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APRIL 2021

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Lessons from the battle over Goose Creek Overlook

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Goose Creek Overlook votes will be remembered for turning the tide on a big development, but what they surfaced about Loudoun's leaders and "place types" may be more revealing in the long run.

Until March 16's final Board of Supervisors vote on the controversial Goose Creek Overlook development, you'd have found

quite a few Loudoun County planning officials and staff members, developers, environmentalists, and nonprofit organization leaders in the weeds of Goose Creek near the Sycolin Road bridge—some literally, others figuratively, as they revisited their strategies and positions one last time.

As most Loudouners who keep up with local news know, on March 2 the Board

of Supervisors voted 5 to 4 to approve the Goose Creek Overlook application. It promised all kinds of good things, Board proponents explained: trails to become part of Loudoun's Emerald Ribbons network, parking near the creek close to a kayak and canoe launch, an active recreation area, and, most important, 75 Affordable

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Read about a bee hotel on page 3.



JK Community Farm volunteers Josh Powers, left, and Nathan Hughes, right, pose with the bee hotel as it was installed.

At Catoctin Creek Distillers, Sen. Tim Kaine offers help with tariffs

BY LAURA LONGLEY

On a sunny and surprisingly warm March 26th near the end of Women's History Month, Sen. Tim Kaine (D-VA) arrived in Loudoun to visit Leesburg, Purcellville, and Round Hill and deliver a long-awaited message: With vaccinations and

the new American Rescue Plan, relief is on the way for women in business.

After meeting in Leesburg with a Loudoun Chamber of Commerce roundtable, Kaine headed to Purcellville to learn how 12-year-old Catoctin Creek Distilling Co. was

weathering the pandemic.

No sooner had Kaine crossed the threshold of the distillery's tasting room and elbow-bumped owners Becky and Scott Harris than the three began talking about the transatlantic tariffs that have disrupted

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

Purcellville Town Manager presents \$22.4 million budget proposal

BY VALERIE CURY

At the March 17 Purcellville Town Council Special Meeting, Town Manager David Mekarski presented the Town's Fiscal Year 2022 proposed budget of \$22.4 million. This is a 7 percent increase over last year.

The General Fund is proposed for \$11.7 million – a 1 percent increase over last year. For Parks and Rec,

\$607,000 is proposed.

For the Water Fund, \$3.1 million is proposed, with a recommended 3 percent rate increase. For the Waste Water Fund, \$3.9 million is proposed, at a 5 percent rate increase. The Town has simplified its rate structure from a 17 to a four-tier fee structure for the Utility Fund.

The Capital Improvements Fund is projected at \$3.784 million, a 134 percent increase.

Tax rates

Mekarski is proposing the same property tax rate as last year at 22 cents per \$100 of assessed value.

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Equal Housing Opportunity

Newborn calf rescued in Lincoln Welcome to the world “Puddles”

BY ANDREA GAINES

It's a story that would send a panic through any mother ... as well as great relief.

Imagine, this.

You are taking a nice country walk with your sister and over the ridge you see what appears to be a cow, standing deep in a ravine.

Something seems wrong. What's that cow doing there?, you wonder.

As you get closer you realize the cow is not alone. Deep in the mud just a few feet from her is what appears to be a newborn calf, shivering, and struggling.

The cow is making movements and noise that indicate she doesn't really like the looks of you. She can't get her new baby moving, it seems, but neither does she want you hanging around.

The most dangerous moments of a young calf's life

The calf, it appears, may be stuck in the cold mud. And, stuck hard.

The slender pink umbilical cord is still attached, indicating the pretty little thing is perhaps just hours old. And, the mom, is frantic.

This is the situation sisters Kristin O'Rourke and Brianna Carr came upon just weeks ago as they were walk-



O'Rourke kids paying Puddles a visit.

ing the backroads and farms of the Village of Lincoln. Both sisters live in Lincoln with their young families.

O'Rourke and Carr used their cell phone to contact the owners of the land, who contacted the farmer who managed the land. They sent a video of the location and the farmer headed to the farm to check on the mom and baby.

In quick order he arrived on the scene in his pickup.

“We told the farmer exactly where the cows were, and he took care of everything,” said O'Rourke.

“We weren't there for the rescue, but I kept in touch

with him and Constance Chatfield-Taylor (whose family owns the land) via text ... he got them out of the ravine, warmed the little guy in his truck, and got them settled in the barnyard.

“He texted us later that evening with an update, and the next day as well. We were really just in the right place at the right time, and just made the call like any other Lincoln neighbor would do.”

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Wait ... A “hotel,” for bees?

BY ANDREA GAINES

This article will lift up your spirits; I promise.

You know the term “worker bees” ... right? Creatures – human and otherwise – who toil away behind the scenes, getting everything done for everyone else.

Well, our live worker bees, including the ones you see buzzing around your yard and garden this time of year, need some help. And, a very generous local company is happy to assist.

Welcome to the JK Community Farm

JK Moving Services has been around for a long time. You know the name.

It handles local moves in Washington, D.C., Maryland, and Virginia. And, with respect to international moves, it's the company that “U.S. presidents and Fortune 500 companies, trust ...”

The community farm that the company established three years ago is designed to “provide food education and

alleviate food insecurity with nutrient-dense produce and protein.”

It's 150 acres are operated in a regenerative, sustainable, chemical-free manner, growing over 50 varieties of vegetables, fruits, protein and herbs – on 14 acres of outdoor fields, two high tunnels, one greenhouse, and 14 raised beds. The harvest is picked up by ... food pantry partners.

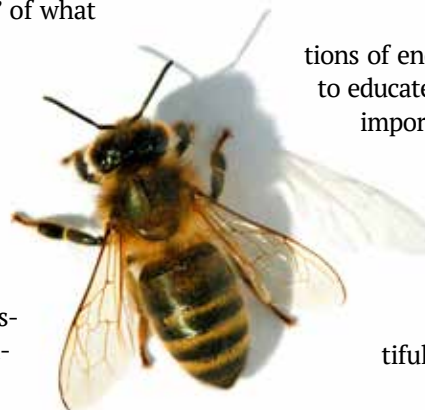
According to the company, “The JK Community Farm is the nation's largest chemical-free nonprofit farm donating 100 percent” of what is grown.

Welcome to the JK Community Farm bee hotel

As JK's blog noted in January – so, so, cute and informative – the farm is on a mission to grow the popula-



“With construction, and limited conservation efforts,” according to JK: “Native bees have fewer places to nest. By creating special nesting sites like bee hotels, you can accommodate many different species of bees ...”



tions of endangered bees, and, to educate people about their importance – to nature, to the environment, and to the economy.

Notes the blog: “We have seven beautiful, colorful honeybee

hives at the JK Community Farm. Our beekeeper, George often uses the bees from our hives to help grow the honeybee population in Loudoun County.”

Honeybees have been affected by a condition called colony collapse disorder, which is killing off large numbers of honeybees.

Many pollinator populations are in decline attributed to a loss in feeding and nesting habitats. This, explains the blog, is why a “bee hotel” can be so useful and helpful for the insect. Native bees nest in hollow logs, dead trees and in the ground.

If you have snowdrops, or crocuses, or other early spring flowers on your property, you may see these insects out right now, searching for food.

“With construction, and limited conservation efforts,” according to JK: “Native bees have fewer places to nest. By creating special nesting sites like bee hotels, you can accommodate many different species of bees ...”

Bee hotels often attract mason bees, orchard bees, and leaf cutter bees, places for solitary bees to build their nests. These bees do not make honey, or live in a hive. These native bees are referred to as solitary bees because

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Give Your Kids A “Yes Day!”

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

“Yes Day!” is a recent movie that involves a mom and dad that usually say “no” to their children, but agree to a 24-hour period where their children get to do whatever they want (with some reasonable ground rules).



DR. MIKE

The family goes on an adventure with all sorts of twists and turns, and the story unfolds with fun, impulsive, and at times difficult emotional moments for them all. In the end, the children and parents grow from their whirlwind day, and they become closer and better off as a family for having had the experience. The movie is adapted from the 2009 children’s book, of the same name.

I strongly recommend that all families take a break from the day in and day out of life to have a “Yes Day.” As a psychologist, and in my opinion, the concept represents a metaphor for change and personal growth. When we do the same things the same way every day, our lives can seem redundant and predictable. Approaching things with an open mind and with creativity, or simply trying things out in a different way can, in contrast, be refreshing, which in turn can bring about happiness and growth. In addition to feeling better about ourselves by breaking up fixed patterns, our relationships can also improve when we say “yes” to our important others instead of “no.”

I think that children can also benefit in tremendous ways from a “Yes Day.” Beyond the idea serving to stretch our children’s comfort level with things, it can also give them a sense of autonomy

or independence that they don’t normally have, which is great for developing self-esteem and confidence. It also can provide them with an opportunity to have unbridled and unscheduled fun; having this sort of fun in relation to parents, can also increase closeness and improve family relationships.

This has undeniably been one of the hardest years our children have ever been through – socially, emotionally and academically, and for many, financially. Aside from COVID-19, the demands on today’s children are great, especially in Northern Virginia where things can be competitive academically; and, busy sports schedules and extracurricular activities don’t give children a lot of opportunities for carefree family fun. A “Yes Day” gives a child a revitalizing break to just feel good in relation to the people who matter most to them.

If you’re interested in having a “Yes Day” with your children, here are a few tips to get the most out of the experience:

Plan ahead and pick a day that has the fewest restrictions or limitations for all involved. A weekend day, the first weekend after the school year or during a vacation might be good times.

Get your children to put some skin in the game. Like in the movie, perhaps your children could consistently knock down daily chores for a month or get very good grades to earn the privilege to have a “Yes Day.”

Put a spending limit on the day.

Make sure that any and all activities that you engage in as a family are safe.

Make sure all of your children agree on

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Dinner for Four

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

“What are you going to serve them?” Robert Rood asked his wife.

“Barbecue. Collard greens. Black eyed peas. Pecan pie from Mom’s,” Byne answered. “They served us a Lyonnaise salad, consommé, lamb chops in cognac, leeks ... There’s no way I’m trying to match that. Let’s eat outside. You go set the table.”

“That’ll work,” said Robert as he went to do his chore.

A half hour later, border collie Belle barked and dashed to the front door. The Rood’s guests had arrived and Robert went to greet them. Christoph de Graffenreid and Guy Blackwell smiled as Robert waved them inside.

De Graffenreid was elegant in expensive-looking clothes, tall and aristocratic. In fact, he was a true aristocrat - his grandfather was the sixth Baron of Bern,

Switzerland. Christoph’s father had moved to the States to establish an investment business, and soon Christoph was born in New York. Despite summers back in Switzerland, Christoph was thoroughly Americanized and a proud citizen. After an MBA he joined his father’s firm, did well, and finally persuaded his father to let him establish a Middleburg office.

Blackwell was fine-featured and model-looking. He wore pressed and creased jeans and a tight-fitting polo shirt. He grew up around horses in Aiken, South Carolina where his father had been a noted trainer. Guy started young, was an adept with horses and an accomplished rider who soon became a sought-after trainer in his own right. He, too, moved to Middleburg.

“Welcome,” Robert Rood greeted them men with a grin. Byne gave them hugs. The four decamped to the sunroom for

pre-prandial conversation.

“What’s new with you two?” Byne asked, “You’re tan!”

“We just got back from St. Barths,” answered Christoph.

“We’re envious,” allowed Byne.

They touched on farms, horses, dogs, mutual friends ... all casual talk. Byne then turned to a more serious topic - land use in Loudoun County. Sprawl was her main concern. Christoph loved the openness and rolling hills; Guy was taken by the manicured farms, and the classic simplicity of old Quaker villages and cottages. They were passionate advocates for rural protection and diligent followed of land use issues here. There was one concept, though, on which they disagreed.

That issue was Affordable Dwelling Units. “We’ve been arguing about ADUs.” Guy looked at Robert and Byne and said, “As involved as you two are, I’m sure you

have some opinions about them.”

Robert answered judiciously, “Yeah. I’m not sure. I can see some merit, but I bet that there’d be unforeseen consequences.”

“Okay, Guy and Christoph, you debate and I’ll judge.” Byne pleasantly directed.

Christoph began, “The goal is a scenic, historic, prosperous county. Good education and healthcare, good shopping and entertainment. Environmentally conscious, sustainable. Diverse and inclusive.”

“Brainwashing,” he means, interjected Guy, “Starting in kindergarten.” “Besides, I though we were talking only about affordable housing.”

“Well, I was laying the foundation for it because providing ADUs has its roots in egalitarianism. Shouldn’t the less-well-off have decent housing? It’s a moral issue.”

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— It Seems to Me —

Do you know how big a trillion dollars is?

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

With the passage of the \$1.9 trillion dollar stimulus and the current \$28 trillion national debt, don’t you think it would be important to really understand how much a trillion dollars is and why it is important to understand what these numbers mean?

A trillion dollars is a lot of money by anybody’s standards but, do you know how much money it really is? By the

same token, the United States’ national debt of 28 trillion dollars, how big is it, really?

One of the best ways you can visualize it is by stacking \$100 bills and see how high they go. \$100 bills can be easily imagined because most of us have seen one during. The paper that all U.S. currency is printed on is 0.0043” thick. The \$1,400 Stimulus cash you received, if stacked in \$100 bills, is 0.06” high or a little less than a 1/16”. Not much. Using simple arith-

metic, one million dollars in \$100 bills is 43” in height, less than 4 feet, again not much space taken and easily visualized.

Now let’s talk now about dollar numbers that the government is used to dealing in, billions and trillions. One billion in \$100 bills would stack 3,583 feet high or 0.68 of a mile and \$1 trillion in \$100 bills would be 679 miles high. The current \$28 trillion U.S. National debt would be over

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Glad to know the Hamilton Mercantile will remain – You forgot to mention Eva

Dear Editor:

I, like everyone else for miles around, am delighted to know that the Hamilton icon will remain an organic food store, and even enhance and expand its services. I wish the new owners much success and satisfaction, and want to thank Sue Phillips for taking it over when she did, along with her always so nice helpers.

I was dismayed, however, that no mention was made of the iconic “Eva” the Swedish personality who was its

operator for many years in the 1990s and early 2000s, who singlehandedly held the Natural Mercantile open with such devotion and at great personal sacrifice until her “dream team” as she called them, including Ms. Phillips, took over. Eva, too, served coffee, inviting customers with a fluttering sign out front, saying COFFEE — albeit it was from two large thermoses and consisted of only regular and decaf.

Bravo to the new barista and the new owners. Just don’t change it too much.

Beverly Bunn
Middleburg

Thank you for giving to GiveChoose.org

Dear Editor:

This starts with a heartfelt “Thank you” to every reader and member of our community. Together, we raised \$820,000 through a 2021 GiveChoose.org campaign.

This charitable community-based “crowdfunding” event has become a high-impact source of spring funding for many nonprofits serving our community. (Did you know that, for most nonprofits, 30 to 80 percent of all household donations are received at year end?)

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: The Old Ashburn Fire House

BY TIM JON

One of my favorite memories of my Dad is watching him run from our family car to catch (on foot, guys!) and jump onto a departing Fire Truck; we'd just been to the local Dairy Queen for after-dinner ice-milk treats, when the fire whistle blew (this was decades before the pager, the cell phone and most of the other high-tech gizmos) a few blocks away, and sure enough – here came the familiar red vehicle donned with hoses, ladders and most importantly – men in heavy firefighting gear.

I'm not sure if Dad was the Chief at that time, or one of the assistants (he saw more destructive incidents in World War II than most local crew-members would experience in a lifetime); I remember a quick goodbye to Mom and us boys, and we were all pretty proud at that moment that he was our Dad. And, recall, I initially said my favorite memory – but certainly not the only one; I've got a seemingly

unlimited supply back there in the personal vault – and I'm very thankful for everyone.

Now, the above memory snapshot dates back to the mid-1960's (and, yes, I know that makes me a very old specimen) – but this is the kind of image (along with the corresponding emotions) I relive every time I see a piece of fire-

personal fire memories – with the original building completed in the mid-1940's.

The local company formed after a tragic fire took the lives of three children in what back then was a small farming community. Now, the facility on Ashburn Road has an historic look to it, but it's actually quite new – having replaced the original station in 2016. The

He would have truly been impressed at the sheer size of the Ashburn Company Six building, as well as a truly dazzling display of equipment seen through the open red doors.

My tenure as local News Director at Wage Radio in Leesburg expired several years before the opening of the current facility for Company Six in Ashburn, but

I recall several visits to the original building in the late 1990's and early 2000's. The Station had a distinctively 'quaint' look to it even back then, but I'm sure lots of other local residents – especially those connected to the Fire and Rescue Community – fondly remember the familiar landmark. Now it exists only in pictures (like the ones shared on the internet at the Station Six website),

some of which many of us 'old-timers' carry around in our heads. And, as referred to in the opening of this story, I've got my Dad narrating the entire slideshow. He does a pretty good job, too. And, this is another moment I'm proud he's my Dad.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »



JON



fighting apparatus, a fire truck – and especially – whenever I pass by a local Fire Station.

No surprise, then, that Dad made his appearance (albeit posthumously) when I took an early-morning drive to Ashburn to have another look at Station Number Six – which certainly predates my per-

sonal fire memories – with the original building completed in the mid-1940's. The local company formed after a tragic fire took the lives of three children in what back then was a small farming community. Now, the facility on Ashburn Road has an historic look to it, but it's actually quite new – having replaced the original station in 2016. The

brick-and-mortar construction (complete with a faceted turret) reminds me of an old-fashioned Armory for National Guard activities. Yup, Dad would have approved – one of his proudest accomplishments was the completion of a new Firehouse in our hometown (in the late 1960's, I believe).

A True Heroine

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

"I waited for a half century to tell my story," Dr. Lise Deguire writes in her memoir, *Flashback Girl*. After reading this book in just two days, I can tell you that it was well worth the wait.



MOORE-SOBEL

Dr. Deguire is a burn survivor. Her book begins with the accident that changed her life forever – a fire inadvertently started by her mother as she attempted to light a grill. The author was just four years old. Even worse, her mother left her daughter in the fire, while her mother rushed to safety and

jumped into a nearby lake.

This experience alone constitutes enough trauma for a lifetime. Tragically, much worse trauma lay ahead for the heroine of this tantalizing story: a childhood marred by self-involved and neglectful parents, her brother's suicide, rude and insensitive remarks hurled at her as she battled her scars. "I was hideously disfigured," she writes. Scars covered two-thirds of her body.

Yet none of this fazed Deguire.

Strong and courageous, she kept going when so many

would likely have given up. For her countless operations as a young child, she often went to the hospital by herself.

After the fire, her mother decided to pursue her doctorate. "My mother wanted to move on with her life," Deguire writes. This meant that from a young age the author often found herself at home alone after school. "I barely survived my childhood

with my mother," Deguire writes.

As for her father, he also was not without his shortcomings. "He was the best of fathers; he was the worst of fathers," she writes. Her father's anger scared her. She summarized her relationship with her father powerfully through a metaphor. When she was in the hospital following her burn injury, he gave her an aquarium. The problem was that it was placed in the room outside of her sight, and she was forced to lay on her back without moving during her recovery. "He wanted to do whatever he could for me," she writes. "But he could not understand my point of view."

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Going Back to School: Tips on How to Pay for It

Going back to school can help you advance in your job, re-enter the workforce, or support a second act as you chart a completely new career. But what are the right strategies adults should keep in mind to help manage education expenses?



RICHARD RICCI

Here are some financial tips for going back to school as an adult:

See what your employer offers. Many large companies offer benefits such as tuition reimbursement through a qualified program—up to \$5,250 may be excluded from income. But even if the tuition above \$5,250 is taxed as income, that's still a great strategy versus paying it yourself. Check with your employer to see if they offer any scholarships, educational discounts, or other resources that you could tap into.

Consider tax-deferred educational savings plans. If you have money in a 529 plan or Coverdell Education Savings Account (ESA), it may make sense to use those funds for you to go back

to school. Did the plan begin as a way to fund a child's education? The beneficiary can often be changed to a qualified family member. Is your planned enrollment date months or years in the future? You may be able to make contributions to a 529 plan between now and then to build up funds. In the case of ESAs, however, contributions are not allowed after the beneficiary attains age 18 and the beneficiary has to be under age 30.

Remember tax deductions and/or tax credits. Though not a source of direct funding, some education expenses (if you are qualified) may be tax deductible. Also, education expenses may qualify for either the American Opportunity or Lifetime Learning Credit. *IRS Publication 970: Tax Benefits for Education** provides a comprehensive overview of tax benefits and tax rules related to education.

Tap into retirement funds only if you understand the rules. You can use IRA savings for "qualified educational expenses" and avoid penalties for

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Loudoun County offering COVID-19 testing events through April

Loudoun County has scheduled more free, drive thru COVID-19 testing events through April. Testing events will be held on Tuesdays only, and end one hour earlier than the testing events held over the past two months. The new COVID-19 testing schedule is now Tuesdays, 10 a.m. – 1 p.m. at the following locations:

- **April 6:** Philip A. Bolen Memorial Park, 42405 Claudia Drive, Leesburg (Enter the park on Crosstrail Boulevard from Sycolin Road.)
- **April 13:** Cascades Library, 21030 Whitfield Place, Potomac Falls (Access the testing location in the back parking lot, near the senior center.)
- **April 20:** Dulles South Recreation & Community Center, 24950 Riding Center Drive, South Riding
- **April 27:** Ray Muth Sr. Memorial Park, 20971 Marblehead Drive, Ashburn

The testing events are free and open to all. There are no age or residency requirements. No prescriptions or appoint-

ments are necessary. A person does not have to exhibit symptoms of COVID-19 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.

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, and 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. The forms are available at

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

11 Critical Home Inspection Traps to be Aware of Weeks Before Listing Your Loudoun Home for Sale

Loudoun - According to industry experts, there are over 33 physical problems that will come under scrutiny during a home inspection when your home is for sale. A new report has been prepared which identifies the eleven most common of these problems, and what you should know about them before you list your home for sale.

Whether you own an old home or a brand new one, there are a number of things that can fall short of requirements during a home inspection. If not identified and dealt with, any of these 11 items could cost you dearly in terms of repair. That's why it's critical that you read this report before you list your home. If you wait until the building inspector flags these issues for you, you will almost certainly experience costly delays in the close of your home sale or,

worse, turn prospective buyers away altogether. In most cases, you can make a reasonable pre-inspection yourself if you know what you're looking for, and knowing what you're looking for can help you prevent little problems from growing into costly and unmanageable ones.

To help homesellers deal with this issue before their homes are listed, a free report entitled "11 Things You Need to Know to Pass Your Home Inspection" has been compiled which explains the issues involved.

To hear a brief recorded message about how to order your FREE copy of this report call toll-free 1-800-355-8037 and enter 1003. You can call any time, 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

Get your free special report NOW to learn how to ensure a home inspection doesn't cost you the sale of your home.

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Purcellville, Loudoun get millions in American Rescue Plan Funds

BY VALERIE CURY

The American Rescue Plan Act, also known as the COVID-19 Stimulus Package, will net Purcellville \$9,250,037 as it stands today, but could be as low as \$2.2 million. Loudoun County will be receiving \$80,203,148. However, there might be a recalculation in the numbers.

At the March 23 Purcellville Town Council Meeting, Council Member Stan Milan wanted to make sure to hear from the citizens of the Town, on how they would like to see the funds allocated.

This can be done several ways including social media, the Town website, and knocking on doors. One way is through an online survey. Said Milan, "I mentioned two to three weeks ago about doing a Polco survey, and I didn't get any response back on what to do...The questions I want to propose are...hard questions we would give the citizens. The ten priorities that affect the majority of the people in Town, broadband, traffic, water, helping the needy... The top ten. There are a lot of issues, and we can't reach out to the Town as a whole, as we would like to."

Council Member Joel Grewe said his "only fear with this is that there is a consistent attempt to essentially move from the form of government that we have right now – it is an elected repre-

sentative – to a more direct democracy approach. And the risk in that is not that we have more community engagement...The risk, however, is the fact that we are going to try to take the synthesis of knowledge that we have weeded through the last year or two or three or more... in understanding the technical and financial aspect in running the city, then turning it over to the citizens..." He emphasized that there are many ways to reach out to the citizens.

Council Member Chris Bertaut said that he agreed that "we need to reach out in various ways to poll" the citizens. "The people in Purcellville are relying on us to listen and take into consideration of all our knowledge of the Town's needs, wants, and desires, and try to serve them as best as possible through whatever funding comes our way."

Mayor Kwasi Fraser said, "Getting questions close to our citizens and reaching out is a point of validation; we still need to keep the community engaged."

The following are general allowable uses, to date, of funds:

- To respond to the pandemic or its negative economic impacts, including assistance to households, small businesses, and nonprofits,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

Leesburg adopts Fiscal Year 2022 Budget – Maintains real estate tax rate at 18.4 cents

The Leesburg Town Council adopted the real estate tax rate for the 2021 calendar year and approved the Fiscal Year 2022 Budget and the six-year Fiscal Year 2022-2027 Capital Improvements Program. The council maintained the current real estate tax rate of 18.4¢ per \$100 of assessed value.

"We are taking a very conservative, cautionary approach with the Fiscal Year 2022 budget," explains Kaj Dentler, Leesburg's Town Manager. "We know we are not out of the woods with the COVID-19 pandemic. Our goal is to position the town to handle the uncertainties of the upcoming year."

The adopted Fiscal Year 2022 General Fund Budget, including debt service, totals \$65.3 million which is a 4.6 percent increase over Fiscal Year 2021. Only two enhancements are included in the budget: \$300,000 for increased emer-

gency and weather response efforts and \$177,086 to continue the downtown outdoor dining program that began last year.

In addition, the council adopted the Fiscal Year 2022-2027 Capital Improvements Program. The CIP includes 69 projects, totaling \$210.1 million over the six years of the program.

For Fiscal Year 2022, the CIP is \$48.2 million and includes 33 projects. Major capital projects that began in previous years or will be under construction in Fiscal Year 2022 including the Route 7/Battlefield Parkway interchange, the widening of Evergreen Mill Road, the expansion and renovation of the Leesburg Police Headquarters on Plaza Street, and improvements at Veterans Park at Ball's Bluff. Council also approved the Lawson Road Pedestrian Bridge project to start design in Fiscal Year 2022 with construction to start in Fiscal Year 2023.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

Ignoring Planning Commissioners, split Town Council – Names Dooley Purcellville Zoning Administrator

BY VALERIE CURY

At the March 9 Purcellville Town Council meeting, Don Dooley Purcellville's newly-hired Planning and Economic Director was voted in as Zoning Administrator. The Council

GOVERNMENT

voted 4-3, with Vice Mayor Mary Jane Williams, and Council Members Joel Grewe, Ted Greenly, and Tip Stinnette voting

yes. Purcellville Mayor or Kwasi Fraser, and Council Members Stan Milan and Chris Bertaut voted no. The Zoning Administrator position is responsible for decision making on critical projects such as Vineyard Square. For example, that project had expired, however, the Zoning

Administrator ruled that the project had "commenced and diligently pursued," according to the determination letter dated April 6, 2015. To date no significant work has been done.

The Town Council interviewed two candidates for the ZA position – Don Dooley and Purcellville Senior Planner Andy Conlon.

Dooley moved to Purcellville from California in January of this year. He brings with him approximately 20 years of city planning experience from Whittier, and Norwalk, CA.

In his interview for the position, Dooley said that "the Zoning Administrator has to be someone who has significant experience for this position, particularly in city planning, historic preservation, economic development, [and] ... very strong skills in public administration."

Stinnette pointed out, "If I did any word search for two words

"If I did any word search for two words 'zoning administrator,' those two words don't jump out from your resume."

*- Council Member
Tip Stinnette*

Stinnette pointed out, "If I did any word search for two words 'zoning administrator,' those two words don't jump out from your resume."

In response, Dooley explained that zoning in California is a community development director position. "I understand the sole responsibility, the gravity for making effective ... decisions as well as logical decisions, based on public input and collaboration with staff and the community."

Greenly asked where Dooley would look to find information before making a decision. Dooley responded by saying he would collaborate with the Town Manager, Town Attorney, staff and Town Council. He later reiterated that point adding also that he would consult with boards and commissions. Dooley said the Zoning Administrator "is not about serving individuals; it's about what the community's needs are."

Candidate Andy Conlon had lots to say about this important Zoning Administrator's appointment.

Conlon has been working for the Town of Purcellville since 2018 as senior planner. Conlon is popular and well-supported. The Town Council received letters of endorsements from all the planning commissioners supporting him for Zoning Administrator.

Conlon noted that he has 40 years of experience, with most of it "holding the exact title of Zoning Administrator." He had held that position for the Towns of Front Royal, Timberville, Woodstock, and Leesburg, and both Culpeper and Stafford Counties, in addition to holding positions at the same time in some towns as Town Manager and Assistant Town Manager – "100 percent of that time ... in the Com-

monwealth of Virginia."

Grewe asked Conlon what was the role of Zoning Administrator relative to the planning commission. Conlon explained, "the Zoning Administrator is focused on ministerial acts ... and the role is representative of the land use regulations."

Addressing the question of working in "a lot of places," Conlon said, "I've worked in small communities, so small that I was

Town Manager, and I was the only professional staff, which meant ... I was plowing snow or emptying trash cans. I've worked in towns and I've worked in counties. My broad experience has given me many, many, many, valuable lessons."

When asked which municipality he worked for in the last 40 years most closely tracks with Purcellville, Conlon said,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

The following are the assigned duties of the Zoning Administrator, according to the Purcellville Municipal Code:

Any land-use or zoning determination that is formally requested by the public, in writing, to the Planning Dept.;

All pending administrative decisions for proposed projects that would adversely impact the historic integrity of an individually eligible or designated historic resource, including contributing historic resources within an eligible or designated historic district;

Any zoning administrative decision that requires CLOMR (Conditional Letter of Map Revision) or LOMR (Letter of Map Revision) under the FEMA national flood zone process;

Any proposed land-use activity that is inconsistent with the Town's current Comprehensive Plan, but consistent with Purcellville Zoning Code;

Any pending zoning determination that would potentially increase existing residential density; and, interpretation of conditions of approval for approved land-use entitlements that are unclear or are contested by the project applicant due to a lack of specificity, after the appeal period for an approved project ends.

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Loudoun County holds courthouse construction Topping Out Ceremony

Loudoun County has reached a significant milestone in the construction of the new Loudoun County District Courthouse. The County held a Topping Out Ceremony on Monday, March 22, at the construction site in Leesburg. The ceremony—a tradition in construction—symbolizes the

GOVERNMENT completion of structural steel installation, which is marked by invited guests signing the final steel beam that is then placed into the structure.

Members of the Board of Supervisors, Leesburg Town Council, and Loudoun County's judges, and Constitutional Officers were among those on hand for the ceremony. The Courts Complex Expansion project includes the design and construction of a new 92,000-square-foot courthouse and renovation of existing courts facilities. The project has also created new parking facilities, such as the Pennington Garage, which has more than 700 parking spaces.

Construction of the new facility is now estimated at 25 percent complete. Future phases of construction include construction of concrete slab decks, electrical pathway installation, exterior wall framing, and building a tunnel under Church Street that connects the existing courthouse to the new building. The project is expected to be complete and open to the public in 2023.

For more information and to sign up for email and text updates on the project visit loudoun.gov/courts-expansion.



(Above) Loudoun County officials attend the Topping Out Ceremony for the new Loudoun County District Courthouse.



(Left) Rendering of new Loudoun County Courthouse.

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Waterford Traffic Calming and Byway Study meeting April 15

Loudoun County is hosting an online public information meeting for the Village of Waterford Traffic Calming and Byway Assessment Study.

GOVERNMENT

The purpose of the meeting is to seek feedback from the public on the study.

The meeting will be held Thursday, April 15, from 6 – 7 p.m. Members of the public are invited to join the virtual meeting to learn, ask questions and provide input about the study. This meeting was originally scheduled for February 18, but was rescheduled due to inclement weather.

Login information and meeting materials are available for

review at loudoun.gov/waterfordtrafficalming and loudoun.gov/remoteparticipation. Meeting materials include diagrams and speaker sign-up and comment forms.

Members of the public must sign up in advance to ask questions during the event by 12 p.m., Wednesday, April 14. Online participants may also send questions to the study team as chat messages, which will be answered during the meeting as time allows.

For more information about the village of Waterford traffic calming study, including a link to sign up for updates about the project and upcoming public meeting, visit the study page.

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So how—and how much—should you mulch your garden?

BY LAURA LONGLEY

There's more to mulch than a bag of wood chips.

Just ask Caroline Armstrong, a manager of her family's Remington Mulch Company, one of the region's largest manufacturers of mulch. "If you're only familiar with the mulch at big box stores, think twice before buying there," she advises. "You'll find higher quality products at local nurseries and landscaping companies."

COMMUNITY

But don't wait too long to put in your order. "The spring season started super late for us this year, so it's now very busy," she explains. But you still have time to get the kind of mulch that can make a big difference in how your property looks and your garden grows.

Your choices are also considerably wider at companies like Remington. Caroline recommends double-shredded hardwood mulches—a finely ground mulch that trees and plant life love. Remington makes it by grinding wood once—called Single Grind—and letting that sit for a period until it is ready to be ground again. The second time around, the single grinds are shred in a "Dia-



The Remington Mulch team out on a delivery: Caroline Armstrong, center; sister Katie, left; brother Trent, right.

mond Z" tub grinder, which pummels wood at 1050 horsepower.

"Having the right tool for the job is very important to our company's success," Caroline explains. "Our reliable and heavy-duty grinders help us stay

ahead of the competition, and give us very good quality products." Mulch sits in piles for two to four more months before it is sold, allowing it to become darker, richer, and finer as time passes.

Remington also dyes mulches to cre-

ate colorized brown, black, and red double-shredded mulch. To make it, natural double-shredded mulch is run through a machine that sprays the mulch with an eco-friendly colorant. The coloring machine spins the mulch in the colorant until it is coated all over the wood. This spinning and spraying motion, along with the use of high quality colorant from the industries' leaders is what gives Remington's colorized mulches their vibrant appeal and ability to hold color for up to 12 months. This process is done the same way every time, resulting in a consistent-looking colorized mulch product. After the coloring process is complete, the mulch is dropped onto a conveyor belt and moved to the appropriate location where it sits for at least a month, drying and soaking in the colorant.

"Dyed brown is the most popular product because of its natural-looking color, and it does not fade as quickly as the product with no dye," Caroline says. "Check to be sure that any dyed mulch you buy is all organic, all natural, with no chemicals."

For mulching your garden bed for

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

Flower & Garden festival April 17-18

The Town of Leesburg's 31st annual Flower & Garden Festival will take place on Saturday, April 17 and Sunday, April 18 at Ida Lee Park. Approximately 70 vendors are expected.

COMMUNITY

Traditionally, the event has been held on the streets of historic downtown Leesburg. Due to the on-going COVID-19 pandemic, the event has been moved to Ida Lee Park to provide

more space to spread out. The festival will be setup in the parking lots near the outdoor pool and soccer fields.

The event will follow all Virginia Department of Health guidelines in order to provide a safe environment for festival attendees, vendors, and staff. To help with social distancing and mask wearing mandates, several regular festival features will not be available this year. There will be no children's area, food vendors, or beer garden. Attend-

ees are also being asked to keep their pets at home as they will not be allowed inside the festival area.

In order to maintain appropriate crowd size, festival admission will be by ticket only this year. Tickets are free and are available online starting April 1st for Leesburg residents and on April 3rd for the general public. Everyone will need a ticket to enter, regardless of age. There will be three ticketed sessions each day:

- 9 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.
- 12:15 p.m. to 2:45 p.m.
- 3:30 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Parking will be available in the Ida Lee parking field, accessed from North King St./Rt. 15. Accessible parking will be available at the recreation center in a dedicated lot.

To obtain tickets or for more information visit www.flowerandgarden.org.



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The Wayward Spy

Real time, inspired thriller by local lady

BY ANDREA GAINES

Don't you love the title ... *The Wayward Spy*. Gives me goosebumps.

The Wayward Spy, a new – and first – novel by a Loudoun woman named Susan Ouellette, was released on March 2.

It is really special when someone as talented and insightful as Susan Ouellette decides to make Loudoun County her home, and publish her first book from here.

In pursuing her dreams to be a writer, “going for it,” as she told the BRL, Ouellette dove deep. With it, she hopes to launch herself into the competitive world of the spy mystery author.

What a thrill it was to talk with her. She's actually not “spooky” at all, talking to us with her cozy wood stove burning, and a hint of spring in the air.

Who is this wayward spy?

The title of Ouellette's book is intend-

ed to intrigue, obviously, and it does.

The plot line follows the main character as she tries to unravel the murder of her fiancé, killed overseas. When he, a CIA operative, is identified as a “suspected” terrorist, she ... smells a rat. And, her mission: to clear his name. One reader, or critic, who comments on books, wondered aloud if *The Wayward Spy's* main character might soon be known as the top female spy of her generation, a la the famous book and movies character in the well-known Jack Ryan series.



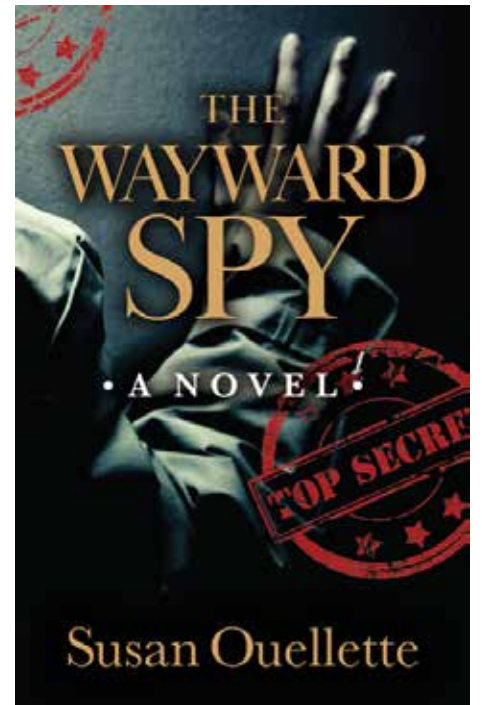
And, maybe she will.

Ouellette herself is a former CIA analyst, having spent many years in the intelligence game. As an author, she draws upon both her work in the CIA and her academic studies of international relations and Russia, at both Harvard and Boston Universities. Ouellette's work on the failed 1991 Soviet coup, her tenure on Capitol Hill (with

the House Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence, or HPSCI), and other assignments make her the perfect “spy” to get interested in this kind of writing.

A press release for her new book notes that the author's “quiet moments in the attic of the U.S. Capitol Building,” helped give rise to her new book's main character, Maggie Jenkins. “She has walked the halls of the House Intelligence Committee and the CIA and knows those institutions as very few novelists do,” says Dr. Mark M. Lowenthal, former CIA Assistant Director for Analysis and former Staff Director at HPSCI: “Susan Ouellette has written a well-crafted page-turner that benefits not only from her imagination and way with words – but from her experience.” As Ouellette tells it, when *The Wayward Spy* was released, she considered her own environment. There are a lot of former and current intelligence professionals in western Loudoun, she noted, “who might be interested in reading *The Wayward Spy*.”

But, in agreeing to an interview with



the Blue Ridge Leader as her book was being rolled out, she was clearly interested in reaching the non-spy audience, too.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »



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Limitless views and highly desirable main-level living on Airmont Road

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Southwest of Purcellville is a lovely, open stretch of the Loudoun Valley where the views of the Blue Ridge Mountains are limitless. There you'll discover this custom home of unsurpassed quality, with limitless possibilities for country living.

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some living room, which adjoins a formal dining room, features cathedral ceilings, hardwood floors, and a brick wood-burning fireplace.

The comfortable family room, opening onto a screened porch, boasts a stone fireplace and wet bar. The sunny kitchen offers an island, abundant cabinet space, a handy desk area, and upgraded appliances, including double ovens and cooktop.

The main-level primary suite comprises a large bedroom, walk-in closet, and bath with double sinks, soaking tub, and separate shower. Three more large main-level bedrooms and wide hallways with lots of storage space complete the first floor living area.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »

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Lincoln Elementary School open for business

BY ANDREA GAINES

Spring Break is just finishing up at Lincoln Elementary School, which, according to www.Lincoln.ptboard.org, runs through Sunday, April 4.

But, if you are part of, or want to be part of this dynamic educational community, now is the time to act.

Lincoln itself is part of the Goose Creek Historic District, the first rural historic district in Virginia.

Are we talking about a special place here? Oh, yes, yes we are. When you are reporting on the elementary school in a place settled in the 1700s, you bet it is special.

From Lincoln's kindergarten teachers: Educators love, love, love this truly authentic place. Here's what they say.

"There is a unique and strong sense of community at Lincoln. We feel grateful to have worked together with kindergarten students over [these many] years. We truly enjoy the creative challenge of bringing the curriculum to life in our school and in our community.

"In the Fall, we pick apples locally and make applesauce with our (older) book buddies."

This experience helps children reflect on where our food comes from and allows us to step into shared procedural reading and

writing tasks.

"We study water changing in winter as we observe our 'ice pictures' melting and changing in the sun along our outdoor cottage walls.

"In the spring, we observe the changing landscape as our butterfly and sensory gardens begin to change again.



"We look forward each year to welcoming new children and families to our school!" (Comments from Meghan Mendez, kindergarten teacher, and Lauri Lanigan, Kindergarten assistant.)

Enrollment dates and times – how to navigate it

There are several ways to move through the process of enrolling your child in Lincoln Elementary school.

Lincoln Elementary school.

- **Special permissions.** Starts April 1; deadline is June 30. Special permission opens up to all families. Applicants can apply here: <https://www.lcps.org/specialpermission>.
- **Zoned kindergarten & 1st – 5th registration.** Feb. 1, 8 a.m.; ongoing. Parents of new 2021-2022 school year students including kindergarten students, and K through 5 students may submit online pre-registrations. Please make sure to select the correct school year. Current LCPS students do not need to pre-register.
- **March 17 is the first day of school, 8 a.m.** First day registrations will begin to be processed. Once the school has received your online registration, you will be contacted by the school to set up an appointment to process the registration. You will need an original birth certificate, parent photo ID, and proof of residency.
- **Re-enrollment for FORMER students**

Former LCPS students returning for the 2021_2022 school year: Students are required to complete the pre-registration online. You will need to confirm proof of residency and a TB screening. Students are to supply name of previous school and/or supply proof of successful completion for home instruction or private school. School administration may need to review to determine if the student will be promoted to next grade. For more information on how to register, please follow the following link: <https://www.lcps.org/Page/228770>.

For further information

The Village of Lincoln, one of the most wonderful communities in western Loudoun County, has quite the story to tell.

For further information on Lincoln Elementary School, including student enrollment, go to <https://www.lcps.org/Lincoln>.

There, you will find directions to the school, details on the Lincoln PTO, the learning and reading resources available, academics, and the teachers and staff. All of it.

With current announcement, a volunteer signup page, and a forms & payments page, the Lincoln PTO Board is one of the best sources of information: <https://lincoln.ptboard.com>.

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~ Remembering ~

Remembering Wanda Lee Noel

Wanda Lee Noel, 82, passed away, Friday afternoon, March 12, 2021. She was the daughter of the late Elmer and Ruth Roop. She is survived by her son Wade Noel and his wife Heidi; and her daughter Jennifer Noel and husband Craig Gravely and three grandchildren Thomas Moore, Nicholas Moore and Kelsey Bozeman; and was predeceased by grandson Seth Noel.



Noel lived in Philomont, for more than 50 years and worked at the Philomont General Store for over 40 of those.

You could find her working nearly every day of the week. On any given day you could find her making sandwiches or ringing up groceries for the people who lived in Philomont or just those passing

through.

More likely you could hear her tell stories or chuckle and laugh at someone else telling their stories. She loved being able to see and chat with all her neighbors daily, she also loved watching the kids grow up and have kids of their own that would come into the store. Noel was much more than a clerk in a little country store, for many, seeing her at the store meant that

you were home.

Noel will be laid to rest at a public ceremony with internment at Ebenezer Cemetery in Bluemont. As an expression of sympathy, memorial donations may be made to Hospice of the Panhandle.

Arrangements are by Hall Funeral Home of Purcellville.

The cicadas are coming, the cicadas are coming

Their little bodies have been maturing in the ground right under your feet for 17 years ... almost two decades.

This is the cicada, one of the most unusual and strange members of the natural world. A hibernating insect, you say? A creature there right under your feet just waiting to climb out? Yes. But, don't worry, they live about 8 inches below the surface.

The entire eastern United States is full of them. Loud noise and creepiness for you, food, including rich protein sources for others, all under the name of, this year, "Brood X." The insects will probably emerge in Northern Virginia sometime in May.

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KAINE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Catoctin Creek’s opportunity for expansion nearly as much as the pandemic itself.

Scott, general manager, explained the situation. “The current 25 percent tariffs on American whisky are set to rise to 50 percent by June if no action is taken. The USA has removed its tariffs on European Union spirits, so a reciprocal move by the EU is certainly expected. Kaine could help us in this effort to remove tariffs by using the authority of his office as senator to contact Ms. Katherine Tai, U.S. Trade Representative, to encourage her to make a priority of negotiating with the European Union to remove all these tariffs.”

Kaine didn’t miss a beat. “I’ll get right on it,” he said.

Of course, the pandemic has hurt Catoctin Creek Distillery’s sales as well as patronage and events at their Purcellville tasting room; membership in their tasting clubs; distribution channels, and sales at retail outlets.

Catoctin Creek sources locally, which spares the Harrises disruptions in supply lines. “One of the benefits of sourcing locally is that our supply lines are not disrupted by global shipping issues, like the Suez Canal debacle right now,” Scott explained. “However, our corks do come from Europe, and those have been significantly delayed by the COVID pandemic, which caused ports to slow down due to furloughed workforces.”



L to R: Scott and Becky Harris with Sen. Tim Kaine.

For Catoctin Creek chief distiller Becky Harris, the pandemic has brought not only interruptions in normal production but, with her election as board president of the American Craft Distillers Association last spring, she also has had to take on responsibilities involving the implementation and FDA compliance

of hand sanitizer production by distillers. Then, at year’s end, when the FDA surprised distillers with \$23,433 in fees due to that COVID-19 effort, she joined forces with other industry leaders in gaining an immediate repeal, and apologies from the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services.

“New equipment is being fabricated presently and is slated to arrive on July 25,” said Becky. “When it arrives, and we get it up and running, it will allow us to triple our current production.”

“We’re planning a ribbon cutting for sometime in August,” she told Kaine, asking if he’d come.

“Wouldn’t miss it!” said the senator.

Now, if you’ve always wondered whether it’s whisky or whiskey, Scott Harris has your answer: “It’s a tricky thing. Context is important. Generally, whiskey is American or Irish; whisky is Scottish or Canadian. However, there are exceptions. For example, Catoctin Creek spells it whisky to pay homage to our Scottish ancestors (as do some other companies like Maker’s Mark).”

Kaine was hardly concerned about spelling. Before leaving to visit Mom’s Apple Pie in Round Hill, he stopped in the tasting room shop, leaving a happy man with two bottles of Catoctin Creek Roundstone Rye 92 Proof “Distiller’s Edition,” rated 94 points by Wine Enthusiast and their #3 rye whisky in the nation last year.

“The key to *Successful Aging* is to pay as *little attention* to it as possible.”
- Judith Regan

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Arbor Day Photo Contest 2021: 'Trees That Make Me Feel Happy'

The annual Loudoun County Arbor Day tree photo contest is underway. The theme of this year's contest is "Trees That Make Me Feel Happy." Entries are being accepted through Friday April 9, 2021, in advance of this year's virtual Loudoun County Arbor Day Celebration, which will be posted on the Loudoun County website at loudoun.gov/trees to coincide with Virginia's Arbor Day April 30.

Contest Rules:

- Entries must be a photo of a single tree or group of trees that are in Loudoun County,
- The photos must have been taken by the entrant. There is a limit of two entries per person.
- Only digital pictures will be accepted. JPEGs are acceptable. High resolution photos are encouraged.



- Email photos to Loudoun County Urban Forester Kyle Dingus of the Department of Building and Development.

- Include photographer's contact information (name, phone number and email) as well as the approximate location of the tree and tree species, if known, and a brief explanation of why the photographer is thankful for the tree or trees in the photo.

Awards will be distributed to the top three photos. The winners will be notified the week of April 12. Photos will not be returned and will become the property of the Loudoun County Arbor Day Committee.

For more information about the Arbor Day photo contest or the virtual Arbor Day celebration, contact Kyle Dingus at 571-252-0678 or by email.

LIMITLESS VIEWS, CON'T FROM PAGE 16

The lower level offers complete living quarters for a parent, au pair, or that son or daughter who arrived with the pandemic and just might decide to stay for a while. Here you'll find a full kitchen, a family room with a third wood-burning fireplace, a den area with walk out to a patio, plus an emergency exit window access and closet. The three-car garage offers additional workshop space.

The property also comes with plenty of peace of mind thanks to a back-up generator with automatic cut-over services to major components, two wells and hot water heater with recirculation

unit, intercom and an alarm system that monitors all windows and doors with active sensors.

You'll already have a good start on a garden for this spring and summer with two raised planters, an established herb garden, and a 25x65-foot garden area. The large 14x33-foot storage shed with electric and water provides ample space for garden and lawn equipment. And you can be sure your four-legged friends will love the enclosed pen with ramp and plenty of room to romp.

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LA FIANDRA OPINION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

19,000 miles high.

This article is not meant to be a lesson in finance, but you should know some basic facts. So who owns the U.S. national debt? It turns out that 78 percent of the debt is owed to the public and foreign countries. The rest is owed to the Social Security Fund, and other government retirement funds including Medicare. Foreign nations like Japan and China own about one third of the public debt. Other nations, like China, want to hold on to U.S. debt to keep the dollar value high compared to their own currency so that their exports cost less.

So why is the size of the national debt important? The current national debt exceeds the value of all the goods and services generated annually in the U.S. In fact, the current national debt of \$28 trillion exceeds the U.S. Gross Domestic Product by \$6 trillion or by 27 percent. This is the largest it has been since WWII. History has shown that stable currencies never exceed 75 percent of the GDP, we are now at 127 percent. Incidentally, Russia's national debt is 20 percent of their GDP.

So, who cares, why not let the national debt go to \$50 or \$100 trillion? One problem with that scenario is the people who are owed the debt start to get nervous about whether their money is safe and will they ever be paid back. There are no assets like gold or silver to back the debt. The debt is supported only by the faith in the United States to pay it back.

One problem with a high national debt is the annual interest payments that must be paid to the holders of the debt, currently about \$400 billion. These payments are relatively low because of the current 1.5 to 2 percent interest rates. These rates are being kept low by the government but may have to go up say to 3 percent or higher due to inflation. We are now seeing rising gas, lumber and home prices that don't bode well for the economy or the national debt.

Where does the government get the trillion or more dollars to pay the interest? They print it. Unfortunately this action will increase the debt even more and start a vicious cycle of printing

money. This vicious cycle has occurred in other countries like Germany in the 1930's, Greece in 1990's and is currently in effect in Venezuela. Wheel barrels of German Marks were needed to buy a loaf of bread and personal savings were wiped out in the 1930's.

Don't laugh but, the Venezuelan government is currently issuing a one million Bolivar Soberano bill to use in every day transactions. The bill is colorful and conversation piece. I asked my Venezuelan born sister-in-law to get me some. They are worth 53 cents. There is a true story about a bank robbery in Venezuela. The robbers broke in and went right to the safety deposit boxes for jewelry and gold. They also stole the computers and furniture but left the cash.

You don't think it can happen here, don't bet on it. Excess spending and the negative effect of Covid-19 on business activity has pushed the nation's debt ratio to heights that threaten the stability of the economy. A severe crisis like another pandemic, major terrorist attack, multiple natural disasters, or military conflict can push it over. Printing more money for "shovel ready jobs" or a \$3 trillion infrastructure stimulus won't solve the problem either, remember FDR's WPA programs of the 1930's?

There are solutions to the debt problem that include reducing government spending, reducing taxes to individuals and businesses to expand business activity and developing valuable national resources, none of which we are doing. But, we could also get lucky like Norway by discovering a valuable natural resource, oil and gas, off shore. Because of these discoveries, their population of 5.5 million are all now technically millionaires.

What about us, didn't we discover how to get more oil out of the ground in the early 2000's and became an exporter of oil and gas in 2011? Yes, we did. We were smart enough to develop fracking to make us energy independent. Money coming into the county to pay for the oil and gas developed rather than going out, helped reduce the national debt. But wait, didn't we ban fracking in the U.S.? I guess we can't use that technology to reduce the national debt or inflation any more.



PUDDLES, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Just in time

As O'Rourke told the Blue Ridge Leader, "The calf was shivering violently."

The umbilical cord was still attached, and the mom was really, really agitated, she noted, ... throwing her head back and forth and mooing.

I don't know what would have happened if we hadn't come upon the mom and baby at that moment. The sun was setting and it was getting cold out. What if that mud had frozen around the baby overnight?

Kids are so smart

Farmers, of course, know just what to do in this situation.

O'Rourke's own little ones, Evelyn, age 9, Maisie, age 7, and Tiernan, age 5 had quite the day, and what a great experience for a kid.

In classic, child-like style, the kids

came up with a perfect name for the little babe in the mud – "Puddles." Perfection, pure and simple.

Thank you, kids, for helping to give us such a happy thing to write about.

We all hope that Puddles will live a long and happy life.

We're not sure that Mother's Day, coming up in just a few weeks for all of us, will ever be the same. Maybe Lincoln will rename Mother's Day ... Puddles Day.

But, we are sure that this story will be told in the Village of Lincoln for a long, long time ... with you as the child stars!

Special thanks to the many heroes in this sweet almost-Mother's-Day story, including the O'Rourke kids, Lincoln resident Laura Longley (who alerted the BRL to Puddles' rescue), Constance Chatfield-Taylor, Constance's sister, Kassie Kingsley, and the farmer. All played a key role in the calf's rescue.

MULCH, CONT' FROM PAGE 14

flowers, plants, and trees, Caroline recommends digging out old mulch until you get to the soil and spread the new mulch two or three inches thick. "Mulch is supposed to act as a sponge holding water in and keeping weeds out, so spreading it too thick or thin will defeat the purpose."

For your vegetable garden, she recommends tilling compost into existing soil or using enriched topsoil. Remington's topsoil is already enhanced with 20 percent compost. Consider it for top-dressing lawns especially after aerating. Just spread it a half inch thick over any area that needs seeding, watering, and grass grown."

Remington produces this high-quality soil and compost using large "trom-

mel" screens to eliminate rocks, sticks, and other debris. The process leaves the soil and compost consistently clean and easy for you to spread.

Prefer to just sit on your deck and admire your mulched garden? Caroline suggests asking your local Remington Mulch sales yard for some loyal contractors. "We love to refer business to other small businesses and contractors."

Remington Mulch Company serves retail and commercial customers throughout the region from plants and sales sites in Fairfax, Springfield, Gainesville, and near Brambleton in Loudoun County. For further information, call 703-560-2275, email RemingtonMulchSales@gmail.com, or visit remingtonmulch.com.

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DOOLEY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

“The Town of Leesburg, because it was similar to Purcellville” when he worked there in 1987. Leesburg has both separate departments of planning and zoning.

Conlon said that the role of Zoning Administrator is not visionary; it is not this is the way I would like to see things. It is the interpretation of the letter and spirit of the law as written.”

Bertaut asked what would he do differently for Purcellville? “Take a bad experience from the past, what should we not do?”

Conlon said he would “make sure we have an adequate maintenance and bonding program. Right now, what we have is in rough shape. Records are not well kept at this point.”

Bertaut also asked how the Zoning Administrator could help with economic development for the Town. Conlon said, “Economic development and historic preservation, as much as I love it, are not primary concerns of a zoning administrator – they are the primary concerns of the planning side of this organization.”

Milan asked Conlon what was his most challenging decision. Conlon said when he was the Zoning Administrator in Culpeper, “a gentleman had an illegal dump site,” and when he visited the property, the man put a shot gun in his chest. He

had to tell him what was permitted, what wasn’t, and how to remediate it.

When asked how would the Zoning Administrator decisions impact economic development, Conlon said, “If laws are counter to the Town’s best interest, then they need to be amended ... through the Town Council.”

When Mayor Fraser asked what needed to be changed within the Town, Conlon said there should be a clear definition of what are the roles and responsibilities of staff members.

“With Patrick Sullivan leaving nearly a year and a half ago, and the department being myself and the planning technician position, to now bringing a new staff member on board, there needs to be a clear statement of roles and responsibilities of these two professional positions.”

Conlon said he viewed “these two positions as co-equal positions in responsibility and general compensation.

“Zoning Administration and planning are not the same; they shouldn’t really be in the same department ... the Zoning Administrator position has a very different focus than the planning legislative position.”

Milan made a motion to appoint Conlon; and Grewe made an amended motion appointing Dooley. In the end, the vote to appoint Dooley passed 4-3.



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THE WAYWARD SPY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15

“I’m happy to chat,” she said in an email and follow-up phone call. “Today’s the day, the one I’ve been waiting for – for a long time. Thank you to everyone who already has purchased *The Wayward Spy*.” Then this spy-turned-writer-turned-book-promoter said, “I hope that [the book] keeps you up reading way past your bedtime! Once you’ve finished the book, I’d be most grateful if you’d post a review ...”

Will Maggie go on tour?

As noted, the main character in *The Wayward Spy* is a woman named Maggie.

As Ouellette explained, she hopes to develop the book into a series starring, as it were, this lovely lady.

“Are you doing local book signings, or other events?” we asked. Will Maggie go on tour? “I hope to do that,”

said Ouellette. But, as she explained, in this world of spies and intrigue, and the rest, a lot depends on the business agreements you have already made.” More intrigue. We like it.

“Do you consider yourself a creature of Washington?” we asked. “Well,” said the spy-turned-author, “I grew up in the Boston area, worked at the CIA for a long time, and on Capitol Hill. But, I’m also a researcher. So, a creature of Washington? I don’t know.”

“But,” she said, “There are a lot of us out here,” meaning ... it seems ... that our wonderful, tranquil, farmy, historic Loudoun County is filled with spies.

Indeed, as Ouellette related, spies like her love western Loudoun. She herself lived in Purcellville 17 years, and, lives now in Hamilton. “I live on a small farm of 10 acres ... and I love it.”



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LETTER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

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As the event's hosts and coordinators, the Community Foundation for Loudoun and Northern Fauquier Counties recognizes Give Choose is one more tool in our community's toolbox to encourage charitable giving.

This is especially critical in Loudoun County, as past studies have shown charitable giving ranking substandard when compared to the nation, the Com-

monwealth of Virginia, and most certainly when compared to neighboring counties. Everyone who donated during Give Choose is part of the solution, strengthening our collective generosity.

Since COVID-19, our local nonprofit Community has with dedication, innovation, and steadfast commitment served as a safety-net for thousands. Your gifts just helped weave that net into a stronger, more resilient place.

Thank you to you all for joining in GiveChoose.org and making this community one of the best to grow up and grow old.

*Amy E. Owen
President/CEO Community
Foundation for Loudoun and
Northern Fauquier Counties*

BEE HOTEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

once the female mates, she is on her own. These bees do not have a hive structure or work as a team like honey bees.

Be hotels need to be located in southern-exposures and sunny places, engineered to a particular size, preserve certain levels of moisture within (like a natural log would have), be kept free of mold, offer protection, and ways to get in and out, and so on.

The bees know how to do things, you see, and, the bee hotel needs to replicate their needs – give them what they need to thrive and survive.

The time is now

As JK said in its recent blog: "Solitary bees nest in the spring and early summer, so until then ... we wait! ... and, hopefully, bees will arrive! We invite you

to join us at the JK Community Farm this season to watch for their arrival."

The farm is located on Paxson Road, in Round Hill; and their website is JKCommunityFarm.org.

Farmer Mike, as he is called, is allergic to bees. So, he makes clear, "... it is very unlikely for you to be stung by a solitary bee, unless you step on them barefoot or try to swat at them."

For more information

With a grant from Microsoft, the farm has been able to build a bee hotel – a special nesting site to draw more species of bees to help with pollinating. The six-by six-foot hotel will be a part of the farm's future food education nature walk. The farm will know when the first guests check in, since the bees create a mud door to cover the entrance.

RESCUE PLAN FUNDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

- or aid to impacted industries such as tourism, travel, and hospitality;
- For premium pay to eligible workers performing essential work (as determined by each recipient government) during the pandemic, providing up to \$13 an hour above regular wages;
- For the provision of government services to the extent of the reduction in revenue due to the pandemic (relative to revenues collected in the most recent full

fiscal year prior to the emergency);

- To make necessary investments in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure

One of the most important allowable possible use of funds would be investments in infrastructure. This could allow the Town to make capital improvements or capital asset replacement in water, sewer, or broadband infrastructure.

The Town has over an estimated \$15 million in needed Capital Improvement Program improvement projects.

2022 BUDGET, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

The newly adopted Fiscal Year 2022 Budget and the Fiscal Year 2022-2027 Capital Improvements Program will be available for download from the Town's website at www.leesburgva.gov/budget within the next month. The proposed budget document is available now.

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GOOSE CREEK OVERLOOK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Housing Units.

Others, who forecast a future absent native plants and trees, wildlife, clean water, and a place to refresh body and soul, saw in the Goose Creek Overlook approval a lost cause and deepening threat to an irreplaceable environmental resource.

But the tide turned on the development two days later when Supervisor Mike Turner (D-Ashburn) had a change of heart and mind. He asked Board Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-At-Large) for a revote to be held on March 16, which resulted in a 6-2-1 split for denial of Goose Creek Overlook.

“Over the course of the past year, I think I lost sight of the forest for the trees—literally,” Turner said. “I’ve certainly done a disservice to the applicant, but refusing to admit my mistake would have done a far greater disservice to my constituents and the citizens of Loudoun County.”

He made the point that he had talked with only one or two individuals over a two-day period after the first vote. He reread sections of the Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan, and grew increasingly uncomfortable that County planning staff might have weighted their assessment of the development application toward approval knowing of the Board’s goal to increase affordable housing in Loudoun.

Other supervisors who had voted against the development on March 2—Kristen C. Umstattd (D-Leesburg) and Koran T. Saines (D-Sterling)—stayed with their votes on the 16th. The same held true for Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian) and Sylvia Glass (D-Broad Run) in their votes to approve Goose Creek Overlook.

Randall clearly knew her own mind: “We only have one earth.”

Supervisor Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) voted “yes” with Turner the first time around and followed Turner’s lead in the second vote, denying the development. As he wrote to constituents, he decided to change his vote after “further discussions with the Goose Creek Association regarding their concerns with the application.”

Given that Buffington’s vote could have changed the outcome in the first round, ensuring the defeat of the development, it’s fair to wonder why the representative of Loudoun’s most rural district didn’t pursue “further discussions” with the Goose Creek Association earlier.

The association has been fighting to protect the Goose for 50 years. In 2020, they made their case for saving Goose Creek in an award-winning documentary about the relentless threats to Goose Creek. It has been available at goosecreek.org for months.

Similarly, the Piedmont Environmental Council, Virginia Piedmont Heritage Area Association, Loudoun Co-

alition of Towns, and the Loudoun Historic Village Alliance have consistently made their voices heard at Board of Supervisors public hearings.

Catoctin District Supervisor Caleb Kershner explained his abstention in the final round in a 1,100-word Facebook post:

“When the Goose Creek Overlook application came in . . . I went to the site, walked the area, and met and questioned the developer’s representatives. I asked questions of our staff, spoke to other supervisors about it, and made a thorough inquiry and research.”

He provided his analysis and assessment of protections of the creek, weighing them against impacts of by-right development.

He evaluated the applicant’s promises and proffers for:

- strong stormwater management commitment
- increased erosion and sediment controls
- sewer pump station required to meet all Loudoun Water’s requirements and design specifications.
- commitment to plant Northern Virginia native trees
- recommendation of the experts on County staff
- Planning Commission’s vote
- views of the other district supervisors, in particular those of the two supervisors for the districts where this parcel sits (Supervisors Buffington and Turner)
- public access and kayak landing
- continuation of stream trail
- public park
- workforce housing

“Rest assured that I continue to be dedicated to preserving Western Loudoun, our waterways, and our natural landscape. I am already looking at the possibility of a change to the zoning laws that would require a greater setback from Goose Creek than our current zoning ordinance requires.”

“Thanks for explaining,” Jeremy Dalpiaz commented on Kershner’s page. “However, nowhere in this explanation do you mention that you considered the views of your constituents. I appreciate the staff views—having been a legislative staffer myself—but it is important to remember your ability to vote on these matters comes from the voters, not the staff.”

Why “place type” proved pivotal

It was Matthew F. Letourneau (R-Dulles) who proved to be the surprise vote to deny the development application. He voted against the development in that location because, according to the 2019 Comprehensive Plan, it wasn’t the right “Place Type.”

The Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan serves as the “umbrella” for the County’s planning efforts and consists of the General Plan and the 2019 Countywide

Transportation Plan. A key section—Chapter 2 of the General Plan—is “Land Use,” which “lays out the vision for Loudoun’s future land uses, growth management, and built environment . . . Place Types guide the intent, form, character, and anticipated uses within each policy area.”

The Plan makes clear that “the Place Type approach differs from the County’s previous approach to land use planning in that it provides a way to shape the future of Loudoun by concentrating on context – the look and feel of places, their form and their character – instead of focusing only on conventional land use.”

Coincidence or not, it’s worth noting that five of the six supervisors who ultimately voted to deny the Goose Creek Overlook development—Buffington, Letourneau, Randall, Saines, and Umstattd—had served on the Board that guided the Comprehensive Plan to approval.

Before their final vote, a woman named Joan Henry stepped up to the microphone in the Board Room. “I’ve worked with vulnerable populations all of my adult life,” she began. “I get the need for affordable housing in Loudoun . . . In this case, the developer and his associates are painting a false narrative. They’re saying that any opposition to this development is an indictment of affordable housing. It is not. What you are voting on—our opposition to—is a specific site location. Goose Creek Overlook is wrong on all levels, including environmental and fiscal.

“It is in fact an irresponsible location,” Henry went on. “Your site does not meet a single criterion, not one, of any criteria recommended for the location of ADU sites. In short, it is not near anything.

“[Regarding] safety: two of the criteria for ADUs are defensible spaces and walkability. Do any of us really want the elderly, the infirm, teenagers, mothers pushing strollers trying to navigate down Sycolin, across the bridge, to get to stores they cannot afford?

“Vulnerable people often have to work multiple jobs. Do you really want curious toddlers, teenagers wandering down to a kayak launch right above a spillway on the river? As a guardian, I would never have recommended or approved placement of one of my kids in such a location.

“I urge you to vote no,” she concluded. “Find alternative sites for affordable housing that meet the needs of the tenants without putting their lives in extreme jeopardy.”

Somehow, early on in those weeds of Goose Creek Overlook, the concept of place type got lost. In the end, with speakers like Joan Henry reminding them of the primacy of place, a majority of supervisors found it again.

If the battle over Goose Creek Overlook has left Loudouners with any useful lessons, perhaps they are these: speak up early and often; stay out of the weeds; read the Comprehensive Plan; learn about Loudoun’s place types; and listen to your constituents.



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MOORE-SOBEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

So much of this book resonated with me as a fellow burn survivor. The countless surgeries, the loneliness, isolation, and the knowledge that burns make us different from others in the eyes of many.

Yet what is striking about this author's story is the amount of trauma she endured entirely outside of her experience as a burn survivor. For example, many readers may identify with the heartbreak of neglectful parents or the loss of a loved one. Dr. Deguire's story is a tale that is not easily forgotten.

What is remarkable about the author is her resilience. She graduates from a doctoral program. She becomes a psychologist. She gets married and has two daughters. She lives a meaningful life, despite all that has happened in the past. The power of her story is the authenticity with which she writes, detailing both successes and regrets. Through it all, she carries on, and each day is a victory.

One of the most powerful passages in her book is her description of her role as a psychologist. Perhaps because of all she has endured, she is not surprised by the adversity her clients face, no mat-

ter how weighty the circumstances. "To me, these dark places are just where we start," she writes. She describes her role as a "guide," working with her clients to lead them to brighter pastures. "I lead them through a dark underground cave, a flickering candle in my hand ... eventually, we emerge out of the black cave together, stepping out into the warm rays of sunshine," she writes.

It's hard to imagine a more traumatic start to a childhood than Dr. Deguire's. Yet, as readers work their way through her story, they may find themselves laughing, crying, and cheering for the

heroine. She includes lessons learned along her journey at the end of each chapter, offering practical advice, while also sharing with readers how she made it through.

Without my giving too much away, she emerges the victor. Readers may feel like they have what it takes to become a victor, too, after reading this wonderful book.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is the author of "Can You See My Scars?" His book is available on Amazon. Dr. Lise Deguire is the author of "Flashback Girl." Her book can also be found on Amazon.

RICH RICCI, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

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you originally invested in your future. If you feel you have to do it, make sure you're using the money for qualified expenses.

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BUDGET PROPOSAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

Residential property assessments were higher this year by 5.69 percent; so if the proposed tax rate were equalized the rate should be 21 ½ cents. The proposed tax rate of 22 cents is a 2.28 percent increase over last year.

For now, Mekarski has proposed to leave the number of full-time staff at 85. He is asking for a 3 percent increase for staff pay/salary enhancements – which would not go out to everyone.

Council Member Stan Milan said, “You also mentioned in the budget a pay raise for staff and management. I feel we have to be a little sensitive with that, because a lot of our citizens have lost jobs ... or their pay reduced. Citizens, he continued: “are not feeling the benefit of their salary increasing.”

Utility rates

Mekarski noted that the utility rate increases are based on the recommendations from Stantec, the Town’s util-

ity rate consultant.

Council Member Chris Bertaut said he has been following the Stantec studies and how they determine “our utility rates.”

Bertaut explained that the Stantec study applies a certain model. Town staff will now have access to the model, and can put in more relevant information to generate multiple and different outcomes. It “is based on a lot of input and in many cases very conservative assumptions that we have been whittling away at in order to come up with the best possible scenarios for utility rate increases for the Town’s residents.”

Bertaut said that one of the assumptions had all of the Town’s Capital Improvement Programs being funded with cash. “Now,” he said, “we are looking at a lot of innovative financing solutions including a way to use USDA loans.” There is also COVID relief funding that could go to certain projects.

Chargebacks

On the subject of chargebacks – time spent by employees working from the General Fund for tasks involving the Utility Fund, “I still have some issues with this,” Bertaut said. He noted that there would be greater accountability “if the General Fund staff who were charging back their time, were doing so on a ticketed basis – just as the Utility Fund staff have to do with their day-to-day activities.” He said that, this way, Council would have “a far better idea of whether we are charging back the appropriate amount or not.”

Milan said he wanted a way to track the chargebacks. “We need to know what the chargebacks are; why are we using them so much? It went from \$500,000 to \$1 million. Why is there an increase?”

As of press time, the public hearing for the budget is set for April 13, with scheduled budget workshop meetings in April and May, as needed. The budget will be adopted either on May 11, or June 16.

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

the activities in advance or give them turns to choose what they’d like to do.

Keep the fun within the parameter of the 24-hour period, and nothing said or done should spill forward into the next day or the future. While your child might want to get you to say “yes” to getting a puppy, for example, that would be outside of the 24-hour period.

Decide on a radius. In the movie, the parents implemented a 20-mile radius for the adventurous day and activities.

From ice cream for breakfast to staying up late and camping outside in the backyard, and whatever other silly and outrageous ideas your children come up with. Embrace the moment, laugh largely, create happy memories and make “Yes Day” the best day!

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.

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

Guy rolled his eyes. “Don’t they live somewhere now? Or if they have long commutes, why’s that our problem?”

De Graffenreid made his closing argument, “If we have the full spectrum of housing, then businesses can hire the workforce they need to grow, there’ll be more good jobs, less poverty. Loudoun will be a more attractive place to live, and all of that makes everybody better-off.”

He then explained his economics: “Working people would pay less for housing. The money they save goes into restaurants, gas stations, car dealerships, clothing stores and so on. Those businesses become more profitable, hiring more workers. In business terms, the people who get ADUs have more money left over, it goes into the economy and the multiplier effect kicks in. Plus, people in ADUs pay more sales tax, property tax, income tax. The county is prosperous, and prosperous for more of its citizens. It’s not just fair, it helps everybody.”

Guy demurred, “I think you’d need an econometrician to figure out what would actually happen. You stated only benefits and didn’t look at costs. And you’d need an environmental planner to project what the county would look like. Traffic engineers.” Guy’s face was getting flushed. “I want the county to be the way it was a while ago. No more peo-

ple. Less traffic. All of western Loudoun would be horse country. Or cattle or crops.”

“You’re a troglodyte, Guy! It’s the moral thing to do!” Christoph said loudly. “You want it to look like a rural Beverly Hills.”

Guy countered, “And you want it to look like Frogmore, South Carolina! (Author’s note: A real place.) I just don’t get why people make such a big deal about ADUs.”

“Guys, I think there’s a compromise,” Robert offered. “Try this: First, the goal is adequate housing for some of our people, right? What’s wrong with decent apartments? Adjust zoning so multi-family housing picks up the slack, rather than building a lot of cheap single-family houses and using up our land. Focus on people who need affordable housing and get them the money, instead of trying zoning requirements – or zoning incentives – for homebuilders you hope will build cheaper houses.

“I think the County already has a housing trust fund. Use it to make grants or loans directly to lower-income people, who use the money to rent or buy where they wish. Actually, if they use their subsidy to buy a place, that helps instill all sorts of values. When they sell the house, then the county gets paid back and it and the profits are split. The better they keep up the property, the more money they end up with. That way they decide what they get, and where, rather than depending on government and

builders deciding. You could fine-tune the program, say with more assistance for homes in redevelopment areas. This could work.”

Robert’s right, fellows,” Byne opined.

She continued. “Robert mentioned apartments. Heck, I lived in apartments until I was almost thirty. (The three other heads nodded their own experience.) We were at one Board of Supervisors hearing and someone griped that his daughter, who was getting out of college, couldn’t afford to live in Loudoun. That was ridiculous. She could have moved back home and saved money, or gotten an apartment and a roommate. He acted like the county owed his daughter a house. Jeez.”

“You know,” Robert said, “Whatever the county does, there’s a great way to fund it: Impose a fee of \$1.50 per square foot of building area on all new construction – houses, data centers, retail, everything. That would help however the county used the money.”

The idea resonated with his three-person audience:

“Yeah.”

“I like it.”

“Good idea.”

Christoph de Graffenreid changed the topic, “Byne, you said something about barbecue.”

Charles Houston developed office buildings for an Atlanta-based firm. He lives in Paeonian Springs.

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Now, the Ashburn Fire Company represents a long-time volunteer service in Loudoun County, but one of its sister groups in Leesburg dates back much further; Members formed that Company in 1803 (the United States was less than 30 years old at the time), representing a veritable ‘bucket brigade’ long before the use of motorized fire trucks.

I remember attending events at the Leesburg Fire Stations as well, and to virtually every public-emergency-type facility scattered across Loudoun County back in those news-covering years, as well as some notable live fires (like the loss of part of the Waterford Old School on High Street), and every time I covered these events, Dad would show up (as per his sworn ‘duty’) to provide counsel, and moral support.

And, sitting in my personal vehicle outside the Ashburn Fire House on my last early-morning visit, I mused at the turnout of fates which led me here, from my original home in a small Minnesota town, to this place of local emergency response; I never became a Firefighter (my talents – if any – lay elsewhere) but, thanks to some very sound advice and example, I certainly grew to respect – and I fervently hope – at least partially understand those who have – and who continue to serve.

Now all I need to do is find another young, local News Director – full of “P and vinegar” and share my memories – along with Dad’s.



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