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FEBRUARY 2022

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Teachers: No plan for Black History Month?

This Black History group can fill the gap

BY LAURA LONGLEY

COVID has left many a Loudoun teacher with little or no time to pull together a Black History Month program. If you know someone in that pickle, you can do them a good turn by pointing them to the Black History Committee of Friends of Thomas Balch Library and its website (balchfriends.org/black-history-committee).

The BHC sections in the Friends site offer a wealth of curriculum resources, tour maps and histories of the County's African American communities, photographs, enslaved peoples' stories, information on local abolitionist and the Underground Railroad, and background on the "Civil War" amendments—the 13th, 14th, and 15th—and their legal impact.

Chaired by Donna Bohanon, one of

Loudoun's most active and influential leaders in Black history and education, the Black History Committee was founded in 2000 "to preserve, collect, promote, and share the history of African Americans who contributed to the emergence and development of Loudoun County, Virginia." To meet that mission, over the past 22 years Black History Committee members have commissioned and published books on the people, places, heritage, and histories of

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

Kuhn presents plans for Town annexation – 118.81 acres on Purcellville Road

BY VALERIE CURY

A year after he first proposed to the Town Council that Purcellville annex his 118.81-acre property on Purcellville Road, owner Chuck Kuhn held a briefing with community members to review his plans for the parcel. The meeting, held at Patrick Henry College on Jan. 26, was attended by some 50 people.

Formerly known as Warner Brook, the property is located in Loudoun County at 17110 Purcellville Road, north of Rt. 7 and east of Purcellville Road, opposite the Mayfair community.

Kuhn is proposing a commercial

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

What will it cost? Who will pay for it? How many cars are from Maryland?

Commissioners raise key questions on US Rt. 15

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Imagine if the seven Planning Commissioners who attended the Jan. 11 Planning Commission Work Session, had not insisted on answers to those questions. What if they'd just nodded their heads and, without further information, sent a highly controversial Comprehensive Plan Amendment [CPAM] forward

to the Board of Supervisors for their approval. The fate of Rt. 15, rural northeastern Loudoun, the Village of Lucketts, and a whopping tax increase for current and future County residents would have been sealed.

Such an outcome from this single meeting would have advanced the massive project to widen U.S. 15 from Montresor Road to a point just shy of the Potomac River. The plan calls for widening the road from two to four lanes, building a bypass around Lucketts, installing median strips up and down the corridor, and, most likely, increasing the speed

limit to 50 mph. And yet none of that would solve the core problem: the merger at Maryland's two-lane Point of Rocks Bridge, which that state has no intention of widening or replacing within a decade or more.

Still, the Planning Commissioners were left with the job of wrestling with County staff to suss out the information they believe they need to reach an informed decision for their Board recommendation.

As Roger Vance, Blue Ridge District Commissioner, and Mayor of Hillsboro, explained, "It would be irresponsible

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



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Local authors launch children's book

Make New Friends is a newly released children's book targeted to elementary students. It is written by local authors, Beverly and Alyssa Samuel, a mother and daughter duo. They are long-term residents of Loudoun County.

The book tells a story of diversity, equity, and inclusion in a fun way as Ava, a friendly girl, starts her first day at a brand-new school. Readers will enjoy learning about the different backgrounds of Ava's



new friends, and they will appreciate the important lessons the book has to offer.

Make New Friends was inspired by their family's life experiences in school, work, and the community. It is available through iUniverse, Amazon, and Barnes & Noble retailers.

The book concept originated because the authors wanted to shed light on the importance of diversity. They realized that

when barriers are eliminated, people of different backgrounds and cultures coexist, learn they share core values, and some form lifelong friendships. "It is getting beyond seeing differences as obstacles, and beginning to embrace and appreciate differences," said Beverly.

"Diversity, equity, and inclusion are implied and represented throughout the book. It is important in schools

because students can appreciate people of different backgrounds and cultures. This can help reduce bullying, prejudices, and discrimination," said Alyssa.

The targeted audience is elementary-aged children, with the primary audience being first and second graders. The book is appropriate for all elementary-aged children, but also has lessons that adults can glean as well.

Follow *Make New Friends* on Instagram and Facebook.



Alyssa and Beverly Samuel

Cappies review of *Xanadu* at Rock Ridge High School

BY CHARLOTTE LOBRING, ST. ANDREW'S EPISCOPAL SCHOOL

Begin with a young, uninspired artist and then explode into a colorful and harmonious celebration of the artists all on roller skates, of course. Rock Ridge High School's *Xanadu* was a highly professional and lively production with a cast and crew that went above and beyond at all times. It was as funny as it was heartfelt, and was a loving nod to the 1980s, legwarmers and all.

Xanadu, a book by Douglas Carter Beane and music and lyrics by Jeff Lynne (of the Electric Light Orchestra) and John Farrar, is inspired by the 1980 film of the same name. It tells the story of an ancient Greek muse, Clio, who wishes to inspire a struggling artist named Sonny.

Using the name Kira and sporting an Australian accent, Clio and Sonny grow closer together as he works to open a roller disco named *Xanadu*. This is much to the satisfaction of Clio's older sisters, Melpomene and Calliope, who wish to get Clio banished to the Netherworld for falling in love with a mortal.



Photo: Olivia McMahon

L-R: Maddie Kesler, Grayson Scheefers, Maggie Cantwell, Julia Freeman

Maddie Kesler, who played the titular character Clio, was a joy to watch at all times. Kesler's bright and bubbly personality was executed perfectly through gran-

diose movements and beautiful, crystal-clear vocals. With the roller skates and accent, Kesler added to the magical quality of the character.

Grayson Scheefers, who played Sonny Malone, was a master with physical comedy and chemistry with the other cast members. The audience roared with laughter watching Sonny struggle with the roller skates and deeply felt Sonny's affectionate connection with Clio. Scheefers also executed the songs with grace and fluidity.

Who doesn't love a villain though, right? This show certainly delivered. D'Amora Brunson, who played Melpomene, displayed a powerful, graceful quality that left the audience wanting to see more.

Ellie Schubert, who played Calliope, had the best jokes and vocal riffs in the show. Whether the two were "making it rain" with dollar bills above the stage or just being silly, they were the highlight of the show.

Another standout performance was by Matt Miscio,

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Happy Valentine's Day!

Oh, they say it's your birthday?

BY LAURA LONGLEY

It's tough enough if you share the day of your birth with Christmas or New Year's Day, Independence Day, Easter Sunday, even Groundhog Day (which means you'll celebrate your special occasion with Bill Murray over and over and over again). But Valentine's Day? That's another story entirely.

Just try throwing yourself a birthday party and see if anyone other than your spouse or significant other shows up, and even if they do, it's with red roses or a heart-shaped box of candy passing as a birthday gift. If you're single, you

might get a "best wishes" birthday call from your parents.

(By the way, memo to parents of Valentine's Day newborns: Previous generations passionately urge you to avoid such monikers for your offspring as Valentine, Valentino, Valentina, Val, Amora, Hart, Ruby, Romeo, Juliet, True, Eros, Belle, Beau, Esme, Posey, and— inspired by Cupid with his bow and arrow—Archer.)

"There's nothing like being in a room filled with good friends singing 'Happy Birthday' with a blazing cake in front of you," Mark Jason Williams told *The*



Washington Post on a recent Valentine's Day. "Yet I've grown bitter about my birthday because I can't stand watch-

ing everyone else get cards and gifts on what's supposed to be my special day. And I hate that I have to plan parties before or after Feb. 14 if I want anyone to come."

Hannah Chambers told the readers of *EliteDaily.com* why, of the 366 possible days to have a birthday, Valentine's Day is the worst. If you're looking for a surprising gift, forget it, she says. "People think we love stuff with hearts on it. If your birthday happened to fall on Arbor Day, would you want us to buy you things with leaves all over them?"

That's important to remember when you open Amazon.com, or visit your local jeweler, or department store, to shop for your Valentine Birthday Boy or Girl, no matter their age. It's hard to get past the endless nighties with hearts on them, cubic zirconia heart-shaped

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Just Like Nothing (else) on Earth: Furnace Mountain Road

BY TIM JON

You know, at the time of this writing, I've lived in Loudoun County, Virginia for almost a quarter of a century, and I still encounter surprising, unexpected experiences in places into which I've previously never ventured; there were a lot of those kinds of moments as I made my way (by means of all-wheel-drive) up the narrow, twisting little (as in, little more than one lane!) gravel corridor bearing the County Number 665 – otherwise known as Furnace Mountain Road.



TIM JON

I'd completely overlooked this hitherto undiscovered gem in my local travels and travails; it corkscrews up the side of the Catoctin Range Peak of the same name – just on our side of the Potomac River, a literal stone's throw from Point of Rocks Bridge on the way to Maryland.

I arrived at the northern end of the dirt road (in winter, think "Ski Slope") before the sun had made its way high enough to shed any real light into the deep woods, so I parked in a little run-off area barely off the turn from Lovettsville Road as it intersects with Route 15 up by the County Line.



Things were very quiet and hushed along the hillside as I waited for that specific pink glow in the sky that would tell me to start moving, and watching for anything of interest: now, out here, on a mountainside, that could mean a striking landscape, a vivid silhouette, a deer (or two, or ten) making way to bed, or even a black bear possibly looking for trouble. And I encountered an array of all, but the last on that list.

I also drove past, at crawl speed (I'd wager that the only traffic jams up here would result from a tree fallen across the road), a scattering of unique human habitations: some – historic log cabins, stone mansions, indeterminate shacks, farmsteads, and just about everything in between. And lots of woods.

Now, I know I've already mentioned the incline factor, but, even after getting (somewhat) used to delivering mail up

on the summit of the Blue Ridge, I could feel my skin crawl as I drove up Furnace Mountain Road; I kept my eye on what seemed like a vertical wall on my left – the uphill side – and, even more daunting – the abrupt drop-off on my right – which led who-knows-where – just down.

I kept both hands firmly on the steering wheel, and passed up many an opportunity for creative photography, just to keep moving through this gauntlet of "verticality": road, trees, hill, you name it, it was either up or down.

And, to clarify, this was no drive-up Pike's Peak or Denali or anything – Fur-

nace Mountain would barely be considered a foothill out in the Rockies of the American West; with the primitive roadway I encountered (driving it for the first time, at dawn's first light) it was as lengthy and steep and uncivilized as I could have wished.

After I'd thought (for about the seventeenth time) that the uphill drive would never end, the road flattened out for a meter or two, and then we were over the highest portion (of the road, anyway – never got near the top of the Mountain itself) and heading downhill, back to some flat, treeless country where

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— Ask Dr. Mike —

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

Dr. Mike,

Our 16-year-old teenage son has a ton of problems. We've tried counseling, medications, hospitalizations, etc., but he's only gotten worse.

His main problems now are pot smoking, explosive and volatile anger, school truancy and gaming addiction, and he's been diagnosed with ADHD, Oppositional Defiant Disorder, depression, and anxiety when he was younger.

We have zero control over him, and he basically does what he wants and usually spends 12 plus hours a day gaming in the basement. His school can't seem to do anything, and he's refused to return to therapy, or to take his medications for over a year.

My husband thinks it's time for us to send him away, but we don't know where to send him. A friend of mine had a difficult teen, and they sent him to military academy, which got

him back on track. Our son has been to Dominion Hospital before, but they only kept him for a short time.

He refused to go to their follow up treatment program, and screamed at us for weeks for sending him to the hospital. I don't want to send him to another psych hospital, but I guess we will if that's what's best. He's also told us that he will run-away if we try to send him some place again. Your advice is greatly appreciated. – Mary Dear Mary,

It seems that you are at a critical moment for your son; and I'm concerned that his functioning will only worsen if you don't do something soon.

Military school can be a very helpful option for struggling children and teens, but your son's problems go well beyond what any military school can handle. If your son doesn't follow the rules or runs away, that school may choose to expel him. I've seen that happen many times.

A residential treatment facility or a therapeutic boarding school is probably the more appropriate

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A Story of Will

BY SAMUEL MOORE-SOBEL

"Some of the most impactful lessons I've ever received, I've had to learn in spite of myself," Will Smith writes in his new memoir, *Will*.



MOORE-SOBEL

Candid and engaging throughout, *Will* was the perfect read over my holiday break. Even though Will Smith has been in the public eye for my entire life, his book revealed new parts of himself and his experience that made for a compelling read.

Smith starts his book with a nod to his

father, whom he calls "Daddio." When Smith was only eleven, Daddio assigned Smith and his brother with the task of building "a new wall on the front of his shop." The project lasted almost a year. "We did everything ourselves," Smith writes. At first the job seemed impossible. But eventually, the wall was completed. Upon inspecting the finished work, Daddio said to his sons, "Now, don't ya'll ever tell me there's something you can't do."

This story is foundational to the rest of Will Smith's story. No matter how you feel about Will Smith, his work ethic is undeniably strong. "For my entire

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Gov. Youngkin Addresses the Joint Assembly

On Jan. 17, Gov. Glenn Youngkin addressed the Joint Assembly, detailing his plans to “put this commonwealth on a pathway to prosperity” and create “a Virginia worthy of the ambitions of its people.”

“After years of fractured politics, a deadly pandemic, lives and livelihoods lost, soaring mental health incidents and drug overdoses, rising crime rates, ever-increasing costs for housing, food and fuel, Virginians have sent us here to turn the page,” Youngkin said. “They came out in record numbers to make their voice heard. They chose a new vision for the future.”

Youngkin called on both Republicans and Democrats to come together to make that new vision a reality, quoting Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.: “We may have all come on different ships, but we’re in the same boat now.” He asked lawmakers to consider how ordinary Virginians feel about the state of the commonwealth. “They’re genuinely concerned that the cold halls of government are disconnected from the cold realities families face while sitting at their kitchen tables every day,” he said.

Sworn in as governor on Jan. 15, Youngkin “hit the ground running” by signing 11 executive actions, swearing in a full cabinet, introducing 59 pieces of legislation and submitting 25 budget amendments in the two days prior to his address.

“Virginians have given us a license to lead. They have charged us all to deliver on a Day One agenda,” Youngkin said. “We know on some issues there’ll be deep disagreement. But I believe this chamber is big enough for us to talk through our differences. And there is more that binds us than divides us. For we all share a common goal: To leave a

better Virginia for our children.”

Youngkin explained that a better Virginia starts with better education. “60 percent of our students don’t meet national proficiency standards, including over 70 percent of Latino students, and over 80 percent of Black students,” he cited. “On this we should join arms and purpose together so that when our time here is done we’ll collectively have raised education standards from the lowest to the highest in the nation.”

Continuing on the topic of education, the governor had a message for parents: “You have a fundamental right, enshrined in law by this General Assembly, to make decisions with regard to your child’s upbringing, education and care. And we will protect and reassert that right,” he said. “Hear me clearly: When parents are empowered and engaged, a child’s life is enhanced.”

Youngkin said it should be up to parents to decide what health measures their children should take, which is why he signed an executive order allowing parents to opt out of school mask mandates. “This is a matter of individual liberty,” he said.

“Our fight against COVID-19 will move forward based on this simple principle: We will protect lives and livelihoods. That means no more mandates and no more shutdowns,” Youngkin said. But he didn’t end the discussion there. “Speaking to you as your Governor, I’ll never tell you what you must do. But speaking to you as a friend and a neighbor, I strongly encourage you to get the vaccine.”

Youngkin linked getting the vaccine to his next goal, keeping Virginians working and the economy growing – something he considers a top priority. He highlighted supply chain challenges

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Whose County Is It?

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

We know many political -isms: conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, progressivism, populism. To me, the paramount-ism is populism, as immortalized in Lincoln's Gettysburg Address: Government of the people, by the people, for the people ...

OPINION

That dictum surely applies to local issues, especially regarding how land is used. Loudoun's people should control how *our* land is used. Period.

We in the west may not think exactly alike on every issue, but I believe that a strong majority of us share similar concerns about threats to our countryside. We want to preserve its rural character. That means strict limits on residential growth and it means stopping almost all new commercialization.

Realpolitik I

I am not optimistic about limiting growth. Our new Comprehensive Plan projects 11,643 new residences in the west by 2040 and I don't think we can do anything about it. (I feel lachrymose.)

We can, I think, mount effective opposition to increased commercial intrusion. Existing businesses can't be touched, but we should fight against new ones.

Why is fighting necessary? Commercial interests have much greater political clout than conservation alliances. That is wrong, wrong. Whatever happened to "Government of the people, by the people, for the people ..."? The wishes of folks in the west should decide what happens to *our* land. Commercial dreams and schemes should suckle last.

I'm from the Government and I'm Here to Help You

I wish that old bromide was true. It's not just that business has so much influence, it's that several parts of county government actively encourage business growth that can intrude into the west. The county's Department of Economic Development is a tiger in bringing businesses to Loudoun. That's great as long as it keeps to commercial areas elsewhere in the county, but I sense that it endorses the general idea of more-business-everywhere.

Then there's our Economic Development Authority ("empowered to promote economic development in Loudoun County") and the Economic Development Advisory Council ("promote development and expansion of commercial and industrial tax base"). Guys, please don't venture west of Route 15!

The Rural Economic Development Council, a county advisory group, focuses on areas west of 15. Its mission is a focus on "economic growth and development in rural Loudoun..." (*Is that something we citizens actually requested?*) To be fair, REDC's membership includes key representatives of agriculture and the equine sector, but my impression is that REDC too often takes a pro-growth, pro-development position.

Thankfully the county has helpful departments and committees: The Rural Preservation Board, Agricultural Assistance Alliance, Mountainside Protection Advisory Committee, League to Stop Sprawl – sorry, I just made those up. They don't exist, but perhaps they should.

DMO vs. DMO

VisitLoudounisaquasi-governmental

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Keep it Rural: Say no to lights at Scott Jenkins Memorial Park

We are opposed to the Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure's SPEX-2021-0025 application to provide lighting for Scott Jenkins Memorial Park.

We strongly disagree with the applicant's statement that "The development of the site will not negatively impact the area in any unusual or significant way above or beyond what is normal for a site of this nature."

OPINION

We oppose this application for the following reasons:

Our family owns a farm that is located directly south of Scott Jenkins Memorial Park that is under a conservation easement held by the Nature Conservancy. Large areas to our south and west are also held in other conservation easements. One of the primary purposes of these easements is "to ensure that the property will be retained forever predominantly in its natural and scenic condition."

The Loudoun County Comprehensive Plan encourages the use of open space easements to protect agricultural resources, preserve farms, forests and open space and the rural character of the landscape in Rural Areas (Chapter 4 – Land Use, Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and JLMA 2003-2020).

Additionally, the preservation of the property through the conservation easement furthers the goals of the Compre-

hensive Plan to "conserve agricultural resources and avoid environmental pollution which would degrade the farmland, the natural environment and the surrounding communities" (Chapter 6 – Natural Resources-Hamilton, Comprehensive Plan for the Town of Hamilton and JLMA 2003-2020).

In 2011, we included provisions in our conservation easement that allow for the establishment of a non-commercial nature park. At that time, we began discussions with NOVA Parks about developing and donating a Dark-Sky Park somewhere on the northwest slope of Catoctin Mountain, where there are high open fields with elevations over 550 feet that look directly to the west and are shielded by the mountain from the artificial lights originating around Leesburg and points east.

The aspect of the sky at these locations would be directly and negatively impacted by sky glow created by the artificial lights proposed at Scott Jenkins Memorial Park (elevation about 530 feet), which would make it pointless, or at best, difficult to establish a Dark-Sky Nature Park.

It is important to note that sky glow, a primary source of light pollution, can be seen as far as 200 miles away from its source. Shielded lights, as proposed by the applicant for Scott Jenkins Memorial Park, contribute to sky glow and reduce visibility of the night. Not only will our area be impacted, but the additional sky

glow may impact Sky Meadows State Park, located in Delaplane, Virginia, and designated as a prestigious International Dark-Sky Park.

According to the Loudoun County 2019 General Plan, the night sky "is an asset" and "is important to the health, safety, and welfare of Loudoun residents."

Listening to spring peepers, chasing fireflies, viewing the Milky Way and other cosmic and night ecological explorations are activities that should be encouraged, protected, and cherished in our rural community. These activities can be easily accessed by anyone at no cost.

The total cost for the proposed lights at the park is \$3,806,000 – see County 2022 Adopted Budget for Scott Jenkins Memorial Park – Phase III.

Currently, the vast majority of our land is used for agricultural crop production. However, we have also considered the use of greenhouses for agriculture/horticulture crops to help support the farm. The potential location for our greenhouses – where we already have existing infrastructure, including road access, power, and sewer and water – is about 1500 feet south of the southernmost ballfield.

Many greenhouse crops are genetically programmed to set buds on strict schedules for day and night. This is referred to as photoperiodism. Any use of artificial light – including lights from athletic

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HEY DAISY, THE BOSSES HAD THEIR YEAR END BOARD MEETING TO DISCUSS GOALS FOR 2022. I HOPE THEY AREN'T BITING OFF MORE THAN WE CAN CHEW! GET IT?!

OH FRANKLIN, I READ THE BRIEFING EARLIER. SO YOU'RE GONNA HAVE TO STOP BARKING ORDERS AND GIVE ME A PAW!! WE HAVE A GREAT PACK SO LET'S TEAM UP AND MAKE JOEY & KRISTI PROUD!

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The cycle of unsustainable annexation must stop

Dear Editor:

After reading about the proposed application for annexation of a property on the north end of Purcellville, the former Warner Brook property – currently named Purcellville Road, LLC – I was again reminded of, and unnerved by, the basic tenet of these

LETTER

proposals: the idea that developers can solve the very problems that development has created in this town.

The cycle of unsustainable annexation has essentially gone forward as a grand plan for economic redistribution—one in which developers front a relatively small initial cost and then leave the town footing the bill for extended sewer and water lines, road infrastructure costs, and increased town services costs.

Chuck Marohn, founder and president of Strong Towns, an urban planning nonprofit, calls this pattern of suburban growth a Ponzi scheme. Though there is no denying that Purcellville could be in a stronger financial position, I applaud Mayor Fraser, and many others on the town council, for finding creative ways to arrive at a more economically sustainable town budget.

But let's be very clear about the causes of this problem—the unsustainable annexation for residential, commercial, and industrial development beginning in the early 2000's. And now, what does this developer propose? More annexation, more development. This is no way to dig ourselves out of a hole dug by careless annexation and development.

Furthermore, we must consider the town's aesthetic integrity. A town must

end somewhere, there must be some limit, some boundary, or a town loses coherence. The fields and woods that surround our town give this place its singular look and feel. Though there might be some sort of annexation that I could envision being healthy and appropriate at certain edges of the town perimeter, this approach does not seem to be that.

In my view, any annexation should be measured (of a size less than 25 or 50 acres), carefully integrated into the existing town, and economically sustainable in the long-term. What does that last point mean? It means that any additional services provided to the annexed area should cost less than the revenue provided in a 50-year time horizon.

The town cannot afford to perpetuate the cycle, even the addiction, of unsustainable development. The light industrial site the developer is currently proposing for the area does not seem to reflect a careful and coherent style. It is the type of development which imagines this property as easily used and misused.

We need to approach the issues of development and annexation with humility and patience. If we want Purcellville to continue to thrive and reflect the area's natural and cultural beauty for the next 100 years, such decisions about annexation should be made soberly and with imagination. If all we can imagine for this beautiful farmland is an industrial park—a use both disconnected from the landscape and the town – there is work to be done in broadening our collective imagination.

Adam Stevenson
Purcellville

Blue Ridge Eagles donates to Autism Speaks

The Blue Ridge Eagles, located in Purcellville, as part of their motto People Helping People, donated \$10,000 of their annual golf tournament proceeds to Autism Speaks.



L-R: Trustees and co-chairs of the tournament Ron Hippler, Larry Hays, Gavin Decker, Kisha James, Executive Director for field Development for the National Capital Area of Autism Speaks, and President Brian Reed.

Middleburg awards construction contract for town hall

The Town of Middleburg has awarded a construction contract to Cooper Building Services, LLC, of Frederick, Maryland, for the site development and construction of its new Town Hall in the amount of \$10.7 million.

After a 10-month design and engineering process, which included approvals and input by multiple citizen-led advisory committees and commissions, the Town completed its construction documents in November 2021.

During this process, the Town held two, hour-long public information sessions to keep citizens informed, and to hear their feedback.

Eleven pre-qualified firms were issued the Invitation for bids. Of these firms, four submitted responsive bids, which varied in cost between \$10.7 and \$11.1 million. Cooper was the lowest bidder. The Town is working with Cooper and its construction management team to find value engineering cost improvements.

The cost of the Town Hall project has increased from the most recent estimates for a variety of reasons. Specifically, the construction industry is expe-



riencing significant cost increases due to COVID-19 impacts, supply chain issues, labor challenges, record inflation, and strong demand for construction in the region.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, some building materials have increased in price by over 200 percent. However, the Town's financial advisors have advised that waiting will likely only lead to further increase in costs over time.

Many construction areas are seeing 1-2 percent monthly escalations. Additionally, the influx of federal dollars into infrastructure projects will increase demand and push costs even higher. If the Town Hall were not built at this time, the

Town and its consultants see no scenario where the project cost would decrease.

"This is a generational project for the Town of Middleburg. The need was first identified in 2006 and will allow us to serve the citizens, businesses, and visitors of Middleburg for decades to come," said Vice-Mayor Peter Leonard-Morgan, who serves as the public information liaison for the project. "While it is a challenging time to construct a new building, we unanimously support the project and are eager to see it completed."

Mayor Bridge Littleton said, "The Town remains in a very strong financial situation, perhaps the strongest in its history. Over the last 10 years the Town

has worked very hard to put ourselves in this financial position. We have saved approximately 200 percent of our annual operating expenses in our fiscal reserves."

The Town's reserve fund is approximately \$6.7 million, with its annual general fund expenses at \$3.5 million. The Town's Reserve policy requires the Town to hold at least 125 percent of annual expenses as a fiscal reserve. As a result, the Town has a healthy reserve balance to handle unforeseen emergencies, economic stresses, or future financial challenges should they arrive in the future while still being able to move forward with this project.

The Town was able to secure \$8 million in bonded debt for the project at a very low rate of 2.72 percent. As a result, no increase in residential property taxes is required to pay for the cost of the project. The Town's current revenue streams are sufficient to cover the Town's debt service, and are continuing to show strength during recovery from the pandemic.

The Town held a groundbreaking ceremony for the new Town Hall on Jan. 24. The ceremony took place in the open

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »





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Notices to vehicle owners in the mail – Residents asked to verify vehicle information

Loudoun Commissioner of the Revenue Robert S. Wertz Jr. is mailing notification of 2022 personal property filing requirements to all vehicle owners currently on the county's tax rolls. Personal property includes automobiles, trucks, motorcycles, campers, trailers, boats, motorhomes, aircraft, and mobile homes.

GOVERNMENT

Residents will soon begin receiving notices in the mail with an account number and instructions that they will use to review and update their personal property tax records for the 2022 tax year. The online process allows residents to review and update information on the more than 375,000 vehicles now located in the county.

Residents can access their personal property information online at loudoun.gov/efile utilizing their social security or tax identification number, mailing address ZIP code and unique account number, which is displayed on the notice. Residents may receive more than one notice, depending on how their property is owned or registered.

Residents should report corrections, an address change, the sale or disposal of a vehicle, or unusually high mileage as well as unrepaired body damage or serious mechanical defect since these factors may affect the property's valuation or the number of months a vehicle is taxed in the county. The commissioner requests that all changes be submitted by Feb. 15, to assist in establishing accurate assessments for the 2022 tax year.

To avoid late filing penalties, newly acquired vehicles or

those recently entering Loudoun County must be reported to the Commissioner of the Revenue within 60 days of purchase or move to Loudoun County or one of Loudoun County's incorporated towns. Owners of vehicles in the county are subject to taxes beginning on the date the vehicle came to Loudoun, even if the vehicle displays out-of-state license plates.

Owners of vehicles displaying out-of-state license plates who are not otherwise exempt from obtaining Virginia license plates will be charged an additional annual license fee of \$100. A \$250 penalty may also be imposed on owners of vehicles that are not registered with the Virginia Department of Motor Vehicles within 60 days of the owner having established residency in Virginia.

Military service members residing in Loudoun County who have separated from military service and were receiving a tax exemption due to claiming a domicile outside of Virginia should contact the Commissioner of the Revenue's Office to report their change in status so their exemption can be removed.

The Commissioner of the Revenue encourages residents to connect with the office virtually as most transactions can be completed online. For more information or filing assistance, visit loudoun.gov/cor or contact the Office of the Commissioner of the Revenue at cartax@loudoun.gov or 703-777-0260. Regular office hours are weekdays, 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.

On-Street parking management area considered near Ashburn Metro Station

In preparation for the arrival of Metro-rail Silver Line service in Loudoun County, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors is considering establishing an On-Street Parking Management Area in the vicinity of Moorefield Station, adjacent to the Ashburn Metro Station.

The proposed program, which would include metered parking near the station, is designed to promote the use of the Ashburn Station South garage by Metrorail riders in order to preserve neighborhood parking for use by current and future Moorefield Station residents and businesses.

The Ashburn Station South garage will

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »

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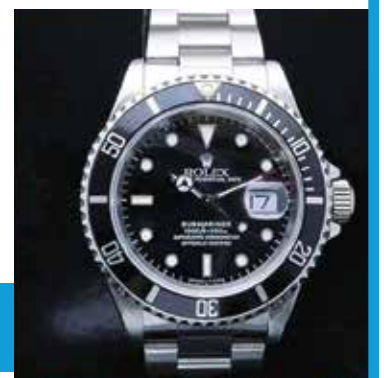
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Fraser reappointed to National League of Cities EENR Committee

Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser has been reappointed to the National League of Cities 2022 Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Federal Advocacy Committee.

Fraser was reappointed to a one-year term, and will provide strategic direction and guidance for NLC's federal advocacy agenda and policy priorities. The appointment was announced by NLC President Mayor Vince Williams of Union City, Georgia.

"Our advocacy for the 19,495 cities, towns, and villages represented by the National League of Cities was instrumental in advancing the passage of the American Rescue Plan Act and the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act. I now look forward to representing the energy and environmental interests of Purcellville, Loudoun County, and communities across the United States on the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources Committee," said Fraser.

As a member of NLC's EENR committee, Fraser will play a key role among a diverse group of local leaders in shaping

NLC's policy positions, and advocating on behalf of America's municipalities before Congress, with the administration and at home, particularly around building sustainable and resilient infrastructure.

"NLC's federal advocacy committees are a key tool for gathering insights directly from the communities that our members serve," said NLC President Mayor Vince Williams of Union City, Georgia. "I am excited to have Mayor Fraser serve on the Energy, Environment and Natural Resources committee and look forward to working with him to fulfill the promise of America's cities, towns and villages."

The full leadership of this year's committee will consist of Chair Emily Larson, Mayor, Duluth, Minnesota, Vice Chair Cindy Dyballa, Councilmember, Takoma Park, Maryland and Vice Chair Brian Jones, Councilmember, Union City, Georgia.

For more information on NLC's federal advocacy committees, visit: www.nlc.org/advocacy/committees.

Groundbreaking for Rt. 7 and George Washington Boulevard Overpass

The Virginia Department of Transportation and Loudoun County held a ceremonial groundbreaking to extend George Washington Boulevard (Rt. 1050) from Research Place south to Russell Branch Parkway via a new bridge over Rt. 7, on Jan 24.

The \$33.2 million, quarter-mile George Washington Boulevard extension will be a four-lane road/bridge with a shared-use path along one side and a sidewalk along the other. This project aims to improve traffic flow on Rt. 7, reduce congestion at the Rt. 7 interchanges with Loudoun County Parkway and Ashburn Village Boulevard, and improve accessibility for drivers, bicyclists and pedestrians by connecting parallel roads to Rt. 7 (Riverside Parkway and George Washington Boulevard) with par-

allel roads to Rt. 28 (Russell Branch Parkway and Pacific Boulevard).

The project also aims to improve access to the George Washington University Virginia Science and Technology Campus and the Strayer University Loudoun Campus.

This project is financed with federal, state, and Loudoun County funding. Construction is expected to be completed by mid-2024. More information can be found on the VDOT project webpage.



L-R: William C. Cuttler, P.E., Deputy District Engineer, VDOT Northern Virginia District; Matt Rogers, aide to Loudoun County Board of Supervisors' Chair Phyllis Randall, Sylvia R. Glass, Broad Run District Supervisor, Juli E. Briskman, Algonkian District Supervisor, Mike Turner, Ashburn District Supervisor, and Sunil Taori, P.E. Assistant Director, Transportation & Land Use, VDOT

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Angie's list



Performing arts teachers take center stage in budget debate

BY LAURA LONGLEY

The show must go on—even if Loudoun County fails to increase high school teachers/directors' stipends for their extracurricular contributions to their students and community.

At this time of year, when school boards and supervisors begin to grapple with the realities of next year's budget, invariably they'll hear passionate pleas from parents, teachers, and performing arts students about “unfairness” in funding for the arts versus athletics.

On Jan. 25, the Loudoun County Public School Board indeed heard about the value of the arts in terms of children's educations, mental health, creative growth, critical thinking, skills development, not to mention revenues to the County. But this time they were also reminded that they should check their email inboxes for the 67-page document sent to them that morning.

Beginning last spring, after working with students to mount musical productions while coping with COVID, a small band of teachers began working on a data-driven report that has delivered some compelling findings on “Internal Equity.”

Expect a drama to unfold in the coming months as the School Board begins to balance the budget.

“I am a newer director who started this job during the virtual year of 2020–2021,” says Katie Hudson of Broad Run High School. “I have no booster program, in my department, it's just me. Though I live five minutes from work, my normal working hours are 8 a.m. to 7 p.m.”

Tony Cimino-Johnson, Theater Teacher/Artistic Director at Rock Ridge High School, is the number cruncher behind the Internal Equity study. Recently, he ran new data using updated data from the FY23 budget proposal and compared spending per school program and per student for football, lacrosse, running, and theater.

Football: Coaches' stipends cover Aug.-Nov. for about 100 students. The stipend for a head coach is \$7,828; two assistant coaches are budgeted at \$6,053 each, a Junior Varsity head coach receives \$6,053, an assistant \$4,220. A

freshman head coach gets a stipend of \$6,053, and an assistant \$4,220. FY22: \$393.20 per student. FY23: \$404.80 per student – an increase of \$11.60.

Lacrosse: 1 season with 100 students at \$32,220—\$322.20 per student.

Running: 3 seasons with 150 students at \$39,305—\$262.33 per student.

Theater: Approx. 11 months teaching, mentoring, and managing all performances, rehearsals, and field trips. Total: \$12,876 for up to 150/200 students. The per student increase over FY22 is \$2.30. The proposed stipend for a theater teacher is \$6,953 plus an additional stipend called “Artistic Director” at \$5,923.

Some Loudoun schools charge theater students extra fees of \$75 to \$150 for participating. Marching band students pay upwards of \$300.

Tuscarora High School Theatre Arts Instructor Justin Daniel points out that the stipend increase theater teachers are proposing also would help music teachers who volunteer to work on after-school musicals for free.

Even if Loudoun County fails to deliver the performing arts teachers' funding proposal, other school districts across the country are ready to take up the cause with the aid of the Loudoun teachers' report. That 67-page document has already been requested by administrators and theater teachers around the country who want to replicate it in their own counties. It also will be shared with Americans for the Arts, Educational Theatre Association, and other national and state organizations.

Here in Loudoun, the report's authors intend to press their case for change in this funding cycle. As Cimino-Johnson points out, “If LCPS is ready to fully fund interscholastic sports, they should be prepared to fully fund the fine and performing arts, as those programs engage roughly 45 percent of our student population. It's not okay that our parents and families have to pay fees to participate in the performing arts while our athletic families receive a free pass.”

To learn more about Loudoun high school theater programs and find a link to the Internal Equity report, visit Cimino-Johnson's site at www.rockridgeperformingarts.org

Food Pantry Opens in Purcellville

BetterALife is proud to announce the Grand Opening of their first Food Pantry on Friday, Jan. 28, at 12 p.m. at 201 N. Maple Avenue, Purcellville. This milestone is a major move for BetterALife on its mission to “leave no local child hungry.”

This new commercial space for their Food Pantry will not only continue to supply food to any child who needs it, it will also:

- Provide a regular space for packing food which will be delivered door-to-door to low-income communities BetterALife serves;
- Provide a space for a new “CookForALife” program designed to teach children and families how to cook healthy meals with the food they are provided;
- Provide a space for a new “InspireALife” program designed to provide mentors

as well as basic needs such as shoes, eyeglasses, etc. to children in need;

- Provide a space for a new “Active Duty” program designed to match children with an Active Duty Service member and assist them in writing letters. The program will help children develop their reading and writing skills while making new connections with inspiring members of the Military community.

In attendance was the founder of BetterALife, Elizabeth M. Ford, along with Board Chairwoman Kellyn Kellogg and Board Member Elaine Stone. They were joined by the Mayor of the Town of Purcellville, Kwasi Fraser, and Town Council Members.

“As a child I experienced food insecurity, so this issue is near and dear to my heart. Our mission is that no child

should experience hunger,” said Ford.

“We have been helping a community member for over a year now, as he was experiencing homelessness.

Throughout this experience he never gave up, and continues to attend school. He has an Instagram page where he sells wooden carved signs to support himself. BetterALife has enjoyed helping him on

this journey and watching him flourish.”

To learn more about BetterALife and to help with their mission by making a tax-deductible donation, visit www.BetterALife.org.



Remembering Mary Elizabeth Strange

Mary Elizabeth Strange, 60, of Purcellville, passed away Sunday, Dec. 30, after a brief illness. She was born in Kerrville, TX in 1961 to James and Carolyn Strange.

Elizabeth grew up in Texas, New Jersey, and Florida. She received a Bachelor of Arts from New College of Florida, where she majored in Classics and Religious Studies. While in college she worked as a dispatcher for the campus police. She also met her future husband at afternoon teas held by her Classics professor. She married Christopher Bertaut on May 8, 1990.

Elizabeth took pride in working as a technical and proposal writer in the high-tech field, for more than 15 years.

Elizabeth and Christopher adopted and raised two wonderful sons, James and Carl.

She loved travel, archeology, waterfalls, and talking with everyone she met. She loved to talk about politics, but never made it a precondition to friendship. She loved to read fiction, philosophy, and biographies. She was a valued part of many shared communities of inter-

est, located both near and far.

She is survived by her mother, Carolyn Midkiff Strange of Tampa, FL, her sisters, Joanna Strange of New York City, and Katherine Burke of Thousand Oaks, CA, and her loving husband of 31 years, Christopher.



She will be sadly missed by relatives, friends, and neighbors. Her wonderful spirit, joys, mischievous sense of humor, love of nature, and talents were celebrated at memorial services held in her family church in Tampa, FL on Jan. 3, and in her hometown of Purcellville at the Carver Center on Jan. 22.



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Three draft redistricting plans available for review

Members of the public are able to view and comment on three draft local redistricting plans that have been selected by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors for further evaluation and refinement.

GOVERNMENT

On Jan. 18, the Board voted to move these three plans to the next phase of consideration in the county's local redistricting process:

The Coalition of Loudoun Towns Alternate Plan, submitted by COLT, an organization comprising the mayors of Loudoun's seven incorporated towns (Hamilton, Hillsboro, Leesburg, Lovettsville, Middleburg, Purcellville and Round Hill). This plan focuses on preserving communities of interest, such as homeowners' associations, in both western and eastern Loudoun with compact districts. It focuses on the Rural Policy Area, the county's incorporated towns, and western

Loudoun by creating two western districts.

The Fechter Plan, a citizen-submitted plan, is designed to include two supervisor districts for areas west of Rt. 15 and one supervisor district entirely west of Rt. 15. It is also designed to avoid split precincts, keep communities of interest together as much as possible, and ensure the Board of Supervisors reflects the county it represents.

The Letourneau-Turner Plan, developed collaboratively by Dulles District Supervisor Matthew F. Letourneau and Ashburn District Supervisor Michael R. Turner. This plan is based on a previous plan submitted by Supervisor Turner, but also contains elements of Supervisor Letourneau's previously submitted plans. It is designed to include rural areas in two districts, while keeping many communities of interest and homeowners associations intact, including Brambleton, Cas-

cares, Lansdowne, Leesburg, South Riding and Sterling.

Members of the public can review these plans through an online viewer, which allows users to compare plans to one another and evaluate how each plan addresses the Board of Supervisors' adopted 2021 redistricting guidelines, which are available at loudoun.gov/redistricting.

Residents are encouraged to view the plans and other useful maps and data on the county's Redistricting Hub. A comment form can be used to provide feedback on specific plans or submit general comments about the redistricting process.

The county's Office of Mapping and Geographic Information is continuing to evaluate these plans against components of the 2021 redistricting guidelines, including each plan's impacts on communities of interest. County staff are also analyzing how the three proposed plans would affect existing voter

precincts.

Following the county staff's analysis, the Board is scheduled to review the three plans again at its Feb. 15 business meeting and select a single redistricting plan in March that will be forwarded to a subsequent public hearing.

The local redistricting process determines how neighborhoods and communities are grouped together into a district for purposes of electing members to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors and School Board. By making sure districts have approximately the same number of people, redistricting can help to ensure residents have equal representation on the Board of Supervisors and School Board. It also affects for whom residents vote and where they vote, based on how the local electoral boundaries are drawn.

For more information about local redistricting in Loudoun County, visit loudoun.gov/redistricting.

DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

placement for him given how he is functioning, however, getting that placement right isn't an easy task for parents.

A parent I work with whose son is in a similar situation recently asked, "Anyone can have a fancy website, but how do I know if a program is right for my child?" As I told that parent, the decision to send your child away is an important one that you want to get right the first time.

There can be times when a second program or follow-up program is needed before your son returns home, but given the expense and commitment, moving from program to program isn't a good thing. Thus, I advise against doing the research yourself or guessing on your own, since there's a lot that goes into matching a child or teen up with the best program or placement.

When I work with children or teenagers whose problems go beyond outpatient treatment, I most often recommend The School Counseling Group in Washington, DC.

The School Counseling Group is comprised of a top-notch team of placement professionals who are very knowledgeable when it comes to finding the exact fit for a child or teen with an away program. I've been very impressed with their work with families over the years, and they are outstanding at what they do.

At 16 you don't have a lot of time if you do decide to send your son away for treatment. Once he turns 18, he can flat out refuse to go.

Regarding your concerns about him running away, a good placement professional can speak to you about how best to handle that. There are professionals that can physically escort your son to the residential treatment program or therapeutic boarding school if needed.

I am hopeful that, with the right program, he will get the help that he needs to get better. While the decision to send a child or teen away for more intensive psychological treatment can be the right thing to do in situations like yours, it can be emotionally difficult for parents. It may be helpful for you and your husband to see a mental health professional for parenting support and guidance.

Dr. Mike,

Our son is 19 years old and lost. He's a great kid, but he just can't seem to find his legs in life. He tried college, but he didn't make it to classes, partied too much, played video games all day, and ended up back home after the first quarter with straight F's.

He then tried NOVA, but he ended up dropping out of that too with more F's. The instruction at NOVA was all online due to COVID-19, and he isn't disciplined enough to learn through a screen. He's hard set on returning to college, but his GPA is too low for him to apply anywhere.

My husband and I are thinking that he may not be suited for college. He's bright, but he's never been a great student, but we don't know what else he'd do without a college degree. He also hasn't wanted to talk to us about school

or next steps, and we've kind of just left him alone. He recently got a job delivering food, but he only does that every now and then. It's also been tough for him to see his friends go off to college and do well. Any thoughts? – Amanda

Dear Amanda,

What your son is going through is not that unusual. The expectation is that our teens will head off to college and do great, but for some, the adjustment to college life and independent living can be too much to manage.

It's not clear to me why your son has done so poorly at college. You write that he didn't do well and that he isn't disciplined enough for on-line learning, so perhaps immaturity is the problem. He was intelligent enough to get into college, but maybe he's not mature enough to be there.

It's also possible that he doesn't want to be in college, but has gone, and is continuing to try to go, because he believes that's what's expected of him. Mental health problems (e.g., depression, anxiety, ADD/ADHD, etc.), social problems or learning problems, could also be factors that are contributing to his failure to do well in college.

Before he attempts college again, I think you should sit down with him to talk through things. Asking him why he wants to go to college, why he thinks he's done poorly, what he plans to do differently, and what he thinks he may want to do with his life, are good questions to ask. Does he have interests or a

passion for something that he could pursue at college?

I recommend he not return until he has greater insight and clarity with a solid game plan, and with understanding your concerns and expectations.

I think you should also explore options beyond college. You write that your son is bright but that he's never been a great student and may not be suited for college. Perhaps he is better suited to learn a trade – the world will always need electricians, fire fighters, plumbers, chefs, police officers, etc. While these trades require secondary schooling and training, they don't require a bachelor's degree. I have worked with dozens of teens over the years who tried college and failed, and then pursued a trade and succeeded.

Your son would also likely benefit by doing some career testing with a psychologist to determine what he'd like to do, and what would fit him best. Career testing could be very helpful with creating a road map for him. If your son has additional mental health struggles, his psychologist will be able to help him with that.

He also tried to embark on a college career during a global pandemic, which may have contributed to his struggles. I'm hopeful that with the right interventions, good communication, and time and effort, your son will find his way.

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.

Hot off the press!

La Prensa's making news with its terrific tacos and tapas

BY LAURA LONGLEY

Take two adventurous chefs—Santosh Tiptur and Tomas Lobato—and blend the distinctive tastes of Mexico and Spain into a perfect recipe for success: La Prensa Tacos and Tapas in Sterling's Nokes Plaza.

Tiptur, La Prensa's owner, has mentored Lobato for many years while Chef de Cuisine Lobato has brought



him some very special gifts—his mother's and grandmother's ways with Mexican food. He grew up with them in Mexico's smallest, historic, and culturally diverse state of Tlaxcala, east of Mexico City.

"Everything I know about Mexican food comes from them," he says. "I used to watch them when I was growing up. They ground the corn for their tortillas and made them from scratch. My grandmother not only showed me all the secrets, but also her love and passion about Mexican food."

In 2004, at the age of 16, he moved alone to the United States, earning his living selling flowers on the streets of Washington, D.C. He got a job as a dishwasher in a restaurant and then moved on to prep work. Next stop—a fortuitous one—was the chocolate themed restaurant where Santosh Tiptur served as chef. He began working for Chef Tiptur at his restaurant Co. Co. Sala, ultimately taking charge of bread making. Within three years, he was Tiptur's sous chef. It was the beginning of an 11-year collaboration that would take them on to Leesburg, where Tiptur opened The Conche at the Village

Market near Wegman's. One day, experimenting in the kitchen, Lobato whipped up a Mexican meal, and Chef Tiptur was so impressed he decided to open La Prensa—with Tomas as chef de cuisine.

The inspiration—and the restaurant's name—came from studying the art and craft of the skilled cooks and chefs who have used the Prensa de

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

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Randall challenges regional leaders in blood drive

Hospitals across the region are experiencing a critically low blood shortage. Due to these challenges, donor services need to think quickly and creatively to continue supplying patients with lifesaving blood.

COMMUNITY

Phyllis Randall, Chair at-Large of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, issued a challenge to leaders across the region to join her in the 2022 *Save a Life* Board of Supervisors Blood Drive Challenge. This effort will run until February 21.

All blood types are needed, but Type O is in extreme demand. "Donating blood is the easiest way to help save a life," Randall said. "I'm confident that my elected colleagues and Loudoun County Citizens will respond to this urgent need."

Blood donations have been dramatically impacted by a rise in COVID-19 cases in the region and volunteer donors are the only way to replenish the supply. Chair Randall called on Chairman Jeff McKay of Fairfax, Chair Katie Cristol of



Arlington, Chair Ann Wheeler of Prince William and Mayor Justin Wilson of Alexandria and said, "Bring it."

Inova is Northern Virginia's leading nonprofit healthcare provider. Inova's 19,000 team members serve more than 2 million individuals annually through an integrated network of hospitals, primary and specialty care practices, emergency and urgent care centers, outpatient services and destination institutes.

Make your appointment or ask questions about your eligibility to donate in the next few days by calling 1-866-BLOODSAVES (1-866-256-6372) or visiting inovablood.org.

Fifth annual Cabin Fever Film Festival a great success

The fifth annual Purcellville Cabin Fever Film Festival kicked off with a slate of 13 films that highlight Loudoun filmmakers. This festival highlighted local tales and talent films, student productions, and vintage home movies, with emphasis on films made in Purcellville, or by residents in the Purcellville area.

COMMUNITY

To celebrate the fifth year of this festival, prizes were awarded for Best Student-Produced Film, Best Loudoun-Focused Film, and Audience Favorite. Prizes were sponsored by the Friends of Franklin Park Arts Center, the Purcellville Arts Council, and Visit Loudoun.

Mike Ellison won best Loudoun-Focused Film – *Arcola Courters*. Best student film was tied between *Bun Buns Return* by Aaron and Noah Benson and a film by Maddy Wade.

Anteaks Roadshow by Phil Erickson and Penny Hauffe won audience favorite.

The films included:

- *Land Trust of Virginia* by Michael Jarvis & Weston Trussell



L to R: Beth Erickson, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser, Mike Ellison, and Elizabeth Bracey.

- *Goose Creek* by The Lincoln Studios
- *Arcola Courters* by Mike Ellison
- *My Farm Friends* by Joey Walker
- *30 Days in June 2019* by Doug Graham
- *The Bun Buns Return* by Aaron and Noah Benson
- *Who dun it* by Ian Poole & Tara Linhardt
- *Dande Biyo* by Ian Poole & Tara Linhardt
- *On Fire* by Andrew Broadhurst

CONTINUED ON PAGE 20 »



L to R: Council Member Erin Rayner, Vice Mayor Chris Bertaut, Council Member Stan Milan, Adair Soho, Karen McCarthy, Mayor Kwasi Fraser, and Council Member Tip Stinnette.

Another Turn Tack Shop celebrates grand re-opening

COMMUNITY Karen McCarthy and Adair Soho, owners of Another Turn Tack Shop in Purcellville had their grand re-opening ribbon cutting for their new store located at 221 N 21st. Street, on Jan. 29.

Another Turn Tack Shop carries items for horse owners and equestrians, and as

they say everything, “for the rider, horse and barn.” They carry consignment items such as saddles, bridles, horse blankets and many other items.

The ribbon cutting was attended by many friends and customers, Purcellville Mayor Kwasi Fraser, and Council Members Stan Milan, Chris Bertaut, Erin Rayner and Tip Stinnette.

52nd annual Bluemont Fair seeks poster designs

COMMUNITY Organizers of the 52nd annual Bluemont Fair, to be held Sept. 17 and 18, in western Loudoun County, invite artists of all ages and abilities to submit designs for consideration for this year’s unique Poster and T-shirt. The theme is Bluemont’s Draft Horse Farming Era. These “gentle giants” were widely used to do the “heavy lifting” that characterized the agrarian life-style in Bluemont during the 18th, 19th and into the 20th centuries, before tractors and other mechanized farm equipment replaced them.

This year’s theme ties into the next special exhibit at the Plaster Museum of Bluemont Heritage, “Agriculture in Bluemont: 19th Thru 21st Century Farms,” which will be open to visitors during Fair weekend.

Artists’ interpretations can be as broad or narrow as they choose, but keep in mind that the winning design and colors will need to be suit-

able for replication on Bluemont Fair’s distinctive poster (14”x22”), T-shirt, and merchandise. The request is for design only – Fair organizers will add dates and verbiage after the winning design is selected. Artists’ names should be on the back of the art.

Please also include contact information and a brief biography for inclusion in publicity. The selected artist’s name will be printed on the poster and their work acknowledged in Fair publicity. Multiple entries from individual artists permitted.

Artwork should be mailed to: Bluemont Fair Poster Design Competition, P.O. Box 217, Bluemont, VA, 20135 and must be received by April 20, 2022. To arrange to hand-deliver art, contact chair@bluemontfair.org, or call 540 554-2367. Individuals requesting return of their submission should also include a self-addressed, stamped mailing receptacle.

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KEEP IT RURAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

fields – beyond these schedules will negatively impact greenhouse crops and not allow the plant to grow appropriately.

Ellmore's Garden Center, which has been in business in Hamilton for 48 years and operates greenhouses, is also at risk.

Our conservation easement, one of the largest in Loudoun County, protects wildlife. Bald eagles, hawks, wild turkeys, bear, coyotes, deer, snakes, turtles and numerous insects, amphibians and migrating birds rely on the natural and scenic condition of our land.

A 2016 report from The Council on Science and Public Health states, "60% of animals are nocturnal and are potentially adversely affected by exposure to night-time electrical lighting."

According to the International Dark-Sky Association, "Scientific evidence suggests that artificial light at night has negative and deadly effects on many creatures including amphibians, birds, mammals, insects and plants."

For example, artificial light at night disrupts night-time ecology and the breeding rituals of amphibians, such as frogs and toads who may fail to reproduce, and breeding rituals and migrating patterns of birds who use the stars and moon to

navigate or hunt. Artificial lights cause them to migrate off-cycle and can radically alter their night-time environment by turning night into day. Bats, too, are impacted as artificial lights act as a barrier to movement for many species of bats.

Additionally, insects are adversely affected by artificial light at night. Ecology and Evolution (Volume 8, Issue 22, 2018) reports that artificial light at night inhibits biological processes in nocturnal insects, alters foraging activity and species interactions and causes spatial disorientation for some insects such as wasps, bees, and fireflies.

Click beetles and glowworms are especially vulnerable to artificial illumination at night and studies have shown that ambient light inhibits courtship flashing of firefly species, including courtship signaling of both sexes in the North American firefly.

Finally, there are roughly 80-100 homes close to the park that may be directly impacted by the lights. There are at least 25 or more residences, including ours, on the south side of Rt. 7 within one half mile of the ballfields. Six residences are immediately adjacent to the west or north side of the park. About another 50 residents are located in Hamilton Station Estates and Hamilton Estates developments.

To date, we have welcomed and co-exist harmoniously with the park, in part

because lights are not permitted, so games must end on or before sundown. However, if lights up to 70 feet high are permitted in Jenkins Park and are allowed to remain on until 11 p.m., residents will feel as though they are living opposite Nationals Park.

Residents will be negatively impacted by sky glow, light glare, light spillage onto adjacent properties, accompanying amplified noise, and increased traffic until late in the night.

This is not and should never be the norm for rural areas of the County. This will negatively impact work habits and sleep patterns for all, especially children and the elderly.

Once the sun is down, the quiet night should belong to residents who live in the surrounding area, as is normal and customary for rural areas of the County. They should not be disturbed by artificial light and amplified noise associated with athletic fields.

Note that our conservation easement with the Nature Conservancy states that outdoor lighting is permitted provided "it is placed no more than twenty (20) feet high and not more than fifty (50) feet away from any improvement located on the property ..." This should give you a sense of how much the quiet night sky supports the scenic and natural condition of our property and neighboring areas.

FILM FESTIVAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

- **Closest to the Pin** by Andrew Broadhurst
- **Light Leaks** by Maddy Wade Films
- **The Women are Not Getting Along** by Maddy Wade Films
- **Anteaks Roadshow** by Phil Erickson & Penny Hauffe

To learn more about Franklin Park Arts Center go to www.franklinparkartscenter.org. Franklin Park Arts Center is located at 36441 Blueridge View Ln, Purcellville, VA 20132.

Lights that are 70 feet high will significantly degrade the normal and customary, scenic and natural conditions of the properties surrounding Scott Jenkins Memorial Park.

We ask that the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors consider our reasons for opposing lights on Scott Jenkins Memorial Park to help protect the health and welfare of residents in Western Loudoun County, nearby farmland and conserved land, and not approve of SPEX-2021-0025.

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Administered by Loudoun County Area Agency on Aging, Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation & Community Services

ON-STREET PARKING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

provide 1,500 parking spaces and has vehicular and pedestrian access to Silver Train Street and Croson Lane.

The Board will need to consider two components to implement this program: establishing the parking management area and setting the rates for metered parking within the area. Public input is invited throughout the process.

Community Meeting: Jan. 27

To provide residents in the area and the greater community with more information about the proposed program, Loudoun County will host a virtual community meeting on Thursday, Jan. 27, at 6 p.m. The meeting will include a detailed presentation and an opportunity for residents to ask questions. For information on participating in the community meeting, visit loudoun.gov/moorefieldstationparking.

Establishment of Parking Management Area: Feb. 15

The Board is scheduled to consider the establish-

ment of the On-Street Parking Management Area at its business meeting Tuesday, Feb. 15, which begins at 5 p.m.

The proposed area, in proximity to the Ashburn Metro Station, will consist of a new network of publicly maintained streets with approximately 400 current on-street parking spaces and is proposed to expand to more than 800 on-street spaces. The on-street parking program will mitigate the risk of Metrorail riders monopolizing the on-street parking spaces intended for residents and retail patrons,

If the establishment of the parking management area is approved by the Board at its Feb. 15 meeting, residents will be able to purchase a parking pass at a cost to be determined by the Board that would exempt Moorefield Station residents from the metered parking rates. Residents would not be required to purchase a parking pass; they would have the option of using their designated private parking spaces instead of on-street parking.

To view the meeting agenda, read staff reports, and to watch the meeting live, visit loudoun.gov/meetings.

Information on how to provide comment, or to sign up to speak during the meeting is online here.

Public Hearing Regarding Parking Rates: March 9

To establish hourly rates for on-street metered parking, the Board of Supervisors must amend the county's parking meter ordinance. The proposed parking meter rates at Moorefield Station are \$1.25 per hour (off-peak hours) and \$1.75 per hour (peak hours). The daily cost of parking in the Metro garage will be \$4.95.

Members of the public may provide input to the Board on the proposed parking rates during a public hearing scheduled to begin at 6 p.m., March 9. To view the meeting agenda, read staff reports, and to watch the meeting live, visit loudoun.gov/meetings. Information on how to provide comment, or to sign up to speak during the meeting is online here.

For more information about the proposed Moorefield Station On-Street Parking Management Area and to sign up to receive email and text updates, visit loudoun.gov/moorefieldstationparking.

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KUHN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

center on the property with 383,000 square feet of light industrial on 22 lots ranging from 1.61 to 7.83 acres per lot, with a 50-ft. buffer around the property. Daily trips would run from approximately 1,500 to 3,800. The property is currently zoned for residential housing—one house per three acres, or around 39 single-family homes.

Attendees said that the County zoning of three houses per acre would be a better fit for the area.

Purcellville resident Lydia Clark said the proposed 50 ft. buffer “doesn’t cut it.” She reminded Kuhn that his earlier proposal to the Purcellville Town Council had the same proposed buffer of 50 ft., and the public said it was not large enough back then. She pointed out that the current proposal showed no increase in the buffer from the last presentation.

Magic Kayhan, who owns the 13-acre



Chuck Kuhn, owner of Purcellville Road, LLC (formerly known as Warner Brook) the 118.81-acre property.

parcel on the southern corner, which used to be part of the property, said he wants “Purcellville to stay the way it is.” Kayhan is thinking of turning the property’s stone house, large barn, and other buildings

into an events center/corporate retreat, a beer and wine garden, and an ice cream parlor for the children.

Several attendees said they didn’t move to Purcellville to be in Ashburn. They also

are worried about the dangers increased traffic would bring to the area. The Mayfair development currently has 75 school-aged children.

Kuhn explained that the economics don’t lend to putting the property into conservation easement as he has done with thousands of other acres in rural Loudoun County. “It’s a multi-million-dollar property ... progress must take place,” said Kuhn. He pointed out that the proposed annexation would create jobs and would “give the town a tax base.”

Kuhn explained that the proposed plan will change based on the citizen comment he heard from the attendees. He added that he has left some land for a skate park.

The meeting, hosted by Michael Romeo, senior land use planner with Walsh, Colucci, Lubley, and Walsh, P.C., was held at Library Study Center at Patrick Henry College located at 10 Patrick Henry Circle in Purcellville, on Wednesday, Jan. 26, at 6 p.m.

RT. 15, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

of us not to take the time to understand this in detail. I’ve asked questions that I can’t seem to get an answer to tonight: What’s the funding source for this project? And “We have to look it up”? I don’t think we have to look it up. I think we all know it’s local money. I think that’s a question in and of itself. And I think there are things we can get answers to in a relatively quick period of time. I’d like to make sure we get those questions answered in a timely fashion ... I think we need much more information, and if this is the place where we’re going to shed light on things that maybe we don’t really know, I think it’s worth the effort.”

Jane Kirchner, Algonkian District ticked off more key questions: “I’d be interested in [a report] from the Economic Development Department that would give us an overview of what the overall impact would be on those businesses. I just heard a mention about fair market value for property. There are some businesses you just couldn’t put anywhere else. I mean Lucketts Store—I don’t know how you could ever move or replace that.”

She also wants to see a comparison of the widening/bypass plan with Ian Lockwood’s 2018 traffic calming plan: “I’m very familiar with Ian Lockwood”—the internationally recognized transportation planner known in Loudoun for his award-winning work on Rt. 50 from Aldie through Uperville—and it was just fantastic ... I know what he presented is very dif-

ferent and also looks to me much less expensive.”

“The third thing has to do with the 2018 traffic modeling analysis done by Smart Mobility. I understand that [study] raises the issue of induced traffic, and I think that’s a real concern with whatever’s done here.”

Kirchner then asked about cost—in recent meeting minutes at approximately \$300 million.

A County staff member replied, “I think our DTIC [Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure] colleagues are pulling that number up.”

“Sorry, I thought that would be an easy one,” Kirchner said. Waiting for a number she never got, Kirchner went on to raise questions about funding the corridor project. “I’d like to know why federal funds are not being pursued, especially as we have needs in other parts of the County.”

Eric Combs, Ashburn District, brought up his thinking about making just safety improvements. “Maybe there’s shoulder widening but not two-to-four lane widening.”

Eventually, Daniel Galindo, lead staff for the Planning Commission, responded to the members, speaking more to priorities of process and timelines than to those of County’s people and purse.

“Obviously, there’s a lot of concern about the decision being asked of you.” Galindo began.

“However, I’m a little afraid ... the Commission can go beyond the scope of what was asked for by the Board ... The Commission still needs to act on

the Board’s request ...

“I do not want to try to limit your debate,” Galindo continued. “I’m just concerned that we’ve talked about a lot of potential work products here. That is a lot of time for staff to put into something that is answering a question that’s not what the Board originally asked ... Whatever motion you make as laid out in the alternatives ... is what you want to do about the three parts of this CPAM.”

“I think that is your baseline decision,” he advised, “and then if there’s additional recommendations you want to make, if there are additional questions you want to have the Board to direct staff to look into and answer, I think that’s the most appropriate way to look at those things so we can fit it into the overall work plan, and we can bring in anybody else from other departments we might need to do this.”

“The original work plan for this got approved by the board,” Galindo pointed out, “and we’re behind on it ... This was supposed to start in June, believe it or not. Let’s say we started it in November when we first brought the briefing to you. We’re three months into that seven-month window already ... Given the questions that have come up tonight, I find it hard to believe that we could try to answer all of these different things and be back even next month ... for a work session. So, we’re prolonging this,” he concluded, “and I don’t know that’s necessarily necessary to respond to the Board.”

Chair Forest Hayes broke in, “Okay,

so Dan, you are not going to be able to direct the Commission in this way. The Commissioners are going to request the information that they think they need to make the decisions that they need to make. Everyone here has been appointed, and they can read, and they know the decision they have to make. We appreciate your point of view, and in a moment Mr. Miller [Mark Miller, Catocin District] is going to make a motion, and we’re going to vote on it. Okay?”

“Yes, sir.”

After more back and forth, the Commissioners came to agreement on the staff’s homework assignment.

Hayes summed up: “Please don’t take all the requests for information and questions from this body as being combative. It’s more an eager and sincere desire to know more about the process, and I think we all understand that it is our charge to render a recommendation related to an amendment to the Comprehensive Plan. I, for one, take amendments to the Comprehensive Plan very seriously.”

The Commission’s vote, Hayes believes, could have consequences far beyond the current CPAM decision. “Not to ask as many questions as I need to and understand every factor would be irresponsible. I have never knowingly been irresponsible since I’ve been a Commissioner and won’t start today.”

With that, the Commissioners reviewed the staff’s checklist. The team has a month, maybe more, to fill in a lot of blanks. It might be time to burn the midnight oil.

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BLACK HISTORY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the County. Their historian-narrated tours of African American communities became so popular the team producing them had to double the number of excursions. The tours have been on hold since COVID.

Overall, BHC's books, programs, and ongoing activities reveal the landscape of Loudoun that reflects the industry and achievement of African Americans in the post-emancipation years when, in the words of an African American folk saying, they found "a way out of no way."

Perhaps the most vital way was through the supportive communities they formed. BHC's publications such as Loudoun's African American Communities: A Tour Map and Guide takes you into the villages and lives of the people in Howardsville, Irene, Mount Pleasant (Scattersville), Conklin, Guinea Bridge, and Willisville, recently enrolled in the National Register of Historic Places.

The Village of St. Louis, in southwestern Loudoun, is a priority focus for the Black History Committee right now. As the County Planning and Zoning staff, under the direction of the Board of Supervisors, moves forward with a master plan that will address village infrastructure, including water quality and availability, the BHC will be participating in the County task force dedicated to the village's future and long-term preservation plans.

Teachers and historians will find the BHC's "Glimpse into the African American History of Loudoun County" (balchhistory.org/glimpse) one of the most useful sources in Virginia. An extraordinary compendium of primary



documents and excerpts from secondary sources, it is organized by eight essential understandings and supporting documents related to Virginia standards of learning.

"Runaway Slave Ads" from the "Genius of Liberty," a four-page weekly published in Leesburg, from 1817-1843, are also available in the BHC section of the Friends' website. Assembled by author-historian Bronwen C. Sounders of Waterford, the collection includes more than 200 advertisements, approximately 50—or more than a quarter—representing individuals jailed in Leesburg. The remaining 150 plus advertisements were placed by the owner or renter and gave varying amounts of information—personal and general. Many ads request that they be reproduced in one or more of 31 regional newspapers in Virginia, Maryland, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C. On the list, you can click on "Date of Ad" and view the actual ad as

printed. Of the 217 total individuals listed, one third (73) had a first and last name; 144 had just a first name.

At the close of her introduction, Souders wrote, "The author hopes that researchers in other counties and states will find name and place links that will enable a broader picture to be formed of the flights to freedom by these brave individuals"

Her wishes are being fulfilled. In 2017, a fledgling digital humanities project associated with Michigan State University received funding from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. With these contributions, Enslaved.org is building a linked open data platform that makes available thousands of records of people, events, places, and sources that span slavery in North and South America, Africa, and Western Europe, from the 15th century to the final slave emancipation in Brazil, in 1888.

Not surprisingly, the Black History Committee has stepped up to play a part. The BHC is the recipient of a grant from the Enslaved.org project; the group is scheduled to work with the support staff in 2022 and upload an important dataset, "The Enslaved Community of President James Monroe."

If you, a friend, or colleague would like to lend a hand in preserving, collecting, promoting, and sharing the history of African Americans in Loudoun County, why not attend a Black History Committee meeting at Thomas Balch Library? The group meets on the first Saturday of every month at 10 a.m.; the public is always welcome.

For more information visit www.balchfriends.org or call 540-579-2825. There's still plenty of work to be done.

CAPPIES REVIEW, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

who played business mogul Danny Maguire. Miscio embodied the tough, determined businessman with ease. It was delightful to see Danny's soft spot for the arts come out gradually throughout the show.

No matter who was on stage, or what song it happened to be, the ensemble was consistently in character, which is advanced for a high school production. The other Muse sisters, played by Mariah Waters, Julia Freeman, Karishma Ruhnke, and Maggie Cantwell stole the spotlight with their alluring dance moves and radiant ribbon twirling.

Zeus and Hera, played by Sam Cooper and Sneha Khandavalli respectively, were entertaining in both witticism and vocals. Hayley Sutton played two of the most memorable characters in the show. As Young Danny, in a flashback scene, Sutton's tap-dancing skills were unreal in rhythm and balance. As Hermes, the one-liners were fantastic.

The technical aspect of the production was simply astounding. The Greek-influenced, two-level set designed by Danny Fortuno caught the eye the moment the audience walked in. The lighting, designed by Jack Capobianco, added to the atmosphere of the show in the most stunning way possible.

The student choreographers, Maggie Cantwell and Elle Hardesty, brought the show to life with mystical and pop-style movements. The costumes, hair, and makeup were flawless, designed by Maddy Springer, and the school's Theatre Costume & Make-Up Class. Each design fit the characters in just the right way.

Xanadu at Rock Ridge High School was a breathtaking show full of unforgettable performances, marvelous design, and a whole lot of fun.

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

maybe I could see more than about 50 feet through the thick woods. Which it did; the gravel road – after some turning and twisting on the descent) became something approaching a horizontal surface, and I found myself driving along what could be described

as bottomland – at least compared with the ridge I'd recently visited.

And then I came upon the intersection with Taylorstown Road (and of course, that's another story – that of the Downey Mill Ruins) and my adventure with Furnace Mountain was over – for that morning.

And what of the furnaces? Well, I recall reading about the name stemming from some historic iron ovens at the base of the peak – apparently dating back to the 18th century; my scant records tell me that the early construction of our nations' capital used metals extracted from iron ore, which in turn

came from none other than the hero of today's story – good, old Furnace Mountain. I'm sure there's more to the tale, and I never did see those mythical furnaces themselves, but that leaves further adventures for another day. Always good to leave them wanting more...

VALENTINE'S DAY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

necklaces, heart-shaped tea bags, heart-to-heart retractable charging cords, and heart-shaped mini waffle maker machines.

Here we are: The legendary martyrdom of a Catholic priest has become a marketing vehicle for waffle makers.

Valentine was a Catholic priest—or possibly a combination of two—who lived in Rome in the 3rd century at a time many Romans were converting to Christianity. Emperor Claudius II, how-

ever, was a pagan and created strict laws about what Christians were allowed to do. Roman soldiers, for example, were to be devoted to Rome and therefore not marry. Valentine began to officiate at Christian marriage ceremonies in secret, which is how he earned his reputation as a love maker.

Eventually, he was jailed for his crimes and, while imprisoned, he reportedly cured his jailor's blind daughter. It's said that his final act before being executed was to write her a love message signed

"from your Valentine." Valentine was executed on February 14 in 269 A.D.


More than 200 years later, when Pope Gelasius I's abolished a pagan fertility festival, that date was proclaimed St. Valentine's Day. By the Middle Ages, poet Chaucer was linking St. Valentine with love; Shakespeare expanded on the connection in his plays and sonnets. Little surprise, then, that purveyors of chocolates, greeting cards, and flowers would eventually seal the deal with a kiss...and leave the child born on Valen-

tine's Day with a box of candies instead of a blazing cake.

But wait! Maybe he or she wouldn't turn down a Red Velvet Heart Cake from Food Network star Duff Goldman?

Scratch that and make their day: Go for the four-layer golden butter vanilla cake with purple buttercream filling and iced in white buttercream frosting and decorated with purple buttercream dots and black jimmies and, on top in sugar paper, the inscription "Happy Birthday!"


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MOORE-SOBEL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

career, I have been absolutely relentless," he writes. The lessons he learned while building the wall stayed with him. "And the secret to my success is as boring as it is unsurprising: You show up and you lay another brick," Smith writes.

Will Smith has laid a lot of bricks. His career success is astounding, especially considering the obstacles he faced along the way. He had a troubled childhood, watching his father mercilessly abuse his mother. He built a successful music career as a young adult yet didn't know that he had to pay taxes on his earnings, which created financial difficulties as he entered his twenties. As an unexperienced actor, Smith obtained a role on

The Fresh Prince of Bel Air through an impromptu audition in Quincy Jones' living room (one of the most entertaining stories in the book). No matter what Smith faced, he kept going, until his metaphorical brick laying paid off.

But his success came at a cost. His first marriage to Sheree broke down. His success (and all that came with it) caused turbulence in his second marriage to Jada Pinkett Smith. His relationships with his children suffered as they struggled to deliver under the weight of Smith's expectations. "I was at the top of the mountain ...Yet, everybody around me was miserable," he writes.

His success also did nothing to heal the deep childhood scars he carried with

him. "My father was my hero," he writes. Yet his father also hit Smith's mother throughout his childhood. Smith blames himself for not doing more to protect his mother. He held himself responsible for failing to intervene in the abuse his mother endured. "I've always thought of myself as a coward," he writes. He argues this sense of cowardice has fueled him to achieve, all in an effort "to hide the coward."

The latter half of the book contains Smith's journey to discover himself. Who he was, and who does he want to be? Smith's journey holds important lessons for us all and is an important reminder that wealth, fame, and success are no substitutes for the hard work it takes to

achieve healing from our past.

Yet, Smith's trauma in some ways served him: it pushed him to succeed. It is clear that Will Smith could be thrown into almost any career and would still find a way to rise to the top. He credits his father in part for his drive. "Well, my father gave me my name, he gave me his name, and he gave me my greatest advantage in life: my ability to weather adversity. He gave me will." A will that, for better or for worse, has helped Smith rise to seemingly unimaginable heights.

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.

MIDDLEBURG, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

field north of the existing Town Office. The land for the new town hall was donated by Sheila Johnson.

The Town will also hold a Public Information Session on the Town

Hall project in the coming weeks for the public.

Questions can be directed to Rhonda North, project lead, or Danny Davis, town manager, at 540-687-5152.

YOUNGKIN, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5

alongside other pressing economic issues. "Virginians are struggling with the high cost of living, in a commonwealth with skyrocketing housing costs, rising fuel prices, and the silent wage theft of inflation," he said.

"There are economic fundamentals we don't control in Virginia. But there is one vital thing we can do to help Virginians, and that is remove some of the tax burden." Speaking to bipartisan efforts to address this, Youngkin added, "Together, we will give Virginians real relief."

The governor turned next to the topic of lawlessness, and called for Virginians to stand with law enforcement agencies and support open dialogue around discussions of policing. "We're in a fractious era and no group of individuals is under greater scrutiny today than our law enforcement," he said. "I'm asking you to fund our police to protect our communities."

Referring to his decision to fire the entire parole board on Jan. 15, Youngkin continued, "When it comes to lawlessness, I want to be crystal clear. If we won't tolerate it in communities across the commonwealth then we certainly won't tolerate it within a

state agency."

"We will not accept selective violations of our constitutional rights," he stated. "We don't get to pick and choose the parts of the Constitution we want to preserve and protect. In order for our government to work for the people, we must also reform the institutions of government that fail to serve the people."

Youngkin reiterated this point toward the end of his address. "Let me state our goal. Let's work together in partnership. To build a government as virtuous as our people. One that serves."

In closing, the governor highlighted two such people – Natasha Barijon, a first generation immigrant and military veteran, and the Commanding Officer of SEAL Team 8, Brian Bourgeois, who gave his life for freedom. Youngkin asked the Joint Assembly to recognize their service and sacrifice before giving one final request.

"Those of us who live in the freedom they so valiantly protect must live lives worthy of their sacrifice," he said. "Set aside petty divisions. Set aside ego and self-advancement. And join together to make this Virginia we love better, stronger, freer."

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

group that promotes commercialization in western Loudoun. Its motto seems to be more-more-more, and if some promoter wanted to build an enormous amusement park in western Loudoun, Visit Loudoun would probably be completely on board. Its goal is to bring tourists into Loudoun, ideally for overnight stays.

OPINION

It has a major incentive to bring in as many tourists as possible. Visit Loudoun is funded by getting 37.5 percent of the transient occupancy tax paid by tourists, some million bucks or so annually. (It pays its staff very well.) Is Visit Loudoun motivated to put "more heads in beds" and increase its income, rather than balancing tourism with what residents want the west to be?

Visit Loudoun operates as a "Destination Marketing Organization" and does exactly what that title implies. It markets Loudoun in all sorts of ways, and much of that marketing focuses on the charms of western Loudoun. (I feel used.)

What we really need is a "Destination Management Organization." Visit Loudoun publicly asserts that it deserves that label, but its actions belie that claim. A true Destination Management Organization is an entity with a balanced approach. Bring in some visitors, but not hordes. Take neutral positions on planned projects

and let their fate be decided by citizens' will. Work with conservation groups to align tourism in Loudoun with our rural ambience. Work with our towns to help meet their desires for tax-paying commercial growth inside town limits.

With the Destination Management approach, the client is the community, not the tourism industry. To succeed it must be collaborative and integrated. Sedona, the Columbia Gorge and Breckinridge have adopted this type of DMO approach, as did Barcelona when it faced a tsunami of tourists that unsettled that city.

Realpolitik II

A first step would be for the county to give Visit Loudoun a fixed amount of money each year, instead of the 37.5 percent of the occupancy tax, thus removing its incentive to push for more and more tourism *uber alles*. Will this happen? I doubt it. (I am fatalistic.)

Our future all boils down to the collective wisdom of nine people – our Supervisors. They do a good job, but I know they get whipsawed by people with commercial agendas. Let's just make sure that conservationists do their own share of whipsawing.

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.

HOT OFF THE PRESS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 17

Tortilla, or tortilla press.

La Prensa represents everything Lobato learned from his grandmother and mother. The tortillas are made from scratch as well as their sauces like salsa verde and salsa arriera. Most of the dishes are garnished with yummy pickled vegetables. The enchiladas come with three choices: chicken, beef, or

poblano corn with verde, roja, or mole sauce and, of course, pickled vegetables.

The restaurant serves a mix of Mexican and Spanish tapas. Three years ago, Chef Tiptur traveled to Spain to research restaurants and their tapas. He returned with his signature offerings—an octopus dish called Pulpo, with salsa Basquaise or their patatas Bravas, fried pee wee potatoes with brava sauce, gar-

lic aioli, and manchego cheese.

"I still consult with my mother for good, creative recipes," says Lobato. "I thank my mother and Chef Santosh Tiptur for teaching me their love of food."

La Prensa is open daily from 11 a. m. to 9 p. m., and is located at 21305 Windmill Parc Drive, Sterling, VA 20165, telephone (703) 421-4950 (laprensarestaurant.com).

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