

# Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

JUNE 2021

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## Town launches income-producing trees project

Green grows the Aberdeen property of Purcellville



Purcellville Mayor Kwasi A. Fraser

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Who said money doesn't grow on trees?

It soon will in Purcellville. And we're not talking pocket change.

In May, the Town wrapped up three weeks of planting 110,000 trees on what's known as the Aberdeen property—190 acres that belongs to Purcell-

ville—at 16385 Short Hill Road.

Over the next ten years, the trees planted on 95 of those acres will grow into a forest designed to increase the biodiversity of the area and invite back song birds and wildlife. The trees also will grow the Town's bank account, yielding more than \$700,000 in net revenue with little administrative cost.

Those revenues will come in part from a contract for the property's management by the country's largest horticultural services company. In addition, the Town will derive income from monetized "credits" from stream, wetland, and carbon sequestration, which is the process by which carbon

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**VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN**

## Input sought on lower height for Purcellville's Downtown

The Purcellville Town Council is offering another opportunity for the community to weigh in on the proposal to lower the height limit in the Town's Historic Downtown District from 45 feet and three stories, to 35 feet and 2 ½ stories (with the half story being attic space). Citizens can email the Town Council at [PurcellvilleTC@purcellvilleva.gov](mailto:PurcellvilleTC@purcellvilleva.gov), or attend the meeting on Tuesday June 8, at 7 p.m. at the Purcellville Town Hall located at 221 S. Nursery Avenue.

In keeping with the new Comprehensive Plan to preserve Purcellville's small-town feel, the Planning

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## Officials announce largest drug bust in Loudoun history

At a May 26 press conference at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Alexandria, law enforcement officials announced the completion of the largest drug bust in Loudoun County history. The operation stemmed from an investigation that began in Loudoun in 2017.

In February 2020, Loudoun County Sheriff's Office detectives assigned to the Drug Enforcement Agency High Intensity Drug Trafficking Area Task Force seized \$6.5 million worth of drugs, guns,

and cash connected to the Sinaloa Cartel in Mexico.

Since May 2017, investigations under Operation Angels Envy led to the takedown of seven violent drug trafficking organizations operating in the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, their Sinaloa Cartel supply cell, as well as their Los Angeles-based transportation network, which used tractor trailers and shipping crates to move tons of methamphetamine, heroin, fentanyl, and other drugs

across the country.

These drug trafficking organizations would then transfer profits and trafficked firearms back to the Sinaloa Cartel. Investigations into the takedown of the transportation network and supply cell led to the dismantling of other drug trafficking organizations in California, Missouri, Ohio, New England, and New York. These organizations distributed hundreds of kilograms of deadly drugs, like fentanyl and methamphetamine, throughout the Washington D.C. metropolitan area, monthly.

Operation Angels Envy culminated in one of the largest takedowns in the

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## 2021 Significant Sales

**17050 Silver Charm Place**  
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**19631 Greenham Drive**  
LEESBURG, VA | SOLD \$1,962,500

**17265 Count Turf Place**  
LEESBURG, VA | SOLD \$1,899,999

**40471 Grenata Preserve Place**  
LEESBURG, VA | SOLD \$1,825,000

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## Hundreds of students from BRMS win Writing Awards

Blue Ridge Middle School eighth graders win Prestigious Scholastic Achievement Awards and Creative Communications recognition to earn BRMS a Writing Achievement Award.

First, Blue Ridge Middle School eighth grade students submitted their writing to the Scholastic Writing Awards Competition to compete against over 1,800 other students in the DC Metro Area.

The Scholastic Writing Awards (<https://www.scholastic.com>) is a prestigious program recognizing the work of seventh through twelfth graders in the United States. They have been in existence since 1923 and have been an initial proving ground for famous American writers such as Sylvia Plath, Truman Capote, and Joyce Carol Oates. Scholastic presents three awards for regional level competition: the honorable mention, the silver key, and the gold key.

The students drafted, conferred, revised, and submitted pieces from multiple genres such as poetry, memoir/ personal essays, short story, flash fiction, sci-



Scholastic Golden Key Winner L to R: English teacher, Eric Kursman and eighth grader, Benjamin Demase.

ence-fiction/ fantasy, critical essay, and humor.

Eleven Blue Ridge Middle School Students placed within the DC Metro/ Regional Competition:

Four Honorable mentions: top 15 percent in each category: Spencer Dyson, Kyle Galletta, Ava Olechna, and Maxwell Riley.

Six silver keys: top 7-10 percent in each category: Magdalena "Maggie" Alicea, Sasha Danjczek, Chance

Harcrow, Evelyn Mccann, and Simon Teague.

One gold key: top 5-7 percent in each category: Benjamin Demase

The gold key winner, Benjamin Demase, will advance to the national level for judging.

In addition, all BRMS eighth graders wrote a poem to submit to the Creative Communications Annual Poetry Contest. The top received entries are selected for publication in an anthology. 199 BRMS students had their work chosen for publication. That's 63 percent of the BRMS eighth grade.

Creative Communications (<https://www.poeticpower.com>) is an organization "devoted to the promotion of writing, teaching, and appreciation of student writing."

Because of the number and quality of the entries accepted for publication, Creative Communications selected Blue Ridge for a Writing Achievement Award, given to the top 10 percent of schools who entered the contest.

Principal Brion Bell said, "The preparation and work the teachers and students commit to this process prior to submissions is so impressive. Edit/improve – Repeat,

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## The Tempest at Stone Bridge High School

BY JOSIE BINKLEY OF INDEPENDENCE HIGH SCHOOL – A CAPPIS REVIEW

Tradition blends with the Wild West in "The Tempest" at Stone Bridge High School for a fast-paced night of fun. With breathtaking costumes, energetic acting, and an awe-worthy set, this show is one you wouldn't want to miss.



Left to Right: Andrew Burton and Diana Altenhof

The Tempest is one of Shakespeare's best-known works. This comedy, about a major act of betrayal, ill treatment, the development of magic arts and a plot of revenge, is given new life on the screen by the talented cast and crew of Stone Bridge High School, who took the classic and added a twist by setting it in the Wild West.

Not only was the work displayed on the stage perfection, but the work offstage was also spectacular. The innovative set and lighting combined with student-created music to add layers of complexity and further suspend the audience's disbelief. On stage, Diana Altenhof (Ariel) shined with her charisma and energy. Andrew Burton (Prospero) was cap-

tivating from start to finish. Emma Noble (Caliban) and Ava Bueno (Miranda) both had excellent physicality that matched their characters, while Bella LoBue (Stephano) and Grace Paskey (Trinculo) drew eyes through their wonderful energy. While everyone in this show was great, the ensemble of smaller characters added an additional dimension to the show and improved its overall quality. They all had wonderful physicality, pantomiming reins or "Wild West" tasks. Another standout part of the show was the narrators, (Katie Reif, Victoria Rabinowitch, Cori Teel, and Avani Sirota) who instilled excitement and energy into every word they

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## Over 400 Plant-A-Thon volunteers sow 16,000 seedlings at JK Community Farm

JK Community Farm kicked off the growing season at its annual Plant-A-Thon with 410 volunteers, including teams from area companies, civic groups, and individuals of all ages planting 16,000 seedlings to help end hunger. The May 22-23 event—"Help Something Wonderful Take Root"—will ultimately yield more than 53,000 healthy, organic meals for families in need.

The event also raised close to \$50,000 toward the farm's 2021 goal of growing 230,000 pounds of chemical-free, nutrient dense produce and protein for its food pantry partners, including Loudoun



Hunger Relief, Food for Others, and Arlington Food Assistance Center.

The need in the Washington area grew exponentially in 2020 with the pandemic. The JK Community Farm saw food

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## The performance of Little Women – at Tuscarora High School

BY EMILY TOWNSEND OF FLINT HILL SCHOOL – A CAPPIS REVIEW

Tuscarora High School's charming production of Little Women featured a cast of ten actors whose impressive vocals, on-stage charisma, and dedication to the story helped the musical thrive and flourish.

This adaptation of the 2005 Broadway show told the tale of the close-knit March family and the four sisters' experiences with love, loss, and ever-changing relationship dynamics. Based on Louisa May Alcott's 1869 novel of the same name, this presentation of Little

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth:

## Airmont Store

BY TIM JON

Maybe someday I'll make it inside; I considered it a quantum leap on my part to actually stop at the property, take a look around, and get a few interesting perspectives with the camera. You see, I had simply passed by this local landmark so many times without further investigation that it may have seemed as if an actual visit would never come to pass; one of my initial rural mail routes (more than a decade ago) brings the carrier right past the front door of the establishment in question – but that's as close as I ever came to making physical contact with the place.

Admittedly, anyone familiar with the country corner of Rtes. 734 and 719 – otherwise known as Snickersville Turnpike and Airmont Road – out in West-Central (“No-Man’s Land”) Loudoun County – will undoubtedly know the subject under discussion: the quaint little, vine-bestrewn Airmont Store.

They, maybe you, also know that the so-familiar-you-forget-it's-there cross-road store is – as I write – closed until



JON

further notice: my suspicions cover the range of current health concerns mixed with the modern-day economic challenges facing any stand-alone, “Mom ‘n Pop” operation – however affluent the regional populace. Seems, after all these years of offering a local source for a cold soda, or bag of chips, or a pound of ground coffee, or a dozen eggs – not



to mention a “Hello! How are you?” – Times got hard for the little store.

Used to be, you could stop in for that after-work treat on the way home. Now, it's more like: “We get our ice-cream bars at Costco!” And, collectively, more and more of us avoid the physical act of shopping altogether: some of us make

just about all possible purchases online – for delivery. Well, perhaps someday our mega-convenience destinations (internet-based included) will offer us a virtual experience of our old neighborhood ‘general store,’ that is if any of us still seek such entertainment.

Now, at the time I paid my one and only official visit, the images I captured indicate a healthy level of commerce at the local establishment – at least during more regular ‘business’ hours (I generally show up about the time the sun makes its morning appearance): major credit cards accepted, expect to show identification in buying adult beverages, some tempting, colorful pictures of assorted old-fashioned ice-cream treats, an American Flag on display out front, and carefully tended shrubbery growing in pots, flanking the front steps.

And those vines, which seemingly date back to the original Garden of Eden, by the looks of their girth. All it needed (that day, anyway) was a few more hours, and some of the locals

would be stopping in for their paper, cigarettes, or candy bars – maybe all of the above.

And I'd wager that a vast majority of those who stopped here enjoyed a first-name basis with the staff (in my relatively limited experience, the now-dwindling number of local ‘general stores’ scattered across our County are usually run by a scant handful of loyal owners, their family members, and a very limited number of actual employees).

You know, it occurs to me, that, at this juncture, we could get that Limey TV food service feller- Robert Irvine, of Restaurant Impossible fame, out here to see what he could do to preserve what few of these unique (and to me, irreplaceable) establishments we have left. He could put his cooking industry experience – and his British Naval training (as well as his not-always-so-gentle people skills) to good use in creating an absolute must-have kind of destination for today's commuters and consumers. C'mon, Tough Guy: I challenge you. Save our little stores.

Not that I find anything distasteful about shopping at any of the ‘big-box’

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## — Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

### Having a mild life crisis as a couple?

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

“Probably the happiest period in life most frequently is in middle age, when the eager passions of youth are cooled, and the infirmities of age not yet begun; as we see that the shadows, which are morning and evening so large, almost entirely disappear at midday.” – Eleanor Roosevelt



DR. MIKE

The Canadian psychoanalyst, Elliott Jacques

coined the term “Mid-Life Crisis” in 1965. He believed that mid-life is a transitional phase rife with uncertainty and emotional conflict, pertaining to one's sense of mortality.

Later research in this area has found that to varying degrees people during mid-life can experience disappointment, regret, dissatisfaction, and unhappiness in their work, and personal life. Research has shown that the phenomenon occurs most often for individuals in their 40s

and early 50s, and approximately 10 to 20 percent of individuals experience a mid-life crisis.

There has been some very interesting research on the mid-life crisis phenomenon, showing that happiness and contentment across the lifespan is experienced in a U-shape curve. In these studies, younger individuals have been found to be satisfied with their lives, while middle age individuals showed a significant drop in happiness. Individuals in their

later years experience a renewed sense of life, purpose, and happiness.

There is also an emerging body of research in economics that is looking at job satisfaction across the lifespan. Those results also have shown a U-shape curve – higher levels in early and later work experiences, with dropping levels during the ages associated with the mid-life. These results are not gender exclusive, and do not discriminate across culture or

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# Understanding the complexities of Medicare

While they're working, many Americans become accustomed to getting health insurance through their employer. They make their initial selections and then update their choices once a year when its time to renew and during life events like adding to the family or, perhaps, starting a new job.



**RICHARD RICCI** But virtually all U.S. residents face a milestone when they reach age 65 and qualify for Medicare, which provides a new and, possibly, more complex approach to health insurance.

Keep in mind that even if you take early Social Security benefits at age 62, you must wait until age 65 for Medicare.

## Breaking down Medicare's four parts:

### Part A: Hospital insurance

Helps pay for:

- Inpatient hospital care
- Hospice care
- Skilled home-health services for homebound patients

- Part A also helps with short-term inpatient care in Medicare-certified skilled nursing facilities, but only if the patient is there for rehabilitation – not for long-term or custodial care.

**Qualifying:** Once you reach age 65, you qualify for Part A. It's unlikely you will be charged a monthly premium if you have worked and paid the Medicare payroll tax for a minimum of 10 years.

### Part B: Medical insurance

Helps pay for:

- Doctors' services
- Outpatient hospital care
- Medical equipment and supplies
- Some preventive services

**Qualifying:** All U.S. citizens and all legal aliens who have lived in the United States for at least five years qualify for Part B at age 65. No work history is required, but everyone who wants Part B must pay a monthly premium.

Monthly premiums are based off the

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— View from the Ridge —

# The continuing small-town power struggle in Purcellville

In the ongoing saga about how big Purcellville should get, what residents old and new want to preserve – or tear down, and how to keep taxes low and economic productivity high, yet another power struggle is bubbling up.

Mayor Kwasi Fraser, who enjoys overwhelming citizen support, has for years methodically reined in growth.

Should a mini-Tyson's Corner development of tens of thousands of square feet of residential, parking, and commercial development be allowed to overwhelm historic downtown Purcellville? Voters say, no.

## OPINION

### Political Winds

The voters have said no to excessive growth in many ways. And, Fraser has led the charge to enforce the voters will – sometimes with the help of the slimmest majority on the Town Council.

And, using creative methods to reduce the enormous \$60 million-plus debt Fraser inherited from his prede-

*You may not have the insider connections that allow you to corner a Town Council member at the end of a Town Council meeting. But, as citizens and voters, you are in charge.*

cessor, Mayor Bob Lazaro, Mayor Fraser has enforced the voters' will to adopt a more fiscally sustainable economy and tax-model.

Fraser is also an innovator, turning Town assets into cash for the Town.

But, the political winds in Purcellville have lashed out repeatedly at Fraser's managed growth, fiscal responsibility, and creative-solutions agenda since the day he took office. There are millions and millions of development dollars to be made here.

The Town is always just one election – or Town Council vote – away from backtracking. And, today, the political winds representing the old, growth-at-any-cost

guard are blowing again.

**Everyone deserves a seat at the table. But, what about the voters' will?**

A key swing vote on Town Council vacated his post on May 31.

The developer elite, along with current and retired "pro-growth" politicians, see this vacancy as another opportunity to dash Fraser's agenda.

Big decisions are made at every Purcellville Town Council meeting, and the developer elite is there for each and every one of them. But, so are many others.

Everyone deserves a seat at the table – citizens, developers large and small, and small and large businesses.

But, it is disconcerting at best to see a developer asking for higher densities, or zoning exceptions, or new roads for a project – while historic preservationists and fiscal conservatives oppose the same – and then to see the developer cozy up to their Town Council friends

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Please include your name, address and phone number.

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



## In Opposition of the PRO Act

BY GRAFTON DEBUTTS

One of the greatest threats to America's economic recovery and future growth is currently being debated in Congress. The PRO Act, a bill which seeks to undermine workers' rights to privacy and free association, would create a one-size-fits-all rewrite of labor laws in 50 states, hurting workers across the United States, including here in Loudoun County.

### OPINION

First, the PRO Act would eliminate Right-To-Work laws in all states, ending the sacred protection of a worker's freedom to choose to join a union or not. Repealing Right-To-Work would force employees to either pay union dues

or be fired, whether they wish to be represented by the union or not.

The PRO Act would undermine the will of Virginia's electorate, who have elected Republican and Democratic majorities to the General Assembly in Richmond, majorities that have consistently protected Virginia's Right-To-Work laws by wide margins. Virginia is currently one of 27 that kept their Right-To-Work status for their citizens and workforce.

Secondly, if passed, the PRO Act would eliminate an employee's fundamental privacy rights when voting in favor or against joining a union. Union leaders continually seek to bring intimidation and coercion to the workplace by singling out employees

that oppose union membership. Protection from voting intimidation and a right of privacy are cornerstones to fair democratic elections in our Nation. Shouldn't the same rights be present in the workplace?

Lastly, The PRO Act unfairly targets independent workers in the "gig" economy. Per surveys by Small Business Labs and Gallup, more than third of all working age adults, or roughly 59 million citizens, are independent contractors or "gig" employees. These Americans would lose the right to independence and flexible scheduling, and the work-life balance that goes with it. Employers would be forced to take on overhead and other expenses

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## The Morality of Housing

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

I called actor Eddie Murphy. "Eddie, this is Charlie Houston in Virginia. How're you doing, guy?"

"Do I know you?" he answered.

"Not yet, but I want your help," I said.

Eddie was unsure but polite. "How can I help you?"

"Well, Eddie, we want to move to Beverly Hills near you but it's pricey. Can you talk to your mayor, and see if

### OPINION

there's a way the town can provide us with an Affordable Dwelling Unit? Something

really nice."

"Huh? You serious, man?" Eddie was now irked.

"Sure. It'll be 'Coming to Beverly Hills 90210,'" I answered. "You know, like your movie 'Coming to America.'"

Eddie had enough. "Dude, you need to get your own house. Why are we supposed to help you?"

"Because it's the right thing to do," I implored.

Eddie hung up.

Frustrated, I started thinking and soon had an idea. I'd delve into the philosophy

of housing and see what I could find. I'd start at the new Gypsy encampment near Lovettsville. I had seen signs: "Madame Leora, Mystic and Fortune Teller." She could help me.

Leora was ensconced in a small tent. A worn oriental rug was on the floor; incense was in the air. Candles flickered, shedding dim light. I handed over a credit card, and sat comfortably. The mystic produced a small glass of a brown liquid. "Drink this," she said. "Relax and we will talk."

I obliged and soon felt mellow and warm.

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— It Seems To Me —

## A Theory on the nature of UFOs

BY JOE LAFIANDRA

The recent glut of visual and radar sightings of UFOs by qualified military observers, raises the question, what are they? There is no question there is something moving in the sky, over water and even into the water that can be seen, recorded by cameras or tracked by radar.

These objects seem to violate the basic laws of physics by having no means of propulsion, perform extraordinary accelerations and decelerations and hover with no apparent means of support. But, you know all that, because you have seen the visual recordings on nationwide TV.

Before I give you my theory of UFOs, I must go over some of the basic science of the laws of nature. These laws of nature, are valid throughout the Universe. True, there is a lot we don't know about some aspects of the Universe such as Dark Energy and Dark Matter but, there is no reason to believe that Classical and Quantum Physics doesn't apply to these cases.

Things like the force needed to change the direction of a moving object or the effect of air friction on that object are well known and can be calculated. For example, moving a solid object from sea level to 80,000 feet in less than a second through the air must cause air friction and heat up the object. The object will then radiate heat (if it survives the transit) which can be detected visually or with an infrared sensor. This is the heat and light that even the very thin air of the upper atmosphere generates from a meteor as it speeds to earth.

Even if “Little Green Men” or robots are piloting these UFOs, the forces and frictional heat involved are beyond conceivable engineering possibilities. Metals or other materials and biological cell life will be liquefied and squashed beyond all recognition under these conditions.

The fact that these UFOs seem to violate the laws of nature and as of the date of this writing, have no material evidence, are clues that these are not sightings of actual objects. But wait, what about the “Little Green Men” theory? Perhaps they are visiting us and using some very advanced technology and materials.

The famous scientist, Enrico Fermi, had an answer for that theory. It is summed up in what is known as the Fermi Paradox, he asked – if there are trillions of planets in the Universe and

some of them have conditions that permit life as we know it to exist, where are they? Why don't we have any evidence they have visited us or even any evidence that they exist anywhere else in the known Universe?

So what are we seeing and tracking on military radar? I believe the only rational answer is holograph images. These images can be produced by a very advanced but technically feasible technology.

So what is a hologram? A hologram is a three dimensional image of an object that is generated by a combination of laser beams, photographic film or electronic screen and software. There is no need to get into the details of how to do this but it is suffice to say it is an established technology.

Many of you have seen holograms in the movies or in person at amusement theme parks. Even dead entertainers like Michael Jackson and Tupac Shakur can be made to appear on stage as a laser generated hologram. The famous scene in Star Wars where R2-D2 projects a hologram of Princess Leia is an example of early use of holograms in films.

Recent advances in hologram technology use ultra-high power laser technology to generate images that literally float in the air in front and above you. These lasers are so powerful that they will breakdown the molecules in the air and form what is known as a plasma which contains electrically charged particles and can be seen.

Lightning generates plasmas when it breaks down the air from cloud to cloud or to the ground and can be picked up on radar in addition to being visually sighted. A plasma hologram can move across the sky in an instant, accelerate or decelerate or disappear in the water. The lack of physical evidence points to UFOs being plasma images.

So, who is doing this? As I previously said, the technology is very advanced and expensive. This points to the sources being technically advanced nation states, very large corporations or billionaires who can fund this technology.

Why are they doing it? Since a majority of these sightings are near government and military installations, the source may be attempting to intimidate the United States by demonstrating an advanced technology we don't seem to have. It has been stated that more evidence will be presented shortly by the government, hopefully this will solve the mystery soon.



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## 185 ft. tower proposal needs more work

Dear Madame Chair and Members of the Loudoun County School Board,

I am writing on behalf of the Town of Middleburg and the greater Middleburg community to share many serious concerns we have received in the last two weeks regarding the potential approval for a 185-foot-tall telecommunications tower at Mickie Gordon Park. To put it simply, there is unanimous and strong opposition to this proposal in its current form.

### LETTER

This opposition has been centered on the oversized nature of this project and its proximity to Rt. 50 as the central gateway to Middleburg.

We fully understand the need for connectivity and access to good infrastructure, but it must always be tempered in a way which balances the services it provides with the adverse effects it has on those living in that community. One of the key elements that makes Middleburg, and the Blue Ridge District a welcoming and unique destination is that we have not, to this point, littered our rural character with cell towers. The community fears this is the beginning of a dangerous trend. Change always comes, but it is how we manage that change which will define our future.

We are particularly concerned with the siting photographs used in the applicant's presentation. They do not pro-

vide a true and accurate representation of the impacts for many key areas. Most of the photographs were taken at predetermined locations with the least visual impact being shown. Unfortunately, what should also be provided to the public and to you is those locations which have the most impact. This is how you will be able to make a truly informed decision in terms of the good and negative.

Given these concerns, we feel that the Board would be ill advised to approve this application until further work can be done to fully understand where the best siting could be placed (ie, further from Rt. 50) and the cell coverage that would be achieved from a variety of shorter tower options, none of which has been provided. While the applicant wants the most height possible, it is our jobs as elected officials to not simply accept their proposal at face value, but to do our own assessment to strike a balance where both sides concerns, and needs are accommodated for.

We must find this optimal balance to protect the rights and respect the views of our citizens. The Town of Middleburg stands ready to assist you in this endeavor, as we have the shared goals of the School Board to do what is best for our citizens.

Sincerely

*Trowbridge M. Littleton  
Mayor, Town of Middleburg*

## We need a distributed energy system

Dear Editor:

The May 7 ransomware attack on Colonial Pipeline reveals challenges not only to the US cyber defenses, but also to the vulnerability of our energy system. A centralized system for delivering fossil fuels, generating electricity, and for distributing electricity is not secure. This ransomware attack reveals just one of many potential weaknesses.

A distributed energy system, on the other hand, is much more secure. Rooftop solar panels on homes and business plus battery storage, is a more reliable and secure way to power our homes and businesses.

Electric vehicles will eliminate long lines at gas stations. The technology exists. Prices are coming down. Electrification must be supported. The Clean Cars Act adopted in the last session of the Virginia General Assembly goes a long way towards electrifying transportation, and qualifying Virginia for federal fund-

ing programs. Already, as part of the Volkswagen Settlement, there are funding opportunities in Virginia to electrify school buses, government fleets, and install public charging stations.

On May 10, Governor Ralph Northam announced more than \$9.4 million in Clean Air Communities Program awards to fund five government fleet electrification projects. While Loudoun was not in the first round of awards, the second-round webinar for potential applicants is starting on May 17, 2021. Details are on the Department of Environmental Quality website: <https://www.deq.virginia.gov/get-involved/topics-of-interest/volkswagen-settlement-agreement> The second round includes school bus electrification grants.

Loudoun must take advantage of these opportunities to build a cleaner and more resilient community prepared for a changing climate.

*Natalie Pien  
Leesburg*

## Bond rating agencies reaffirm Loudoun's Triple-A Rating

The nation's top bond rating agencies have again affirmed Loudoun County's AAA rating on its general obligation bonds, noting the County's sound operating performance, the size and diversity of its tax base and strong management.

### GOVERNMENT

Loudoun County has held the Aaa rating from Moody's since 2004, and AAA from Fitch Ratings and S&P Global since 2005. The three ratings agencies also affirmed Loudoun's AA+ and Aa1 ratings on the upcoming sale of public facility revenue bonds through the Economic Development Authority, as well as outstanding lease revenue bonds.

#### Fitch Ratings noted the County's:

- Very sound operating performance, supported by strong revenue growth and solid expenditure flexibility.
- Moderate long-term liability burden.
- The County's solid expected economic prospects.

#### Moody's noted the County's:

- Sizable, diverse and growing tax base.
- Healthy and stable fund balance and liquidity driven by conservative and proactive budgetary management.
- Manageable debt and pension burdens.

#### S&P's Global noted the County's:

- Extensive and well-integrated financial management and long-term planning.

- Very strong liquidity.
- Strong debt and contingent liability profile.

Each agency further noted the actions that the County took at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic relative to the Fiscal Year 2020 and Fiscal Year 2021 budgets to mitigate any negative impacts to the County's finances and operations.

These actions support each rating agency's stable outlook for the county's AAA rating during this time.

"The work that the Board of Supervisors and staff have done to establish and follow sound management practices and fiscal policies has once again manifested itself in the highest possible credit ratings," said Dulles District Supervisor Matt Letourneau, Chairman of the Board's Finance, Government Operations and Economic Development Committee. "This is particularly notable over the past year as the Board took decisive action in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic to maintain financial flexibility and conserve resources. These ratings ensure the best possible value to the taxpayers by helping us achieving low interest rates, reducing the cost of our extensive capital improvement program."

A triple-A rating is important to the County government and taxpayers, because it helps the County continue to get the best possible interest rates to finance capital projects, saving millions of dollars. The reaffirmation comes in advance of the county's upcoming sale of general obligation bonds; the proceeds of which will be used for school and general government projects.

More information on Loudoun County finances and its triple-A status is online at [loudoun.gov/BondRatings](http://loudoun.gov/BondRatings).

## St. Louis is under threat

Dear Editor:

The village of St Louis is under threat. We need help from the Board of Supervisors.

The subdivisions that are in the plan would increase the housing numbers in the community by 30 percent, and the current zoning could double the houses in the community.

### LETTER

We would suffer from many negative impacts. If our wells dry up, most cannot afford to dig new ones, and many resi-

dents could lose everything. Too much growth would create overcrowding at the school. Vehicular traffic on the gravel roads would end our quality of life as we know it.

St. Louis is a quiet, affordable place. It is home to many families who not only have lived here many years but many generations as well. We ask the Board of Supervisors to act now before this injustice happens.

*Marcus Howard  
St. Louis*

# Randall gives 2021 State of the County Address: “Loudoun, this is who we are”

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chair At-Large Phyllis J. Randall delivered her sixth annual State of the County speech on May 26, 2021, focusing her talk on three major topics: COVID-19’s impact on the County’s health, economy, and education; strategies for addressing the need for attainable housing; and County residents’ support for the burgeoning racial equity movement.

“Many years from now,” Randall began, “our children will learn about the year 2020. Their lessons will primarily focus on two issues: a 100-year pandemic that swept the globe, sickening and killing millions, and a long overdue reckoning on systemic racism that has plagued America since its birth. Loudoun joined every other county in the nation as we made our way through a life-altering year that brought countless heartbreaking and heartwarming moments.”

## COVID-19 in 2020

Randall emphasized several prudent



decisions taken early in 2020 that significantly impacted the County’s ability to respond to the pandemic, including the decision to hold \$100 million in reserve in the 2021 budget.

What did that mean for County employees? Well-deserved merit pay increases were delayed, as was hiring new employees to meet County growth. With the decision to freeze County employee salaries and not take on new employees, Loudoun County senior staff and employees responded in real time and adjusted services to meet the needs of the County’s 420,000 people.

Meanwhile, COVID stimulus money received through the Coronavirus Aid Relief and Economic Security Act (also called the CARES Act) was instrumental in helping Loudoun’s businesses, nonprofits, and residents survive the negative economic impacts of the pandemic.

The County also implemented the Business Interruption Fund that distributed \$12 million among almost 2,000 of Loudoun’s businesses. Another \$2.4 million was sent to Loudoun’s rental assistance program, \$2 million was provided to Loudoun non-profits, and \$650,000 went to emergency food assistance.

For guiding the County government through its response to the health crisis, Randall expressed the County’s appreciation to Dr. David Goodfriend, Loudoun County Health Director:

“Throughout the pandemic, Dr. Goodfriend has been a steady, grounding, advice-giving, meeting-holding, email-answering, call-taking, test-coordinating, vaccine-giving, never-sleeping, regional leader on COVID.”

She also praised the work of the em-

ployees and 4,000 volunteers of Loudoun’s Medical Reserve Corps. They assisted at COVID testing drive-through events, staffed the COVID information hot line, and ran a mass vaccination site that—at the height of operations—vaccinated nearly 5,000 people a day.

“If we apply a monetary value to the 91,000 hours of services delivered this year by members of Loudoun’s MRC,” Randall calculated, “it amounts to over \$2.6 million of in-kind service to the County.”

## A Reckoning on Racial Justice

Citing the deaths of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor, and Ahmaud Arbery as a national tipping point for racial justice, Randall spoke of “a long overdue reckoning.” She congratulated the six young men who organized a peace and unity march in Purcellville that brought out almost 1,500 people of all races, ages, and backgrounds.

## Loudoun’s Economy and Employment Rate

Despite the pandemic, Loudoun saw almost \$7 billion in new commercial investment from already announced projects. The County also saw the sale or lease of 5.2 million square feet of nonresidential space.

Although in April of 2020, Loudoun’s unemployment rate hit a COVID high of 9.9 percent, today that rate sits at 3.9

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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# Warner visits Loudoun, offering vaccine help for India – And broadband help for Loudoun – ‘Don’t miss this window’

BY VALERIE CURY

Sen. Mark R. Warner (D-VA) started off May 21 by going to Alexandria to discuss affordable child care. He then visited Indian-American community

## GOVERNMENT

leaders in Ashburn at Celebrations by Rupa Vira Restaurant to offer COVID-19 help to India, and finished up at the Loudoun County Public School Administration to talk about broadband support for Loudoun.

The event in Alexandria focused on how the Covid crisis has affected child care providers and educators.

The American Rescue Plan provides nearly \$800 million in funding to help Virginians afford childhood care and education. The law includes nearly \$306 million for Virginia Child Care and Development Block Grants, nearly \$490 million for Virginia Child Care Stabilization Grants, as well as \$16.5 million for Virginia Head Start programs to help support operating costs, Personal Protective Equipment, and tuition assistance for struggling families.

The Plan also includes an expansion of the child-tax and dependent credit, which would make Virginia families



L to R: Sen. Mark Warner and Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton

big request was vaccine, vaccine, vaccine – and that would help get to the herd immunity. Warner said “We’ve had this challenge about how to distribute vaccines.” But he confirmed the administration is working on a plan, and that the U.S. will be sending vaccines to India as soon as possible.

## ‘Don’t miss this window’

eligible to receive up to \$4,000 in tax credits for one child, and \$8,000 for two or more children.

Warner was joined by Del. Suhas Subramanyam (D-87) and former U.S. Ambassador to Belize, Vinai K. Thummalapally, as well as community and business leaders, to discuss how the U.S. can best support India during the Covid crisis. Business and community leaders said it is important to identify areas in need, and get the vaccinations distributed as soon as possible. The

Warner then went to the Loudoun County Public School Administration, and was joined by Congresswoman Jennifer Wexton (D-10), Acting Federal Communications Commission Chairwoman Jessica Rosenworcel, the Loudoun Broadband Alliance, Catoctin Supervisor Caleb Kershner’s Chief of Staff Stacy Carey, and various community leaders to discuss how the area can best take advantage of the new

CONTINUED ON PAGE 30 »



L to R: Former Ambassador to Belize, Vinai K. Thummalapally, Sen. Mark Warner and Del. Suhas Subramanyam.

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# Town of Hillsboro reopens Route 9 to two-way traffic on schedule

The Town of Hillsboro has reopened to two-way traffic on its “reclaimed Main Street,” Charles Town Pike, with the substantial completion of a \$30-million multi-faceted road and infrastructure project, ReThink9. Hillsboro Mayor and ReThink9 Project Manager Roger Vance called it the Town’s greatest transformation in its 269-year history.

## GOVERNMENT

“We are delighted to have met our commitment to fully reopen 24-hour two-way traffic in May,” said Vance, noting that most commuters and visitors had two-way access beginning in March, much earlier than had been planned.

ReThink9 provides a range of benefits to tens of thousands of commuters and visitors, area residents and businesses by relieving congestion and enhancing pedestrian safety on one of the region’s busiest corridors, Vance said. “The project has also brought 21st-century infrastructure to one of the Commonwealth’s best-preserved 18th-19th-century towns, including a new drinking water system, wastewater and storm water collection systems, underground power and communications, and a state-of-the-art streetlight system.

Context-sensitive design, materials and streetscaping have reclaimed Hillsboro’s historic ‘Main Street’ while preserving its historic integrity and providing new opportunities for economic sustainability and long-term preservation.

“The on-time, on-budget success of this project was the result of extraordinary collaboration between the Town, our engineers at Volkert, our contractor Archer Western, and our funding partners,” Vance said. “By building these multiple projects concurrently and most efficiently, we’ve saved many millions of dollars—and avoided several years of traffic disruption on Route 9, rather than just 14 months.”

Nearly two decades in the planning, ReThink9 was funded by the Northern Virginia Transportation Authority, Loudoun County, the Virginia Department of Health, and the Town of Hillsboro.

Monica Backmon, NVT’s Executive Director said, “The Town of Hillsboro is truly the ‘Little Town That Could,’

demonstrating how public comment really does matter. It has been an extraordinary partnership between NVT, Loudoun County and the Town of Hillsboro, and we thank all the dedicated leaders, elected officials and their staff, and transportation and construction professionals, who made the Route 9 improvements possible, seeing this vision through to reality. In fact, Hillsboro’s Route 9 traffic calming project, is one of the first transportation projects in the Authority’s inaugural Six Year Program to start and finish construction.”

Phyllis J. Randall, the Chair of the NVT and of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors said, “It has been exciting to witness the unity and passion exhibited by the Town of Hillsboro residents, who have seen the transformation of Route 9 through from the beginning to end. Projects like this play an integral role in maintaining and enhancing a comprehensive transportation network in the region and improving the quality of life for Northern Virginians and beyond.”

Loudoun County Blue Ridge District Supervisor Tony Buffington, an early supporter of the project, said, “I’m honored to have played a small role in this important project and I want to recognize Mayor Vance and Vice Mayor Marasco for their efforts to ensure this timely and on-budget completion.”

The project was managed by the Town of Hillsboro, with Mayor Vance and Vice Mayor Marasco donating their time as project manager and deputy project manager. Marasco said, “Our ownership and nimble management provided significant cost savings to the project, streamlined decision making and allowed for innovation. This is a small-town Americana effort at its best. It just goes to show that collaboration across jurisdictions and agencies on a project of this size doesn’t have to be slow. Our ‘one-team’ approach made it work seamlessly.

“This partnership and commitment,” Marasco said, “on the part of officials, residents, local subcontractors, vendors and businesses—to rebuilding and reclaiming Hillsboro has ensured public health and safety and delivered extraordinarily modern infrastructure—while maintaining the historic character and charm of Hillsboro. We did it!”

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# Hamilton's secluded oasis: the perfect place to refresh your life

BY LAURA LONGLEY

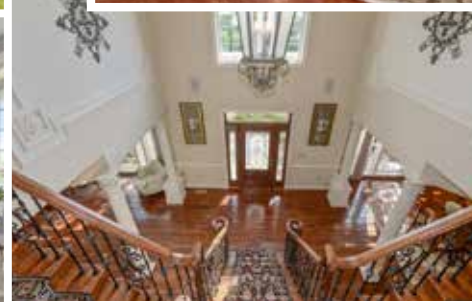
Tucked in the Waterford Creek community of Hamilton is a place the neighbors call "the secluded oasis." Visit 16077 Sainte Marie Court and you'll instantly understand why.

It would be hard to find a better example of property where you truly feel away from it all. As agent Sam Fisher of On the Market with Sam & Ray says, "What the new owner is going to benefit from is the hundreds of hours of planning (and thousands of dollars) that went into the mature landscaping, the wonderful stone work, and, of course, the magnificent pool in the backyard."

How often do you come across a pool with a waterfall that, in a moment, can transport you to Maui? Open the sliding glass doors of the owners' suite and start your day with the soothing sound of water, or better yet—fall asleep to it. Make every poolside pavilion party a seaside evening under the stars. And for a place to escape for a good read, there's a gazebo awaiting you at the far end of a walkway.

Greeting you at the home's entranceway is a gorgeous fountain and a stunning foyer with wood floors and a signature staircase with wrought-iron balusters.

The open floor plan leads you from elegant living and



dining rooms, large island, granite countertops and deep walk-in pantry, hard to resist. Who knows, you might decide baking is your favorite pastime.

On the opposite end of the home, an office offers a quiet place for remote work and a sunroom with a curved wall of windows has a secret balcony.

Upstairs, the unforgettable owners' suite features a heavenly bath and a magazine caliber walk-in closet.

A balcony overlooks the pool. Three additional bedrooms complete the upper level.

The walk-out lower level has a double recreation room complete with full-size bar, fireplace, a second office and a full bath. It makes for the perfect in-law suite or a separate

space for entertaining, working, or working out.

So come on in—this home and the water's very fine.

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# Keeping buildings low in P'ville's historic downtown

BY VALERIE CURY

Developers want higher building height limits in key parts of Purcellville, with periodic support from certain Council members, depending on the moment, they have tried to take power away from the local legislative body – and, in turn, the citizens – who don't agree with them.

**GOVERNMENT** At the Town Council Work Session on May 25, the Council moved to reconsider lowering the height in the Historic Downtown area (C-4 District) from 3 stories 45 feet to 2½ stories 35 feet.

On June 8, the Council will debate the issue, and is expected to vote. The discussion on this change has been going on for months.

The sticking point at a previous meeting was that Council Member Tip Stinnette wanted to take any appeal to the height limit away from the Planning Commission and Town Council, giving it to the Board of Zoning Appeals.

Stinnette's effort failed. His comments during this meeting were focused on the appeal process for the developers, and the money they had to spend to get what they wanted – not the height reduction issue itself.

## Developers have plenty of recourse

At the Planning Commission and Town Council level, there are two public hearings before a vote would be made – if someone wanted to increase the height of a structure from the allowed limit.

At the Board of Zoning Appeals level, there is one public hearing where the people who can appeal the BZA's decision are "aggrieved parties," – those in close proximity to the project.

At the May meeting, Council Member Stan Milan said that after the failed vote from the previous meeting, he would "trust but verify," noting he had looked at other jurisdictions to see how they handle special exceptions and special use permits.

## Semantics

While Purcellville calls the process to change an allowed use to something more intense [i.e., higher structures] a "Special Use Permit," most localities call it a Special Exception. But the effect is the same.

"The bottom line," said Milan, "... from all the jurisdictions I talked to, anything that deals with ordinances, to the level concerning height and zoning – is a legislative act, because we create the legis-

lation via the ordinances, and we should not abdicate the responsibility for that legislation to an appointed body."

Milan noted he had researched Culpepper, Herndon, Fairfax County, Leesburg, Winchester, Rappahannock County, and Loudoun, and the process is "all done legislatively because ... my conclusion is my research has shown Special Use Permits/Special Exception decisions reside with the Town Council and the Planning Commission, since these two bodies are responsible for the creation of the broader legislation."

Council Member Chris Bertaut said, "The principal here is we as a legislative body want to set a height [limit] with our vision for the community, perhaps it's communicated to us through the Planning Commission and the Comprehensive Plan, perhaps through public hearings."

He also noted that the Town Council receives its input from a variety of sources, and if anyone wants an exception to that, that person is in effect asking for a change in zoning law. "The principal at work here is that we don't want to shuffle off the responsibility for rewriting a law to ... another body or process.

"When we as a council enact an or-

dinance, there are a lot of eyes on us. There is a lot of public discussion, and hearings, so there should be just as many eyes on the same body, frankly ... that took the responsibility of passing that original law. It should be with the same public visibility."

Bertaut said the BZA as a body would look at the issue from a very different perspective "than the people who basically had to sit in the hot seat and put up with the public heat that accompanies the passing of any kind of law ..."

Casey Chapman, who is part owner of the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street and the Trails End proposal on Hatcher (a multi-story proposal that would include tearing down three single-family homes) asked to speak several times during the discussion. He recommended another public hearing on something this "extreme."

Council Member Tip Stinnette spoke with Chapman at length after the meeting was over.


At a May Planning Commission meeting, commissioners weighed in on the subject. Commissioner Boo Bennett said she found it disturbing that there was so much emphasis from a few Council

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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# Oh, dad, poor dad: time to get him out of the house on Father's Day

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Remember Father's Day, June 21, 2020? No Major League Baseball. "Spring training" didn't start until July 1. Barbecues remained masked occasions with social distancing and limitations on numbers of guests. Off limits completely were visits to amusement parks and carnivals (which dad probably didn't miss all that much).

What a difference a year and vaccines make.

Of course, it's still wise to check a venue before you visit for any changes in operations, masking, and distancing requirements, and other regulations. But as of June 1, it's a fair bet you can

treat dad to a day out of the house on Sunday, June 20.

Maybe he'd enjoy a journey through the countryside. You can even take a drive through Hillsboro. All done are the two roundabouts, traffic calming measures, and sidewalks, so residents and visitors can actually stroll from the Hill Tom Market to the Old Stone School without fearing for their lives.

Here in one of the Commonwealth's best preserved Early American towns you can shop at Stoneybrook Farm Market and stake dad to hearty sandwiches, fresh produce, and baked goods, or head next door to pick up a gourmet picnic you can pre-order from the Virginia Picnic Basket Company.

From Hillsboro, drive dad west to visit the wineries, breweries, and historic sites along Charles Town Pike and Harpers Ferry Road.

Stop off at Hillsborough Vineyards & Brewery, for example, and with your wine tasting, take in the breathtaking views of the Blue Ridge. Then head up Harpers Ferry Road where you'll find 868 Estate Vineyards, Breaux Vineyards, and more.

If your dad is up for more vigorous activity, continue north to Harpers Ferry Adventure Center, formerly BTI Whitewater/Butts Tubes, for a day of whitewater rafting, tubing, ziplining, kayaking, canoeing, fishing, and hiking.

If, however, dad would prefer quieter pursuits, consider these options:

- Father's Day Fish-a-Rama at Great Country Farms in Bluemont: Enjoy barbecue and catch-and-release fishing for bass and bluegill in the stocked ponds. Bring your own pole and gear to fish (no drag hooks). For details, visit <https://greatcountryfarms.com/festivals-events/fathers-day-weekend/>.
- The area's breweries and wineries: Check out their websites for brunch menus, barbecues, and entertainment by local bands.
- Wegmeyer's Home Farm near Lincoln or its second location at Oatlands Historic Mansion south of Leesburg: Spend a day picking luscious ripe strawberries. <https://wegmeyerfarms.com/strawberries/>.
- Temple Hall Farm Regional Park, a 286-acre working farm on Limestone Road north of Lees-

burg: Take dad on a free tour or search the park on a scavenger hunt for different farm animal breeds. <https://www.novaparks.com/parks/temple-hall-farm-regional-park>.

- W&OD Trail: Cycle on the trail. Start out at Paonian Springs and bike 5.5 miles westward to Purcellville. The payoff for all that exercise? Ice cream at Tipped Cow Creamery or Gruto's soft serve, both just short rides from the Purcellville Train Station at trail's end.
- Boulder Crest Warrior Trail Run: Sign up your father and join him for this 5k run or a 1-mile run/walk that starts and ends at Purcellville's Franklin Park. Time: 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. The event benefits Boulder Crest Foundation, which is non-profit organization training combat veterans, first responders, and their families to live great lives in the aftermath of trauma through post-traumatic growth. Visit the event website at <https://bouldercrest.org/warriorrun>.
- Go to a movie—at a real movie theater. (Masks are not required for fully vaccinated moviegoers unless the theater or a local mandate requires them.)
- Take a walk—and leave dad at home. Of course, he wants to spend time with you on Father's Day. But after a year of family confinement, wouldn't he appreciate having the house to himself for a few hours?

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## Virtual music in the Tabernacle

The Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board will introduce the first virtual concert of the Music in the Tabernacle series. On Saturday, June 5, visit the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Facebook page at 7 p.m. to see local performers Ben Demase and Megan Waltman.

This is the first of four virtual concerts featuring eight local musicians and bands recorded in the Bush Tabernacle by OHM Productions with Loudoun DJ as the host. Watch for the four concerts each Saturday in June, 2021.

Below is an introduction to the performers who will be featured on June 5.

### Ben Demase

Ben Demase is a 14-year-old 8th grader who attends Blue Ridge Middle School. He takes lessons at Shamrock Music Shoppe and has been playing for about 5 years.

He enjoys indie and alternative music, and has started writing his own music. He has played the Purcellville Music and Arts festival community stage twice, plays at various open mics, and participates in Loudoun's Battle of the Bands. He also enjoys performing with school and local theater groups.

### Megan Waltman

Megan Waltman grew up entertaining

in the live performance culture of Chicago, and has been singing for crowds since her first gig at The Taste of Chicago when she was 12. While living in Los Angeles and honing her live performance skills at USC, Waltman worked her way through school as co-host of the nationally broadcast, 'Nate and Megan In the Morning' on Radio Disney.

Waltman's current focus on writing and recording allows her regularly travel to Los Angeles, Chicago, and Nashville to perform live. She has recently released five songs which are now available on all streaming platforms.

Music in the Tabernacle is sponsored by: Mountaineer Pipe, Keren Jayne Homes, Presidential Bank, Bayside Professional Services, DiRenzo Family Dentistry, Kettles and Grains, Longhouse Architects, Loudoun Valley Roofing, Purcellville Business Association, and Shamrock Music Shoppe. The Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board thanks these sponsors for their generosity, and recognizes the Bush Tabernacle for supporting this event.

Get more details about the concerts and the performers on the Music in the Tabernacle page of the Town website: <https://purcellvilleva.gov/992/Music-in-the-Tabernacle>.

## A.V. Symington Aquatic Center open for the season

The A.V. Symington Aquatic Center, in Leesburg, has opened for the summer season, on Saturday, May 29.

Through June 15, while Loudoun County Public Schools remain in session, the pool will be open on Saturdays and Sundays, from 12 to 8 p.m. with Town Residents admitted at 11 a.m.

Beginning on Wednesday, June 16, the aquatic center will be open daily from 12 to 8 p.m., with Town residents admitted at 11 a.m. The outdoor pool will be closed on July 4.

The AV Symington Aquatic Center is located within Ida Lee Park and features a 600' lazy river, large slide tower

with two body flumes, drop slide, 25-yard lap lane, two gang slides, water pipe fall, crossing feature, dumping buckets, little squirt whale and floating snake, as well as a large "beach" area with bubblers and water fountains, concession stand and grass picnic area.

All interactive features will return this season, including the use of slides, tubes, and chairs. COVID-19 protocols will be followed, if required, at the time of opening.

For more information, regarding hours, rates, passes, and rentals go to [www.AVSAC.org](http://www.AVSAC.org), or call the Aquatic Center at 703-779-5390.

## Dulles South Recreation & Community Center to close for maintenance

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services announces the temporary closure of Dulles South Recreation and Community Center for annual maintenance. The center will be closed June 1 through June 7, reopening June 8. The competition and leisure pools will be

closed for maintenance June 1 through June 15, reopening June 16.

The closure does not impact child care programs. DSRCC will post any updates on its Facebook page. Call 571-258-3456 for more information. Follow @loudounprcs on Facebook and other social media.

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# Virginia has eased COVID-19 restrictions

Gov. Ralph Northam has lifted Virginia's universal indoor mask mandate to align with new guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention.

Virginia has eased all distancing and capacity restrictions two weeks earlier than planned. Virginia was able to take these steps as a result of increasing vaccination rates, dramatically declining COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and statewide test positivity rate, and revised federal guidelines. "Virginians have been working hard, and we are seeing the results in our strong vaccine numbers and dramatically lowered case counts," said Northam.

"That's why we can safely move up the timeline for lifting mitigation measures in Virginia. I strongly urge any Virginian who is not yet vaccinated to

so—the vaccines are the best way to protect yourself and your community from COVID-19. The message is clear: vaccinations are how we put this pandemic in the rearview mirror, and get back to being with the people we love and doing the things we have missed." The CDC guidelines state that fully-vaccinated individuals do not have to wear masks in most indoor settings, except on public transit, in health care facilities, and in congregate settings.

Businesses retain the ability to require masks in their establishments. Employees who work in certain business sectors—including restaurants, retail, fitness, personal care, and entertainment—must continue to wear masks unless fully vaccinated, per CDC guidance. Those who are unvaccinated, or not fully-vaccinated are strongly encouraged

to wear masks in all settings. The state of emergency in Virginia will remain in place at least through June 30, to provide flexibility for local government and support ongoing COVID-19 vaccination efforts.

Northam will take executive action to ensure individuals have the option to wear masks up to and after that date. Masks will continue to be required in K-12 public schools, given low rates of vaccination among children. Virginia has administered nearly 7 million doses of COVID-19 vaccines. More than four million people have received at least one dose of the vaccine, representing over 63 percent of Virginia's adult population.

Northam has said he remains confident the Commonwealth will meet President Biden's goal of having 70 percent of adults vaccinated with at least one

dose by July 4. COVID-19 cases, hospitalizations, and the percent of positive tests continue to fall throughout the Commonwealth. Virginia is currently reporting a positivity rate of 3.5 percent, which is lower than at any time since the start of the pandemic.

The Commonwealth's seven-day average of new cases is 555, the lowest number in over ten months. Virginia is currently recording its lowest number of COVID-19 hospitalizations at 684.

For additional data on COVID-19 on Virginia and vaccination efforts, go to the Virginia Department of Health's data dashboards. Virginians over the age of 12 can schedule a vaccination appointment by visiting [vaccinate.virginia.gov](http://vaccinate.virginia.gov) or calling 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682, TTY users call 7-1-1).

## Sheriff, police or a combination of the two?

### Loudoun BOS moving to reduce role of Sheriff

BY ANDREA GAINES

In July 2020, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted 6-3 to proceed with a Request For Proposal to hire a consultant to "study" the ins and outs of altering the County's long-standing reliance on a County Sheriff as its top law enforcement officer. Supervisors Caleb Kershner (R-Catoc-tin), Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge), and Kristen Umstattt (D-Leesburg) opposed the idea.

The whole thing started with an initiative to study whether Loudoun County should consider changing its "form of government," which would include new law enforcement options. Those law enforcement options would include creating a County Police Department, and dramatically reducing the role of the Sheriff's Department. Sheriff Mike Chapman (R) opposes the idea, and contends that the County is spending \$500,000 to study a law enforcement problem that doesn't exist. He also pointed out that while other departments across the country have officers leaving, his office has a very low vacancy rate.

#### Big Changes

Chapman has served as Sheriff since January 2012, winning re-elections in 2015, and 2019. Chapman's third term as Sheriff began in January 2020. His term ends in 2024.

If the change in Loudoun's form of government goes through, it would mean big changes for law enforcement, splitting that function between a Sheriff's Department with its top officer elected by the voters, and a newly formed Police Department – top officer appointed by the County Administrator.

The Virginia Constitution states that the County Sheriff is an official Constitutional Officer.

The BOS awarded the \$500,000 contract to study the possible change to the International Association of Chiefs of Police located in Alexandria. The study is projected to be ready by November.

But, based on the wording of the RFP, many see the process itself as designed to make the change in the County's law enforcement program a fait accompli; i.e., the Board wants to make a law enforcement change.

#### What the sheriff does, today

The RFP issued by the BOS states that Loudoun County "uses 'the traditional' form of government, which provides for an elected Board of Supervisors, a County Administrator appointed by the Board, and the election of five Constitutional Officers required by the Constitution of Virginia, including the Sheriff. The traditional form of government was established under the Reconstruction Constitution of 1870."

As "Background," the RFP goes on to state that "the Sheriff's Office pro-

vides all law enforcement services, including..."

- Investigating crimes;
- Pursuing offenders and making arrests;
- Maintaining the local jail;
- Managing other local corrections programs; and
- Transporting criminal defendants to and from corrections facilities.

In Loudoun, the Sheriff also provides courthouse security, serves legal papers, summons jurors and witnesses, and executes court judgments. And, as the RFP states, "The Sheriff is assisted by deputy sheriffs who are appointed by the principal officer."

Sheriffs manage their departments independently. Chiefs of Police report to the County Administrator ... who, in turn, reports to the BOS.

#### The enormity of the Constitutional change, and what's required

The BOS seems to want to change the County's law enforcement system to one of the "optional" systems allowed by the Virginia Constitution. The RFP wants any options presented to include the establishment of a County Police Department.

Any change of government must have the approval of the voters, via referendum.

To initiate a referendum, the Virginia Code requires a Board resolution on the subject, or, a petition signed by at least 10 percent "of the voters of the County asking that the referendum be held

on the question of adopting one of the forms of government."

When the change results in the elimination of a "Constitutional Officer" position – which a County Sheriff is – the referendum must be approved by "at least 20 percent of total votes cast in the County's last presidential election ...". If the referendum passes, the Virginia General Assembly must also approve the elimination of the Constitutional Officer position.

#### Law enforcement quicksand

Information on initiating a change in forms of government was presented to the BOS by staff last year. The goal: explore the establishment of an official County police department.

Today, various counties, towns, such as Leesburg and Purcellville, have their own police departments. But the Loudoun County Sheriff's office runs law enforcement throughout the County.

Most citizens might not distinguish between a sheriff and a policeman – they all wear badges, and are expected to protect and serve.

But, the history of the debate around how a sheriff's department should relate to a police department ... should relate to the local legislative body ... and should relate to voters is more complicated.

Some argue that shifting more law enforcement "power" to the County Administrator and BOS, in the form of the power to hire and fire a police chief, for example, makes law enforcement less accountable to voters. It also, some argue, may make the whole thing more "political."

Some argue the opposite.

We'll see what happens in Loudoun County.

## Remembering Diane Wike Banton

Diane Wike Banton passed away peacefully on Easter Sunday, April 4, 2021, at the age of 87.

Banton was born on March 12, 1934, in El Paso, TX, to Maxine McDonald and Ralph Adam Wike.

As a child she moved often, spending the most time in Little Compton, RI, Upper Darby, PA, and Chicago, IL.

She met her husband, Marvin Banton while she was a student at the University of California at Santa Barbara. They married at on Feb. 26, 1954, at the beautiful Wayfarers Chapel in Rancho Palos Verdes, California.

They went on to live together in Cleveland, Ohio, Roosevelt Roads naval station in Puerto Rico, New Orleans, Louisiana, and finally in Purcellville, Virginia, where she was a resident for over thirty years. Together they raised four daughters: Betsy, Marcy, Heather, and Heidi.

Banton's life was full of adventure and curiosity. She had many interests and hobbies, and was fueled by a love of learning, and the world around her. She was a docent at the New Orleans Museum of Art, and was on the Board of the Women's Guild of the



New Orleans Opera Association.

She loved to sew and was a skilled seamstress. She was also an incredible cook and baker, and her Christmas cookie recipes live on within her family. She had a genuine fondness for animals, and cared for many cats, dogs, and horses throughout her long life.

Banton traveled often, and fell in love with many places around the world, including Dauphin Island, Alabama, Aspen, Colorado, and Scotland and England, where she became enamored with British history, culture, and the rolling landscapes. She loved reading and spent most mornings with her Bible, and evenings devouring books on history, particularly British history and politics.

Diane leaves behind many who love and will miss her. She is survived by her husband of 67 years, Marvin Banton, and her four daughters: Betsy Mitchell (Steven Mitchell), Marcy Banton (Michael Freeman), Heithoff Heithoff (Kim Heithoff), and Heidi McPhillips (Brian McPhillips).

She will be missed by her ten grandchildren who she deeply adored: Olivia

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »

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## Sign up open for Purcellville's Independence Day Parade

The Town of Purcellville is currently accepting applications to participate in the annual Purcellville Hometown Independence Day Parade.

### COMMUNITY

There is no cost to participate. The parade will kick off at 12 p.m. on Saturday, July 3.

Show your patriotic pride and join in America's birthday celebration! To complete your application to be in the parade go to <https://www.purcellvilleva.gov/FormCenter/Parks-and-Rec-Forms-2/2021-Purcellville-Independence-Day-Parade-111>. Applications are due by Friday,

June 25.

Those interested in participating in the parade are to follow Executive Order 79 for face coverings. Additional rules for participants are included on the application form.

This year, the parade route will start at Blue Ridge Middle School on East A Street, turn left onto South Maple Avenue, turn left onto East Main Street, and concludes at Emerick Elementary School. The parade route will be closed to traffic from approximately 11:45 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

For additional information contact Hibah Salah at [hsalah@purcellvilleva.gov](mailto:hsalah@purcellvilleva.gov).

### LITTLE WOMEN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

Women put a unique and socially distanced spin on the classic tale.

Even with a small number of actors, the cast was filled to the brim with talent. Among the standouts were the actors portraying Jo March, Professor Bhaer, and Marmee. Ella Nassauer (Jo) displayed an incredible range of emotions, perfectly capturing the energy of the spunky March sister, who also lovingly takes care of the sickly young Beth.

Nassauer's heartfelt vocal performances, in which she combined confidence and sensitivity, helped showcase the special relationship between the sisters through the power of music. Nassauer also had a great dynamic with Ryan Gill, who played Professor Bhaer. The flirty connection between the two in their culminating scene solidified Gill's character's personality as shy yet passionate.

Another facet of Gill's strong performance was his spatial awareness, and the ability to make a scene with only two characters feel emotionally close while still being comfortable on stage and, of course, following safety guidelines for this year's altered theatre experience.

Dylan Vanzego also contributed a strong supporting performance as Marmee, the mother of the March girls, with her calming stage presence and great dynamics with other cast members, via songs and scenes alike.

On the technical side, props and costumes added authenticity, charm, and context for the time period, highlighting the crew's attention to detail and intentionality. The costumes were visually pleasing, era-appropriate, and aided in differentiating between the characters: each



Left to Right: Ellie Mazer (Beth) and Ella Nassauer (Jo)

Photo by Justin Daniel

March girl's outfit had its own color scheme.

On-stage props, including an antique wheelchair, a kite, and an umbrella, added flair to scenes with only two or three characters. They acted as character-identifiers (the wheelchair signified Beth's ongoing health issues without providing excess context, for instance) as well as tools to fill the stage and direct the viewer's attention to key scenes -- even with limitations of COVID. In fact, the romantic scene between Jo and Professor Bhaer featured the umbrella as a creative way to stage a kiss while also being masked and separated.

With a wonderfully energetic cast, heartwarming solo, duet, and ensemble performances, and a technical stage crew working at the professional level, Little Women was a triumph, proving that, no matter the circumstances, strong relationships are meant to persevere.

Tuscarora's drama department flawlessly recreated a musical favorite while bringing the "little women" of the March household into the 21st century in an unforgettable way.

## New operating hours for Loudoun COVID-19 information line

Loudoun County has changed the hours of operation for the COVID-19 information line to Monday through Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., excluding holidays when Loudoun County government administrative offices are closed. This change eliminates weekend call center operations.

**GOVERNMENT**

Residents may continue to call the COVID-19 Information Line at 703-737-8300 during weekday hours, for assistance with vaccination appointments and for COVID-19-related information.

As the number of people receiving COVID-19 vaccines continues to rise and the rate of cases declines, utilization of the information line by the public has significantly declined on weekends, prompting the scaling back of operations.

Outside of the County's hours of operation, callers to the COVID-19 Information Line will be forwarded to the Virginia Department of Health's COVID-19 information line when available. The statewide call center operates Monday through Saturday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. Residents may contact the statewide information line directly by calling 877-VAX-IN-VA (877-829-4682).

In addition to contacting the County by phone, anyone who needs assistance or has questions related to COVID-19 may send an email at any time to [health@loudoun.gov](mailto:health@loudoun.gov). The Health Department will respond to emails as quickly as possible.

For the latest information on vaccination efforts in Loudoun, including how to schedule an appointment to receive a COVID-19 vaccine, visit [loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine](http://loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine).

## John Beatty announces Congressional candidacy

John Patrick Beatty, a member of the Loudoun County School Board, has announced his candidacy for the 10th District Republican Congressional nomination to the 10th District of Virginia. Beatty is a graduate of the Virginia Tech College of Engineering and is the Information Technology Director for The Heights School.

**GOVERNMENT**

Beatty was involved in technology startups in the D.C. area before moving into the educational field. He is also an organic farmer who raises chickens and sheep, and grows vegetables and hops on his family's farm outside of Lovettsville with his wife Katie and their five children. He is a member of St. Francis de Sales Catholic Parish in Purcellville.

In Congress, Beatty has said he will advocate for free market policies and defend First and Second Amendment rights.

He says that it is through free market incentives that we can do more to

keep our environment clean, and that he will work to improve agricultural policy and promote more family farms in Virginia, so that farmers can focus more on quality than quantity.

As the Director of Information Technology at The Heights, a member of the Loudoun County School Board, and a resident of a farmstead, Beatty says he understands the necessity for greater rural technology investment. Because of this, Beatty is committed to working to secure broadband access for all in the 10th District.

On the Loudoun County School Board, he has spoken out against promoting Critical Race Theory, and has stood up for parental rights.

Regarding health care, Beatty said he would work to return financial fairness to our healthcare system, so that if you like your insurance plan, you really will be able to keep it.

To learn more about Beatty and his ideas, go to [www.BeattyFor.us](http://www.BeattyFor.us)



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**HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

“What do you seek?” she asked me.

I told her, “I am interested in the morality of housing, and what duty citizens have to others.”

“Whom do you think can guide you in your search?” she asked.

“Let’s try great philosophers or political economists,” I answered, “Like Plato, Adam Smith, John Stuart Mill. Karl Marx.”

Leora recognized the names. “We can reach them from a séance.”

“Let’s do it,” I replied. Her concoction was working and I was amenable to her suggestion.

Most of the candles were extinguished. More incense was burned. Leora chanted softly. Soon I saw them. Plato in a red robe, balding and bearded. A stern face. Adam Smith, in 18th century fashion with a powdered wig. Mill balding and serious-looking. Big-headed and bushy-bearded Marx. They began philosophizing.

Mill’s classical liberalism maintained that liberty put individual freedom above domination by the state. Adam Smith supported that notion. There was an “Invisible Hand,” he said, by which individuals pursuing their self-interest produced societal good. I wasn’t sure. Is the proliferation of breweries good or bad? Can a neighbor convert his home to some noxious use? How about homebuilders who bring sprawl?

Marx intoned his different perspective, “From each according to his ability, to each according to his needs. That’s the moral course.” I saw a smirk beneath his whiskers.

Plato wrapped things up, “What is the basis of moral and social obligation?” He answered his own question, “Seek wisdom to understand the good, which will ensure a good communal life in society.”

I sank deeper into my seat and thought for a while. “I thank each of you gentlemen. You may return from whence you came but please return if I need you.”

I looked at Madam Leora. She waved a bejeweled hand and the philosophers vanished. “Are you satisfied,” she asked me.

“Yes, but a bit confused. I also realize something.”

“What?” she asked.

“Well, philosophers’ beliefs are simply their opinions. Well thought-out and deftly explicated, but just opinions nevertheless. So why would not my opinions be just as valid?”

“They would be,” replied the mystic as she returned my credit card. “Go and form your own ideas.”

I did just that. The primacy of the individual was an enticing thought, but Plato had it right. If we are a moral and civil society, then the goal is a “good communal life,” and to reach that we need a social contract with some moral obligation to care for others. A safety net, as it were. Under that contract, recipients also have a duty, usually, to live in a civil and productive manner. The Greek philosopher’s focus on “wisdom” becomes crucial. We help through governmental taxation and spending (though “wisdom” often

fails to apply to governments, and we have no choice in the matter) we help through individual charity, and in the case of land conservation, zoning is supposed to achieve a balance of uses that benefits us all.

Loudoun County government is now focused on providing affordable housing to lower-income households, as part of an “Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan.” This is an impenetrable 265-page tome which seems to be the premise to use zoning or other incentives, to compel or incent developers to build Affordable Dwelling Units, or “ADUs” as they are usually called.

I tested the plan with a reality check. Did it include the word “roommate”? Yep, but only about four times, mostly in a negative context like, “I had to get a roommate.” Nowhere did I see a positive statement that applies to most twenty-somethings, “A roommate and I were able to get a nice apartment.” The plan thus ignored that staple dwelling arrangement for young adults. Well, how about the word “marry,” as in “When I marry, my spouse and I will have two incomes and can buy a house.” Nope, that concept is completely absent in the 265 pages.

Should government be in the housing market? I conjured the philosophers and they promptly materialized. Marx said yes, while Mill and Adam Smith said no. Plato, the wisest of the bunch, said, “Maybe.” Regardless of differing opinions, the ADU train is leaving the station, and our County has issued a Request for Proposals from developers who would build affordable apartments.

A better approach would be to give housing assistance directly to those who qualify, and empower them to choose what kind of housing, and where, they want. I’ve lost that argument, unfortunately.

The County’s plan suggests that the selected developer will build an entire lower-rent apartment complex. That is wrong, wrong, wrong. It would soon become nothing more than project housing, where the poor are concentrated in one area. This eviscerates any desire for a diverse environment.

Concentrating the less-well-off in a single location never works. A classic example was the notorious Pruitt-Igoe project in St. Louis. Its 2,800 units in multiple buildings started deteriorating shortly after opening. It became almost completely segregated, and was the poster child of failed urban renewal projects. Pruitt-Igoe was spectacularly dynamited in the 1970’s.

Another caution was described by Roberta Gratz in Common Edge (an architectural website with a progressive slant) who says that many *neighborhoods in New York have been up-zoned based on claims promising diversity and affordable housing, but none of these promises were realized, and perversely the up-zoning created the opposite conditions: less diversity, fewer affordable units, and whiter, wealthier neighborhoods as developers had their way with the new zoning. Could this happen here?*

“Yes, it could,” said Adam Smith warned, with John Stuart Mill concurring. However,

Karl Marx was optimistic and assertive, “The state works for the common good.” Plato demurred, “Let me illustrate the answer.”

“Assume that there are two apartment buildings in Athens,” he stated. “Parthenon Pines has young people just out of college, living with roommates; single mothers; married adults who don’t want the responsibilities of a house; wealthy retirees; el-

derly people in smaller flats; lower-income families with children. It’s very congenial. Acropolis Creek only has tenants who are economically disadvantaged. Which is the better?”

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

**IN OPPOSITION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6**

go up, limiting the resources they have for employees’ salaries and force cost increases on customers.

In Loudoun County, where average home sales and rental rate exceeds what the average household can afford, secondary jobs such as driving for Uber or picking up occasional jobs on Task Rabbit are critical. In addition, many talented professionals prefer to work from home as independent contractors in numerous industries, providing them the flexibility to care for their children or other family members.

Any law which would limit secondary job opportunities while increasing the costs of goods and services to the customer is a “lose-lose” for our community and our workers.

The Loudoun Chamber will continue to urge our nation’s lawmakers, particularly US Senators Mark Warner and Tim Kaine, to oppose the PRO Act and protect our economy as we seek to recover from the lost jobs and income as a result of the pandemic.

*Grafton deButts is Vice President of Membership and Government Affairs at the Loudoun Chamber.*

**KEEPING BUILDINGS LOW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 15**

members on the developers having to spend \$1,000 for the Special Use Permit process. “The median apartment monthly rent is just over \$1,000, so we aren’t talking something that’s really burdensome.” She said it was good that the existing process calls for a Town Council public hearing. “A big part of this ... is to have the citizens weigh in ...”

Bennett also quoted Stinnette, when he ran for Town Council three years ago, when he wanted ‘to strengthen and preserve Purcellville, protecting its place in western Loudoun County as a sustainable small community.’

Commissioner Nan Forbes said she didn’t know of any community that refunds fees for applicants who go through the Special Exception process from start to finish.

Chairman Nedim Ogleman said, “As a citizen, the two public hearings through the Planning Commission and the Town Council and the deliberations [are good] ... Give every citizen an opportunity to be heard.”

As far as the cost to go through the process, he then asked, “... If the developer is not paying for it, then it needs to come from ... the tax dollars of all the other citizens. What business is it of ours to subsidize a developer’s application?”

**INPUT SOUGHT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

Commission has proposed to amend the Zoning Ordinance so that buildings constructed in the Town’s Historic Downtown / Central Commercial District – C-4 Zoning District – be limited to a by-right height of two and one-half stories and 35 feet, as measured from the street front.

As proposed, the amendment would

allow buildings to be constructed up to three stories and 45 feet, if a Special Use Permit is first obtained from the Town Council, following public hearings at both the Planning Commission level and the Town Council level.

The Town Council encourages citizen questions, input, and feedback throughout this zoning ordinance amendment process.

**BRMS WRITING AWARDS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

is how great writing is made. Bravo to the work our students and teachers put into this endeavor. These awards are awesome and represent the end product of many opportunities for authentic writing.”

“Publishing matters to all writers--students and adults alike. We are so proud of all of our students for putting themselves out there so their

voices can be heard.”, said Allyson White, ELA Team Lead.

Eric, Kursman, an eighth grade English teacher said, “Their hard work to craft such powerful pieces, and their resilience to battle through distance learning and a pandemic to cultivate writing worthy of national recognition, is an outstanding testament to their determination.”




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**THE TEMPEST**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

spoke and moved the story along. On top of the excellent performance on stage, the work done offstage is also worth noting. The costumes made each character sparkle (Ava Bueno). The stage production was brought to the screen flawlessly by the talented film directors (Ava Bueno, Emma Paskey, and TJ Santoro)

and the wonderful editors (Ava Bueno, Emma Paskey, Katie Reif, and TJ Santoro).

The lights were innovative and beautifully-executed (Riley Seppings, Alexander Mccoy, Fletcher Loyer, Ki Smith, Josh Douglass, and Emily Lough). Another unique part of the show was the music, composed and recorded by Evan Harris and Arman

Moshafi. In addition to the lighting and music, the set was an integral part of the execution of this show (Maia Ocampo, Diana Altenhof, Rachel Leary, Manoela Mishima, Sophia Liebermann, Trey Conner, Alex Reif, Alexa Alomia, and Alex Merkt). This show was classic and exciting. With excellent performances, innovative designs, and creative touch-

es left and right, "The Tempest" at Stone Bridge High school is a spectacular way to spend the night. Just like Shakespeare's original work, this production of The Tempest is sure to stand the test of time with its classical sense, fast paced story, and breathtaking execution. To view this show, go to : <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Vc58OUxTZ0c>.

**DRUG BUST**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

area – with 33 individuals charged, and seizure totals of 473 pounds of methamphetamine, 42 kilograms of fentanyl enough to kill over 21 million people – more than the population of D.C., Maryland, Virginia, and surrounding areas, combined), nine kilograms of heroin, 129 kilograms of cocaine, 5,100 pounds of other drugs, over \$5.3 million in U.S. currency, 114 firearms, many of which were assault weapons, and over \$700,000 in jewelry and vehicles.

"Much like these drugs having a far-reaching impact in our country, I am proud to say the work of our detectives in Loudoun County in combination with other DEA Task Force members had an



Loudoun County Sheriff Mike Chapman at the U.S. Attorney's Office in Alexandria.

even further impact on the operations of the Sinaloa Cartel," said Loudoun County Sheriff Mike Chapman at the press conference.

"Our law enforcement community

must continue to fight this scourge and protect our citizens, and I am glad that we have such dedicated partners in our law enforcement profession that put their lives on the line every day to do just that," said Chapman.

Items seized in Loudoun during the investigation included 50 kilograms of cocaine, 2 kilograms of fentanyl, 1 kilogram of heroin, 6 pounds of marijuana, 150 grams of crack cocaine, 100 fentanyl pills, 7 firearms – including one assault rifle, and \$1.4 million in cash.

Others at the press conference included Acting U.S. Attorney Raj Parekh of the U.S. Attorney's Office for the Eastern District of Virginia, Special Agent in Charge Jarod Forget of the DEA Washington Division, and LCSO First Lieu-

tenant Paul Loconti.

Parekh said it was operations like Operation Angels Envy that "keep our community safe."

Last year, an estimated 90,000 people died from drug overdoses nationally, mostly from opioids – an increase of around 27 percent from the previous year. "Unfortunately, Maryland, Virginia, and Washington, D.C. accounted for almost 5,000 of those opioid overdose deaths. We seized enough Fentanyl to kill every man, woman, and child in Loudoun County-two times over," said Chapman.

In Loudoun County, there have been five suspected opioid fatalities in 2021, as of April 15, with two opioid fatalities investigated during the same time period in 2020.

**DR. MIKE**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

socio-economic status.

Common mid-life crisis symptoms include: depression, unhappiness in your marriage, sleep struggles, preoccupation with your appearance, weight gain or loss, being tired or bored, losing interest in the things you used to find pleasure in, thoughts of dying, increased consumption of alcohol or drugs, and making excessive or extreme decisions -- buying a sports car, having an affair, or changing careers.

In my work during COVID-19, I have seen first-hand the mid-life struggles for individuals and couples increase tremendously. There is no doubt that the many stressors of COVID-19, and its impact on us as spouses and parents, have been emotionally overwhelming for many.

It is not uncommon for people to act-out their strong negative feelings, when it seems like life's problems have become too much to handle.

So, if you are middle age and find yourself struggling with your partner or spouse, here are a few helpful tips.

**Get active:** Research has shown that being active and exercising boosts energy, promotes better sleep, helps to fight off illnesses, increases your libido and lifts your mood.

**Drink less alcohol:** Alcohol is a depressant, so if you are feeling badly about yourself or your life, drinking will likely make things worse. Enjoying a beer or a glass of wine with friends can complement a moment, but drinking in excess is a bad idea. Maybe ask yourself, "How often is alcohol involved when I fight with my partner or spouse?" If the answer is often, maybe it's time to reassess your relationship

with alcohol.

**Spend time with your children:** If you have children, they are an extension of you, so spending time with them should serve to help you center yourself. Seeing your child's joy will have a positive impact on you. It will help to remind you of how important your family is and vice versa.

**Make a vision board:** Get a cork board, and thumb-tack some visual goals. Magazine and Google images are great places to start. Perhaps you could tack up a picture of a happy couple or family, or a beach house, or someone your age in good shape etc. Whatever your goals are, keeping them in sight will remind you of what matters most.

**Get outside:** Research has shown that spending time outside can boost mental health, improve blood pressure, and even decrease medical conditions.

**Do something different:** Doing the same thing over and over can become boring or even laborious, especially if you are struggling emotionally. Take a new way home from work, try something different for lunch, or start a hobby. By stepping outside of your comfort zone, you can begin to find renewed purpose.

**Meditate or pray:** Research has shown a number of benefits to prayer, and meditation. People who pray or mediate report experiencing a greater sense of inner peace and purpose, reduced depression and anxiety, lower blood pressure, and improved relationships. Believing in God, or something greater than yourself, can serve to humble you to better appreciate the awesomeness of life.

**Get social:** We are social beings, and research has shown that building and experiencing social connections, is a sure-fire way to improve mood and

emotional wellbeing, and to decrease feelings of depression.

**Active social people** have stronger immune systems. Studies have also shown a positive relationship lowers the risk of dementia.

**Focus on the good:** Numerous research studies show that people who think positively, experience better wellbeing. They also tend to be more successful in life, have better relationships, and an increased life span.

**Spend time with your spouse or significant other:** If you are struggling in mid-life, make it a priority to spend more time with your significant other. One-on-one time, does not need to be a big night out on the town, although date nights are important for any marriage, but letting your partner know how you are feeling, and what you are needing is a must.

**Get Help:** You do not need to have a serious mental health condition to participate in therapy. Meeting with a psychologist, can help you to process and think through your mid-life struggles, develop more adaptive and productive coping skills, and positively reframe and redefine your life course.

I agree with Eleanor Roosevelt's wisdom that middle age is probably the happiest period in one's life, but there certainly can be challenges to overcome. If you are experiencing a mid-life crisis and struggles in your relationship, it is my hope that with improved communication, mutual respect, and patience, you will both find the happiness you once had.

*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.*

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**STATE OF THE COUNTY**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

percent. Put another way, Loudoun's unemployment rate is only about one point higher than before the pandemic. In addition, during the FY 2022 budget process, Randall pointed out, "Your Loudoun County Board lowered the real property tax rate by five and a half cents while funding almost every new County position that was requested by staff. And just this week, we learned that all three credit rating agencies have renewed Loudoun's AAA bond rating."

Although the hospitality and tourism sector was hit hard during the pandemic, it survived and is rapidly rebounding.

"Thankfully, Loudoun's Department of Economic Development partnered with Visit Loudoun and the Loudoun Chamber of Commerce to support the small business and tourism industry." The leadership team brainstormed ways to ensure restaurants could survive with curbside pickup and increased delivery services. Randall added, "They even encouraged every Loudoun resident to 'tip big when you buy local.' Most impressive, the award-winning 'Loudoun is Ready' program boosts consumer confidence and drives demand to hundreds of businesses that committed to following all COVID safety protocols."

**MEDICARE**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

worker's modified adjusted gross income (MAGI) from filed taxes with higher income individuals paying more. Your first opportunity to sign up for Part B is the initial enrollment period, which begins three months before and ends three months after your 65<sup>th</sup> birthday month.

**Part C: Medicare Advantage**

Part C offers an option to buy health insurance from the private sector as an alternative to joining the "traditional Medicare" program that comes from the government.

If you choose a Part C plan, you will generally get all of your Medicare-covered services, including all services, supplies, and drugs that are otherwise covered by Parts A, B, and D, from your Part C plan instead. However, Part C plans typically restrict your choices of health care providers.

Medicare enrollees who choose Part C must continue to pay their Part B premiums, and Medicare will pay the plan a monthly fee. You might have to pay an additional monthly premium depending on the plan.

**Part D: Prescription drug coverage**

The optional Part D covers prescription drugs. If you have Part A, Part B, or both, you will qualify for Part D.

Like Part C, Part D comes from a private company, not directly from the government. When you turn age 65, you will have the right to enroll in one of several Medicare-approved Part D prescription drug plans.

Medicare pays most of the cost of Part D. However, if you choose Part D, you will pay a monthly premium to the company you select.

**Supplementing your coverage**

Medicare alone is not likely to be enough. To help minimize out-of-pocket expenses, many retirees have some other arrangement to supple-

ment Medicare's coverage. Some options include:

**Former employer health insurance** – Your former employer may let you carry its group health plan into retirement. If you are retired and eligible for Medicare, your employer's group health plan is your Medicare supplement.

**Medigap insurance** – Medigap is supplemental health insurance you buy from a private insurance company to fill in some of the gaps in Part A and Part B. Medigap policies pay some or all of Medicare's deductibles and copayments, and some cover a few services that Medicare doesn't.

**Medicare Advantage Part C** – Part C is not a true Medicare supplement because it replaces Medicare's coverage. But if you have Part C, you will not need a Medicare supplement.

This article contains basic information about Medicare, services related to Medicare, and services for people with Medicare. If you would like to find more information about the government Medicare program, please visit the official U.S. government site at [medicare.gov](http://medicare.gov).

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CAR: 0321-01305. CAR expiration: 10/01/2022.

**Attainable Housing**

Going forward, Loudoun County must seek and find solutions for its looming attainable housing crisis, emphasized Chair Randall.

"A few weeks ago, the Board received the draft of the long-awaited Unmet Housing Needs Strategic Plan. Unfortunately, the results confirmed some of our worst fears. Like the nation, Loudoun has a dearth of attainable housing options. In fact, according to the Dulles Area Association of Realtors, Loudoun has only a 12-day supply of available housing stock.

Over the next few months, Loudoun must ask and start to answer these questions: "How many new neighbors can we welcome to Loudoun, and where will those homes be located? How do we build infrastructure in advance of or in conjunction with new housing? Is it important for us to have a community where college graduates and retirees can live? And very importantly, what is the connection between attainable housing and a strong economy? Loudoun, my ask of you is this: Join the Board of Supervisors, County staff, and community partners in this critical conversation."

**Lessons in Education**

"In March of 2020, then-Loudoun County Public School Superintendent Eric

Williams made the hard but judicious decision to close every LCPS building and send all 81,708 students home," observed Randall. "That single decision meant that overnight every kitchen table immediately became a classroom. Parents of elementary school kids were forced to scramble to find child care, and many parents of high school juniors and seniors were forced to reacquire themselves with high school calculus."

At the same time, educators were also facing this uncertain world like the rest of us, they had to make immediate changes to their lives.

**The True Cost of COVID**

In closing, Randall reflected on the true cost of COVID in Loudoun: 278 lives lost.

"We know they were not just numbers; they were real people who had family and friends who loved them," reflected Randall. "While we will always honor and cherish those we lost, we remain grateful for the exemplary work of Loudoun County employees who surely saved so many others.

"This is who we are, Loudoun," Randall concluded. "And together we will face this post-COVID world with grit, determination, and kindness...I know this because I know the state of Loudoun County, Virginia, is indeed strong."

**JK COMMUNITY FARM**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

insecurity skyrocket. According to Samantha Kuhn, executive director of the farm, "Food pantries suffered as they faced an increased demand while grocery store donations diminished as a result of supply chain issues and stock piling. The food we were growing was more important than ever to our community in need. Seeing the increased needs of our community, our board asked, 'If you had the funding, what could you realistically accomplish in 2021?'"

The organization set a new and ambitious goal: to double produce production, increase the farm's herd of cattle from 25 to 45, bring 25 chickens on site, and expand distribution into Washington, D.C.

The JK Community Farm has also expanded their food education programming, working to increase understanding of nutrition and agriculture with the goal of reducing chronic disease in our community.

"With the support of our board, our

volunteers, our annual partners, and our community, we think we can raise the funding to grow 230,000 pounds in 2021. But," Kuhn added, "we'll need the support of about 4,500 volunteers through the season."

Since it broke ground in 2018 with land donated from JK Moving Services, the JK Community Farm has not lacked for help, with 8,112 volunteers since the farm's launch turning out to plant, weed, and harvest. Much of that support comes from community members, local groups and company team building events.

Sponsors have played an important role in advancing the farm's mission. Among those supporting the Plant-A-Thon and raising awareness of regional food needs were Greenfare, CARFAX, Ted Britt Automotive, EagleBank, Northwest Federal Credit Union, Sonic Promos, o2kl, KLNB, and Kuhn Aviation.

Support the JK Community Farm's mission by making a donation or registering to volunteer at [www.jkcommunityfarm.org](http://www.jkcommunityfarm.org).

**DIANE WIKE BANTON**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 21

Fleming (Nick Fleming); Alexandra Geeslin (Trey Geeslin); Rebecca Freeman (Seth Dickey); Amelia Leong (Frank Leong); James Freeman (Suvi Fong); Rose Heithoff (David Dukes); Banton Heithoff (Tara Mullen), August Heithoff; Chancellor Hendley (Jess Hendley); and Molly McPhillips,

as well as eight great-grandchildren: Elle Fleming, Jude Fleming, Arthur Leong, Henry Leong, Paul Leong, Samuel Freeman, Ronan Dickey, and Guinevere Hendley.

A private service was held for Diane's family on May 1, 2021, in Purcellville, Virginia. In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Diane's name to St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

one-stop-fits-all retail sites we have to choose from in Loudoun; they're a great help for those of us with seemingly dwindling supplies of personal time and energy at our disposal. I'm sure I'll be just as sentimental about each one of these, if they should – for whatever reason – begin to lose out to the test of

time and disappear from the landscape.

But for today, I sure wish I had – at some point – taken a drive – during regular business hours – and stopped in for some kind of memorable treat at the Airmont Store; I bet I could've banked away the experience for the rest of my days. But who knows? Someday, maybe, I'll still make it inside.

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**TREES PROJECT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1**

dioxide is removed from the atmosphere and held in solid or liquid form.

The credits will work this way: The Virginia Department of Environmental Quality will issue credits for the reduction in nutrients and sediments achieved on the Aberdeen property. Those credits can then be sold to public and commercial developers who are required to purchase nutrient credits for their development.

For example, when grading and construction get underway on the Rt. 690/Rt. 7 interchange, some streams and wetlands will be degraded by VDOT. That degradation could be permitted and offset by VDOT's potential purchase of credits from the Aberdeen nutrient credit bank. Likewise, if a data center is being built in Ashburn, there will be some degradation to the environment, and as such, the data center developer will need to purchase credits to be permitted to build.

Other potential sources of Town income from the Aberdeen tree project are public and private contributions to adopt any of the trees. Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser says he has already been contacted by one major corporation interested in the launch of an adoption

program.

Once mature, the 95-acre nutrient credit bank area can welcome naturalists, hikers, and other visitors. Meanwhile, the Town will proceed to seek grants to restore the Federal-era brick house on the remaining 100 acres. Council Member Stan Milan will be working with historians to verify and tell the stories of enslaved African people who once lived on the property.

The perimeter of the property will become a horse and walking trail; the pond will be restored and stocked with fish. The wells on the property will be brought online to increase fresh water to the Town. Managed hunting similar to Leesburg's Banshee Reeks program could be implemented. A house at the entrance to the property could be renovated into a guest house or welcome center. There is also potential for recreational activities such as zip-lining, camping, and flying drones through an obstacle course.

The Town Council will hold a June 8 vote to approve the contract for nutrient mitigation credits. That contract is part



House on Aberdeen property

of a package of documents that should be signed at the same time to achieve the best advantage for the Town. There is also a Deed of Restrictions and a Mitigation Activity License Agreement that specify what contractor Davey Resource Group and its subsidiary Wetland Studies and Solutions, Inc. are allowed to do on the Aberdeen property.

Davey Resource Group, which began as a tree services company, is celebrating its 125th anniversary this year. Now an international company with 5,000 employees, the firm offers expertise in horticultural, environmental, and con-

sulting to residential, utility, commercial, and governmental markets. The company is employee-owned.

Mayor Fraser, who has been looking for ways to monetize the Aberdeen property through an environmental program, found his inspiration in a \$43.9 million landmark forest protection deal between Norway and Guyana. The Purcellville program is adapted from it.

"This model is further evidence that a town does not need to rely on rooftops for revenue or to keep going into

its taxpayers' pockets to fund operations," said Fraser. "We need to embrace innovation and responsibly monetize the assets we are blessed with. Water and sewer taps are finite. No new land is being created; however, innovation and creativity is infinite.

"With the Aberdeen project, we will be returning the land to its pristine natural state. We will be achieving conservation goals and bringing revenue to the Town," Fraser added.

"I think President Theodore Roosevelt would be proud of Purcellville."

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

when the meeting is over, as if to say, "OK, what do we really want to do here?"

**Citizens vote, but developers never give up**

Slow growth and fiscally sustainable budget models – including lower taxes and less debt – have been the citizens' clear and consistent choice.

But, time and time again, the vote happens, and Purcellville's old guard reasserts itself and tries to take back the power they lost to the voters. After each election, or consequential Town Council decision that didn't go the old guard's way, the special interest effort to develop the heck out of Purcellville begins anew, swinging back and forth, depending on how many Town Council friends the developers have, and how many Town Council members are willing the stick with Fraser and the citizens who put them in office.

In terms of composition, the Council is generally split 3 to 3 on Fraser's agenda.

*New vacancy on the Purcellville Town Council is a very big deal.*

That is why it is so important that the Fraser forces – and the citizens – get the right person in the vacated seat.

**Ryan Cool**

Ryan J. Cool served on the Town Council for four years, and has a proven record in favor of slow growth and sustainable fiscal policies. He has kept all of his campaign promises to the voters who put him there.

The interminable Vineyard Square debate is just one example of why filling the vacant seat on Town Council is so important.

For example, the question being debated now with respect to Vineyard Square is whether that project has, legally, and from a zoning permits per-

spective, "expired." After all, it has been going on for more than eight years now.

But, in a recent Planning Commission meeting, the Town Attorney indicated that she had to meet with the Council to get a sense of what the Council members want to do.

**More to come. Stay at your posts, citizens.**

As of press time, there were five applicants for the vacated seat on the Town Council. Control of the chamber is up for grabs.

One applicant for that seat has had people send in endorsement letters. And one of the individual's endorsers is former Mayor Robert W. Lazaro, the same individual who saddled the Town of Purcellville with that \$60 million-plus debt.

Lazaro's grow-at-any-cost approach went so far as to grow the Town's water treatment capacity to accommodate massive amounts of development, not as it was happening, or, in response to in-the-pipeline growth, but to accom-

modate future growth. Spend now, pay later.

Lazaro also gave us the Vineyard Square project – a six story building on 21st Street.

**We need leaders**

Serving on the Town Council is not a popularity contest or a job for sissies. Big decisions are made. Big money is involved.

The Town is a nearly \$30 million dollar company. It takes tough work not to bend to development and growth pressure.

So, with the balance of power, and the continuing small-town character of Purcellville at risk once again, all need to speak their minds.

Purcellville's future hangs in the balance.

You may not have the insider connections that allow you to corner a Town Council member at the end of a Town Council meeting. But, as citizens and voters, you are in charge.

**WARNER VISITS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12**

programs available through the American Rescue Plan to expand broadband access and services.

Part of the plan includes \$17 billion in funding to increase affordability and access to broadband, as well as \$10 billion in the Coronavirus Capital Projects Fund to help communities expand access to high-speed internet.

Warner said that Virginia has a budget surplus this year, and \$4.3 billion has not been allocated yet. He said there is \$222 million allocated for broadband.

The lack of internet in western Loudoun is a big challenge. Congresswoman Wexton said that when she has visited western Loudoun farms to purchase products, she has seen staff walk all over the room to get a decent connection to complete a

transaction. "It's not lost on me that we need broadband ... not just rural areas ... also poorer zip codes can't afford it."

Harriet Wegmeyer, owner of Wegmeyer Farms, said it's a challenge because broadband is not accessible where she is located.

Stacy Carey said, "Our businesses are suffering. We have a very critical issue now."

Warner said, "This is more than a passing interest to me." He pointed out that Loudoun County is the internet capital of the world, and still there are challenges. "In 2021, we know that high speed internet is a necessity ... If you don't have it, you are up a creek," he said.

Warner urged everyone to "have a plan of action for every community ... Don't miss this window."



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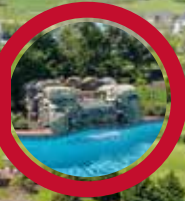


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