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JANUARY 2022

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Is there still time to rethink Rt. 15?

Planning Commissioners weigh traffic calming US 15 vs. building 'de facto Outer Beltway'

BY LAURA LONGLEY

"It's not perfunctory," said Forest Hayes, chair of the Loudoun County Planning Commission, at its Nov. 30, 2021, meeting. "It's a monumental responsibility to consider making changes to the body of work known as the Comprehensive Plan of 2019."

With that point and a unanimous vote to move a controversial Comprehensive Plan Amendment to their next work session, the planning commissioners put the brakes on the County's plan to further expand US Rt. 15 north of Leesburg to a point just shy of the two-lane Point of Rocks Bridge and the Maryland state line. The construction project would also incorporate a bypass of the historic rural village of Lucketts. It would cost half a billion dollars—a number missed by no one in the audience or on the dais.

The commissioner's vote did not come, however, until the largest number of speakers ever to attend a Planning Commission meeting had their say—with nearly 95 percent of the 28 or so in attendance voicing their opposition to turning a two-lane, undivided rural roadway into a four-lane, median-divided highway or, as one neighbor described it, a "de facto Outer Beltway."

Three or four speakers representing upscale developments along 15, such



The proposed road work would wipe out half the barn and the silo, farmers market, shopping area, all the mature trees, and the septic for Christ Church Episcopal, as well as the Lucketts Store.

as Raspberry Falls and Selma Estates, brought up their concerns about safety in exiting the communities' driveways and how more traffic lights would solve those problems.

For the Lucketts village residents, those safety problems were among their concerns, too. But they also worry whether the Lucketts Elementary schoolchildren can get to and from school safely, whether their driving-age offspring can enter and drive the road safely, and whether their police have sturdy shoulders along the road to pull over speeding vehicles. The County staff plan calls for a speed limit of 50 mph.

Renshaw, owner of the 400-acre Lost Corner Farm and Mom's Apple Pie Bakery, painted an alarming picture. "Anyplace that Rt. 15 is four lanes it will be subject to even more aggressive driving." She gave an example of the relentless traffic impact on farming in the area.

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

"Whatever you want, I'll make it happen"

Hot mic reveals the inner workings of Purcellville politics

BY VALERIE CURY

It is a cardinal rule of politics: Always assume the mic is on.

An influential Town of Purcellville staff member and a well-known local developer must have missed that memo.

In the hour and 27 minutes that followed a lengthy fall 2021 Planning Commission meeting – after citizen participants had been dismissed – their cozy relationship was laid bare as the staff member, speaking on a hot mic, told the developer of a large controversial downtown project, "Whatever you want, I'll make it happen." He added, "It might take an

election cycle or two."

Whatever has been expressed by the public in lengthy years of meetings before hand, testimony in the now years-long record from traffic experts, the opinions of opposing Town Council members, Town's Architectural Boards etc., etc. was, essentially irrelevant. What the developer wants the developer gets.

A glimpse at local politics

Rarely does one get a glimpse into what happens behind the scenes in local government.

If anyone stayed behind online

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Loudoun Valley HS sports and football star Quentin Ogren all-around leader, academic, and take-no-prisoners tackle

BY ANDREA GAINES

At six-two, he is just over 230 lbs. of determination, grit, and smarts.

Playing in the NFL, he told us, would be “a dream come true.”

But, he’s got way bigger plans than that. Way bigger plans.

Like working with kids. Establishing himself as a super personal trainer and businessman. And, who knows. Saving the world one day.

There is something really, really special in this Loudoun Valley High School graduate turned 20-year-old life-philosopher. My, my, my. What an exemplary human being.

Moving on up

Ogren was part of Loudoun Valley High School’s class of 2018.

He is due to graduate from Muhlenberg Collage in PA in 2022.

The college is located in Allentown.

Ogren’s academic and sports-related stats are impressive, as Muhlenberg’s website attests.

Career football highlights include 7 tackles against MIT in 2019, three of which were solo tackles. In 2019 he played in every game as a reserve defensive end. That year he recorded a total of 16 tackles, including tackles in postseason play. He also had “sacks” in wins against nationally-ranked Susquehanna and Salisbury.

Both 2018 and 2019 were great years for the young man. In 2019, his team reached the final four. In 2018



Ogren, number 92, is leading the team.

the team was ranked as one of the elite eight. Muhlenberg lists him also on the Centennial Conference Honor Roll for the years 2019 and 2020.

Ogren was a two-year football captain at Valley High School. He also played linebacker, defensive end and fullback, lettering for two years in lacrosse, and also playing basketball.

All this for a young guy born in 1999, with a double major in business administration and economics. He has made the Dean’s List for six semesters.

A really remarkable young man

Social media and the internet provide young people today with lots of ways to express themselves, and talk about their plans for their life. Quentin’s comments are really insightful.

Ogren said this about his short-term plans: “Looking into the more near future, I plan on successfully graduating college and fulfilling my double major course requirements in order to earn my Muhlenberg College degree.

“While this is taking place, I plan on establishing myself as a Personal Fitness Trainer further, as I continue to pursue additional certifications such as Youth Fitness Specialist Certification, Athletic Development Certification, Dietician Certification ... through the National Academy of Sports Medicine and/or the American Council on Exercise.

“Acquiring additional fitness certifications and a degree in Business and Economics will open doorways for my career interests ...”

As for long term plans, Ogren said, “As I look into the deeper future, I find myself hoping for a job containing meaning to both myself and others, as well as being in a profession I enjoy ... I must work diligently now, and be mindful of each and every connection I make ...”

Gushing parents – “look out, world”

We asked Quentin’s parents how they felt about their

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Purcellville Town Council gives Adam’s Bike Park a big thumbs up

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Michelle Caudill has a dream: That on June 1, 2022, every parent who hopes to see their child happy and healthy, every Purcellville kid who loves to mount a bike and ride with friends will turn out at Fireman’s Field and discover Adam’s Bike Park. And every one of them can thank this mom who, with her boundless imagination, relentless fundraising, and the support of local cyclists, international bicycle manufactures, the Purcellville Parks and Rec team and all the members of the Town Council, created a remarkable place in honor of her 15-year-old son Adam, who died in a tragic accident last year.

“When I think of this bike park, I can’t help but smile,” she told the Town Council. “I see this as a community gathering spot for all ages. I see friends meeting here for hours. I see moms chatting on benches watching the children who are totally engaged in physical activity. I see dads riding bikes with their kids. I see families packing a lunch and coming here to spend a few hours on a Saturday. I see an outdoor arena that is affordable and accessible for family fun, right here in town. I see kids and even teenagers smiling and having a good time. What I don’t see is teenagers staring at their phones. They’re also not at home staring at another screen.”



Adam Caudill, right, and his best friend Charlie Keller, whose father, Stephen, is Michelle Caudill’s best partner in making Adam’s Bike Park happen.

Instead, she sees kids like Adam. “He loved riding his bike around this town. He was easy to spot with his 6-foot frame and weighing only 135 pounds and always riding his red Trek mountain bike. If you were ever lucky enough to spot him, he always had a kind smile and a thumbs up for you.”

Caudill’s concept is to create a place accessible to kids from all over town—a safe environment where kids can hone their skill, to become more confident on their bikes. They can then take those bikes elsewhere, like the W&OD trail.

The demand is there for a park dedicated to cycling: In 2019 and 2020, with COVID, the bicycle industry saw a 60 percent increase in children’s bike sales. And that means the kids now have bikes, and the one thing they don’t have is a place to use them. What Caudill would like to do is provide that place.

The plans and its features are based on existing in parks in the area, particularly one that Adam, his brother Zach, and friends frequented in Stephens City, just south of Winchester.

At Fireman’s Field, the park would include several fixed structures in a path system occupying a small portion of the property. The town-owned property’s towering trees could be maintained in place, using

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth:

Legacy Park

BY TIM JON

In an odd sort of way (or maybe not) it reminded me of Central Park in New York City; having traipsed around that popular acreage many times in days



gone by, I guess I'd internalized the character of the landscape for some future use. Well, in mulling over my literary possibilities for a local gathering place called Legacy Park – in Brambleton, a short distance from the Dulles Greenway, I kept getting images of the recent visit interspersed with those of its giant sibling further up the East Coast.

I'd arrived at the general area of Rt. 659 – Belmont Ridge Road – and Legacy Park Drive – expecting ... well, I'm not sure what; I simply followed my map directions after discovering a relatively new patch of green in the eastern part of the County, a rare commodity in comparison to the more open country to the west.

So ... I drove around the spot a time or two, not noticing any clear parking area or entrance to the park itself; I finally settled on just pulling over on an adjacent residential street and making my own foot trail to one of the paved hiking



paths within the green space.

Now, I generally obey my first instincts at a new location, in heading toward any body of water, moving or still, and followed the same rule here; I was rewarded with a sunrise-enhanced perspective of a good-sized pond – with some impressive new homes on the opposite shore.

The water had the quality of having been treated to reduce eutrophication (hey, I remember being fascinated by that word from high-school science, give me a break here!) – late-summer algae growth – giving the remaining liquid an odd, phosphorescent, almost day-glow look (leaving a very strange impression, at least to my early-morning vision), which seemed to extend as far as I could see beneath the water's surface.

And this artificial manipulation of

nature extended into the harder landscape, as well. With the surrounding neighborhoods poised quite close around the Park's perimeter, I imagined the entire acreage having been sort of molded into its current format by the same giant earth-movers which had flattened the area for all those residential and commercial structures.

Letting these images and sensations sink into the objective and subjective realms of the mind and spirit, I began making those aforementioned associations between the ground beneath my feet and those now-long-ago visits to that vast open space in the heart of

Manhattan – Central Park.

And, despite their obvious size difference, the similarities included the obvious, a designated green space in the midst of a most ambitious human development, coupled with the variety of sporting opportunities within both sites (various ball courts, dotting the wooded and grassy landscape of Legacy Park, had also notched their way into my memory banks that morning), and the well-worn foot-paths left by those visitors who'd stepped from any of the paved surfaces to approach the pond or other sites of interest.

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

How to make (and keep) Your New Year's Resolutions in 2022

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

With 2021 coming to a close, many are looking ahead to what 2022 will bring. And, while there are always things outside of our control (e.g., COVID-19 ending), coming up with some personal New Year's resolutions, can be a fun and productive way to start the year. Sure, we've all heard that New Year's resolutions don't last, but research has actually shown



Dr. Mike

that close to 50 percent of people who make a resolution are still successful in keeping it after a 6-month follow-up. So, how do you make your resolution stick? Planning ahead, being realistic, having supports, being goal specific, tracking progress, persevering, being kind to yourself when you get off track, are some of the important things you can do to bring about lasting and meaningful

change.

However, in my opinion, change occurs best when you have both an intellectual and emotional motivation to address a problem or goal. So, for example, only knowing that you have a drinking problem or only having a strong desire to quit isn't likely going to be enough to sustain sobriety. Typically, those with alcoholism won't admit that they have a problem and reach out for help until they are forced to; until they realize – both intellectually and emotionally – that they've hit a personal bottom.

Two timely winter holiday examples that demonstrate how your intellectual understanding and emotional reality with a problem can match up for change to occur are Charles Dickens', *A Christmas Carol*, and the film, *It's a Wonderful Life*.

In *A Christmas Carol*, Ebenezer

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A Lifelong Search

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

"I told myself, even if a picture was all I ever found, I'd be happy for the rest of my life" Kevin Barhydt writes in his memoir, *Dear Stephen Michael's Mother*.



Rarely has a story gripped me as much as this one. I devoured the book in just a few days, taking in every word of this incredible tale.

"I was adopted in 1962 in Schenectady," the author writes. Near the beginning of the book, Barhydt and his family return to Schenectady from Brooklyn. One gets the sense that it was not an easy move. "Leaving Brooklyn

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What's brewing on Hamilton Station Road?

BY LAURA LONGLEY

It's no surprise that when residents in western Loudoun get wind of a new winery or brewery coming to their residential neighborhood, they get concerned. Traffic, trespassing, and inebriated patrons getting behind the wheel as they try to navigate their way home through country roads are all realities.

GOVERNMENT

What also makes the arrival of these rural businesses troublesome is the filling and grading of the land for the operation—especially if what came before was a dump of materials unknown.

That's what the folks on Hamilton Station Road between East Colonial Highway and Rt. 9 are now facing. The previous owners of the 17-acre property directly opposite The Barns at Hamilton Station Vineyards never developed it, but instead used the parcel as a dump. The dumping situation over the years became so dire that the heavy runoff onto the road endangered drivers.

That dump was not the only one to trouble the community. Just five minutes away is the Gable Farm and its massive landfill that had been frequented daily by a parade of dump trucks rumbling up the hill to empty their contents in the ever-growing pile. It took several years of community complaints and environmental tests before the dumping ceased when the Loudoun County General District Court issued an Order of Abatement that required the property owners to correct the violations.

Meanwhile no action has been taken by the county to deal with the Hamilton Station dump, despite years of complaints.

The new project planned for Hamilton Station Road would be the second site for Leesburg's award-winning Black Hoof Brewing Company, owned by Bill

and Nikki Haase. With their plans filed with the County and currently moving through the approval process, the neighbors are seeking answers to their concerns. They are asking the Haases and their project team how they plan to manage an operation that would bring approximately 80,000 square yards of fill onto the property and shift drainage to the southwest. At 12 cubic yards of dirt per dump truck, this construction activity would require nearly 7,000 truckloads and disturb 13 of the property's 17 acres.

The residents are also seeking answers about additional grading, erosion, and sediment control; quality of the fill, duration of fill operations, and dust from regrading; drainfield capacity and gallons per minute; property and building design and materials; number of events per year, and noise abatement.

Well regarded in the art and science of brewing, the Haases have impressive credentials and experience in other fields as well. Co-owner Nikki Haase is an engineer at Microsoft; her husband, Bill Haase, is an environmental engineer. Their brewer, Dean Lake, has experience building breweries and similar projects.

The team expects to have the brewery up and running within a year or two once they obtain the necessary approvals. The job of filling and grading the property as well as removing a pond is likely to occupy most of that time. Exterior construction by an Amish firm from Pennsylvania that customizes pre-manufactured pole barns would take approximately two weeks. Interior work and brewery installation should be a few months; Bill and Nikki Haase assure the community that the noise inside will be limited.

Meanwhile, the neighbors hope to work collaboratively with Black Hoof Brewing Company and the Haase team to

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Zoning Update

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

You Should Not Ignore Zoning

I know, I know. Zoning sounds as dull as dirt. Put this in the proper context and you'll see why it's critically important. When it's approved, the new zoning ordinance will govern how much Loudoun should grow, what it will look like, and whether western Loudoun will be ruined by sprawl and commerce, or if we can save its special character. It will govern what you can build, where you can build it, and how you can use your property and how you can't.

Gestation

Our new zoning ordinance is taking a long time to birth.

The effort started way back in October 2016. An early task was to get public

comments through the "Envision" process. (Thank consultants for that somewhat-irritating trendy term.)

Next came a new General Plan, a guide for how the county should develop by a 2040 horizon. This plan was adopted in June 2019 and now is being translated into a new Zoning Ordinance. Commercial interests had undue influence over the General Plan but the good guys are working hard to get zoning that reflects the desires of residents, such as slowing growth, stopping sprawl and fighting commercialization.

Staff Starts Work

With the General Plan in hand, Staff and consultants started a comprehensive zoning rewrite process. The first step was to examine all 1,025 pages of the old zoning code to see what was worth keeping and what needed changing in order to

align with the new General Plan. That done, the first sections of zoning text were presented to the Zoning Ordinance Committee this past January.

I am a member of ZOC (rhymes with "rock.") We have no actual power. During the rewrite process we offer ideas and suggestions to Staff. Some of our comments make it to zoning text, others are rejected. Later ZOC will make formal, comprehensive recommendations to the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

Staff continues to work section by section, promulgating chapters like "Zoning Districts" (e.g., the suburban area or the rural west) and "Uses" (setting out what can go where.) These are important, fundamental sections of any zoning ordinance.

Protecting the West

Western Loudoun is the Rural Policy Area. It's important that legitimate agriculture is always not just allowed, but encouraged; it's equally important that inappropriate uses (e.g., hotels, sawmills and so on) are kept out. There is still significant debate on several uses. Breweries, for example, are particularly controversial for residents since they can seem awfully close to roadhouse bars. No one – not even myself – is seeking to remove any of the 28 or so existing breweries, but we are terribly afraid of more new ones. (Neighbors seem to go berserk when they hear that a brewery plans to move in.) The General Plan calls for "farm breweries," that grow their own ingredients. This prescription is never followed, and western Loudoun could be on the way to becoming a drink-and-drive destination with nary a nod to farming.

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Pigs can help the environment

BY JOHN P. FLANNERY

There may be no zero carbon footprint but we still have it as an environmental goal.

The next generation is working on how we attack carbon emissions – and, sometimes, it's downright fun.

This narrative begins with a young Landon Hughes, about 4 years of age, when with his Mom, Cameron Hughes,

he'd get upset at the litter he'd see and

want to remove it, recycle it.

In those days, young Landon would refer to "litter" as "glitter" but the result was the same. Away with the garbage. Be it litter or glitter.

Landon is now an eighth grader, 14 years old, at the Hill School, and he favors math and science but also history. Of course, he enjoys sports (football and baseball).

He has also been influenced by his teachers and, for our purpose, we focus on Susan McCaskey, one of Landon's sixth grade teachers, who taught him about recycling.

It's ironic that his mom, Cameron Hughes, attended the Hill School, graduating in '03. Tal Mack taught Cameron and Tal is the one who started the recycling program at the Hill School.

So what does this have to do with

pigs?

My wife, Holly Smith Flannery, has a pig sanctuary and rescue. "Holly's Happy Hogs," and, our pigs are pets; they are not going to market, and no pig is going to be crying "all the way home."

Landon took it on himself to collect pumpkins to feed pigs. Holly's Happy Hogs was one of the beneficiaries of his enviro-thusiasm.

Landon confirmed that pumpkins can

and nutrients (Vitamins A, C, B2, B6, E, Iron, Thiamin, Niacin, Folate, Iron, Magnesium, Manganese, Copper, Phosphorus, Fiber, Carbs, Riboflavin, Protein, and Potassium) that help pigs with their digestive system and skin.

Landon was all in to help the pigs.

Landon appreciated the season for pumpkins was mid-September through November.

Many families that throw out their jack-o-lanterns, therefore don't recycle.

The pumpkins end up in the landfill – and not recycled.

The US Department of Energy reports that most of the 1.3 billion pounds of pumpkins produced in the United States end up in a landfill.

Photo: John Flannery



Two-year-old Asher Svedlow feeding pumpkins to pot belly rescue, Ethel-age six.

be harmful to a landfill, but are good for a compost pile.

Landon, however, never gave compost a second thought.

It was always about the pigs and recycling.

Pumpkins are good for pigs to eat.

They are high in antioxidants, have low calories, and have many vitamins

Once there, they decompose and release methane gas, a harmful greenhouse gas that contributes to global warming, with more than 20 times the warming effect of carbon dioxide – CO2.

Pumpkins are 90 percent water and add tons of water to the landfills, contributing to the problem of ground water contamination.

Many farmers are no longer animal farmers for lots of reasons but also be-

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Purcellville supports renaming Harry Byrd Hwy

The Town of Purcellville received a letter from Loudoun County requesting input on the renaming of the portion of Harry Byrd Highway – Rt. 7 – that lies within the Town.

Harry Flood Byrd Sr., who lived from 1887 to 1966, was an American newspaper publisher, and leader of the Democratic Party in Virginia for decades.

GOVERNMENT

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser suggested renaming this portion of the road, Billy Pierce Hwy. After a brief discussion, there was a unanimous consensus of Council in support of this change.

William Pierce was born (1890) and raised in Purcellville. He is buried in the cemetery in between Grace Methodist Episcopal Church and Mount Olive Baptist Church – two historic African American places of worship in the village of Lincoln.

He served in the military, and later followed his heart as a choreographer. He was the inventor of the Black Bottom dance, the craze of the 1920's, and later the Sugar Foot Strut dance. He was also instrumental in founding the Harlem Renaissance. The Billy Pierce Dance Studio in New York City was the largest of its kind at the time, and developed routines for Broadway stars as well.

Fraser said that the Purcellville Arts Council was looking at putting up something in his honor as well.

The Loudoun County Board of Supervisors initiated the process to rename Harry Byrd Highway at their meeting on Dec. 7. At that time, the Board unanimously voted to adopt a resolution requesting to rename all of Rt. 7 within the County's control from Harry Byrd Highway to Leesburg Pike, which was the former name of the road prior to 1968.

Practice what you teach

Dear Editor:

When the opportunity came up to put my name in the hat for the Loudoun County Public School Board I thought to myself, this could be an opportunity for the school board to show the community that they're listening.

LETTER

I figured as a Puer Rican, in a biracial marriage, with a special needs child, and employed as a public servant already, that I might actually have a chance to get on the school board. Besides, LCPS has been promoting equity and diversity since 2019 after spending nearly a half million dollars on an Equity Collaborative Report to promote equity and inclusion.

I was wrong. Despite a significant number of qualified, non-controversial candidates the school board chose yet another white male who was the only candidate that was publicly excoriated by a father from Loudoun County. Given the school board is predominantly white and considered economically affluent it seems counterintuitive to have made that choice. I'm glad that one of the school board members decided to table the equity policy approval to give it more thought.

However, every cloud has a silver lining. Thus far I've been able to meet

a lot of very morally solid parents and citizens from many demographics, who care about children. I have learned that it is not enough just to go to the school board meeting and speak passionately, because all of our words are falling upon deaf ears.

I've learned that the only way to combat the corrupt and politicized Loudoun County School Board is through the courts and utilizing the law. The school board has clearly sent the message that they are not resigning, stepping down, or doing anything to respect the will of the people.

I, like many other parents, will continue to fight for our children's education and to restore LCPS back to its glory. Activism may be tiring and inconvenient but I do not feel I have a choice. I need not only to defend my own children's education but more importantly to defend the rights of the voiceless in Loudoun County who are shackled to the public school system with no options.

The last time I checked, elected officials in the United States only have the authority which is given to them by the people, and that same authority can be taken back by the people.

Michael A. Rivera
Leesburg

Returning to school after the holidays – a checklist for parents

As students prepare to return to school in Loudoun County after the winter break, health officials encourage parents to take steps to help limit the spread of COVID-19 and other illnesses to keep their children healthy.

“Each year, the return to school after the holidays typically brings a significant increase in respiratory infections and absenteeism,” said Loudoun County Health Director Dr. David Goodfriend. “This year, the problem is compounded by the winter surge of COVID-19 and the flu, which are both widespread in Virginia. So, I encourage families to take simple precautions that will help keep your children safe and in school.”

The health department recommends the following strategies in a layered approach, since no one mitigation measure is perfect, because these efforts work in concert to slow the spread of illness:

Get vaccinated against the flu and COVID-19. Vaccination, including getting a booster when eligible, for both the student and their family is the most important step you can take to reduce the likelihood of getting sick and passing the virus to others.

Get a COVID-19 test. Testing is one important way to identify children and adults infected with COVID-19, isolate cases and identify clusters where the virus might be spreading.

Get a supply of masks. Indoor mask use in school and other public settings reduces transmission of COVID-19, influenza and other winter respiratory infections. Everyone two years and older should wear a mask in public spaces, regardless of their vaccination status or any requirements to do so.

Review and practice proper safety activities for:

- Washing and sanitizing hands.

- Social distancing: Keep away from others who do not live in your household whenever possible and avoiding sharing school supplies with others.
- How to cough and sneeze without spreading germs.

Vaccination Opportunities

Anyone 5 and older is eligible for a COVID-19 vaccine and anyone 16 and older is eligible for a booster. To make an appointment for a COVID-19 vaccine at the county’s Dulles Town Center clinic, visit loudoun.gov/covid19vaccine.

In addition, COVID-19 vaccine is widely available in the community from many providers, such as medical offices and pharmacies including, but not limited to, CVS, Giant Food, Harris Teeter, Safeway, Walgreens, Walmart and Wegmans. These locations have the benefit of being able to also provide flu vaccine at the same time. Visit vaccines.gov to find a vaccination site near you.

Testing Opportunities

Many pharmacies and health care providers offer COVID-19 tests in Loudoun County. To find a provider near you, visit the Virginia Department of Health website.

Loudoun County provides free COVID-19 testing. For testing schedules and event details, visit loudoun.gov/covid19testing.

For More Information

For additional information about COVID-19 and to sign up for COVID-19 text and email updates from Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/coronavirus.

Anyone with questions about COVID-19 vaccine may call the Health Department’s information line at 703-737-8300 or send an email to the Health Department.

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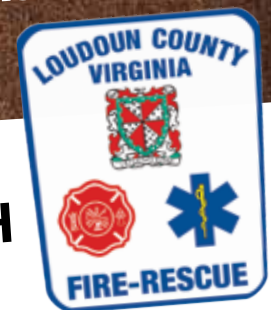


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A second time capsule is found in base of Lee statue

A second time capsule is found in base of Lee statue

On Dec. 27, crews found a second 1887 time capsule, located in the base of the former statue of Confederate General Robert E. Lee on Monument Avenue in Richmond. The capsule was opened on Dec. 28 at 1 p.m. at the Department of Historic Resources lab, located at 2801 Kensington Avenue, Richmond, 23221. The discovery comes 11 days after a different and unknown time capsule was discovered.

This appears to be the time capsule which historians believe was placed on Oct. 27, 1887 – and it is made of copper, and matches the size listed in the historical record.

Records from the Library of Virginia suggest that 37 Richmond residents, organizations, and businesses contributed about 60 objects (such as a Bible, ammunition, buttons, confederate money, books, 12 copper coins and more) to the capsule, many of which are believed to be related to the Confederacy.

Crews previously also located the first 1887-time capsule of Confederate artifacts 11 days prior. It was discovered by crew members disassembling the pedestal that formerly held the Robert E. Lee statue.

Workers noticed something that looked “different,” so they chiseled down with a hammer, and found the top of a time capsule – located inside a large block, under one inch of cement. It was located approximately 20 feet in the air, in the tower, not in the pedes-

tal’s base. It was located approximately 8 feet from the outside of the granite and about one foot from the edge of the core. It was largely undamaged.

The stone was removed and lowered to the ground before historic preservation teams were able to confirm the actual time capsule.

Historians believe a time capsule was placed in the cornerstone of the Lee pedestal on Oct. 27, 1887. Records from the Library of Virginia suggest that 37 Richmond residents, organizations, and businesses contributed about 60 objects to the capsule, many of which are believed to be related to the Confederacy.

It will be transported to the Department of Historic Resources, so it can be opened using best practices for historic preservation to maintain the integrity of the artifacts.



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Loudoun offers mental health education programs

Loudoun County offers ongoing mental health education and substance abuse prevention programs. All programs are free, but registration is required, and seats are limited. The schedule of upcoming classes for January 2022 is as follows:

Adverse Childhood Experiences Training

The Adverse Childhood Experiences training is a one-hour educational program that aims to raise awareness of Adverse Childhood Experiences, or ACEs. ACEs are potentially traumatic events that occur in childhood. ACEs are linked to chronic health problems, mental illness and substance use problems in adulthood. The training teaches that ACE prevention is a key to improving a community's well-being. The virtual training presentation lasts about one hour. Discussion and a question-and-answer session will follow the presentation. The next class will be held Tuesday, Jan. 11: 6 p.m. For details about the training and to register, visit loudoun.gov/childhoodadversitytraining.

GOVERNMENT

Mental Health First Aid

Mental Health First Aid offers training that teaches people how to identify, understand and respond to signs of mental illness and substance use disorders. The training also teaches the skills that someone needs to reach out and provide initial help and support to someone who may be developing a mental health or substance use prob-

lem or experiencing a crisis.

There are two versions of the program, a general adult program and a program for adults who interact with youth. The virtual trainings are usually held over a two-day period, with the class lasting for about three hours each day. The next trainings are:

- Adult Mental Health First Aid: Jan. 5 and 6: 1 – 4 p.m.
- Youth Mental Health First Aid: Jan. 25 and 26: 6 – 9 p.m.

For details about the training and to register, visit loudoun.gov/mhfirstaid.

Opioid Overdose Reversal

Loudoun County offers local training sessions of RE-VIVE!, the opioid overdose and naloxone education program for the Commonwealth of Virginia. Anyone who uses opioids or knows someone who is using opioids is encouraged to attend. The virtual sessions last about one hour. Upcoming classes are:

- Friday, Jan. 7: 12 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 10: 5:30 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 14: 12 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 21: 12 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 24: 5:30 p.m.
- Friday, Jan. 28: 12 p.m.
- Monday, Jan. 31: 5:30 p.m.

For details about the training and to register, visit loudoun.gov/revive.

Public comment open on Scott Jenkins Memorial Park lighting

Loudoun County is holding an open comment period to gain input from the public regarding Phase III of construction for Scott Jenkins Memorial Park in Hamilton. Phase III will install lighting for five existing athletic fields.

The comment period is open through Jan. 14, allowing members of the public the opportunity to view a presentation online and provide input about the project.

Installation of the lighting is subject to approval of the Planning Commission, and the project is scheduled to be on the agenda of the Planning Commission's Jan. 25, public hearing.

Information on how to provide comment for the public hearing will be posted prior to the hearing at loudoun.gov/remoteparticipation.

For more information about the Scott Jenkins Memorial Park project, to watch the recorded presentation and submit a comment, visit the project page at loudoun.gov/scottjenkinsparkphase3.

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Virginia deploys \$2 billion to achieve near-universal Broadband

Gov. Ralph Northam in mid-December announced new grants that will advance Virginia 90 percent to the goal of achieving universal access to broadband and high-speed internet, placing Virginia on track to being one of the first states successfully charting a path to universal access to broadband.

GOVERNMENT

The progress results from a combination of state, federal, local, and private-sector investments that Virginia has accelerated over the past four years.

“Broadband access impacts every facet of our daily lives, from education to business to health care,” said Northam. “It’s a necessity for navigating today’s digital world, and this new funding will close Virginia’s digital divide with universal broadband by 2024.”

Virginia will allocate more than \$722 million to provide universal broadband infrastructure in 70 localities, which will close 90 percent of Virginia’s digital divide. The funding—from the Virginia Telecommunication Initiative (VATI) and the federal American Rescue Plan Act—will support 35 projects, connecting more than 278,000 households, businesses, and community anchor institutions to high-speed internet, and leverages more than \$1 billion in private and local investments, pushing the total broadband investment in Virginia above \$2 billion over the past four years.

“Virginia and the VATI program continue to be the national model for closing the digital divide and to-

day’s announcement cements our success,” said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Brian Ball. “This round of grants will connect more than 278,550 households/businesses to high-speed internet, ensuring more communities across the Commonwealth have access to the necessities of modern life.”

The Department of Housing and Community Development administers the VATI program, which provides targeted financial assistance to extend broadband service to areas that are currently unserved by a provider. Projects were selected through a competitive process that evaluated each project for demonstrated need and benefit for the community, applicant readiness and capacity, and the cost and leverage of the proposed project. The level of funding awarded is based on the infrastructure needs in the project area.

In this application year, VATI received 57 applications from 84 localities that partnered with 25 internet service providers, requesting more than \$943 million in funding.

The awards went to dozens of localities including Loudoun County and All Points Broadband. The project will build fiber broadband to 8,629 unserved lo-

cations, and achieve universal coverage in Loudoun County.

Loudoun and All Points Broadband will receive \$17,524,000 – leveraging \$42,376,126 to build fiber broadband to various locations.

In a press release announcing the awards, Del. Dave LaRock (R-33) said, “My thanks go to the Loudoun, Clarke and Frederick County Boards of Supervisors, All Points Broadband, Dominion Energy, and the Northern Virginia, Northern Shenandoah Valley, and Rappahannock Electric Cooperatives for working together with VATI staff to bring this necessary service to our communities.”

“I look forward to working with all my constituents and the stakeholders in this project to finally bring this long-standing effort to a successful resolution in the coming months.”

He added, “The last 18 months have taken this need to a whole new level, as so many people have transitioned to working and schooling

at home. Fortunately, this increased need, as well as legislative efforts I and others worked on, has brought us to the point where Virginia was ready to bring public and private investment to solve this complicated problem for the foreseeable future.”

“It’s a necessity for navigating today’s digital world, and this new funding will close Virginia’s digital divide with universal broadband by 2024.”

— Gov. Ralph Northam

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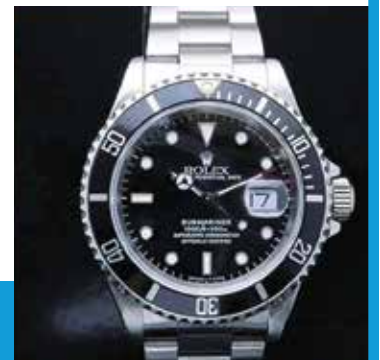
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Tuition assistance for National Guard

In his 'Thank You, Virginia' Tour, Gov. Ralph Northam is proposing investing an additional \$1 million a year to support tuition assistance for Virginia National Guard.

"Our National Guard members make difficult sacrifices to protect our nation and the Commonwealth," said Northam. "This investment aims to reward Virginia Soldiers and Airmen and encourage more people to join the program. This is a way to say thank you."

Between 400 and 500 members of the Virginia National Guard apply to its Assistance Program each year.

"We are excited to be able to offer more members of the Virginia National Guard assistance to pursue higher education," said Acting Secretary of Veterans and Defense Affairs Kathleen Jabs. "Guard members have been at the forefront of response to natural disasters, testing for COVID-19 early

on in the pandemic, and answering the call during times of civil unrest in addition to deploying overseas for Department of Defense missions. This is a way for Virginia to show appreciation."

Northam proposes to change the program from an up-front direct award, issued before class begins, to a reimbursement model, issued after a Guard member completes a class. This is considered a best practice and is expected to increase the overall individual tuition assistance Guard members receive. It will also eliminate the requirement of the Department of Military Affairs to recollect funds from those who do not complete eligibility requirements.

"This initiative is a tremendous step in providing a key benefit to our troops and ensuring that we remain competitive in attracting talented men and women," said Major General Timothy Williams, The Adjutant Gen-

eral of the Virginia National Guard.

The Virginia National Guard Tuition Assistance Program has remained at its current funding levels since 2008, as tuition costs have risen at colleges and universities. With this proposed increase, the program will be able to provide approximately \$4 million dollars to those who qualify.

The proposal is in conjunction with the departure ceremony for the 1st Battalion, 1-111th Field Artillery Regiment at the Harrison Opera House in Norfolk. Approximately 300 soldiers are being deployed to the Middle East from units based in Norfolk, Hampton, and Hanover. About two weeks ago, more than 1,000 members of the National Guard from Virginian and Kentucky deployed from Bedford to the horn of Africa.

More Virginia National Guard members are now deployed than at any moment since the surge of 2007.

Community water and wastewater project assistance offered

The Loudoun County Water and Wastewater Program will begin accepting applications for county assistance with community water and wastewater projects starting Jan. 1.

The Water and Wastewater Program is designed to support Loudoun

County communities experiencing issues with deficient or non-existent water and, or wastewater systems with funding and other resources. Properly functioning water and wastewater systems help to assure a cleaner and healthier community.

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

Additional information can be found at loudoun.gov/waterprojects, or by contacting Loudoun County Environmental Program Specialist Scott Fincham at 703-771-5520, or Scott.Fincham@loudoun.gov.

Round Hill and business tangible personal property taxes in the Towns of Leesburg, Middleburg and Round Hill.

More information about taxes in Loudoun County may be found at loudoun.gov/taxes, or by calling 703-777-0280 or emailing taxes@loudoun.gov.

County will assume real estate and personal property tax billing – for Purcellville and Hamilton

Loudoun County is assuming responsibility for assessing, billing and collecting personal property and real estate taxes in the Towns of Purcellville and Hamilton effective Jan. 1.

Residents and businesses in Purcellville and Hamilton will receive combined semi-annual bills that include all county-administered taxes as separate line items. Each line item will show the respective county or town tax rate and amount. Taxpayers will remit a single payment for the total amount of taxes to the County of Loudoun. The new process will apply to the first half tax bill

due May 5.

The Treasurer's Office will process the tax payments and transmit the appropriate amount to the Towns of Purcellville and Hamilton. The Treasurer's Office will also undertake any collection efforts for all accounts which may become delinquent after the Jan. 1, effective date.

Purcellville and Hamilton will continue with delinquent collection efforts for all taxes due for 2021 and prior years.

This process change is part of an overall effort to centralize the tax system of the county and the towns to improve efficiency, economy and customer service to taxpayers.

The first phase of this initiative began in 2019 with the county assuming responsibility for real estate taxes in the Towns of Hillsboro, Leesburg, Lovettsville, Middleburg and Round Hill.

In 2020, the county assumed responsibility for personal property taxes in the Towns of Leesburg and Round Hill and business tangible personal property taxes in the Towns of Leesburg, Middleburg and Round Hill.

More information about taxes in Loudoun County may be found at loudoun.gov/taxes, or by calling 703-777-0280 or emailing taxes@loudoun.gov.



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Remembering Kathleen “Casey” Marie DeSouza

Kathleen “Casey” Marie DeSouza was born in a military hospital at Ft. Belvoir in Virginia on June 2, 1961, to her parents Charles and Anne O’Donnell. Casey was the tenth child of eleven for the O’Donnell couple. She left us to be with our Lord on Jan. 3, 2021, six months shy of her sixtieth birthday.



Casey was born into a Catholic and military family. Her father Charles O’Donnell proudly served our military, until he retired as a Lieutenant Colonel in the late 1970’s. He worked at the Pentagon, and was buried at Arlington Cemetery on Dec. 27, 1983.

Casey’s mother, Anne, manned the troops at home, caring for her eleven children and was a major provider from the home. Charles served the military in numerous ways, Casey fondly reminisced about the family’s five years in Germany. She had the opportunity to learn German when she was there, from the time she was five until her return at age eleven. The family moved back to the Virginia area where Casey finished out middle and high school.

With the encouragement of her father, Casey went straight to work. She excelled at shorthand, was a skilled accountant, and had a knack for premier organization. She succeeded at every job she took.

She had originally met her future husband, Nelson, as a neighbor in Vienna, Virginia. Many years later they meet again, and a new relationship began.

Nelson and Casey married on Jan. 30, 1985. They were blessed with two daughters, Anna (Want) and Kathleen (Henley). Nelson and Casey were partners in every sense of the word. They went on to create and run three businesses: DeSouza Construction, Nelka LLC, and Casanel Vineyards and Winery in Leesburg, VA.

Much of the success of these businesses, Nelson lays at Casey’s feet. Casey had a way to make all those whom she interacted with feel spe-

cial and respected. All her former employees speak highly of how she was there for them in more ways than any standard employer.

She was their teacher, teaching many of their construction employees English. She often helped employees’ pregnant wives secure doctor’s appointments and more. She listened to them, and she was always ready with a hug. She had a smile that “lit up the room” and was a shining light to all the people she touched.

Casey is survived by her husband of 36 years, Nelson DeSouza and their daughters Anna and Katie, their husbands, and her grandchildren. She is survived by her siblings Peter O’Donnell, Margaret Appel, John O’Donnell, Stephen O’Donnell, Mary Herring, Joseph O’Donnell, and Anne Tyrpak. Casey was preceded in death by her parents, Charles and Anne, as well as by her siblings Charles O’Donnell, Michael O’Donnell and Patricia Jarosz.

Casey is sorely missed and will continue to be, especially during the Christmas season – which was her favorite time of year.

We hope, in her memory, to always make this a special time for those nearest and dearest to us, and for the strangers we can touch with a simple smile.

Thank you, Casey, for all you did, your love will always remain in the lives of those you touched.

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Sip like a Mayan – it's hot chocolate time

BY ANDREA GAINES

Who knew that something as common as every day hot chocolate had such a fascinating history.

Learning about its history, and savoring it with that history in mind can turn an ordinary winter day into a trip back through time to when chocolate itself was first “discovered.”

The powdered drink mixtures we are familiar with today bear little resemblance to the original drink known as hot chocolate.

But, with a little bit of knowledge and fact-finding you and yours can turn a simple hot chocolate taste-testing into a spectacular cold weather day event – and a history lesson to boot.

The Mayan's started it, and everyone improvised

Hot chocolate's history started in Mexico as early as 500 BC with the Mayan people. The original drink was made using ground cocoa seeds mixed with water, cornmeal, chili peppers and other ingredients.

It was first enjoyed as a cold beverage.

But, by the 1500's the beverage had made its way to Europe as Cortez brought cocoa beans and chocolate-making tools to the continent. Originally the drink was quite bitter, but, as it began to be introduced in Spain, it tended to be served hot with sweeteners added and the peppers removed. Chocolate Houses, as they were known, started popping up in London in the 1700's. Countries have their own specialty hot chocolates today. Here in the United States, it is thin and milky. In Spain it's a thick beverage known as chocolate a la taza, in Latin America it's quite spicy and known as chocolate para mesa, and in Italy, a thin drink called cioccolata calda.

It was not until much later that chocolate itself began to be eaten in solid form.

Old fashion hot chocolate consists of unsweetened chocolate, either whole milk, cream, almond milk, or coconut milk, sugar and vanilla topped with marshmallows, or whipped cream. Mexican hot chocolate, or chocolate caliente

consists of ground cocoa seeds and similar ingredients with the addition of the chili peppers. A grainier chocolate known as chocolate de mesa is often used, along with cinnamon.

Viennese hot chocolate often takes the place of coffee in German cafes. This beverage features an egg yolk and semisweet chocolate with a high cocoa content which gives the drink it's thick consistency and strong taste. Classic Dutch hot chocolate, or Warme Chocolademelk is made with dark chocolate chips and Dutch-processed cocoa, a generous dollop of whipped cream dusted with more cocoa powder, and cinnamon. Whole milk is used and vanilla or almond extracts, rather than sugar to flavor the whipped cream.

Where to go for outstanding hot chocolate

After hearing all of these fun facts about hot chocolate, you may be tempted to go online and research some hot chocolate recipes of your own. Making an authentic hot chocolate concoction is a great family activity, following a walk in the snow, a hike, some skiing or sledding, or just to accompany you to a seat by the fire.

Hot chocolate is a very popular winter beverage, for sure, and also wonderful for crisp or rainy spring days.

Three sources we like include are:

- Dolce and Ciabatta Bakery in Leesburg is located at 9H Catoctin Circle S.W., Leesburg – The Shoppes at Kings Corner. They serve a delicious hot chocolate ... as good as their outstanding pastries, cakes, cookies, bread, and coffee. Said manager Tatiana McKenzie, “A cozy cup of Hot Chocolate is a comforting drink that goes straight to the heart! It is amazingly prepared with sinful dark chocolate, and steamed milk. It has a rich, real chocolate taste that you remember from your childhood. Optionally finished with comforting whipping cream on top, along with satisfying drizzle of chocolate. It may taste like nostalgia, and is a perfect time to

build new memories.”

- The Conche, located at 1605 Village Market Boulevard S.E., Leesburg in the Village at Leesburg, serves five different flavors of hot chocolate: peanut butter, salted caramel, milk, dark, or white hot chocolate. All of this can be topped with roasted marshmallows. Yum!
- The Chocolate Palette, is located at 141 W. Main Street in Purcellville and is one of the gems of western Loudoun. From sipping chocolates to Danish pancakes (aebelskivers) to desserts, it is not to be missed. Some of varieties they offer include: Aztec life, Italian Job, Milky Way, Classic, and Salted Caramel.

There's more to hot chocolate than meets the eye

We received these very insightful comments from the owner of The Chocolate Palette in Purcellville.

“Yes, this is the perfect time of year for hot chocolate, especially January in Virginia as it tends to begin snowing.

“I would encourage anyone who wants to make their own hot chocolates at home to use quality ingredients, especially the chocolate – chips or wafers, cacao powder, sugar and milk or heavy cream (or any dairy alternative).

“Keep in mind, the use of milk alternatives will determine the viscosity of the hot chocolate. Cashew milk is my favorite as it is nice a fatty, and creamy, and seems to adopt the flavor with which it is mixed.

“One may always adjust portions of cacao powder and chocolate wafers for added richness or mildness. Flavors may be added to hot chocolates as well to keep things interesting such as eggnog, whipped cream, candy cane stir sticks, and pure vanilla extract. “Some folks even dare to add a shot of espresso or whiskey to liven things up. Last tip – always drink it fresh and hot ... and sipping in front of a nice crackling fireplace is an added bonus.”

Could not resist – spicy pecans

Here's a fun idea to make your hot chocolate adventure a little more satisfying: add a snack of spicy pecans.

Ingredients for spicy pecans include pecan halves, 1 egg white, 1 teaspoon water, 1 cup sugar, 1 teaspoon salt, 1 teaspoon cinnamon, 1 teaspoon cayenne pepper (optional), 1 teaspoon red pepper flakes (optional).

Directions: preheated oven to 250 degrees. Combine dry ingredients and set aside. In a large bowl, combine egg white and water and beat until frothy. Dump in the pecans and mix until all pecans are wet. Dump dry ingredients mixture onto pecans and mix until pecans are coated. Grease cookie sheet (with edges) and dump in the pecans, spreading them out evenly. Bake one hour, watching for burning and mixing pecans every 15 minutes. Spread out onto a flat surface to cool. Enjoy with your hot chocolate.



DryHome Roofing awards free roof to Ashburn family

Ashburn's Chris Moorhouse and his family received a free roof right before Christmas, from DryHome Roofing and Siding. The new roof replaced the home's 25-year-old original roof. Moorhouse, who has struggled with cancer, was nominated by his wife for DryHome's 19th annual Free Roof for the Holidays program.

COMMUNITY

"Allison wanted to do something special for Chris and her family. They have faced a number of hardships related to Chris' health while trying to raise four children," explained Steve Gotschi, CEO, DryHome. "I am happy that we can lessen some of their worries. We wish the Moorhouse family a safe, healthy, and happy holiday under their new roof."

Throughout November, Sterling-based DryHome accepted nominations from customers and the community to identify a Northern Virginia individual, family, or nonprofit in need.

DryHome selected Moorhouse as the recipient based on his needs, the condition of the roof and the heartfelt nomination from his wife.

In her entry nomination, Allison Moorhouse wrote: "I would like to nominate my husband for the Free Roof for the Holidays giveaway. It has been quite a challenging life thus far, but he survived, and we are forever grateful. I would love to be able to provide him with a new roof, so that it's one less expense that he needs to worry about. He works so hard for our family, and to pay the bills."

Chris and Allison Moorhouse met in college as members of Virginia Tech's marching band. After college, they purchased a condo and were married in 2004 and had their first two children in the years following.

Unfortunately, the Great Recession brought financial difficulties, and by 2010, they could no longer afford to keep their condo. After getting back

on their feet, they had a third child in 2013, and a fourth in 2015.

However, it was on their anniversary in 2015 that Chris was rushed to the emergency room after experiencing back pain, where he was diagnosed with acute lymphocytic leukemia. He spent a month in the hospital receiving chemotherapy.

Two months later, on the day after the birth of their fourth child, Chris fell ill and was hospitalized again, one of several hospitalizations to come during the next year of grueling chemo treatments, which kept him unable to work. After he recovered and returned to work, they were able to purchase their current townhouse in 2016.

DryHome Roofing and Siding has been serving Northern Virginia for over 30 years and is committed to making a difference in the community. The "Free Roof for the Holidays" program enables the company to thank its customers and the community by helping those

who are struggling, to have a safe roof over their heads. Since the program's inception, the company has donated 20 roofs valued at nearly \$200,000.

Over the years, DryHome has awarded roofs to people and nonprofits across the region with a variety of needs.

Michelle Robinson, a Navy veteran, and founder of a nonprofit providing animal therapy to people with special needs and disabilities, won last year after being nominated by a colleague.

Other past recipients include a beloved piano teacher, a Stafford mother of three who lost her husband, a Vienna mother who was struggling following a difficult divorce, a Leesburg widow and mother of two young children, Cornerstones; an advocate for the homeless; Doorways for Women and Families' Safehouse, a Loudoun school bus driver, Good Shepherd Alliance, Falls Church Cub Scout House, and Gabriel Homes.

Goodbye Debbie Downer Hello New Year

BY ANDREA GAINES

I surveyed friends and family over the holidays to ask them if they were making any New Year's resolutions for 2022.

It has been a rather tough time for all of us, recently, but I got lots of very hopeful comments in response to this question: "Are you making New Year's resolutions this year?"

COMMUNITY

If you have made them in the past, have you been able to keep them?"

I have always felt it was my responsibility to make New Year's resolutions, and to keep them.

Truth is, though, I beat myself up to make them, but keep almost none of them.

The lesson, for me has been to see resolutions as a way to make progress towards a goal, as opposed to solving a big problem.

Enter Debbie Downer

I actually got some very surprising answers when I asked friends and family about their own New Year's resolutions history.

Some people, I know avoid them like

the plague.

One person though, a family member with a very sunny and upbeat view of life in general, said she was resolving to ease out of her life the people and circumstances she described as "Debbie Downers." "I'll do it with love, she explained. But she was "sick of it ... Sick of the negativity." No more Debbie Downers for her.

"I want to have as positive a 2022 as possible. My goal is to get rid of the depressing Debbie Downer people." But, she cautioned, in a kind and sweet way true to her nature, "None of my family members are on that Debbie Downer list!"

Listening to her comment I realized that I had been doing that, in a nice way, all year long. So, goodbye Debbie Downer, love you still, but goodbye.

The anti-resolvers, and a little history Several people replied to my question about New Year's resolutions with a simple "I don't make New Year's Resolutions" message. I get it.

I also got messages of hope: less

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »

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MOORE-SOBEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

knocked the wind out of us all ..." he writes. Yet it seems fitting that Barhydt returned home after many years away—he is still searching for a piece of his identity that has eluded him for so long. Specifically, he is looking for his biological mother.

"I needed to know my real name," Barhydt writes.

Barhydt's search was far from easy. Obstacles abounded as he attempted to extract information from Catholic Services about his biological mother. What sustains him during his search is a desire to know his birth mother. Barhydt wrote a letter to his mother, starting with the simple words, "My name is Kevin. I am writing with the hope that we might know each other."

Regardless of the reason for giving a child up for adoption, it seems unavoidable that the child is left with a sense of rejection. This rejection is present throughout Barhydt's story, but this is just one of many scars that Barhydt carries. He is a survivor of child sexual abuse. He spent time in the foster care system. His struggles with addiction began at an early age and continued into adulthood. He writes about his obsession with

stealing and his addiction to drugs and alcohol.

When he was 17 years old, Barhydt joined the Navy and got married shortly afterward at 18 years old. Barhydt's turbulent and abusive relationship with his first wife, Nessie, comes to an end (which he writes about in unflinching detail). Barhydt's military career came to an end, too, when he was discharged for "burden to command due to substandard performance or inability to adapt to military service."

Barhydt continues struggling to find his way. He serves time in jail, sinks deeper into addiction, and loses more and more of himself to the pain. Some of the passages are gruesome as he describes the symptoms of his addictive drug use. Yet just when it feels hopeless, Barhydt pulls himself out of the abyss. The story takes a triumphant turn: Barhydt overcomes the addiction that once controlled him.

His feelings toward his biological mother are understandably complicated. "She had abandoned me. Nothing could ever change that fact. I would always be a living reminder of what was left behind," he writes. It is a heavy burden to carry. But

his love for his mother is also indisputable. "I miss her, and I know she missed me, still misses me," he tells his half-brother in the book's waning chapters.

Barhydt does eventually meet his half siblings, and gains far more than he ever could have imagined. Does Barhydt ever meet his mother? You'll have to read the book to find out.

As for his given name, the title of this book reveals it all. In a letter to Barhydt's adoptive mother, Barhydt's biological mother reveals that she had named him Stephen Michael. "As you see I've named your child after St. Stephen, to give him courage, and St. Michael, to protect him." Considering how the author's story unfolded, it seems to me that she could not have picked a more fitting name for her son.

Samuel Moore-Sobel is the author of Can You See My Scars? His book is available on Amazon. To read more of his work, visit www.samuelmoore-sobel.com Kevin Barhydt is the author of Dear Stephen Michael's Mother. His book is available on Amazon. To read more of his work, visit <https://www.kevinbarhydt.com/>.

GOOD BYE DEBBIE DOWNER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

sugar and more yoga, for example. Or, lose some weight, finally.


One New Year's resolutions researcher suggests that the history of the concept dates back about 4,000 years to Babylonian times.

That culture celebrated something called Akitu, a 12-day New Year's event. During this festival the Babylonians would plant crops, crown a new king or pledge their loyalty to the reigning one, and make promises to the gods to pay their debts and return any borrowed items.

The belief was that if they kept their word they would be rewarded by the gods in the coming year. Break your promise, and the gods would not look favorably on you. An 1800's Boston newspaper is thought to have coined the phrase "New Year's Resolution." But who knows.

The most common New Year's resolutions today include to eat a more healthy diet, to lose weight, to pay down one's debts, to get a new job, to watch less TV, to exercise more, and to spend more time with family and friends. The usual suspects.

I am very intrigued with the goodbye Debbie Downer idea. Let Debbie be Debbie, but, don't follow her down the rabbit hole. Cultivate positivity in this new year to come.



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HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

From Mountains to Parking to Cluster Subdivisions

ZOC's seen a number of sections that Staff has drafted, like as Parking, Overlay Districts such as one to protect mountainsides, Development Standards (e.g., lighting, parking controls,) and Signage. Special attention was paid to short-term rentals and whole-house rentals.

Because most of Loudoun's undeveloped land is in the western area, and especially because growth and commercialization threaten rural Loudoun, ZOC has spent an immense amount of time discussing a number of issues, and especially clusters. A lot is at stake: Will mountainsides remain as undeveloped forests that are the backdrops for many of our scenic views? Will sprawl and growth erase farms? Simply, will western Loudoun stay as nice as it is?

Final Approval Late in 2022

When Staff presents its complete zoning rewrite, a ninety-day review starts, with comments from ZOC and the public. After any revisions, the proposed zoning ordinance goes to the Planning Commission and finally to the Board of Supervisors planned by the end of next year.

Have you followed the dates? Start in 2016, finish in 2022. Hmmm.

Input and Influence

Consider the number of people and groups who have been involved and that timeline is more understandable. Varied input is a good thing but is time consuming: When ZOC sees the new text produced by Staff, eighteen members opine at our twice-monthly meetings, while the public can submit written comments. The most visibly active groups are rural preservationists, conservation easement donors, farmers, owners of developable land and breweries.

Business interests seem to be busy behind the scenes, meeting with politicians and with senior County people. They have strong governmental allies: The Department of Economic Development, the Rural Economic Development Council, and Visit Loudoun. Has anyone ever listened to western Loudoun citizens to see just how much "economic development" they really want? That question must be asked. After all, Loudoun belongs to its residents, not business.

Charles Houston developed more than six million square feet of office buildings throughout the South for an Atlanta-based firm. He lives in Paeonian Springs.

Precious, precious, precious

Inova Loudoun Hospital's first baby of the year came into the world – a girl – at 2:36 a.m. on January first. Another girl followed her just hours later at 4:39 a.m., and a baby boy at 7:14, a.m.

Inova Loudoun Hospital provided us with this precious information about the first babies born there in 2022.

Inova is also offering health screening services as we start the new year.

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24950 Riding Center Dr., South Riding

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Leesburg Senior Center
102 North St. North West, Leesburg

Tuesday, Jan. 11, 9 a.m. to noon
Cascades Senior Center
21060 Whitfield Place, Sterling

Wednesday, Jan. 12, 10 a.m. to noon
WaltonWood
44141 Russell Branch Pkwy., Ashburn

Monday, Jan. 17, 9 a.m. to noon
William Watters House
22365 Enterprise Street, Sterling

Tuesday, Jan. 18, 10 a.m. to noon
Ashburn Senior Center
20880 Marblehead Dr., Ashburn

Wednesday, Jan. 19, 10 a.m. to noon
Wingler House
30900 Runnymede Terr., Ashburn

Tuesday, Jan. 25, 9 a.m. to noon
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Kaine re-introduces expanding Medical Education Act

U.S. Senator Tim Kaine (D-VA), a member of the Senate Health, Education, Labor, and Pensions Committee, has re-introduced his Expanding Medical Education Act, legislation to

GOVERNMENT

tackle the lack of representation of rural students, underserved students, and students of color in the physician pipeline.

The bill would provide grants to colleges and universities to establish or expand medical schools in underserved areas or at minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges and Universities.

The legislation would encourage the recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students from disadvantaged backgrounds at the medical schools. Virginia is home to 5 HBCUs: Hampton University in Hampton, Norfolk State University

in Norfolk, Virginia State University in Petersburg, Virginia Union University in Richmond, and Virginia University of Lynchburg in Lynchburg. Senator Kaine is pushing to include this legislation in the Build Back Better bill.

“Even before the pandemic, underserved, rural, and minority communities faced too many barriers in accessing health care,” said Kaine. “This has only been exacerbated by nationwide physician shortages.

“One way we can address this issue is by diversifying and expanding our physician pipeline, as medical students of color and those from rural areas are more likely to practice in the communities they’re from. I’m proud to re-introduce this important legislation to help us get one step closer to ensuring communities across Virginia and the nation

have access to the medical professionals they need.”

“The Expanding Medical Education Act is of significant importance as we find solutions to health disparities in the medical profession and in our underserved communities.

“Virginia Union University is committed to developing academic programs to train future physicians and health professionals who identify with the ailments that affect communities of color. This legislation would provide the financial resources to increase our programs and opportunities for better healthcare in our community,” said Dr. Hakim J. Lucas, President of Virginia Union University.

“The ongoing pandemic continues to show us that we must create new professional medical opportunities for

students to become physicians in underserved areas and at our Historically Black Colleges and Universities and other minority serving institutions. We have been pleased to work with Senator Kaine and his colleagues on this important initiative to help increase the number of medical doctors who are eager to serve in our communities,” said Dr. Makola M. Abdullah, President of Virginia State University.

“COVID-19 has shined a bright light on the health disparities that continue to persist in America’s communities of color. Norfolk State University’s medical and health programs, such as Nursing, Allied Health, and DNIMAS, have a rich history of contributing to the advancement of healthcare in communities of color, in Hampton Roads, across the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

ADAM'S BIKE PARK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

their shade to create a pleasant riding environment.

The path would run alongside the Bush Tabernacle and make the most of the natural elevation. The trail would flow through the trees to control speed and ensure a safe environment. Installation of the bike path would be the first phase, followed by construction of a covered area with seating for families that come with their kids. The area would also include a maintenance facility where kids can work on their bikes—fix a flat tire or brakes.

And who would pay for all this? Not you, Purcellville taxpayer!

The bottom line is estimated at \$60,000 to \$80,000; Michelle and her family have raised money through Adam’s fund and they’ve developed connections with some bicycle industry vendors who see the growing need for bike parks like this one across the county. For ongoing park maintenance, local cycling clubs, youth

clubs, and supporting town members are very likely to help out. Purcellville, she points out, is already seen as a welcoming environment for cyclists, and, she adds, “We’re sure that it will bring revenue to some of the restaurants in town as well.”

Anticipating Council members’ concerns, Caudill addressed a number of issues, including liability. “The Code of Virginia 291509 provides relief of liability for the Town Council so long as the park is a town-owned facility and there’s no fee involved.”

Council members were amazed at the extent and depth of her planning and budgeting for the park.

“I’m used to people coming and asking us to do a thing and pay for it,” said Council member Joel Grewe. “And you’re coming here and saying ‘We would like to do something for the community as a whole—oh, and by the way, were’ basically paying for it.’”

“The thing I’m interested in is getting out of your way,” added Council member Tip Stinnette.

“I know you’re going to do the right due diligence. I

know you’re going to partner with our staff.

What we can do to help you get you to your June target? Ideally, it would be a great way to celebrate Adam, and so there’s a date associated with that.

“If we put that at risk because of the normal bureaucracy of using taxpayer land, then I’m interested in trying to figure out how we can collaborate and not put that at risk...I fully trust that you’re going to do it right because of Adam’s legacy,” Stinnette concluded.

“We have received over 140 emails,” noted Mayor Kwasi Fraser. “Adam’s memory has really energized this community, so with that said, “Is there anyone on this dais who thinks this is a bad idea?”

His question was met with a shared laugh.

“Well, that speaks for itself,” Fraser added. “With that said, when government comes and tells you that you need help from government, you want to run from government. Our job is to stay out of your way, so this can be done.”

Thumbs up!

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Scrooge was a bad guy for a very long time, and he only changed his ways after the ghosts helped him to realize and fear what would happen if he remained bad.

Similarly, in *It’s a Wonderful Life*, the main character, George Bailey, decided not to kill himself after Clarence the angel showed him what life in his town would have been like had George had never existed. Ebenezer Scrooge and George Bailey changed when their understanding, alongside their strong emotions, for their situations altogether mattered enough to compel them to see and do things differently.

Research has also shown that change is a process and not a moment, which is an important thing to keep in mind, if you’d like to change something about

yourself for the coming year. For instance, studies on smoking cessation have shown that it takes several attempts to quit smoking – The American Cancer Society Council sites 12-14 attempts, the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention sites 8 to 11 attempts, and a study out of the University of Toronto found that it can take as many as 30 attempts or more to go a full year without any cigarettes.

Interestingly, these studies revealed that the failed attempts were actually part of the quitting process toward positive change. For Ebenezer Scrooge and George Bailey, change didn’t happen all at once – Ebenezer Scrooge had to meet all four ghosts to learn about himself and his life, and George Bailey too, needed Clarence to show him fully how life would’ve been without him before

he understood the true impact of his actions and next steps.

Research has also shown that our relationships can be a powerful motivator to change; and, Ebenezer Scrooge and George Bailey both came to realize that for themselves. In large part, it was their care and love for others that led them to want to change their ways. That’s why the ghost that mattered most to Ebenezer Scrooge was arguably the ghost of Christmas present; he realized that he had the ability to do something about his behaviors in relation to the current people in his life, and he rushed to the opportunity to do so at the end of the story.

So, whether your New Year’s resolution is to lose weight, get organized, exercise more, or quit smoking or drinking, I invite you to first start with cre-

ating a mindset where you appreciate – intellectually and emotionally – the importance for the change.

For example, if your doctor tells you to lose 30 pounds, your motivation to do it will likely be higher if you allow yourself to consider the importance of self-care for you and your loved ones (e.g., being able to spend more active time with your spouse or kids, living longer because you’re healthier, etc.).

Here’s to a great 2022!

“There is no separation of mind and emotions; emotions, thinking, and learning is all linked.” – Eric Jensen

Michael Oberschneider, “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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MEDICAL EDUCATION ACT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Commonwealth of Virginia, and the United States of America.

“Additionally, through our new Center for Minority Health Disparities and partnership through the ONE School of Public Health, Norfolk State University is poised to do more. Through the Expanding Medical Education Act, Norfolk State University will have the ability to help address these disparities and diversify the physician pipeline by providing the financial resources to increase the number of physicians that serve the communities of color that they come from through medical schools at Historically Black Colleges and Uni-

versities and other institutions of higher education that educate underserved and rural areas ...,” said Dr. Javaune Adams-Gaston, President of Norfolk State University.

The Expanding Medical Education Act would: Authorize funding to provide grants through the Health Resources and Services Administration to colleges and universities to establish or expand allopathic (M.D. granting) or osteopathic (D.O. granting) medical schools in an area in which no other such school is based and is a medically underserved community or health professional shortage area OR at minority-serving institutions, including Historically Black Colleges

and Universities.

Grants funded through this legislation would require reporting to Congress on associated outcomes and would be used for:

- Planning and construction of a new medical school or branch campus in an area where no other school is based.
- Activities to meet the accreditation criteria for a medical school.
- Hiring diverse faculty and other staff.
- Recruitment, enrollment, and retention of students, including those from disadvantaged

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

I was quite alone in my arrival in semi-darkness, and brief hike timed for the break of dawn, but I can imagine the popularity of this spot during more ‘normal’ visiting hours – enjoying the placement within this upwardly-mobile, young (can I say ‘crowded?’) neighborhood.

But: no – Legacy Park will not become the ‘Central Park’ of Loudoun County. Our locality is much too vast in terms of physical geography – imagine driving from Loudoun Heights or Lost Corner – or Upperville or Bluemont – just to get out and stretch the legs and enjoy a simple communion with nature.

Thankfully, we can enjoy those ex-

periences in just about any of our own local neighborhoods, or at least in the next over. We don’t need to ask this little sister to fulfill all the niches of its giant partner (in my imagination) up in New York.

And, no – I didn’t get to revisit all my long-gone experiences from Central Park while in Brambleton, nor did I need

to. I’d already had them, enjoyed them, and could now remember them with pleasure.

But I was very thankful for the spontaneous associations I’d made – in the heart, mind and soul – between these two faraway facilities – vastly distant at least now, for me – in both time and space. It was a good place to be.

PURCELLVILLE POLITICS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

after the Oct. 21 Planning Commission meeting ended, they would have gotten an earful. A staff member and a local developer talked for one hour 27 minutes, and the mic was still on after the meeting.

In the beginning of the conversation the staff member promised the developer, “Whatever you want, I’ll make it happen ... it might take an election cycle or two” – referencing how local elections might play into it.

The member of the staff said he didn’t pay attention to committees, commissions and boards. “I have them looking at a big red shiny ball over here, while the real issue is over there.”

He assured the developer that when residents are happy and comfortable, they don’t care what’s going on outside the boundaries of their property.

The exchange ended with the developer saying, “If you need anything just let me know,” and the reply was reciprocal.

Lots of after-meeting chit-chat

The Oct. 21 Planning Commission meeting ended around 9 p.m. But the mic was still on and the developer and staff member remained in the chambers not knowing that the mic was still live.

Anyone viewing the meeting at the time could have heard the conversation – which started right after everyone left, and lasted until 10:27 p.m.

This hot mic event was brought up at the Purcellville Nov. 9 Town Council meeting. Council Member Stan Milan said he “would like to notify council and staff that on Oct. 21 we had a Planning Commission meeting, and we finished the meeting about 9.”

He explained that after the meeting everyone left, and he “was shocked and appalled” by what he “overheard in a conversation by a senior staff member and a developer ...”

Milan said, “There was, like I said, a following meeting directly after the meeting – in the council chambers after everyone had left.”

The red shiny ball, and upcoming elections

“I overheard statements from the staffer that really shocked me ... the staffer talked about the Planning Commission and Council inefficiencies. He made statements about his professional experience, “I don’t take directions from any CCB’s” [committees, commissions and boards] ... statements like “I have them looking at the red shiny ball, they look over here, and the real issue is over there.”

Milan said the staffer had remarked, “You have to wait a few election cycles to get what you need.” He said this after he told the developer, “Whatever you want, I’ll make it happen.”

Milan explained this was a conversation “where we rely on this person’s professionalism and insight to help lead the Planning Commission ... When you hear these comments,” said Milan, “that are disingenuous to the efforts of the Planning Commission and the Town Council, it shakes your confidence on what you are being presented. Are we

constantly being presented with red shiny balls ... and being distracted by the issues at hand?”

Vice Mayor Chris Bertaut also heard the hot mic conversation. He said he heard “some of these disturbing comments that took place between a couple of individuals, and I can concur that I heard the comment about holding up a big shiny ball in order to distract the public.

“I heard the comment about not taking direction from the CCB’s [committees, commissions and boards]. I also heard a somewhat disturbing comment that went along the lines of ‘When people are happy and comfortable, they don’t care what’s going on outside the walls of their property.’”

Bertaut said, “One comment that shook me to the core was, ‘You tell me what you want to do, and I’ll make it happen.’”

“I consider none of these to be in the spirit of cooperation of respect for one another’s roles within this community.”

QUENTIN OGREN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

son’s football success, and they said, “We are just unbelievably proud of what he has been able to accomplish. He has been a hard worker since before he was even in high school; his motivation, drive, and ability to just keep working is amazing.

“He overcame injury in his sophomore year, and had a COVID year off; in spite of that he came back better, stronger, and faster.

“His leadership on the field led to him being one of their captains, and his hard work led to his accolades both on and off the field.

“It’s not just the football aspect that we are proud of; it’s that he has succeeded in the classroom and in his life as well. When he got accepted to Muhlenberg,

none of us realized what a top-notch program it was, and truly the family that it is. He has grown with the team, his coaches, and the school.”

We’d say that Quentin’s most outstanding achievement, continued these proud parents is “making the academic honor roll every semester, while excelling in his chosen sport.

“It’s hard not to gush about your own child,” said his parents. “But, he is an amazing young man with a very bright future ahead. Whatever he puts his mind and energy towards, he will be successful with. It’s not just his drive and effort; he is a natural leader with fantastic people skills, and he is getting a double major in business and economics. Look out world.”

From another adult who knows

Nate Milne, Head Football Coach at Muhlenberg College is equally enthusiastic about this remarkable football player.


Milne said. “What our staff really enjoys about Quentin is his consistency.

Preparing for the next game, “He practices very hard,” continued the coach.

“... and that speed shows up on Saturday as well.

“When his teammates see how hard he practices they know they better practice at their highest level as well. He’s a tremendous leader, and people want to connect with him off of the field as well.”


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PIGS CAN HELP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

cause animal farming provides just 18 percent of the calories while taking up 83 percent of our farmland.

OPINION

In addition, it takes significantly more water to yield foods that come from animals than foods that come from plants.

Landon set out to collect as many pumpkins as he could to “feed the pigs.”

He figured some pigs will get a great treat and the environment will get a break.

How to go about this.

Mom Cameron and son Landon resorted to Mom’s social media contacts and the pumpkins started filling up in the front yard. They had cars backed up outside their home leaving off pumpkins, totaling 900 pumpkins this year. Hundreds contributed. This was not their first year. They had 600 pumpkins last year and 50 to 100 pumpkins the year before.

Days ago, 800 pumpkins arrived to feed Holly’s Happy Hogs in Lovettsville.

The caravan transporting the pump-

kins consisted of three trucks, two minivans, and one Mazda. There was a team of 10 adults and six youngsters including Landon to transfer the pumpkins from the vehicles to the ground, and then to the pigs.

Three herds of pigs, 24 pigs in all, can devour 50 pumpkins a day and they got right to it.

Landon was busy hurling pumpkins hard at the ground to break open the pumpkins, to save the pigs the trouble, to make it easier for them to get at the pumpkin meat.

Asked what he thought of all this,

Landon said, “It’s a community coming together, working for a singular cause. I enjoyed watching everyone’s face seeing the big pumpkin pile around the Magnolia tree, and watching the kids help, and then feeding the pigs.”

Mom Cameron said, “I’m proud that Landon wants to help the environment.”

The next generation is shaping up well when you see this kind of voluntary effort to feed the pigs and conserve the environment.

Finally, remember, next year, save your pumpkins for the pigs!

RETHINK RT. 15, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

“We depend on the farm support businesses in Lucketts like Stanford Excavating and Coopers Welding. John Stanford has for many years had to plan his equipment entrances onto 15. He does it at Zero Dark Thirty on Sunday mornings because of the aggressive traffic that will not even let his equipment get on the roadway from Lucketts. We worry that... our inability to drive safely on a faster four-lane road will stymie or force farm-based businesses out of the area. You don’t want that.”

Several individuals representing conservation and preservation groups broached the historical, aesthetic, and environmental impacts of the road. Michael Myers, executive director of the Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, cited the irreplaceable wetlands of the JK Black Oak Wildlife Sanctuary west of village. William Sellers, president of the Journey Through Hallowed Ground, emphasized the importance of this National Scenic Byway to the 180-mile Journey corridor that stretches from Gettysburg to Thomas Jefferson’s Monticello in Charlottesville. From the planning documents, however, it’s clear the County staff has been directed by Loudoun’s supervisors to incorporate the Journey’s design guidelines only “where feasible.”

The project’s costs will be borne by Loudoun taxpayers, current and future. James Williams, a real estate developer for 45 years who represented the Potomac Overlook Association, took that issue head on. “Let’s not spend half a billion dollars of our community’s hard-earned tax dollars on some of the ideas that have been presented here this evening. Let’s spend them on our children, our

schools. Let’s spend them on our fire and rescue. Let’s spend them on our law enforcement...Let’s not spend these monies for the benefit of commuters that come across the Maryland bridge. It doesn’t make sense to me to spend my tax dollars, your tax dollars for those commuters. Instead, consider the alternatives that are in our well thought-out 2019 Comp Plan ...There are better solutions than those that are here on the table.”

Evan McCarthy of the Piedmont Environmental Council concurred. “Commuter needs should not override the local Lucketts community needs. Immediate improvements can be made at significantly reduced cost to improve safety in the entire corridor and should occur without further delay. These improvements should not impact the community negatively.”

Owners of Lucketts businesses focused on the area’s mushrooming rural economy and how, if Rt. 15 were to become a four-lane highway, you could say goodbye to current or future businesses such as Rich Rosendale’s Roots 657 Café and Market on Spinks Ferry Road, Jonathan Staples’ 63-acre, family-owned Vanish Brewery off Black Hops Lane, Brossman’s Farm Market, Black Sheep Farm, Hidden Brook Winery, bed and breakfasts, wedding and events venues, and countless more.

Anyone who questions that scenario might look at US 50. Imagine how a four-lane highway and bypasses of Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville might have changed the landscape for rural businesses. Would the area still be a mecca for rural tourism without its green fields of horses and cattle? Would there be Chrysalis, Cana, 50 West, and Greenhill

vineyards? Would the Red Fox Inn get much business if there were a bypass around Middleburg? Would the five-star Salamander Resort & Spa ever have been built?

That’s not fantasy

In the early 1990s, VDOT and the County proposed four-lanes and bypasses on both US 50 and VA 9. Like US 15, both roads were congested and the villages unsafe. Only intense community opposition, the residents’ own work with international transportation design expert Ian Lockwood, and active partnerships and funding by VDOT, the Virginia Transportation Authority, the Commonwealth of Virginia and a federal demonstration grant obtained by then-Rep. Frank Wolf and the late Sen. John Warner stopped US 50’s expansion in the planning stages. The final product is a national model of traffic calming.

At that time, traffic calming plans for Hillsboro and Rt. 9 in the northwest quadrant of the County began moving along the same promising path—until 2007 when the community was forced to beat back a second bypass proposal.

According to the website of their ultimately successful “ReThink9” project, completed just this summer, “a subsequent impact analysis revealed that project would have induced even greater volumes of traffic and likely would have led to significant development along the corridor. Land acquisition, litigation, design, and construction were estimated to be more than \$100 million.”

It is not the job of the planning commissioners to develop traffic signal solutions or design bypass alignments, but they are free to explore alternative plans and recommend further staff work

before advising the Board of Supervisors to amend—or not amend—the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

While the Lucketts area residents continue to press their case for traffic calming, the commissioners will head out to Hillsboro on Rt. 9 to see how the design system works.

“Be progressive planners,” implored Avis Renshaw. “Study the current trends that are reversing big highways built in places like the Bronx and New Orleans. Don’t make the same mistakes in Loudoun in 2021 that they made back in the ‘60s. Please make safety improvements that retain the environmentally sensitive karst area through which this byway traverses and maintain the functionality of our small businesses and village of Lucketts.”

Asked by his fellow commissioners to compare the US 15 widening plan to the VA 9/Hillsboro traffic calming project he spearheaded as town mayor, Roger Vance replied, “Clearly there’s a lot of information and questions that need to be ferreted out here. We need to be sure we understand the goals of the project.

“Roundabouts work,” he emphasized. “A system of roundabouts creates a safe environment and facilitates traffic. Come to Hillsboro,” he added. “I was told 20 years ago that everything that we’ve just accomplished in Hillsboro could not and would not be done and would not work. We’ve just completed a post-construction study, and some of the results are pretty amazing.”

The Planning Commission work session is set for Thurs., Jan. 13 from 6 to 10 p.m. The public may attend in person at the Government Center or visit Loudoun.gov/meetings for online access.

HAMILTON STATION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

minimize the impact on their residential community. The residents intend to safeguard the interests of the neighbors, including working directly with County and Commonwealth regulators and reserving the right to challenge the regrading and brewery operation plans.

MEDICAL EDUCATION ACT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 24

backgrounds, underrepresented racial and ethnic minorities, students from rural and underserved areas, low-income students, and first-generation college students.

- Supporting educational programs.

- Modernizing and expanding infrastructure.
- Other activities determined by the Secretary of Health and Human Services.

The Expanding Medical Education Act is cosponsored by Senators Alex Padilla (D-CA) and Dianne Feinstein (D-CA).

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TO BE BUILT by Powers Homes. Lovettsville- 4.66 acre lot, 5 beds/5 full baths \$924,900

"We recently had a home built by Powers Homes. The quality, attention to detail as well as the customization process were second to none! Dennis & Randall (Father & Son team) took the time to talk to us and address our questions in a patient and efficient manner. We love our Powers Home and would recommend them without hesitation." - Megan & Brian Tucker



HEADS-UP! COMING SOON Purcellville Farm- High speed internet (FIOS)! Less than 5 minutes to the heart of historic Purcellville. Fabulous country retreat with winning and updated interior. Lovely Barn, multiple paddocks and outbuildings including additional 2 car garage.



In a Class by Itself, the Incomparable "Beech Hill". Superbly built custom home on seventeen magical acres only three minutes from historic Leesburg. **Property video available on our website.** **Under Contract with Multiple Offers.** Listed for \$1,350,000



Sold Lovettsville \$1,230,500



Sold Waterford \$885,000



Sold Lovettsville \$442,500



Sold Leesburg \$2,050,000



Sold Beacon Hill \$1,770,000



Sold Waterford \$1,260,000









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