IP Institutional and Public Use.

The parcel is part of the Fields Farm property near Woodgrove High School and Mountain View Elementary. The rezoning is called a "non-conditional rezoning," meaning no proffers will be offered to the Town.

Proposed projects include a commuter parking lot, a park-and-ride lot, approximately six sports fields, four ball fields, one possible park or well/water tower site (or possible police station), and the extension of Mayfair Crown Drive at the cul-de-sac – making it a through street and linking it to a second access (future Fields Farm Park Road) to other parts of the development.

Stan Milan, Purcellville Town Council Member and Council liaison to the Planning Commission, noted that during his campaign for Town Council the resi-

dents of Mayfair were "not too keen on having a through road through their community."

At a later meeting, he said that the road could become a cut through, and the community would have to weigh in on this. Milan also asked if there would be cross walks, and sound barriers isolating road noise from the community.

Dale Lehnig, engineering manager for the Town of Purcellville said, "When Mayfair was approved, it was required to have a second entrance because of the size of that development ... The road has pretty much been approved."

Planning Commission Chair Nedim Ogelman, answered, "When I was on Council, while there was always an idea that something would happen with that land, those certainly were not presented as part of the whole package. That is to say that secondary entrance access was strictly described in terms of what was needed for the Mayfair community itself."

He also pointed out that one has to think about "second and third order of effects on our community, having this construction there." He asked, if "those fields" would "crowd out, or complement" fields like Haske Field and Fire-



man's Field. "I don't want to vote without additional information especially about traffic impacts ..." Lehnig responded, "You are absolutely right, and we have been asking for information on traffic."

Commissioner Nan Forbes said that "sound and lights should be looked at. That can be extremely disruptive to neighbors and they are not good for the environment. So I know when Franklin Park opened, promises were made: 'no lights.' Then all of a sudden two or three years down the road, you have giant lights and nighttime activity." Are there going to be loud speakers?" she asked.

Getting back to the Mayfair community, and the possible extension of May-

fair Crown Drive, Commissioner Stosh Kowalski suggested having a tree buffer between the houses and the fields. Regarding lights, he said "You can do things with lights to make them less impactful ... Just because Mayfair moved there expecting nothing to

be developed, doesn't guarantee them perpetual woods ... If they wanted that, they should have bought the land." He finished by saying he wants to "look into traffic and noise."

Lehnig said there will be lights on the field, but her understanding was that it would be daytime only. Town Attorney Sally Hankins said she didn't remember what the County said regarding lights, but "maybe it will be early evening." She pointed out that added to the mix is the County, which under a different administration, agreed to give the Town acreage for a well site or any kind of water infrastructure.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

The Pullen House will be sold

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Jan. 12 Purcellville Town Council meeting, the council voted 7-0 to start the process of selling the Pullen House – by sealed bid at a base bid of \$330,000. The Pullen house is located at 301 S. 20th Street, across from the Bush Tabernacle.

The Town, under the Lazaro administration, purchased the .51-acre property in 2010. The property has been vacant since then, and has been identified as one of the Town's underutilized assets.

The Council was faced with three choices: demolish the home for \$70,000, reserving the property for a future Town use; sell the property by sealed bid; or sell the property using a real estate firm. Before a sale can take place, the Town would have to hold a public hearing.

Town Council Member Chris Bertaut, who is the Council liaison on the Purcellville Economic Development Advisory Committee, said that when he first



started looking at the Pullen house; "I thought there were a lot of very good worthy uses for the house; it could be rebuilt. I have changed my opinion since then. I have come to understand it's a structure with seven-foot interiors, asbestos insulation in places, and other very, very serious issues.

"Many of the things that have been proposed as recreational amenities ..." he continued, "are also worthy. I like the idea of a tot lot ... a water park ... and a picnic space.

"But, I would argue there is no reason to put any of them on the existing property. We would find the highest and best use of this property by selling it, preferably by sealed bid, and taking the revenue that comes from that, and apportioning at least some if to one or more of these amenities.

"There is space for things like that behind the Bush Tabernacle and various other spaces in between and around the ball fields." Bertaut noted that if the Town keeps the property, a small space, the Town would be left with finding revenue for the desired amenities. "I counsel everyone [here] to sell the property."

Council Member Stan Milan reasoned that if the Town kept the property, the cost alone to tear the house down would be prohibitive, and "there is no estimate for a cost to put anything on it ... My suggestion is to sell it, and use part of the money" for a tot lot and/or a water park elsewhere. He said that the Town still needs to look at the community garden space, which is

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

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Mayor Fraser joins National League of Cities drone effort

The National League of Cities welcomes Purcellville to their Unmanned Air Mobility Integration Advisory Forum of cities and towns, to advise the federal government on efforts to integrate unmanned aerial vehicles, or drones, into the United States airspace. The first meeting was held Jan. 29.

GOVERNMENT

Mayor Kwasi Fraser will represent the Town in this working group, which will provide strategic advice to the range of government and industry sectors who are advancing drone integration technology into the complex airspace above communities, and ensure there is coordination among all levels of government.

This new forum is comprised of approximately twenty-five large and small cities and towns with roles in managing airports of different sizes, transportation planning, and strategic technology deployments. The

communities will be providing directional insight to key government partners on the upcoming drone identification rulemaking, concepts of operations, necessary elements of Unmanned Traffic Management systems, and essential principles of operations shared amongst industry stakeholders and partners in aviation.

In 2018, the Federal Aviation Administration NextGen Office released an overarching Concept of Operations (V1.0) for Unmanned Aircraft Systems (UAS) Traffic Management (UTM) that presented a vision and described the associated operational and technical requirements for developing a supporting architecture, and operating within a UTM ecosystem.

UTM is defined as the manner in which the FAA will support operations for UAS operating in low altitude airspace. UTM utilizes indus-

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Purcellville gives nod to western Loudoun Aquatic and Recreation Center

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Dec. 8, 2020 Purcellville Town Council Meeting, the Council unanimously passed a resolution in support of a western Loudoun Aquatic and Recreation Center. The resolution in part states: "Purcellville is committed to partnering with Loudoun County to bring a greatly needed recreation and aquatic center to western Loudoun County; and on December 8, 2020, the Purcellville Town Council discussed, in an open session, and has expressed, by a majority vote, its willingness to extend water and sewer service for the County proposed western Loudoun Recreation and Aquatic Center ... Whereas Purcellville is the home

to five Loudoun County Schools, including two High Schools with swim teams ..."

Mayor Kwasi Fraser believes this is needed for the school's swim teams, and the community as a whole, and has been pushing for this for several years. In addition, he said the tournaments and events will bring economic value to Purcellville and western Loudoun County.

When discussing this subject, Fraser has pointed out that having a western Loudoun Aquatic and Recreation Center would bring in needed revenue for the Town's water and sewer system.

Fraser said that either the Woodgrove site which is over 220 acres, or part of the Purcellville West prop-

erty, owned by Chuck Kuhn, would be good choices for the Loudoun Aquatic and Recreation Center. He has said that this option would be a great choice for the community, and this type of use would negate the developers' consistent requests for more high-density residential housing.

In June 2020, Fraser and a former Loudoun Valley High School student, Muka Nyamuhindu, created the western Loudoun Aquatic Center Facebook page. Go to Western Loudoun Aquatic and Recreation Center@WesternLoudounAquaticCenter on Facebook, to promote the center.

Lessons in Leadership

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

When I was in college, I heard author Dr. Shane Lopez talk about his book, *Making Hope Happen*. In his talk, he spoke about the need for a good leader to both anticipate problems and to spread hope. Years later, I heard Gen. Colin Powell speak about how inspiration was more important than motivation, and that to be a good leader, one needs to inspire others.



MOORE-SOBEL

Last fall, I was given the chance to step into a manager role and lead a team of program managers. It is a role that I love – I have learned so much in the intervening months. I've learned that managing is not something we can probably ever be fully prepared for. I spent years reading about leadership, devouring business articles, and learning from mentors who were strong leaders in their own right. Despite that preparation, some lessons I could only learn after assuming a managerial role. Whether you are a manager at work or not, we

are all leaders to some extent—in our professional or personal lives.

First, I've learned that managing during a pandemic brings a unique set of challenges. For instance, I haven't met most of my team in-person. Our interactions are restricted to phone calls, conference calls, and instant messages. I have to find ways to earn their trust through virtual interaction. Video-conferencing helps, but there is still so much that can get lost in communication without face-to-face conversation. I'm finding that it's important to be authentic and transparent with my team, so that the intent of my words does not get lost.

I've also learned how important it is to cast a vision for my team. As a manager, I am asking team members to work on projects, take on new assignments, and fulfill the various requirements of their roles. This requires me to earn credibility with my team. This can be accomplished in part by providing a clear roadmap for the journey ahead. No one wants to be on a rudderless team. Casting a vision that everyone can buy into allows for

my team to feel a vested interest in the future. Connecting the dots to the projects the team is taking on now to where the team will be three to six months down the road will help others derive meaning from their work.

I once had a mentor tell me that to be a good leader, you had to be "believable as a leader." Meaning that to gain credibility with your team, you have to find ways to earn your team's respect. I strive to earn my team's respect by jumping in and completing any task, no matter how "menial." I'm finding that being a leader doesn't mean that there are now tasks that are "beneath me." In fact, it's the exact opposite.

I've noticed that as a leader, more people are watching; not only my team, but other teams with which I regularly interact. This means I have to lead by example. I work hard to show how I would like my team to interact with others. Sometimes, the most effective way I can lead my team is simply by being an example of what it is I am asking them to be.

I've also learned the importance of apologizing to team members. There

have been a few instances where this was necessary. Being a good leader doesn't mean you never say you're sorry. In fact, admitting fault is a necessary part of leadership. No leader is perfect; we all make mistakes. In my experience, I've grown to respect the managers I've had or the leaders I have encountered that haven't been afraid to admit they were wrong. It means they are human, want to rectify the situation, and are working to do better the next time. Seeing this in action is invaluable to earning the respect of your team.

I've learned more lessons which I'll share in a future column. In the meantime, I'll leave you with this: leadership is hard work. It's easy to get caught up in the demands of the job and forget why we were hired to lead in the first place. Leadership is all about people. Quite simply, a manager's role is to encourage, inspire, provide constructive feedback, and most of all, to lead with empathy. Especially now, when the world feels like it's about to fall apart at the seams.

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

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Great Country Farms discusses adding campground to farm, winery, brewery, special events, other businesses

BY ANDREA GAINES

Great Country Farms, one of the iconic family farm businesses in the County, met with various state, and local officials Jan. 25 to discuss the establishment of a campground with cabins and RV parks on its 400-acre farm in Bluemont. But Raymond Taylor, one of the applicants, told the Blue Ridge Leader just three days later that they do not intend to pursue the project.

Campsites are a permitted use in the farm's AR-2 zoning district by special exception/minor special exception. While not 100 percent interchangeable, the terms "rustic cabins," "campsites," and "RV parks" are sprinkled throughout the zoning ordinances; each with rules and regulations designed to promote the rural economy while protecting nearby residential and other uses.

The Great Country Farms neighborhood

GCFs is located in Bluemont on 400 acres that includes farmland, wooded areas, and beautiful, steep slopes leading up to the Blue Ridge Mountains. The mostly residential area is increasingly busy, right on the border between Loudoun and Clarke Counties.

Roadways serving the area include Rt. 7 and Blue Ridge Mountain Road (Rt. 601), Snickersville Turnpike, and Rt. 626 (Foggy Bottom Road).

Loudoun's rural economy has taken off here. There is the annual Bluemont Fair. The Bears Den Scenic Overlook and Campground. The Appalachian Trail itself. Numerous breweries, wineries, and small businesses. The Boulder Crest Retreat Center. The Raven Rocks trailhead. The Mount Weather Emergency Operations Center – on 601 heading towards Rt. 50. And, others.

This commercial activity is juxtaposed with family farms, hundreds of quiet residential properties, and rich wildlife habitat. The fragile, eastern side of the mountain, wetter than the western slope, is prime wildlife habitat, and is a recharging zone for Loudoun Valley's lower landscapes, the Goose Creek Watershed, and Eastern Loudoun.

The new commercial activity in the area is transforming life here, causing increased traffic, light and noise pollution, dangerous situations on Rts.7 and 601, and for the many hikers using Bear's Den and the Appalachian Trail. Just turning onto one's driveway can present hazards, and smoke from outdoor fire pits wafts into yards, onto patios, and through open windows.

In the Jan. 25 pre-application conference, an aide of Supervisor Tony Buff-

ington (R-Blue Ridge) acknowledged the traffic problems, indicating that the applicants "know that traffic is a concern in this area, and heard a lot from residents ..." Then, addressing the intersection of Rts.7 and 601 specifically, Buffington's aide said they still need to learn more "before any decisions can be made."

Representatives for the potential future campground applications noted this: "Tent camping [would be] for people coming off the Appalachian Trail ... or cabins for those visiting Western Loudoun ... Nothing is written in stone, yet, would start out with more camp sites for tent camping and RVs and few cabins, leaning towards adding more cabins each year ..."

Nearby residents wonder how many cabins, RVs, campsites – or whatever might be ultimately proposed – could be made compatible with residential life here.

The Great Country Farms operation

The Zurschmeide family has received the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce's Agribusiness of the Year award twice "for its unique efforts to farm in a different climate through innovation, rather than 'selling out and growing houses.'"

Working the site since the 1970s, they offer wedding services, corporate retreats, farm tours, and kids' activities. There is pick-your-own, a farm store, a bakery, Community Supported Agriculture, a winery, a brewery, hard cider tastings, and various agriculturally-related festivals. There are cow trains, mazes, pumpkin picking, goats, a fishing pond, and a farm market.

Bluemont Vineyard includes a "studio-style stone cottage nestled among the vines ..." Dirt Farm Brewery includes a "brewer's cottage". And, the farm itself is described as featuring "a cozy, yet spacious three-bedroom blue door cottage ..."

The Great Country Farms website notes that the property is open Monday through Wednesday 11 a.m. to 5 p.m., and Thursday through Sunday 11 a.m. to 7 p.m.

A "Harvest Room & Kitchen" offers restaurant-style experiences for small parties. Wine-pairing events are offered throughout the year. Henway Hard Cider, an extension of Bluemont Vineyards, offers hard cider made with farm apples.

Campground basics (Section 5-646 of ordinance)

As defined by the zoning ordinance, a campground is "An outdoor facility designed for overnight accommodations of human beings in tents, rustic cabins, and shelters for

recreation, education, naturalist or vacation purposes," along with "accessory appurtenances."

Planning and Zoning envisions campgrounds to be a minimum of 40 acres. GCFs wanted to combine two parcels totaling 50-or-so acres to contain 35 cabins, and 15 campsites.

Overall, Section 5 addresses dozens of potential uses, from the familiar bed and

breakfast, farm market, and brewery/winery, to "flex-industrial," and seasonal labor dormitories.

The County wants to encourage economic activity, while also ensuring that it operates alongside normal residential activity safely and without conflict. This includes basic rules with respect to lighting, road access, traffic flow, parking, noise,

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Loudoun to host free twice-weekly COVID-19 testing

Loudoun County will hold twice-weekly, free drive-thru COVID-19 testing events at multiple locations beginning in February. Unlike past testing events hosted by Loudoun County, these weekly, fixed events will not be mass testing sites and instead are intended to provide regular, predictable testing opportunities for the community. As a result, capacity at these fixed testing sites will be limited.

GOVERNMENT

“While mass testing is an important part of our COVID-19 prevention strategy because we could efficiently test 1,000 to 2,000 people per day, they were sporadic,” said Loudoun County Health Director Dr. David Goodfriend. “These more frequent, but smaller testing events will accommodate a few hundred people per day, but the frequency provides residents with greater flexibility when the need for a COVID-19 test arises.”

February COVID-19 Testing Schedule

The events will be on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 10 a.m. – 2 p.m.

- **Feb. 4:** Franklin Park, 17501 Franklin Park Drive, Purcellville.
- **Feb. 9 and 11:** Philip A. Bolen Memorial Park, 42405 Claudia Drive, Leesburg (Enter the park on Cross-trail Boulevard from Sycolin Road.).

- **Feb. 16 and 18:** Cascades Library, 21030 Whitfield Place, Potomac Falls (Access the testing location in the back parking lot, near the senior center.).
- **Feb. 23 and 25:** Dulles South Recreation & Community Center, 24950 Riding Center Drive, South Riding.

The testing events are open to all. There are no age or residency requirements. No prescriptions or appointments are necessary. A person does not have to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 in order to be tested. A PCR test (nasal swab) will be administered, which tests for the novel coronavirus. No antibody or rapid tests will be offered. No COVID-19 vaccine will be available at these events.

Registration Form

To help reduce wait times, people who plan to attend the testing events are strongly encouraged to complete a registration form for each person who will be receiving a test prior to arriving at the testing site. The registration form is required and asks for general demographics and contact information, including name, date of birth, address, phone number and current symptoms, if any.

The fillable form may be downloaded, filled out, printed and completed forms

should be brought with you to the testing site. Forms will also be available at the testing site for individuals who do not have access to a printer or otherwise are unable to complete the forms in advance.

Future Testing Events

Loudoun County expects to continue hosting COVID-19 testing events on an ongoing basis as long as a need for COVID-19 testing exists in the community. Residents are encouraged to visit the county’s website regularly to review the schedule and to access registration forms: loudoun.gov/COVID19testing.

Find other COVID-19 testing sites in the region.

When to Get Tested

The Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) encourages people to get tested for COVID-19 under the following circumstances:

- People who have symptoms of COVID-19.
- People who have had close contact (within 6 feet for a total of 15 minutes or more) with someone with confirmed COVID-19.
- People who have taken part in activities that put them at higher risk for COVID-19 because they cannot socially distance as needed, such

as travel, attending large social or mass gatherings or being in crowded indoor settings.

- People who have been asked or referred to get testing by their health care provider.

The CDC recommends that people who are tested self-quarantine/isolate at home pending test results and follow the advice of their health care provider or a public health professional.

Learn more about COVID-19 testing.

Stay Informed

Loudoun County encourages residents to stay informed about COVID-19.

Visit loudoun.gov/coronavirus for more information about how to protect yourself and your family and to sign up for email and text updates on COVID-19.

Opt in to receive text messages from Loudoun County about COVID-19:

- English: Text LCCOVID19 to 888777.
- Spanish: Text LCCOVIDESP to 888777.

Residents with questions about COVID-19 may call the Loudoun County Health Department’s information line, 703-737-8300, or send an email to health@loudoun.gov.

Loudoun installing more Wi-Fi Hot Spots – For Western Loudoun residents during COVID-19 Pandemic

Loudoun County has installed a new Wi-Fi hot spot for residents in western Loudoun. The county’s Department of Information Technology has installed outdoor Wi-Fi at the Loudoun Valley Community Center in Purcellville, which is operated by the Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services.

GOVERNMENT

The installation of the free hot spot, which was accomplished with funds from the Coronavirus Aid, Relief and Economic Security Act, is intended to help residents who have no reliable internet service to access information about COVID-19 and complete any other type of essential online business, such as ordering groceries or other household supplies. Residents are asked to stay in their

vehicles in order to maintain the physical distancing needed to mitigate the spread of COVID-19. Users of the service who are not in vehicles are also asked to maintain a distance of approximately 6 feet from others.

The signal is available to access in the parking lot of the community center at 320 W. School Street in Purcellville. The name of the network is ParksRec-Public. No password is required. The service is available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Last year, the County worked to amplify the Loudoun County Public Library’s Wi-Fi signal so that it is available to access in the parking lots immediately adjacent to the Lovettsville, Middleburg and Purcellville libraries. A similar project is underway at the Lovettsville Community Center.

Stay Informed

Loudoun County encourages residents to stay informed about COVID-19.

Visit loudoun.gov/coronavirus for more information about how to protect yourself and your family and to sign up for email and text updates on COVID-19.

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Delegate LaRock Praises Judge's Order on Election Integrity – Renews Call for Committee Reinstatement

In a consent order dated Jan. 13, signed by Hon. William W. Eldridge IV, Presiding Judge of the Frederick County Circuit Court, the Virginia Board of Elections agreed to

GOVERNMENT

revise their regulations to bring them into compliance with Virginia law. The lawsuit was brought by Frederick County Electoral Board member Thomas Reed. According to a statement from the attorney in the case, "This consent decree gives Mr. Reed everything he requested – a permanent ban on accepting ballots without postmarks after Election Day, and is a loss for the Virginia bureaucrats who said ballots could come in without these protections."

Del. Dave LaRock said, "I am grateful to my constituent, Thomas Reed, for bringing this important litigation to protect the integrity of Virginia's elections in 2020, and going forward. The 2020 elections, already made more difficult by the emergence of COVID-19 and the Governor's attempts to move local election dates in an illegal manner, was further complicat-

ed by dozens of July 1, 2020, changes in election law passed by Democrats in the General Assembly.

"My office's conversations with the Commonwealth's Voter Registrars showed that the Virginia Department of Elections attempts to interpret and regulate in accordance with all these new laws in 2020 caused significant confusion and wasted time and resources of our dedicated registrars and election workers. Now we know that at least one of those regulations violated Virginia law. Unconstitutionally enacted legislation passed in September 2020, further disrupted the election and allowed hundreds of thousands of ballots to be cast in a manner that lacked proper chain-of-custody. All these issues not only undermined the integrity of Virginia's elections, but overwhelmed and abused our hard-working registrars and election workers."

In addition, the mandatory annual update of the voter rolls throughout the Commonwealth to correct the records of voters who have changed residenc-

es was not performed prior to the 2020 General Election due to information not being provided to local registrars by the Department of Elections.

During the current session of the Virginia General Assembly, Democrats are continuing to bring forward legislation which will continue to unnecessarily burden local registrars and undermine election integrity in the Commonwealth, even proposing to amend our Constitution to guarantee that the legislature cannot regulate or prevent voting by "those adjudicated to be mentally incompetent".

At the same time, legislation attempting to restore integrity, transparency and accountability to the voting process has been voted down in both the House and Senate Privileges and Elections Committees.

The same day that Judge Eldridge's order was issued, House Speaker Filler-Corn stripped committee assignments from three delegates, including Del. LaRock and Del. Mark Cole, the ranking Republican member of the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

Greenway Legislation passes in Senate Transportation Committee

On Jan. 28, Senate Bill 1259, introduced by Senator John Bell, passed out of the Senate Transportation Committee on a 12-3 vote. Senate Bill 1259 will bring transparency and accountability to the process of toll rate increases on the Dulles Greenway.

"This is a big win today for Loudoun County and Northern Virginia commuters. Passing this legislation would not have been possible without the bipartisan support of the Loudoun Delegation and the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors," said Senator John Bell. "We have been working on this issue for a long time, and I'm proud that we were able to come together on this important issue facing Northern Virginia commuters. I look forward to passing this bill through the Senate and helping relieve our commuters from high tolls."

The legislation emphasizes that any proposed toll rates must be reasonable, not materially discourage use of the roadway, and provide the operator no more than a reasonable return.

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Amazing space: If you're in business, don't let Purcellville's 130 E. Main Street pass you by

Rarely does a commercial property as sensational as this come on the market in Loudoun County.

Welcome to 130 East Main Street, just listed by On the Market... with Sam and Ray. This 1.23-acre marquee property could not be better located, commanding the middle of downtown Purcellville—one of the fastest growing towns in Virginia's fastest-growing and America's richest county. Median income of Loudoun's 400,000+ residents is \$136,000.

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Sam and Ray call C-4 the "Alphabet of Zoning," since it provides you with opportunities that include, for example, an adult day care center, bank, bed and breakfast, and bakeries; a clinic



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On the Market... with Sam & Ray

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and child care center, eating establishments (without drive-in); garden stores, a fitness center; hotel, indoor theater, medical, office, and publishing uses; radio, television, and retail operations, and many more.

Known as the data center capital of the world, Loudoun also boasts a strong agricultural economy built on wineries (45 at last count), a burgeoning number of breweries, organic farming, and horse and cattle operations.

What makes this property all the more attractive is its ideal location a few steps from the region's WO&D biking trail, and Purcellville's Old Town district, where visitors and residents alike frequent Magnolias at the Mill for a robust meal, a taste of Catoctin Creek Distillers' trademarked Virginia Rye Whisky, or an old-fashioned fishing rod at the iconic Nichols Hardware Store.

It's hard to appreciate the possibilities of this remarkable property without paying a visit. Sam invites you to come take a look and imagine your build-out in what is quickly becoming a business hot spot in Loudoun County.

For more information, Sam and Ray can send you a complete property package with video. Call (703) 470-0680 or have your realtor call On the Market... with Sam and Ray/Keller Williams Realty.

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Remembering Jean Brown

Jean Smith Brown, resident of Lincoln and a community fixture died Jan. 15. Brown is survived by daughter, Sara Brown, son-in-law, Scott Maison, and grandchildren Hannah and William. She leaves behind sisters Page Smith, Lucy Albritton, brother Admiral Leighton Smith, and nieces Page Lewis, Captain Dorothy Milbrandt, Rolins Thorpe and nephew, Leighton Smith.

Brown was born June 14, 1938, Jean Elizabeth Smith and grew up in Alabama. She attended college at Auburn University, before she began a career as a secretary on Capitol Hill. It was there she met her future husband, then-Assistant Parliamentarian for the US House of Representatives, William Holmes Brown. They married and settled down to Bill's eight-generation family farm in Loudoun, Oakland Green.

As her husband worked on Capitol Hill, Brown settled into Loudoun County life and soon came daughter Sara.

Brown worked as a secretary to local Christian writer, Catherine Marshall who lived in Lincoln until her death. Brown and her husband were instrumental in establishing the Goose Creek Historic and Cultural Conservation District, which placed more than 11,000 acres on the Virginia Landmarks Register and the National Register of Historic

Places.

She also opened Oakland Green as a Bed & Breakfast and quickly learned that the local ordinances were not ready for rural businesses like B&Bs. So, she gathered together with a few other innkeepers in the county to start the Loudoun Bed and Breakfast Guild, which still advocates for B&Bs and Inns in Loudoun.

Brown possessed an artist's talent for flowers and gardens. She was active in the Leesburg Garden Club for many years, serving as President as well as chairing Historic Garden week. She served three terms on the Garden Club of Virginia's Conservation Committee and chaired the GCV Conservation Forum.

Brown and her husband put the farm in a permanent conservation easement in the mid 1990s. The farm now boasts its 10th generation and is named a Virginia State Certified Centennial Farm – continuously farmed by the same family for more than 100 years.

Brown twice won the Clean Water Farm Award, and was named Conservation Farmer of the year. She also served as a gubernatorial appointee to the Virginia Agricultural Council.

She served for decades on the



L to R: Jean Brown and her daughter Sara

Brown pos-
sessed an art-
ist's talent for
flowers and gar-
dens. She was
active in the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

How we felt about Jean Brown

Reflections from friends

"One of my last and most precious messages from Jean was: 'Wishing all of y'all good health and happiness.'"

"Lying in bed last night thinking about Jean, our wonderful get togethers ... we picked up Jon Meacham's book for her on John Lewis before Christmas. Just last week she told me she had finished it."

"She made me laugh, was always willing to say out loud what the rest of us were probably thinking. She was, I think, completely guileless – such a forthright person. Jean had a great combination of kindness, and also blunt

honesty that made her rare."

"She was the kind of person to say 'Drop over for coffee ... any time,' and mean it."

"Jean lved to talk about her early years, falling in love with Bill, her two attempts to win election, young daughter Sara, and working as a lobbyist in Richmond."

From daughter, Sara: I'm so grateful to the community, my friends, my family for holding us in the Light over the past few days and weeks. The prayers and support and love have truly sustained us, and made Mom feel loved as well.

Purcellville Arts Council calling art organizations

Local non-profit arts organizations are invited to submit requests for funding to the Purcellville Arts Council by Monday, March 1, to be considered for inclusion in the Town's proposal for the Virginia Commission for the Arts Creative Communities Partnership Grant Program. Eligible arts organizations may apply online. Applications are due by 5 p.m. on March 1.

Through the Creative Communities Partnership Grant Program, the Virginia Commission for the Arts will match up to \$4,500 of tax monies given by independent town, city, and county governments to stand-alone arts organizations. Should the Town receive funding through the grant, a total of up to \$9,000 could be distributed to independent arts organizations that have applied for and been

awarded support for arts activities within the town.

Eligible arts organizations interested in applying are required to submit the online application, the organization's W-9, and the organization's 501(c)3 letter. Eligible applicants must be 501(c)3 organizations that:

- focus primarily on the arts (i.e., production, presentation or support of dance, literary arts, media arts, music, theater or visual or related arts)
- are incorporated in Virginia
- have their headquarters and home seasons, or activities equivalent to a home season, in the state

Proposals must be for arts activities that will be held in Purcellville,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

Remembering Roy Windham

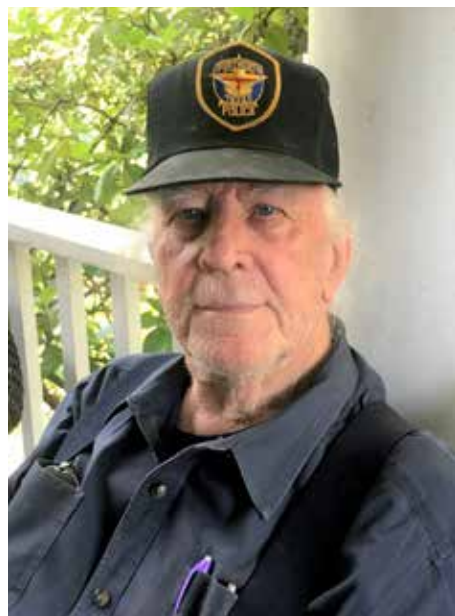
Allen 'Roy' Windham, 82, of Purcellville, Virginia, passed away on Monday Dec. 21, 2020 with his loving wife and daughter at his side after losing his battle with cancer.

Windham's life began on June 29, 1938, in Jonesboro, Texas, when Henry Thomas and Edna Merle Humes Windham gave birth to twin boys, Thomas Ray and Allen Roy Windham, brothers that shared the special bond of brotherhood and friendship that only twins can know.

His childhood was also spent with adored big sister Gail and beloved younger brother Jerry. Windham attended Hamilton, TX public schools and graduated from Hamilton High School. As a young man he served in the US Army, along with his twin, stationed in beautiful Alaska which he loved.

He went on to work as an executive at the Xerox Corporation for over 35 years after which he retired. He was a dedicated husband to his beloved wife Susie of 50 years. He was a hero and best friend to his daughter. He was a loving brother, son and uncle who was very proud of his siblings' and their children's accomplishments in career and family.

He was a good friend to many, and loved his town and those in it. He was honest, loyal and cared for others, as well as animals. He enjoyed working on and bringing life back into old cars, driving his 1935 Ford to his weekend car club shows, and spending time at the town service station with friends. He could



fix and build just about anything. He is loved, and will be missed beyond words.

Windham joins his parents Henry and Merle, twin brother Tom, niece Johanna, and precious daughter Kammie in Heaven.

He is survived by his wife Susie Parnell Windham and their dog Pearl of Purcellville, and daughter Michelina Windham of Leesburg; brother Jerry Windham and his wife, Pat, of College Station, Texas; sister Gail Windham of Manhattan Beach, Calif.; sister-in-law Maria Windham of Fort Worth, Texas; and many nephews, nieces, great-nephews and great-nieces and cousins.

A private service was held on Friday Jan. 8, at the Purcellville Baptist Church.



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The hunger inside – ‘Breaking bread is part of community’

BY ANDREA GAINES

Pretty much everyone can relate to the idea of being hungry for a few hours. But, when hunger is chronic, causes you to worry, and leaves you thinking that you are failing your family, it is referred to as food insecurity. And, it's no joke.

COMMUNITY

About 10 percent of Americans experience this on a daily basis. In Loudoun, the number is about half of that, five percent, probably because we have one of the highest incomes in the U.S. Loudoun's generosity towards those who might be experiencing food insecurity, though, shines brilliantly in both individual citizens and the groups organized to help. Dealing with food insecurity, or helping a friend or neighbor struggling to “make ends meet” is just something we do. Don't just talk about it ... do something about it ... seems to be our motto.

Friends and family get it, and it is touching The Blue Ridge Leader conducted an informal survey to put some meat on the bones of the issue. Nearly 100 percent of the people we surveyed had volunteered at a food bank, food pantry, or food kitchen, donated food and/or cash, or knew someone who relies on donated food regularly. “For at least two or three winter seasons,” one friend said, “we made food for 30-40 people at a County cold weather shelter. Each of us cooked for 8-10 people ...” Another said, “I refer patients, and have been to food banks in my line of work ...” “I used to work at a soup kitchen ...” said a third person ... “My sister was on Food Stamps for two years ... it's basic [helping feed people] – breaking bread is a part of community.” Another beautiful soul said, “I helped on Saturdays serving lunches. I also helped at several ... pop-up food banks that served the poorest school in [my area] ... Many of those students have their backpacks filled daily with food to

take home ...” People want to be independent, one person indicated, and, she noted she always encourages them to do all they can for themselves. But, she also said she helps people in need ... just because ... with no questions asked.

Generosity first meets the need, and then, multiplies

Delving into the food insecurity issue, you get a quick refresh on some of our world's most basic teachings. This includes “The Tree of Life” analogy. The idea that we are all in this together. Loudoun's Tree of Life (TOL) organization is a non-profit dedicated to changing the lives of the poor and needy. For this article, we spoke to a member of the organization's leadership, Kristen Hickman, and got a first-hand look at their amazing work. TOL had been providing 100 meals a week at one area location. But, now, they do 300. They work through several pantries, deliver food to homebound seniors, and more. COVID has increased the need. They are supported by local churches, and enjoy the help of many, many volunteers. Hickman made clear that her organization represents “The love of Jesus Christ in action. We do not give handouts. We give a hand up.” This concept is key to efforts to combat food insecurity. That idea that the generosity of one person is infectious. A donation of food extends to a donation of warm clothes which extends to a feeling of increased security – holding families together, motivating someone to seek work, etc.

The need is great. So, we keep going

According to Poverty USA, women are more likely to be poor than men. Some 10 percent of seniors are poor. And, some 16 million children are poor (over 10 million, young kids).

With respect to race, Native Americans have the highest rates of poverty, at over

25 percent. About 10 percent of American households are “food insecure.” And, of course, families are far more food insecure if their income is below the Federal Poverty Level.

Government supports a myriad of programs that help people put food on the table, and interacts with tens of thousands of organizations and individuals that are also working to fill the gap.

Poverty rates and food insecurity numbers vary widely, depending on where you live. Nationwide, nearly 40 counties, including Loudoun County, have median household incomes in the \$100,000 range. But, as we all know, pockets of hardship are common.

Loudoun Hunger Relief reports that in 2020, the organization “served more than 8,000 individuals through 67,000 visits, and almost half are children, [this amounts to] 1.6 million pounds of food ... [help for] up to 70 families per day.

“This topic is under-discussed for our area. Most people assume all in Loudoun County are prosperous enough to buy food ... like many in the middle class and lower middle class, I've had periods of hardship and not enough money ... Once or twice ... I turned my car around and went back to give money to someone who was alongside the road, walking ... I wanted them to realize their humanity was seen and recognized and respected ...”

During the COVID-19 crisis, LHR is supplying tens of thousands of pounds of emergency preparedness food to help families shelter in place, as well as continuing our regular food distributions

each week.”

Feeding America is a national organization representing 200 food banks and 60,000 food pantries. “We work to get nourishing food – from farmers, manufacturers, and retailers – to people in need,” notes the organization's website.

Need help? You can get it.

Let us help fight food insecurity. If you have ever experienced food insecurity yourself, or found yourself wondering if that elderly neighbor, sick family member, or disadvantaged kid walking down the street is well-fed, you understand. Most of us have had an experience where we needed a little help to pay the rent or cover the utility bill. Fewer have wished they had 20 bucks for a quick trip to the grocery store. And, even fewer have ever thought, “Wow. Refrigerator is really low. Should I consider going to a food bank?” Local government and the federal government have developed lots of programs designed to address hunger, including Food Stamps and its successor, the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program, and school lunches. But, as the plethora of local food banks, food pantries, food kitchens, and delivery services shows, doing something about food insecurity is not something we are inclined to wait on government for.

It is big business, and it is generous. Local agencies and non-profits that are not waiting include the Capitol Area Food Bank, Community Church Christian Ministries (with Messiah's Market), Crossroads Methodist Church, Dullles South Food Bank and Soup Kitchen (in partnership with Blue Ridge Area Food Bank, over a dozen schools, and others), Link, Inc., the Lion's Club, Loudoun County Catholic Charities, Loudoun Hunger Relief (and partners such as the Goose Creek Meeting), Loudoun Interfaith Relief, Middleburg Food Bank, the Salvation Army, Seven Loaves Services, Inc. (and area churches), Tree of Life, Volunteers of America, and so many more. So many more. Amazon, Google, Harris Teeter, Wegmans, Giant, and other companies are big donors to many of these organizations, which literally blanket the County, from Ashburn to Purcellville to Leesburg to Middleburg to Sterling.

Bracey awarded Leadership in the Arts Award

The Purcellville Arts Council unanimously selected Elizabeth Bracey, Managing Director of the Franklin Park Visual and Performing Arts Center, as the recipient of the third annual Jim “Doc” Wiley Leadership in the Arts Award. At the Jan. 26, Town Council meeting, Mayor Kwasi Fraser presented the award to Bracey.

“Elizabeth is dedicated to bringing visual and performing arts to people who live in and visit Purcellville—from

local talent to national artists and performers,” said Mayor Fraser.

“Elizabeth organized the hugely successful Bob Ross exhibit giving Purcellville prominent national recognition in 2019. When faced with the challenges of 2020, she continued to give local artists opportunities to be featured and bring joy to those looking for a cultural experience through Facebook live features and in-person events that follow all of the safety protocols.”

In her remarks after receiving the award, Bracey said that she had known Jim Wiley since she was a young girl and that “he left a wonderful legacy, and it is so meaningful to me to be recognized for my work in his memory.”

She continued, “The past year has shown us all how essential the performing and visual arts are in our daily lives, our community, our nation. Despite quarantines, isolations, social distancing and shut downs, the Arts continue to keep us connected to one another. The shared experiences, even though computer screens, have brought joy

Flower & Garden Festival Scheduled to Take Place at Ida Lee Park

The Town of Leesburg's 31st annual Flower & Garden Festival will be changing locations for 2021.

COMMUNITY

The Town's unofficial start to spring has been traditionally held on the streets of historic downtown Leesburg. Due to the COVID-19 pandemic, the event will be moving to Ida Lee Park. According to Deputy Director Kate Trask, the move will provide a better opportunity to allow social distancing. "After having to cancel the festival last April, staff is excited to be planning this

year's event," Trask said. "Of course, we are all hopeful that the positivity rate will be waning come springtime so the festival can be held. We've missed hosting our community events."

The festival will be on Saturday, April 17, and Sunday, April 18, rain or shine. It is being planned according to all Virginia Department of Health guidelines in order to provide a safe environment for festival attendees, vendors, and staff.

Staff is looking forward to the return of the festival to downtown Leesburg in 2022. To stay up to date on this year's festival, visit www.flowerandgarden.org.

New Exhibit Features Work of Local Artists

The artwork will be available for viewing, through March

A new exhibit from Friends of Leesburg Public Arts is available for viewing at the Thomas Balch Library

The display includes acrylic paint on canvas, charcoal and ink drawing, trompe l'oeil, ceramic and glass mosaics, and punch needlepoint embroidery created by four local art-

ists Anne Marie Chirieleison, Forrest Holbert, Linda Kreingold, and Megan Kud.

The artwork will be on display through March 30, and may be seen by appointment only on Tuesdays and Thursdays, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. or 1 to 3 p.m. Please call 703-737-7195, email balchlib@leesburgva.gov, or fill out an Appointment Request Form online.

BRANDON MICHON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

mentally healthy, and being kids," he said in an interview with the *Blue Ridge Leader*.

"Look at the private schools," he added. "They've figured it out. Why not our school district? Because they haven't bothered to make a plan. Schools are open around the country, and reports of illness have been few," he noted. "Statistics bear that out."

Michon also echoed other parents' feelings about how they—and their children—have been treated by the School Board over the past year. In his case, School Board Chair Brenda Sheridan not only asked that he be removed, but asked staff to wipe down the podium afterward.

"Two of my children—5 and 8—spoke to the Board," he said. "That takes a lot of courage for a kid to get up in a public forum and address people sitting up on a dais. And then they weren't even given the courtesy of a thank you."

He added that it was especially upsetting to see how Board members treated another father and his nonverbal child.

"The father had signed them both up to speak, which meant he would have been allotted a minute and his child would have had a minute. He expected he could use both minutes to address the Board. But the moment he finished his remarks and moved on to speak on behalf of his

child, the chair stopped him and told him he couldn't do that." An exchange proceeded for the next two minutes about why he couldn't use the student's minute. Then he was dismissed from the podium. "Twice the time he might have used in support of his child was used by the Board member," said Michon.

"I didn't do this for attention. I just want the school board to make a plan. There's no excuse at this point for not having one. As I said in my remarks, 'Do your job.'"

Clearly his comments resonated with the public and Loudoun's superintendent. Within a day, the video of his speech had topped 500,000 views on Twitter. Scott Ziegler, Loudoun's interim superintendent, sent a letter to the school community recapping the Board meeting.

Without naming Michon, he observed that "increased media attention ... has led to some inflammatory rhetoric being shared on social media, and in email and phone communications with staff." Ziegler added that the community has a common goal to safely send students back to school as soon as it is possible.

Due to weather, please check the School Board calendar for the next meeting. The Board will be voting on a plan to return to in-person learning by Feb. 16. The return would include grades K-5 and some older students in special categories.

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IT SEEMS TO ME, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

nationwide.”

Many restaurant workers who rely on tips would see their minimum wage also raised; and this could lead to a reduction of servers. So, workers would see a rise in their income, but there could be fewer of them working.

When families go out to eat, they will be faced with increased meal prices. The same will happen when they go to the supermarket or department store. Wage earners will then be chasing the increased prices of goods and services, because of the minimum wage increase. Nobody wins.

Another unintended consequence is the fact that many small businesses will go out of business, since they work on thin profit margins. History has proven this over and over again. Plus, the timing of adopting a \$15 an hour minimum wage couldn't be worse. With Covid-19 shutting down hundreds of thousands of restaurants and other businesses nationally, the increased minimum wage will ensure that they never reopen.

A higher minimum wage will also increase the use of automation in service industries such as restaurants. A good

GREAT COUNTRY FARMS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

food service, drain fields, and so on.

Residential conflicts

Importantly, Loudoun's zoning ordinances show a clear intent to protect the historic, rural residential character of places like Bluemont.

For example, Section 2-907's "Use Limitations" has a preference for off-street parking, and, encourages vegetative screening, landscaping and buffering, the clustering of buildings, a "size and scale" of commercial enterprises that promote pedestrian travel, and underground utility lines.

It is this stated intent to protect rural residential areas that seems to have motivated some residents in the area, including immediate neighbors, to question both the intensity and style of land use that is emerging in many of the County's rural areas.

But, the intensity of the use by commercial activity, regardless of how inviting and farm-based it is, seems to be the question of the hour – for the County, for farmers, for people raising families here, and for the people trying to make a living.

As breweries in the area have demonstrated, neighbors are having trouble all over western Loudoun living in these areas inundated by music (live and recorded), heavy smoke from fire pits, and traffic. In some cases, there is even trespassing onto neighboring properties – and to date there is, as one person explained in a community meeting, no voice for residents.

example is the use of self-serve beverage kiosks. Automated hamburger and sandwich makers are currently being tested, and soon will be used because of increased labor costs. These lost jobs will never return, because once automation replaces human labor, it stays in place.

The rise in the minimum wage will have a major effect on manufacturing companies, who will have incentive to make products off shore. It will be so much cheaper to build products in countries with low labor rates, such as China, Vietnam, Indonesia, and Central America, that manufacturers will build more factories off shore. Jobs that could have stayed

in America will now disappear. The balance of trade between the U.S. and these countries will also be affected, since we will be sending our money off shore.

In a recent Wall Street Journal editorial entitled "Yellen vs. Yellen on the minimum wage," the new Treasury Secretary, Janet Yellen, was quoted saying in 2014 that she "wouldn't argue" that the nation would lose 500,000 jobs if Obama's proposal to raise the minimum wage to \$10.10 an hour were enacted. It wasn't. Now she says that the effect on jobs would be "very minimal" at \$15 an hour. As the editorial points out, it isn't very minimal, if you are one of the 500,000 who would

lose their job.

Even if the increase in the minimum wage is brought on gradually, it will affect an economy that is still recovering. If you combine the effects of raising the minimum wage with the loss of jobs in the energy sector, the economy will take a major hit.

It looks like the administration has the votes to pass the increase in the minimum wage, but when people lose their jobs because of these political decisions, they tend to vote out those politicians who made the decisions. Remember, the election in November 2022 is not that far away.

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Suppose you're a Supervisor. You know the existing zoning ordinance - enacted in 1993 - needs replacing. You're also covered up with regular county business and have no time. So, you do what the Board did: Assign the task to the Department of Planning and Zoning (DPZ,) let them hire consultants, and at the same time give a citizens' stakeholder committee the task of working with DPZ on the new ordinance.

Exit ZOAG, enter ZOC

Zoe-Ag, as it's pronounced, was an existing committee dealing with zoning matters. Its charter called for its involvement in the new zoning process, and it began working with DPZ on the new ordinance.

Last fall the BOS dissolved ZOAG. I won't speculate as to why, other than presuming that it was not doing what the Board wanted. Simultaneously the Board created ZOC.

One key difference between ZOAG and ZOC is the make-up of stakeholder members. ZOC is more balanced, with a pretty equal mix of conservation representatives and development interests. ZOC also has two at-large members; I am one of them. ZOC has been directed to provide input to DPZ on the text of the proposed new zoning ordinance though no actual zoning text has yet been drafted.

Later on, ZOC may propose zoning amendments as part of an annual package that's brought to the Board, and it may also be asked by the Planning Commission (to which ZOC reports) or by the Board to comment on other proposed amendments (such as regulations for outdoor shooting ranges. ZOC also has the authority to recommend new, individual amendments. This power could be critically helpful to protecting western Loudoun.

Sandboxes

Merriam-Webster defines bureaucracy as "a body of nonelected government

officials; an administrative policy-making group; government characterized by specialization of functions, adherence to fixed rules, and a hierarchy of authority and a system of administration marked by officialism, red tape, and proliferation." We all know some: The IRS and the DMV quickly come to mind. Locally, Loudoun County Public Schools is a perfect example.

Bureaucracies have many things in common. The first is that they are generally necessary. The other commonalities are mostly negative: Their primary goals are perpetual existence, accretion of power and size, and focus on process rather than results.

Years ago, in Atlanta I was in a DMV line late in the afternoon, watching the wall clock's hands move inexorably towards 5 p.m. I reached the clerk's counter just as the minute hand signaled "quitting time." The clerk simply turned around and left with neither word nor glance. I stood there steaming at that display of bureaucratic attitude.

Our Department of Planning and Zoning is a bureaucracy. Thankfully it does not act like the Atlanta DMV. In fact, a well-run bureaucracy can be driven by goals, not process. It can be a good steward of citizens' tax dollars. It can be efficient in its operations. Most pertinent to zoning, it should accept others - like ZOC - playing in its sandbox as colleagues working together to produce a new and improved zoning ordinance. The relationship between DPZ and ZOC is polite on the surface, but I sense that real collegiality is not there. My experience on other boards and committees has been that staffs generally see outsiders as interference that only has to be tolerated. My fear is that this is how the Department of Planning and Zoning sees ZOC.

ZOC Meets

Our first meeting was a briefing by DPZ's head and by a County attorney, with emphasis on the Freedom of Information Act. It was disconcerting, since it felt to me that great importance was

placed on ways to make sure that controversial topics would stay private. I will not participate in something like that - citizens have a right to know. The county belongs to its citizens, and so does the zoning ordinance. If I have comments, questions or complaints, I will present them in a way that clearly makes them available to the public when a FOIA request is filed.

ZOC's second meeting was a presentation by the County's consultants of a "zoning audit" in which they had dissected our existing zoning ordinance and suggested improvements. It was a massive amount of good work, though many of the details warrant discussion. I have asked Staff and ZOC leadership to put on our next agenda enough time to share our thoughts on the code audit. Failure to provide a way to discuss the audit would be an abrogation of ZOC's responsibilities.

ZOC and Bureaucracy

Ironically, ZOC itself is a bureaucracy, albeit a tiny one. We need prescribed procedures. For example, ZOC is to "provide input" on zoning issues, but how? Do all 19 members vote on things? Will ZOC issue official statements? Will dissenting opinions be presented? Will any member be able to communicate directly with DPZ (If the answer to that one is no, I will go ballistic)? Will ZOC use committees or act as a committee-of-the-whole? I have faith that ZOC's chairman and vice-chairman will present good solutions to these quibbles.

ZOC, Zoning and You

Sad to see an old farm sprouting houses? Feeling hemmed in by data centers? Irrate at illegal landfills? Later, there will be a number of public sessions where citizens may comment on drafts of the new zoning ordinance, which I'm sure will be posted online. I hope you will attend. If something's bugging you and you want to bring up an issue now, your best bet is probably to email the head of DPZ, Mark.Stultz@loudoun.gov, or ZOC's chairman, KevinRuediselizoc@gmail.com.

A NEW DEAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

restaurant and inn.

The price tag for the deal would include a \$600,000 escrow payment by the County to be matched dollar for dollar by the developer to renovate the tavern and construct a road from the 60 adjoining acres owned by Andrews to Rt. 50. Andrews currently says he would use the 60 acres to create hiking trails, but any plans he might have for that acreage would be subject to resolution of a lawsuit with the Land Trust of Virginia.

Mojax has been here before

Mojax and fellow developer Hobie Mitchel have been keen on acquiring these 6.3 acres in Aldie for the better part of two decades. In fact, they had the three contiguous parcels known as the "Aldie Assemblage" under contract until the County bought the land in 2015 as a potential site for a fire station. After the community opposed that site for the fire station, the County was left holding the 6.3 acres and its buildings, which is why it has this property to deploy in negotiations with Mojax.

What became clear in the January hearing is that Aldie may have an uphill climb in successfully opposing this deal, even as its residents have put forward at least two bona fide cash offers.

Memories of the costly struggle to find a site for a new fire station for the Aldie area clearly remain fresh in several Supervisors' minds, even though the fire station search eventually yielded a mutually acceptable site at the intersection of Rts. 50 and 15. Most of the Supervisors also repeatedly reminded Aldie residents that Mojax could resume work on the St. Louis development tomorrow.

Given that the St. Louis-Aldie issues are complex from both a financial and land-use perspective, many community members were surprised to hear Supervisor Matt Letourneau (R-Dulles), chair of the finance committee, weighing in at this early date on the aesthetics and economic value of the Mojax project in Aldie.

"As far as what has been proposed as the concept," said Letourneau, "I think it's intriguing. I think the challenge we have is that any time someone wants to do something that's big and bold and potentially significant, there's always going to be questions that have to be answered ... I see this project as potentially ... providing something that could be a crown jewel for us."

Letourneau said that in order to keep western Loudoun from having densities similar to the eastern part of the County, western Loudoun must continue to have strong tourism options.

Officials raising concerns about the deal and the developers

Prior to the public hearing, Supervisor Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge), the mayors of Loudoun's seven towns, including Mayor Bridge Littleton of nearby Middleburg, residents of Aldie and St. Louis, and area preservationists brought up their concerns about the St. Louis-Aldie projects and the developers, in letters to the Board of Supervisors. Buffington, who initially supported the deal but now opposes it, focused his letter on public records that document infractions by the developers.

In their letter to the supervisors, the mayors of the Coalition of Loudoun Towns (COLT) wrote: "Our objections to this transaction rest on two key elements: First, the history and background of Mojax, LLC in its dealings with the County and other parties in Loudoun; and second, the proposed transaction is not a good deal for the citizens.

"Mojax, LLC has been the subject of a number of complaints over the last several years, including matters that are still unresolved ... We do not have confidence that any restriction or limitation placed on Mojax, LLC by the County would be respected in the long term. We fear that a violation would result in a fine with no remediation, leaving the residents of both villages to suffer the long-term effects.

"Relating to the second issue," the mayors went on, "we are concerned that this current deal is unfavorable to the County and its citizens ... We recommend the County perform a charrette to engage the full community, both citizens and business, to develop viable options which are in alignment with the community's vision and value. As the County has multiple bona fide offers now, this will only help to open the view and bring better options to the table for the County and the public."

Madeline Skinner, chair of the Loudoun Alliance of Historic Villages, echoed the mayors' charrette recommendation. "As it states in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan, a new structure within the rural historic village must be compatible with existing buildings and contribute to the character of the village. There is nothing compatible about this concept. Even their plan for the tavern house goes against historic district guidelines. My hope for 2021 is for the County to uphold what is written in the 2019 Comprehensive Plan—to work with each village to produce a plan with the village residents' input and joint meetings with County staff.

Katie Johnson, president of the Aldie Heritage Association, agreed. "Our goal has always been to help the County to

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

MAJOR DEVELOPMENTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Hankins said that the Town has asked for three, four, or five acres for a police station. "We are looking for land to locate a police station." Council has not directed staff to look for land for a police station. Council has already approved renovations and expansion of the existing police facility, including a five-year lease.

Milan answered, "And, we go deeper in debt to build a police station for \$8 million. We are \$33 million in debt ... and we are giving ... [the County] free hookups for water? No. If they give us land for

PULLEN HOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

5.86 acres, and a much larger area which could be used for multiple things. "We don't need to incur any more debt."

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser said, "A wise man once told me never to fall in love with a stock and never fall in love with real estate.

"We have a property that has doubled [in value] ... That wise man told me that real estate never goes up to the sky. We can't predict tomorrow." The Town bought the property for \$175,000. Fraser added, "Given the financial situations we are faced with, I think it is time for us to sell the asset and put it on our [property] tax roll. Whoever occupies it, whether it be a \$500,000-dollar building ... it is \$500,000 of assessed value coming back to our tax roll ... in addition, that occupant will be using our water and sewer. So, that is money coming back to the Town."

REMEMBERING JEAN BROWN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

Loudoun Hospital Ladies Board, the Board of the Piedmont Environmental Council, and the Advisory Boards of Scenic Virginia and the Virginia League of Conservation Voters. She was a member of the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition and was named Preservationist of the Year by the Loudoun Preservation Society.

In her life she was known not just as a preservationist but a civic activist. She worked tirelessly with the League of Women Voters, spending countless hours in high schools registering young people to vote. She understood that the threats democracy faces come from an under-informed and inactive electorate. She was well known to have carried voter registration forms everywhere she went, and if anyone dared admit they were not

LAROCK PRAISES ORDER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Privileges and Elections Committee, for sending a letter to Vice President Mike Pence asking Pence to delay counting of Virginia's electoral votes until an investigation into election irregularities had been completed.

wells, we still have to pay for the infrastructure. And, we have capital improvement projects to deal with. We are going to spend another \$12 million to bring water from there into the Town? "We have \$14 million worth of projects that need to be done. All this for an \$8 million police station that we don't have the funds to build. This doesn't make sense."

Ogelman asked, "Don't we need to know the impact of what our decision would be? If the County doesn't give us enough information, then we don't have to accept their offer."

Fraser, supporting park assets and Town finances at the same time, suggested the Pullen House could meet dual goals. "We do have a lot of park assets ... that are underutilized." He noted that the citizens have access to park assets owned by the County, and, that the courts at Emerick Elementary are often empty. Here, he looked back at his own childhood, and how heavenly open spaces were for kids. "When I was a boy ... that would have been heaven to me ..." But, he noted that making maximum use of what the Town and County had already invested in is a better financial strategy. "My guidance would be to sell it."

Vice Mayor Mary Jane Williams initially wanted to keep the property, and use it for a tot lot or a place for kids to study outside. She supported the sale on the condition that part of the proceeds would go to youth activities behind the Bush Tabernacle, as suggested by Bertaut.

registered, they soon were.

At the center of her life was a deep and abiding faith in God, which guided her daily. She practiced that faith through music. She was a founding member of the Washington Choral Arts Society and sang in her church choirs all her life, most recently at St. James Episcopal in Leesburg.

Funeral will be held at a later time when travel and gathering made be done safely. In lieu of flowers, please consider a contribution to the Loudoun Preservation Society or the League of Women Voters of Loudoun. Please send a check with "Jean Brown Memoriam" in the memo line. The addresses are: Loudoun Preservation Society, PO Box 351, Leesburg, VA 20178, and League of Women Voters of Loudoun, PO Box 822, Leesburg, VA 20178.

Del. LaRock said, "I am reaching out to Speaker Filler-Corn today to draw her attention to this court ruling, and to reverse her decision to take retribution against me for my good-faith efforts seeking to assure Virginia election outcomes past and future reflect the expressed consent of the governed."

BIRD COUNT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Merlin was another uncommon find.

In terms of sheer numbers the County landfill, usually has the most individuals because of the large flocks of gulls, crows, and starlings that find in it a vast buffet.

The landfill also usually provides some rarities and uncommon species, and this year was no exception. While Lesser Black-backed Gulls are certainly more common than they used to be in the mid-Atlantic. The one found this year is still a rare visitor to Loudoun County.

Changes from year-to-year are always fascinating.

While last year was a boom year for several species of woodpeckers, only Yellow-bellied Sapsuckers showed up in record numbers this year. In fact, the 10 Red-headed Woodpeckers found were a dramatic decrease from last year's record 84, but, their decline had a rational reason which we've seen before — when the mast (acorn) crop is low, and it was this year, most Red-headed Woodpeckers don't overwinter in the area.

Hello, Mr. Bluebird, Mr. Crow and more. It was wonderful to see 760 Eastern Bluebirds tallied, not only a record for this count, but a dramatic turnaround from

the declines they endured during the height of West Nile Virus's impact. Also, one can't help but wonder how much Loudoun Wildlife's extensive Bluebird Trail program has helped reverse that trend.

Other high counts occurred for Black Vultures (733), Red-shouldered Hawks (163), Fish Crows (1,410), Chipping Sparrows (53), and White-throated Sparrows (2,455), along with 44 Eastern Meadowlarks — especially good news for this grassland species whose numbers have been decreasing for years.

Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy thanks the many participants as well as the numerous landowners who gave us permission to visit their properties. Without both, this count would not be the success it has been for 24 years, and we wouldn't have this snapshot of what is happening to birds in Loudoun in early winter.

Detailed totals for the county can be seen on www.loudounwildlife.org. The next count will be on Tuesday, December 28, 2021.

Specific thanks to Bob Abrams, Allison Gallo and Polly Nagell. Joe Coleman serves as the Compiler for the Central Loudoun Christmas Bird Count. He is a long term member, leader and board member of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy.

PURCELLVILLE ARTS COUNCIL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 19

Virginia between July 1, 2021 through June 30, 2022. Please note that funding cannot be provided for payment to performers for specific performances or for school arts budgets or arts programming by local governments, committees or councils of government, nor departments such as parks and recreation.

The Purcellville Arts Council will review the funding requests and then share their recommendations of organizations to be included in their grant proposal to the Virginia Commission for the Arts Creative Communities Partnership Program with the Town Council.

The application to be considered for included in the Town's grant proposal is available online on the Purcellville Arts Council page of the Town of Purcellville website. Eligible art organizations may either apply online or mail the proposal with all of the required information to Purcellville Arts Council, Attn: Creative Communities Partnership Grant, 221 S Nursery Ave, Purcellville, VA 20132 by 5 p.m. on Monday, March 1.

For more information about the Virginia Commission for the Arts' Creative Communities Partnership Grant Program, visit http://www.arts.virginia.gov/grants_local.html.

LETTER: VIOLATION OF ETHICS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

prior to the Board meeting.” I served on the Loudoun Board of Supervisors for eight years with substantial Republican majorities in both terms. In fact, during the 2012-2016 Board we had a nine member all Republican Board. During those terms, we followed our

Rules of Order and adhered to the Code of Ethics. We did not use the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, county staff or resources to further divisive partisan political agendas.

*Geary M. Higgins
Catocin District Supervisor (2012-2019)
Waterford*

MAYOR FRASIER JOINS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

try's ability to supply services under the FAA's regulatory authority where these services do not currently exist.

The FAA updated this Concept of Operations (ConOps) to document the continued maturation of UTM and share the vision with government and industry.

UTM ConOps V2.0 continues to focus on UTM operations below 400 feet above ground level, but also addresses increasingly more complex operations within and across both uncontrolled (Class G) and controlled (Classes B, C, D, E) airspace.

V2.0 updates and expands the set of operational scenarios.

LEADERSHIP IN THE ARTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

and laughter when we needed it the most. Recently, I heard someone say that “creativity is the first vaccine against COVID.” It struck me that this thought sums up the past year for me personally and professionally.”

The Purcellville Arts Council initiated the annual Jim “Doc” Wiley Leadership in the Arts award in 2018 to recognize out-

standing, sustained contributions to the arts and culture in the greater Purcellville community by an individual or organization. This award is named for Dr. James Wiley, a family dentist, former Town Council Member, and long-time supporter of art and artists in Purcellville.

The Purcellville Arts Council will soon be seeking nominations for this year's Jim “Doc” Wiley Leadership in the Arts award.

LETTER: FAKE NEWS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

everything about every topic. We have processes in place, and I trust they were followed. I trust the courts which examined the lawsuits and found them without merit. Why? Because I can't demand that every claim be proven to me.

And likewise, we have to be able to find media organizations we can trust as well. We have to be able to believe in what we read and watch. Discounting and demonizing all other news organizations except the one you watch is an unreasonable position to take. The Washington Post is not a leftist organization because it says

the President has lied to us. Newsmax is not a reputable news organization because it says he did not.

I'm sure Mr. LaFiandra was not aware that those he was addressing would violently rise up against the United States, but I hope that now seeing what his recommended news regime has wrought upon us all, he, and the Blue Ridge Leader, will think twice about encouraging Americans to withdraw, pull back from any information other than what is true.

Let's not further divide our nation.

*Rob Martin
Leesburg*

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

every day. My position is that he should put his family first, and money second. Even with my not working, we have invested well, and even if he's out of work for a period of time, I'm confident that he will find a good job in the area.

– Help in Loudoun

Dear Help,

I agree that your children's needs should be a big part of the decision you make as a family. Your husband's point that finding employment as a VP could take time, is a valid one. In his sector higher level positions may not open often, and he may indeed remain unemployed for an extended period, or he may need to settle for a lesser position in the area, if he rejects the offer.

I think the two of you need to evaluate your finances and your long-term goals. If your husband doesn't relocate, how long can you maintain your current standard of living? Could not relocating impact your retirement plans?

Rather than thinking of your situation as all or nothing, is there the possibility of a compromise? This could include your husband relocating to the West Coast on his own, and flying back and forth for visits until the end of the school year. COVID-19 has demonstrated that teams don't need to always work physically together,

and perhaps he could take the role, while remaining virtual a portion of the time?

With the likelihood of virtual learning continuing, perhaps your children could try to complete the year in their current schools virtually from the West Coast? This may allow them to maintain social connections, which would be harder to do in a new school, when managing social distance.

If you consider this on a trial basis, your family could make the move and see if there are benefits to the new town, and how they feel about it while still attending NOVA schools.

If at the end of the school year the children's struggles seem to great, then perhaps your husband could start a job search back in NOVA, with the added benefit of his higher title and broadened experience.

As a psychologist who works a lot with families, children and teens adjust fine to work related relocations, as long as the approach to the transition and new experience is reasonable. The key is to support each other, to listen to each other, and to maintain an open mind to new experiences as a family.

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.

A NEW DEAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

secure a preservation-minded buyer who would become part of the community. Based on our review of the documents provided online and the material we received from the developers when they met with us on Jan. 10 at our request, we have real concerns about the proposal ... We are asking that this complex proposal

be sent to the appropriate departments within the County for further review and study, and the County consider any viable alternatives.

“We want to see a positive outcome for both of our villages,” she added. “This deal is large, and it is complex, and it could change the face of Aldie forever. It deserves a complete analysis.”

GREENWAY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 13

Any toll rate requests that fail to satisfy these criteria would be deemed against the public interest and would not be approved by the State Corporation Commission.

This legislation prevents the Greenway owners from using the toll road

as a financial instrument by requiring approval from the SCC on any refinancing of debt obligations. This bill has reached a bipartisan agreement, and is supported by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and the Loudoun Delegation, and will now advance to the Senate Floor.

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Loudoun County Housing Market Q4 2019 vs Q4 2020

Median Price= \$550,000, up by 10%! Active Listings down by 58%!

Average Days on Market= 16, down by 29%! *Stats Courtesy of Dulles Area Association of Realtors

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