

Blue Ridge LEADER & LOUDOUN Today

SEPTEMBER 2023

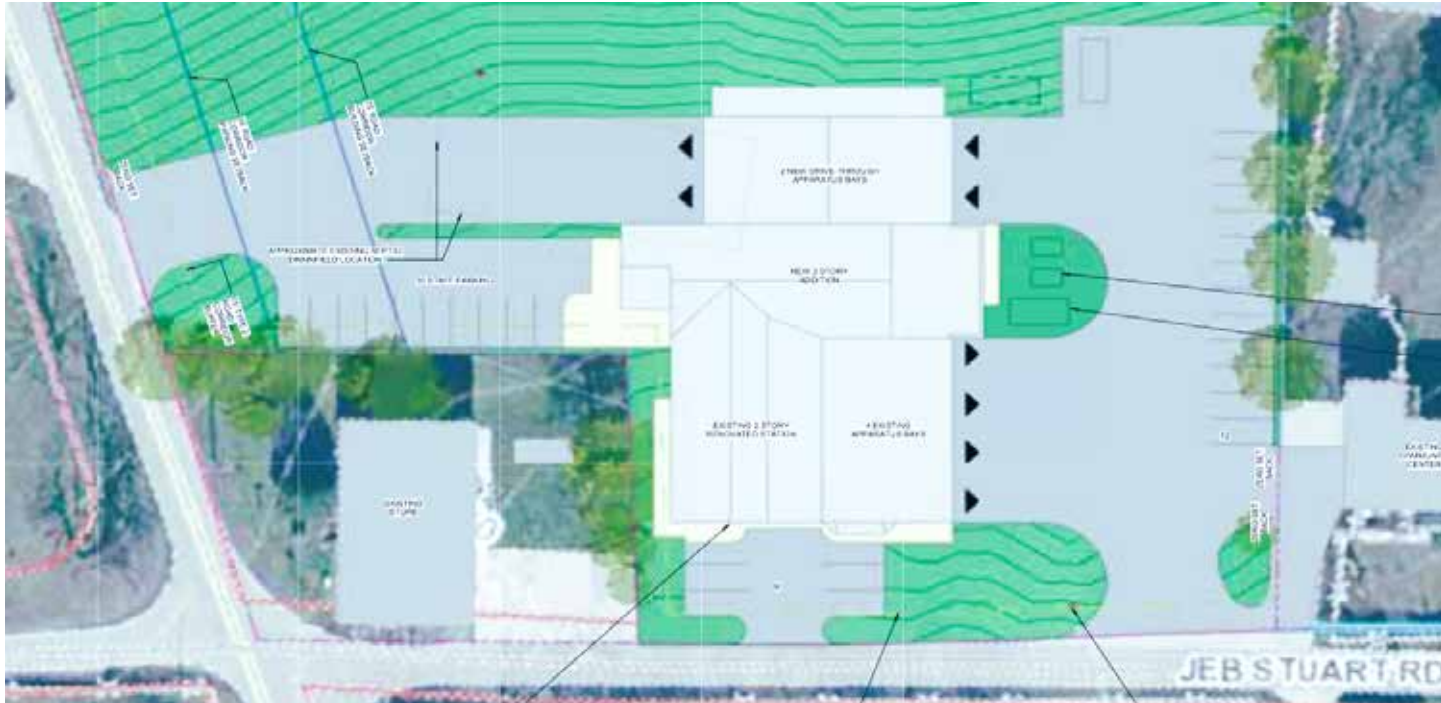
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Rendering of Philomont Firehouse renovation.

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VOTED BEST OF LOUDOUN

Canby Road to remain unpaved after community feedback

BY TABITHA REEVES

Canby Road, home to rural neighborhoods and passionate Leesburg residents, was up for discussion on whether or not a 300-foot portion of the road should be paved, resulting in three community meetings, many email chains and a well-attended Board of Supervisors public hearing on July 12.

After pushback against paving, Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin)

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Philomont Firehouse: Renovate or Build Brand New?

BY LAURA LONGLEY

It happens all the time: Someone decides they want to “improve” a place in western Loudoun—pave a scenic gravel road, turn a rural park into a lighted sportsplex, build a massive new house across from an 18th century Quaker meetinghouse. No sooner are these projects approved with a 5-4 vote of the Board of Supervisors than a small but significant part of our sense of place disappears forever.

That’s what could happen in the 19th century village of Philomont, which sits at the crossroads of Jeb Stuart Road (renamed Philomont Road), and Snickersville Turnpike, a beautiful winding road from Aldie to Bluemont that Visit Loudoun calls one of the greatest drives in Loudoun.

At that crossroads, residents and visitors alike will drop in at the 1913 Philomont General Store to post a letter or pick up local farmers’ produce. Next door is

the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department, which years ago counted 60 volunteer firefighters in its ranks. Today, only seven volunteers remain, tasked with maintaining the station while career—paid—firefighters from the Loudoun County Fire & Rescue System now serve there.

Organized in 1955 after several blazes broke out around Philomont, a group of residents realized the community needed a fire company and raised the funds

to construct a two-bay fire station, and they donated \$18,500 for a fire truck.

From 1956 to 1961, they held a horse show on Bob Griffith’s farm off Colchester Road. But as luck would have it, in 1962 a seven-acre field in the village of Philomont became available for the horse shows.

So, with money raised by the Ladies’ Auxiliary, the fire department bought that land from Frank and Mary Pierce for \$6,000. Ever after, it’s been called the “Horse Show Grounds,” the place where the community congregated for baseball games, barbecues, turkey shoots, and the annual spring horse show that kept

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Purcellville special election interviews
See page 10

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“ IT'S LIFE CHANGING

Finally! A local Doctor is helping cancer survivors live lives free from the constant pain and suffering associated with **Peripheral Neuropathy!**

Irreversible is not a word you want to hear from your Doctor but it's a common one if you've been diagnosed with Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy or CIPN.

John T. of Leesburg survived testicular cancer only to be living life in constant pain. He felt as though he were walking on pins and needles, becoming weaker and weaker every day. "I was beginning to be worried that one day I would be wheelchair-bound."

Nearly half of the patients who undergo chemotherapy will develop Chemotherapy-Induced Peripheral Neuropathy or CIPN.

Chemotherapy meds travel throughout the body and attack cancer cells; sadly they can also cause severe damage to healthy nerves. CIPN can begin within weeks of starting treatment and can worsen as treatment continues. A high number of really unfortunate people will be forced to endure the symptoms associated with CIPN for months, or even years after they've completed chemo.

When asked how CIPN was affecting his quality of life, he responded, "It was difficult to even walk up and down stairs and do other things we usually take for granted."

The most common symptoms include:

- **pain, tingling, burning, weakness, or numbness in arms, hands, legs, or feet**
- **sudden, sharp, stabbing, or shocking pain sensations**
- **loss of touch sensation**
- **clumsiness and trouble using hands to pick up objects or fasten clothing**
- **loss of balance and falling**

For some, their nerves will recover over time. For most, the nerve damage is 'irreversible.' John had been told just that by a series of Doctors and specialists. Essentially they could cure his cancer but couldn't fix the damage done by the drugs used to cure his cancer.

Then John made a call to Rachal Lohr of FIREFLY | Acupuncture & Wellness right here in Ashburn. Rachal and her team are using the time tested science of Acupuncture and technology originally developed by NASA that assists in increasing blood flow and expediting recovery and healing to treat this debilitating disease.

After a series of treatments John was taking stairs with stride!

"We have a beach house and it's up stairs. This morning I walked right down the stairs and got in the car," John shared.

"I remember thinking 'that's become mighty easy for me', I didn't have to hold on to the handrail or anything! It's life-changing to have this mobility back!"

Again and again, we meet with patients who were once diagnosed as "untreatable" or "incurable" but after receiving Rachal Lohr's treatments are now living lives free from pain and suffering. For over 16 years she has been reversing the effects of CIPN and other varieties of Peripheral Neuropathy, including that is caused by diabetes without invasive surgeries and medications that come with uncomfortable side effects.

If you've recently beat cancer only to find that you're living a life in constant pain and discomfort or you're struggling with the same symptoms as a result of either Idiopathic Neuropathy or Diabetic Peripheral Neuropathy, Rachal and the incredible team at FIREFLY can help!

Rachal Lohr is now accepting new patients but only for a limited time. In an effort to protect her patients, both current and future, she has made the difficult decision to limit the number of patients seen in her clinic.

Only 10 new neuropathy patients will be accepted monthly so call (703) 263-2142 now to schedule a consultation.

Visit FIREFLYAcuAndWellness.com to learn more and to take advantage of their New Patient Offer!

20th Anniversary of the Purcellville Tag Sale – Saturday Oct. 7 Rain or Shine

Save the date – it’s that time of year again for the Purcellville Tag Sale. On Saturday, Oct. 7 join the community for a day of fun, shopping, and deals. Oh, and treasures, too. Sign-up will end Monday, Oct. 2.

The Purcellville Tag sale is perfect for the hunter, collector, picker, and hoarder in us all. The event starts bright and early at 8 a.m. and goes to 6 p.m. – rain or shine. “We have people selling vintage clothing, antiques, candles, household items, handmade jewelry, collectibles, and the list goes on,” said Redd. “There is

truly something for everyone.”

All vendors wanted. Go to Purcellville-VaTagSale.com to sign up.

The Purcellville Tag Sale is organized and sponsored by Silas Redd, owner of Nostalgia Boutique located at 142 E. Main Street in Purcellville. Said Redd, “I am happy to be doing the Purcellville Tag Sale again this year. It is our 20th Anniversary. It’s a great opportunity for the Town of Purcellville community to showcase the variety of businesses. It’s also great for our neighbors to come

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Eagle Scout Troop 961 completes project at BRMS

The journey towards becoming an Eagle Scout is marked by a dedication to leadership, community service, and personal growth. In a remarkable display of these qualities, Owen Ayotte, a dedicated young scout from Troop 961, took it upon himself to enhance the aesthetics and functionality of his former middle school, Blue Ridge Middle School by coordinating his troop, family and friends to sand and paint the picnic tables that serve as the school’s outdoor seating area. This initiative not only demonstrated his commitment to serving his community but also left a lasting impact that will help BRMS students enjoy their school experience every day at lunch.



“I was looking for a meaningful Eagle Scout project that would benefit the community, when Mrs. Stetter, the school nurse at Blue Ridge and a Committee member of Troop 961 brought this project to my attention. Then my mom, the German teacher, put me in contact with Mr. Bell and it seemed like a good fit,” Ayotte said.

Ayotte worked with Brion Bell, Principal of Blue Ridge Middle School, at the beginning of the summer to start the plan. The project was to sand and paint the picnic tables at Blue Ridge Middle School to restore and enhance their

appearance with school colors, in order to prolong their longevity in the outdoors for students, staff and community of BRMS.

Said Ayotte, “I reached out to multiple stores requesting donations of materials, supplies and tools to help out with the project. Jake Anderson of Sherwin-Williams donated all of the paint required, around \$700 worth. Home Depot gave \$50 worth of other materials needed. Domino’s donated \$40 in pizza and Vocelli’s donated \$70 worth of pizza to feed the hungry troop. The sanders we used were lent to us by friends and family. “Owen Ayotte, James Cook, Sean Cook, Moses Zhang, all members of Troop 961 of Hillsboro, along with the

Ayotte family and friends, helped with each phase of the process as a collaborative community effort.

“This project means a lot to me because I know it will be used and enjoyed by many students for years to come,” said Ayotte. “These tables provide a space to be able to spend time with friends outside, whether sharing a meal, playing a game or just having a place to sit and talk.”

Principal Bell said, “I truly appreciate the hard work of Owen and all his supporting scouts and friends in this endeavor. The project preserves and beautifies our picnic tables.”

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Just like nothing (else) on earth: Mervin Jackson Park

BY TIM JON

I knew nothing of the late Mervin Jackson of Leesburg, Virginia, when I first moved to town; having said that, I wouldn't have been surprised (even back then) at his existence. I remember first



hearing a description of his character by a trusted friend (this being on the eve of Jackson being appointed to the Town Council back in 1999). Mervin was depicted (and turned out to be true to form) in terms of the classic gentleman: cultured, respectful, knowledgeable, soft-spoken, patient, and of very strong character.

He would serve on Council for some five years, including a two-year stretch as Vice Mayor; my job—back in those golden days—allowed (or forced) me to get to know all the panel members fairly well, as I attended some two dozen official meetings on an annual basis, as well as bumping into them (sometimes literally) at various local events:

groundbreakings, ribbon-cuttings, press conferences, and other civic gatherings. Then, there were the Loudoun Supervisors: the County Board—but that's another story—or several.

Now, the Council Chambers at the Leesburg Town Hall are relatively small: the curved, raised dais in front for the Members and Clerk, a podium with microphone, and some half-dozen rows of seating for the general public.

During the rare controversial issue, the space was packed to standing room only; on most occasions, it was mostly limited to official applicants on local building projects (and their legal counsel), the various town government staff on hand to weigh in on specific items, a handful of concerned citizens, and the oddballs in the crowd—the local media representatives, of which I numbered one of a select few.

With meetings lasting as long as three to four hours at a crack, that meant spending quite a bit of time with those people in that—more or less—intimate

space. I got to know their moods, likes and dislikes, names of their family members, where they went on vacations, educational and professional histories, and things as personal as childhood hobbies



and pastimes. With very few exceptions, that room came to feel almost like a large family gathering room to me.

Now, let's reintroduce Mervin Jackson; every time he would enter the room, the atmosphere changed a little bit: you felt good, resting assured that all was in relative order and things would be

taken care of. He just had that air: never hurried, never rushing anyone else, he would patiently listen to all voices on a particular issue and offer his opinions and votes without bickering or belittling anyone else.

In my experience with government—even at this local level—that can be a rare trait. This type of behavior may not grab headlines or command many sound bites, but it sticks in the memory and resonates on the heart's sounding-board—at least to mine.

Now, Mervin Jackson wasn't the only Council Member exhibiting exemplary character—far from it; the thing is, this is his story, and I enjoyed (and felt privileged) being in his company.

And I think it's time, at this point in the tale, we travel even further back in time. I'd initially stumbled upon the outdoor location now known as Mervin Jackson Park in Leesburg the very first day I moved into town—well over a quarter century prior to this writing; I

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Finding a new purpose to cope with Empty Nest Syndrome

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Transitioning into the "empty nest" phase of life as parents is a significant rite of passage. As your children leave home (often for college), a whirlwind of emotions can ensue. The empty space where there was once laughter, chatter, and occasional teenage drama in the home is suddenly filled with silence.

That's a lot for many parents to handle, and it's normal to feel sadness, loss, and even anxiety about this new chapter. However, it's essential to remember that this unavoidable phase of life also offers parents opportunities for personal growth and rediscovery.

What is Empty Nest Syndrome and what isn't it? Empty Nest Syndrome refers to feelings of sadness or loneliness that parents may feel when their children depart from home. It's important to note though that the phenomenon is not a clinical diagnosis, but rather a shared emotional experience. The assorted emotions and conflicts parents experience occur for a variety of reasons.

For instance, for years, parents define much of their lives around their children's needs. With this constant role now changed, the silence can be daunting, which can

create a sense of lost purpose or a parenting void.

Parents also often identify first and foremost as caregivers. So, when children leave, it can bring about an identity crisis of sorts. And, whether a child is younger or older, parental worry or concern is always a reality. As our children step out and into the world, parental worries can amplify, exacerbating feelings of helplessness or anxiety.

Ask Dr. Mike

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.



So, how can parents cope as they transition into the empty nest phase of life? As a child psychologist, I offer the following tips.

It's important for parents to embrace their feelings. It's natural to feel grief or loss when your young adult child leaves home. Instead of pushing these feelings away, accept and process them. Whether through journaling or discussion, acknowledgment of the loss and ensuing changes is the first step to healing.

They say that travel is the best teacher, and it can also help with healing loss. Without the confines of school calendars or extracurricular activities, the world is your oyster. Whether it's backpacking in Europe or a quiet retreat in the countryside, the options are endless.

It's also important to rediscover new relationships. For

those with partners, this period can be a golden opportunity to rekindle the romance and shared activities you once enjoyed. Single parents can use this time for self-reflection and personal development.

Forging a new routine is also a good idea. Whether it's adopting a new fitness regimen, picking up an old hobby, or dedicating time for self-care, new routines can provide structure and purpose.

Focusing on personal enrichment can also be helpful. Joining a club, learning an instrument, or diving into a new book series are just a few pursuits to consider that can be therapeutically rewarding.

Maintaining a connection with your adult child is a must, and thanks to technology, staying connected has never been easier. Calls, texts, or visits can keep the parent-child bond strong.

It's also smart to lean on others as needed. There are many support groups, both on and offline, dedicated to helping parents navigate the empty nest phase. Lean on these communities for advice and camaraderie.

Volunteering is a great way to refocus, and many parents find real joy in giving back. You could explore charitable initiatives or even embark on something grander such as an overseas volunteer mission.

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Don't Pave Old Wheatland Road

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Some of the residents in new subdivisions off Old Wheatland Road have signed a petition asking that the road be paved. There are 100 or so signatures, but only 59 addresses. The latter figure is the one to use.

Paving Old Wheatland is a very bad idea for many reasons.

A Defective Poll

The County's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure (DTCI) sent out its own poll, but it is defective: Respondents were asked if they preferred paving or not paving. The poll ignored some—good alternatives to asphalt paving.

One, using a better aggregate and binder, grading carefully and rolling the new road surface has produced superb results for test sections on Old Waterford Rd. and Purcellville Rd. Those

sections are smoother, there is less dust, and this surfacing method is far less expensive than asphalt. This is a better alternative and requires less maintenance than asphalt and should please all parties.

The DTCI poll failed to present this or other options, and polled only a very limited number of addresses; the Board of Supervisors should tell DTCI to go back and get it right.

VDOT and Waterford

While the paving issue is political at the county level, ultimate decision-making technically rests with VDOT. Commonwealth Code (33.2-332. B.2) sets out factors that VDOT must consider before paving, and local sentiment is one of them: VDOT must consider "the views of residents and owners of property adjacent to or served by such highway ..." VDOT generally defers to local government when making decisions about roads, and local government

should abide by the same factors that VDOT must consider.

VDOT/DTCI tried to assess local sentiment by polling owners in new subdivisions off Old Wheatland but it failed to poll residents in Waterford. The village's Main Street is a continuation of Old Wheatland Road, and Waterford is clearly "served by" Old Wheatland. The village's views are critically important.

Paving Old Wheatland would be a grave problem for Waterford, a National Historic Landmark. Numerous traffic studies have agreed that there are terrible levels of cut-through traffic in the village. Paving Old Wheatland would just make the situation much worse.

A New and Valid Poll

DOT or DTCI must find the truth. I suspect a poll of Waterford residents would yield overwhelming opposition to paving Old Wheatland with asphalt. Residents are now preparing such a poll.

We need a new poll that offers the

alternative surfacing method rather than a simplistic, binary pave-don't pave choice, and which includes Waterford and nearby areas. -

The Truth About Old Wheatland

Old Wheatland is actually in excellent condition with few potholes, minimum washboarding, no drainage problems and a generally smooth surface. It has long straightaways which encourage fast traffic. If the road is paved, speeding over its seven blind hills would lead to catastrophic accidents.

In actuality, nothing really needs to be done to Old Wheatland right now. However, if money is available for an alternative surfacing method, go for it.

No Debate about Safety

The pro-paving petition says that speed limits are constantly being violated now and that some traffic races along at up to 70 mph. If that's the case, only a simpleton would assert that paving would improve the situation. Paving the road would increase the amount of

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An opinion from two candidates for the Catoctin District

Voters' choice: who will stand up for western Loudoun?

BY JOHN ELLIS, CANDIDATE FOR LOUDOUN COUNTY BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, CATOCTIN DISTRICT

The majority of western Loudoun's citizens want to preserve the unique, historical charm and character of western Loudoun's small towns, villages, and countryside. They do not want more development.

But that is not what is actually happening.



The County's Zoning Ordinance allows rural developers to build up to 10,000 more houses in the western countryside, which would generate more than 100,000 vehicle trips per day on roads that are already congested and dangerous.

Some county supervisors, planning commissioners and staff seem unaware of or unconcerned by the impacts of development, traffic, rising floodplains, falling water tables, the relentless loss of valuable farmland, and rising taxes.

Why do we have this huge gap between what citizens want and what the County government is delivering?

One reason is that the County has, for a long time, favored the interests of land speculators and developers over the interests of tens of thousands of residents. When citizens propose zoning reforms, County staff often reply that they must consult with the "users" of the Zoning Ordinance – by which they do not mean Mr. and Mrs. Homeowner. The "users" they are referring to are their friends in the development industry, who have preferential access and disproportionate influence over the County's decision-making processes.

The recent debate over whether the County should protect

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Building a vision for Western Loudoun

BY CALEB KERSHNER, CATOCTIN DISTRICT SUPERVISOR AND CANDIDATE FOR REELECTION

When I think of western Loudoun's future, I see rural farms and horse trails, wineries and beds and breakfasts, surrounded by beautiful open space. I see towns and villages that support tight-knit communities and make lasting memories, where our kids thrive in our schools, play with their friends, and grow up safe.



That's my vision for western Loudoun. I've spent the last four years working to turn it into a reality. The stakes are worryingly high – just look at Prince William County, which recently gave away its historic Rural Crescent to be paved and built over by development.

If we don't work now to preserve our rural west, it's going to vanish in our lifetimes. Here's how I'm working to fix that.

Secure Our Rural Land

Our county is racing to save our rural land from overdevelopment. And we're winning, thanks to conservation easements that permanently protect the land. Once a parcel goes into an easement, it can't be developed later. Over 83,000 acres have been permanently preserved in this way, with another 75,000 acres left to go. And for every acre of prime agricultural soil that's had a cluster development built over it, we've seen another 20 acres go into these easements.

I'm working to supplement this with a Purchase of Development Rights (PDR) program, which would buy the

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Dear Editor:

My name is Juan Pablo Segura and I'm running to represent Virginia Senate District 31.

I'm running to bring political renewal to Virginia and I hope to earn your vote in the fall.

LETTER

I'm writing today to talk about a young entrepreneur and farmer that lives in Senate District 31.

I first met Katie and her family, who hail from Lucketts, at the Blue Ridge Cattlemen's Dinner at Whitestone Farm in Aldie. We talked about her 4H project and about the lambs and steer she was raising

to auction off at the Loudoun County Fair.

I was impressed and I told her to keep me updated on her work. In early July, Katie sent me a letter explaining how her 4H project had progressed. She wanted to come by my office to explain how the animals were doing and talk about how the fair auction would work.

Katie's efforts paid off: she raised a great steer and lamb. When I saw them at the fair, I was impressed not only with how well she finished them but how hard she and the other 4Hers were working to educate the public walking through the barn about their animals.

By the way – Katie woke up before school every day to mix a special meal for these animals. It was impressive to see that kind of grit and determination.

On Friday night, after a delicious BBQ dinner sponsored by Smokin Willy's in

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Where do the Catoctin District candidates stand on two important issues?

Dear Editor:

In the November 7 election for the Board of Supervisors there are, among others, two important issues facing the Town of Purcellville. One is where do the two

LETTER

candidates running for the Catoctin District Supervisor stand on eliminating the North/Northern Collector Road from the County's Transportation Plan. The other issue is where do the two candidates stand on supporting the county rezoning of a 117-acre county property located at 17110 Purcellville Road which is currently zoned JLMA-3 (Joint Land Management Area), to Planned Development-Industrial Park (PD-IP).

On June 17, I sent an email to Catoctin District Supervisor Caleb Kershner asking for his position on the aforementioned issues. I received no response, and had to ask again on July 26.

On August 3, Supervisor Kershner's aide responded, "Supervisor Kershner continues to review these matters since Purcellville is new to his district, he would like to hear more from his constituents and County staff before taking a position. We are awaiting a briefing from staff on this matter and will get back to you once he has a position."

I asked, on August 5, when a meeting is scheduled if I could get a copy of staff notes and documents regarding

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Chris Reed

Christopher G.

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PURCELLVILLE TOWN COUNCIL

My wife and I chose to live in Purcellville to raise our family in a small town with a strong sense of community. **I'm asking for your vote on November 7.**

Early voting starts September 22.

I will work for our residents without catering to special interest groups who would destroy the character of our small town.

I will stand up to nonstop developer pressure. Unlike my opponent, you won't see my campaign signs on developers' properties. Last year my opponent ran with the pro-development group that lost. His positions haven't changed.

I look forward to working with our new town manager and those on town council who wish to sustain Purcellville's small town character, while nurturing prosperity.



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Loudoun's Future stands for protecting the County we know today

Dear Editor:

When we set out to create Loudoun's Future, we did so with one goal in mind: To fight the sprawl and overcrowding that is encroaching on our way of life. Many of us moved to this part of the state for its natural beauty, sprawling countryside, and laidback lifestyle.

As rapid urbanization and development continue to encroach on our way life, now more than ever we must stand up and have our voices heard. Whether it's attempting to pave over our unique and historic gravel roads, building new subdivisions, or erecting data centers, our way of life as we know it is under attack.

More growth is not our objective here; it leads to higher taxes and the destruction of our way of life. Loudoun County is the richest county in the United States. We don't need growth. We want to maintain our way of life and let others share it with us.

Loudoun's Future stands for protecting the Loudoun County that we know today. And that includes all of Loudoun County from the east to the more rural west. It's protecting suburban Loudoun from new data centers and commercial development that'll take away parks,

trails, and green spaces. It's protecting rural Loudoun's natural beauty, agricultural footprint, and historic villages from commercialization, high-density housing, and the closing of community schools.

All of us moved to Loudoun for a different reason, but what we can all agree on is the beauty, tranquility, and peacefulness that comes from living here. We're blessed to have a mixture of rural countryside and commercialization, but we must be wary of tipping the scales too far in one direction.

Let us all join forces to protect our slice of Heaven and work to keep our County in its truest form. The journey towards a brighter Loudoun County begins with you.

As a resident, business owner, or someone who cares deeply about the community's future, your support and donations are pivotal. By contributing to Loudoun's Future, you are investing in a legacy of progress that will reverberate for decades. Your donation will directly fund initiatives that promote sustainable growth, protect the environment, and uplift the quality of life for all who call Loudoun home. Please visit our webpage, <https://loudouns-future.org>, go to the donation section, and give whatever you can.

Together, we can pave the way for a future that stands as a testament to the shared values and aspirations of the Loudoun community. Join us in shaping tomorrow, today.

John Lovegrove
 Chairman Loudoun's Future

Ram Venkatachalam for Supervisor Little River District, Loudoun County

BOLD, NEW LEADERSHIP

I am running to make a positive difference in the lives of every resident of Loudoun County, to support a strong local economy, to keep your taxes down, and to keep divisive social politics out of local government.

We have a great county, but we can do even better – and that requires bold, new leadership.

I will bring my 20 years of business experience and community service to the Board of Supervisors – along with my ability to bring people together and achieve common sense results.



The first Supervisor from Little River District should be representative of the most diverse district in our county, while also serving Loudoun as a whole -- from its most suburban and commercial areas to its most rural and historic ones.

I will be that Supervisor, and I welcome your ideas and support.

Ram

Early voting starts September 22nd
 November 7th is election day

Paid for and Authorized by Friends of Ram Venkatachalam

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Dawn to Dusk

BY LAURA LONGLEY

That was Middleburg's main message to the Loudoun County Parks, Recreation, and Community Services team about the hours for future use of Mickie Gordon Memorial Park.

On the evening of Aug. 31, more than 140 people, armed with sticky notes, markers, and maps crowded around large tables at the Middleburg Community Center for a charrette to share their ideas for this historic park.

Parks and Rec staff joined Steve Torpy, director of the department, to help out. Also on hand were Bridge Littleton, mayor of Middleburg, and Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-At Large).

The gathering was upbeat and collegial, unlike the one held at the end of June when this same crowd assembled at the nearby American Legion Post to voice their opposition to the county's plan to turn the historic park into a championship cricket complex.

In that now scrapped plan, which caught the community by surprise, Parks and Rec would have installed 18 lights on poles 100 feet tall around three cricket fields measuring 450 feet in diameter. The lights would have blazed over the three fields from 6 to 11 p.m., obscuring the dark sky. Adding to the transformation of this 100-acre rural park would have been space for 250 vehicles on paved not pervious lots, a new entrance on Carters Farm Lane, and turn lanes off Rt. 50, an award-winning traffic-calmed highway.

Working in teams, each table produced a wish list of features for the park. Not surprisingly, several items appeared on all 13 lists. "Dawn to dusk" came up on top by a mile, but there was a strong runner up: maintenance.

Other recommendations included:
Honor the park's past: Create an indoor facility for hosting reunions and other events that includes a pictorial and narrative history of the Hall family and their field where, before the end of segregation, Black baseball teams could play. Tell the story of "Pop" Gordon and his son, Mickie, who for decades coached baseball for Loudoun County kids and adults.

Restore baseball to the park: Rebuild the fields so the American Legion can resume their games and young people can get out there for a casual game with friends.



GOVERNMENT

Install a playground for children.

Add trails, lots of them: Narrative trails telling the story of Native Americans in these parts, of African Americans who

not only played ball here but gathered three times a year for horse races, dances, ball games, and music. Walking trails meant for walking, not dirt bikes. Exercise trails. Nature trails. A trail for horses leading from their parked trailers to nearby gravel roads.

Clean up the pond for catch-and-release fishing.

Be inclusive: Maintain the community garden area for everyone, whether they live east or west of Gilberts Corner.

Keep current with the county's progress on constructing more cricket pitches in locations closer to where the players live. As cricket players at the meeting said, they don't care about lights and they want fields closer to where they live; they can play during the day. That will save them hours on the road shuttling their children to fields in Maryland. After their report, Torpy noted that additional cricket pitches are

now in a new site plan for Hanson Park.

Take a field trip to Fauquier: One table's spokesperson mentioned a quiet, natural park on Rt. 55, between Delaplane and The Plains; she said it might be a good model for Mickie Gordon Memorial Park.

Create a partnership between Middleburg and Loudoun County Parks and Rec for managing and programming the park.

Use the park for daytime events.

Enjoy the dark skies: Occasionally, after dusk,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 26 »

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CANDIDATES FOR TOWN COUNCIL

Elections are November 7th

Chris Reed

Chris Reed lives with his wife and two children on Main Street in the Town of Purcellville. He and his wife worked for several years to restore their historic home. Often citizens would stop by to meet them and talk about the progress of their renovation. Reed, a Penn State University graduate, holds two bachelor's degrees – one in biology and one in environmental resource management. In his spare time, Reed enjoys kayak-fishing, landscaping, and running and biking on the W&OD Trail.



Blue Ridge Leader: Why are you running for town council?

Chris Reed: I am running for Town Council to be an advocate for citizens' views and their vision for preserving the unique character of our small town. I will promote responsive, citizen-centered government and intend to meet the needs of our residents without catering to nonstop developer pressure.

I chose to live in the Town of Purcellville because I love the architecture, incorporation of green space and the sense of calm I get when I drive into town. It's a great community where families feel safe, and neighbors

look out for one another. I would like to see our historic downtown area become a tourist destination by encouraging small businesses, such as quaint shops, eateries and even amenities that promote our location along the W&OD trail.

I am running in support of slow growth, environmental stewardship, debt reduction and controlled spending. I ask for your vote in the Town of Purcellville Special Election on November 7. Early voting starts on September 22.

BRL: Is the Rt.7/690 Interchange good for the town; why or why not?

CONTINUED ON PAGE 14 »

Caleb Stought

Caleb Stought works from home as a software engineer, and in his spare time he studies history and does CrossFit. He has also served in the military for 10 years as a linguist, speaking Spanish, French, Arabic, and Persian. Stought lives in Mayfair with his wife and two daughters. They are expecting a third daughter in September.



Blue Ridge Leader: Why are you running for town council?

Caleb Stought: Service to others is a big part of my life and my family's life. I served as a military linguist for 10 years, and my family and I enjoy serving in our church and our local community. My family and I also love living in Purcellville. It's a special town where you can cheer for the local baseball team and then take your kids roller skating.

If we want to preserve this special town for future generations, we must be good stewards of it now. This means engaging in responsible management of our town's resources, staff, and money. I'm running for Town Council because I want to serve and preserve this town we

all love.

I believe I will be effective as a council member because I am able to listen to people with different perspectives and understand their viewpoints. I always show respect to people even when I disagree with them. I also seek to draw conclusions from facts, rather than only accepting facts that support preconceived notions.

As a councilmember, I will work hard to build good relationships with town staff, the local business community, and other local governments. We can't get the results we want by attacking the people we disagree with. We are all neighbors, not enemies.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 21 »



Paid for and Authorized by Jonathan Erickson for Soil and Water Director



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TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE SPECIAL ELECTION



CANDIDATE: REED, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

Chris Reed: Loudoun County is approved to build three of the four proposed on/off ramps, which would be part of a modified diamond interchange design. The fourth ramp is encumbered by impacts to the Catoctin Meadows subdivision and flooding of the South Fork Catoctin Creek and remains the only ramp subject to Town Council decisions. The three unencumbered ramps would provide town residents, as well as those to the north, access to both eastbound and westbound Route 7. The fourth ramp only restricts access to Route 690 for those traveling eastbound on Route 7, where minimal volume is anticipated.

While town residents may experience some short-term conveniences from the interchange, County engineers have said that the purpose is to improve traffic outside town, yet Purcellville's residents want traffic to improve inside town.

There is also an unsafe aspect of the design, which includes the use of roundabouts. However, unlike other roundabout locations, this one introduces pedestrian crossings into the mix of heavy traffic entering and exiting a major highway and clearly creates a dangerous situation. To date there has been no safety analysis.

If the Town of Purcellville were to re-zone the encumbered area and facilitate the building of the fourth ramp, without the County mitigating any of the issues, it could be held liable for any future repercussions. Therefore, I do not feel that this interchange will be good for the town in the long run. In my opinion, the current plan potentially saddles the town with unnecessary risk and literally "paves the way" for more sprawling development.

Therefore, my goal is to work on fixing the existing Rt.7/287 Interchange first as it appears to be the best path to solving any traffic issues in Purcellville.

BRL: Do you support the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street which is approved for a 6-story commercial and 40 condo building – and the extension of O Street to support it?

Chris Reed: I do not support the plan, as approved, for multiple reasons. First, a 6-story building of any kind does not fit the character of our downtown area. Second, while the plan includes much needed retail space, the area cannot accommodate the number of vehicles that will result from a 40-condo building, which could be 80 permanent cars. Where would patrons and town visitors park? Finally, the O-Street extension from 21st Street to Hatcher Avenue would likely compound the Town's existing traffic problems and could be difficult for fire

and rescue vehicles to access.

Instead, I could support either the rehabilitation of the buildings that would be demolished to make way for Vineyard Square or the construction of new buildings that are in keeping with the scale and character of the other buildings in our historic downtown area.

BRL: Do you support the north west corner of 287 and Rt. 7 Cardinal Corner proposal?

Chris Reed: Cardinal Corner is a proposal to develop the 7-acre parcel of land, which is located north of the Town, fronting Berlin Turnpike (Route 287) and the corner of St. Francis Court. A group of developers is proposing that the Town annex this land and give them zoning for a 130-room hotel, a conference center, a restaurant, a market and a fueling station with a convenience store. The plan would require the Town to supply the developers' project with water and sewer infrastructure.

At this time, I do not support annexing this property, as it seems extending water and sewer service across Route 7 would be complicated and costly to the Town. Additionally, I don't support suburbanizing Purcellville by expanding the footprint of our town in this direction, especially when there is so much potential in the revitalization of our downtown area.

The developers said that extending commercial to this area would take traffic off Main Street and would deter people from coming into town, while also offering alternatives to some of the restaurants in town. This goal of taking business away from Main Street is the opposite of what we should do. I would rather see the property remain zoned for one house per three acres, like the surrounding homes in the area and have a smaller hotel within walking distance to downtown. This encourages foot-traffic and supports our unique small businesses.

BRL: Would you support the annexation of the Kuhn property located on Purcellville Road?

Chris Reed: The Kuhn property totals 117-acres, located north of town, along the east side of Purcellville Road, across from the Mayfair development. Currently, the property is zoned Joint Land Management Area (JLMA)-3, which according to the County Comprehensive Plan, is supposed to be used for "a low density, rural mix of residential and business uses around the town that are distinguishable from the intensity and character of development in Purcellville."

The Kuhn plan is for the development of an industrial park, but due to the property's JLMA-3 limitations, would require

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 »

The November 2023 Election will include the following races:

State Offices:

- Senate of Virginia
- House of Delegates

Constitutional Offices:

- Clerk of Court
- Commonwealth’s Attorney
- Sheriff
- Commissioner of Revenue
- Treasurer

Board of Supervisors

- Chairman – Board of Supervisors
- Board of Supervisors – Election Districts – Algonkian, Ashburn, Broad Run, Catoctin, Dulles, Leesburg, Little River, and Sterling

School Board

Note: Due to the implementation of staggered terms for the school board some seats will be elected to a 4-year term this year, and some will be elected to a 2-year term this year.

- Member School Board – At Large (4-term)
- School Board – Ashburn, Catoctin, Little River (4-year term)
- School Board – Algonkian, Broad Run, Dulles, Leesburg, and

Sterling (2-year term)

Soil and Water Conservation

- Director – Loudoun District

Referendum

- School Projects
- Public Safety and Parks and Recreation Projects
- Transportation Projects

Absentee/early voting opens Friday, Sept. 22

Leesburg office

- Monday – Friday 8:30 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Extended Hours: Tuesday, Oct. 24, Thursday, Oct. 26, Tuesday, Oct. 31, and
- Thursday, Nov. 2 open 8:30 a.m. until 7 p.m.
- Saturdays, Oct. 28 and Nov. 4 – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

NOTE: Office will be closed on Monday, Oct. 9, Indigenous Peoples Day.

Satellite locations open Monday, Oct. 23 through Nov. 4 (two weeks)

- Claude Moore Recreation Center – 46105 Loudoun Park Lane, Sterling 20164
 - Mondays, Wednesdays, and

Friday (2 weeks) – 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.

- Tuesdays and Thursdays (2 weeks) – 12 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- Saturdays, Oct. 28 and Nov. 4 – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

- Dulles South Recreation Center – 24950 Riding Center Drive, Chantilly 20152

- Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays (2 weeks) – 10 a.m. – 5 p.m.
- Tuesdays and Thursdays (2 weeks) – 12 p.m. – 7 p.m.
- Saturdays, Oct. 28 and Nov. 4 – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

- Carver Senior Center: 200 E. Willie Palmer Way, Purcellville 20132

- Saturdays, Oct. 28 and Nov. 4 – 9 a.m. – 5 p.m.

Voter Registration deadline – Monday, Oct. 16

Absentee Voting by Mail application submission deadline – Friday, Oct. 27

Early In-Person Voting deadline – Saturday, Nov. 4

Purcellville issues drought watch

The Town of Purcellville has issued a drought watch as dry conditions persist in the region. The Town is asking residents to use water wisely and cautiously. Residents can continue to use wise water measures by avoiding outside watering of landscaping, limiting washing of vehicles, and ensuring no water leaks on owners’ property.

The U.S. Drought Monitor shows Purcellville is in a moderate drought, and water levels are below normal at the Town’s reservoir, which supplies about half of the Town’s daily water production.

The Town’s Water Emergency Ordinance has three stages: Watch, Warning, and Emergency. The Town continues to monitor the drought condition and future rain forecasts closely. It is hoped that rain in the coming weeks will alleviate the drought conditions and eliminate the need for water restrictions.



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Mike Sanders, the “Flag Guy,” has a message for Leesburg

BY ROBERT TALBOT

It's difficult to drive through Leesburg without noticing elaborate American flag displays decorating traffic signs, medians, and street corners all across town. Linger outside the circuit courthouse on East Market Street on any pleasant evening, and you're bound to run into the man who sets up these displays.

Mike Sanders—sometimes referred to as “Flag Guy” by locals—is an Air Force veteran and avid bicyclist and is easily identified by his neoprene outfits and patriotically festooned sedan. Sanders eagerly dispenses wisdom gleaned from his life experiences; chatting with him unlocks a treasure trove of anecdotes and proverbs.

Sanders grew up in the small town of Hampton, South Carolina, spending much of his youth around his grandfather, a Pentecostal minister. He recounts how his grandfather would minister to the homeless and down-trodden in the streets. He would always ask about what they had done to improve their situation first. If they had made some effort, then he would offer them his help. If they hadn't tried, however, he would simply promise to pray for them and walk away.

Sanders learned a valuable lesson about individual effort from his grandfather. “This country has a lot of safety nets,” he says. “[It has] a lot of things to help you out if you want to help yourself ... but you've got to do something. Like my grandfather said: ‘I can help you, but you gotta come meet me halfway!’”

After graduating high school, Sanders spent four years on active duty in the United States Air Force. Hoping that his service would take him around the world, he

was disappointed to find himself stationed at Biloxi, Mississippi.

He switched to working as a computer systems operator in hopes of being sent somewhere exotic, but this change only brought him to an Air Force base in Georgia. “The reason I joined the military was I wanted to travel,” he laments. “I wanted to see the world. Well, I grew up in South Carolina, and the first two places I got to go to were Mississippi and Georgia.”

Sanders retired from active duty for a reserve position and a career as a satcom technician, which afforded him ample travel opportunities. He ultimately settled in Leesburg around 2008.

His “Flag Guy” identity was born in 2009 after watching the funeral procession for soldier Stephan Mace of Purcellville, who was killed in action in Afghanistan. “When I was standing there, looking at that, I was looking around at people's faces. And people looked kind of sad.” Noting how all his neighbors were troubled by the ongoing war, he remembered what his grandfather had taught him about working proactively to make the world a better place. “I thought, ‘Well, what's something that makes

people smile in America? Flags. Because people understand what they represent.’”

Reasoning that the American flag could cheer people up while serving as a reminder of what unites us, Sanders

embarked on a personal mission of displaying it all across town. Always armed with an arsenal of flags and zip ties, he's been making his rounds for fourteen years, and he doesn't intend to stop anytime soon.

Of course, Sanders wouldn't keep at this if the American flag didn't mean something special to him. It reminds him of the incredible cooperation it took the founders to give us the liberty we enjoy. “You think about all these people who came here from all these different places [and] different cultures ... You can't tell me that when they were in that room, that they didn't have disagreements. We all know that. But they didn't lose sight of the

greater goal, which [was] one country ... We're going to rise and we're going to fall together. Whatever happens, we're a community. We're a country.”

Above all, Sanders hopes to inspire youth to remember their American identity, discover their talents, and

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »





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CATOCTIN DISTRICT CANDIDATES, CON'T FROM PAGE 8
 these important issues facing our town. On August 7, Supervisor Kershner's aide responded that the "staff briefing will be face to face so there are no transcripts from it."

On August 11, I was informed that there will be a meeting on August 21 "to have a meeting to discuss and be briefed."

I sent the same questions to candidate for the Catoctin District John Ellis on August 5 and received an answer on August 7.

Regarding his position on the North/Northern Collector Road, John Ellis responded by saying, "I think it's inappropriate for the County to ignore the Town's clear opposition to the Northern Collector Road. If I'm elected, I will ask to remove it from the County Transportation Plan and all other planning documents."

On the rezoning of county JLMA-3

property to PD-IP, John Ellis said, "I do not support re-zoning the Kuhn property to PD-IP. The available road access and water/sewer infrastructure do not meet the requirements for PD-IP zoning (see section 4-502 of the Zoning Ordinance)."

John Ellis said that "Putting a commercial park there would represent another intrusion of urban development into the western Loudoun countryside."

I appreciate candidate John Ellis' quick response and knowledge of the issues facing the Town of Purcellville.

Update: On August 22, Supervisor Kershner said he "would not be inclined to support it" [the Northern Collector Road]. Regarding the rezoning of the Kuhn property from JLMA-3 to PD-IP, Supervisor Kershner said "he feels it may be premature to make a decision."

*Christine Green
Purcellville*

SEGURA, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

Purcellville, we headed over to the auction barn. I was ready to buy my first animal, the grand champion pig.

Later in the auction I was honored to buy Katie's market lamb and support Katie's future: she'll be using her profits to support future 4H projects – and she'll also be putting away some money for veterinary school. We have to celebrate and support programs like 4H in our community. 4H is a great example of a program that teaches kids

how to plan for the future, work hard, and achieve their goals. It also raises awareness of the challenges and realities of farmers here in our district.

I promise to be a fierce advocate for Loudoun County and Fauquier County agriculture in Richmond so hard workers like Katie can continue to build their future here and we can all benefit from their important work.

*Juan Pablo Segura
Candidate for Virginia Senate District 31*

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Saving Grace

The Lincoln Preservation Foundation has announced that their signature restoration project, Saving Grace, is well underway at the African American Grace Heritage Site in the village of Lincoln.

Grace is an early African American church founded in 1872 and built in 1885. Once the thriving center of community for local Black residents, the church was abandoned in 1949 after the Black population shifted and most congregants moved to Purcellville.

Efforts began 20 years ago to rescue the deteriorated stone structure, spearheaded by Lincoln Preservation Foundation's founder, Carol Morris Dukes. Today, the project is a joint collaboration between LPF and descendants of the former



congregation, Friends of Grace, a non-profit led by Jeffrey Jackson.

Outstanding volunteer support and financial gifts from individuals and organizations resulted in today's milestone, including several pump-priming grants from the Loudoun Preservation Society. A substantial financial gift from the Goose Creek Meeting and a large Commonwealth History Fund grant from the Virginia Museum of History & Culture put fundraising efforts over the top this year.

Cochran's Stone Masonry has begun work on removing and rebuilding the entire roof structure, using time-honored craftsmanship to replicate the original. Lincoln Preservation is grateful to their collaborators, the Friends of Grace, for sharing a common vision for Saving Grace. For more information on this African American landmark, visit savinggraceproject.org or lincolnpreservation.org.

Come to the 53rd Annual Bluemont Fair Sept. 16 and 17



The 53rd Annual Bluemont Fair will be held on Sept. 16 and 17, 10 a.m.-5 p.m. both days, rain or shine. An old-fashioned Country Fair, the Bluemont Fair features traditional crafts (juried), local art and authors, craft and farming demonstrations. There will be a mix of music: traditional, blues, and country. Don't forget a free Children's Fair, petting zoo, Llamas and Alpacas.

Quilts will be on display, Gardener's Shed, blacksmithing and stone wall building demonstrations, homemade food, baked goods, jams and jellies, pie-baking/pickle-making contest, antiques and collectables. There will be a Wine and Beer Garden with gourmet treats, and a Bluemont history slide show.

Snickersville Academy will feature a restored 1825 log schoolhouse, beekeepers and hives, antique caboose, pre-Civil War Country Store, Farmers Market, model trains, and lots of hands-on activities. The Plaster Museum of Bluemont Heritage will

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Third Annual Celebrate Purcellville

The Town of Purcellville and the Purcellville Parks and Recreation Advisory Board invite Purcellville businesses and organizations to register to participate in the third annual Celebrate Purcellville.

This week-long, town-wide event is designed to encourage people to visit the Town of Purcellville, shop at local businesses, enjoy local food and beverage options, tour the town, and enjoy live music and activities. Celebrate

CONTINUED ON PAGE 27 »

CONTINUED ON PAGE 28 »



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CANDIDATE: STOUGHT, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

BRL: Is the Rt.7/690 Interchange good for the town; why or why not?

Caleb Stought: The 7/690 Interchange will be a tremendous benefit to the town. Town consultants and an independent study by VDOT have both confirmed the importance of the 7/690 Interchange for alleviating traffic congestion in town. The interchange will help reduce in-town traffic congestion by providing an additional outlet for cars to get to Route 7. Additionally, completion of the 7/690 Interchange will help get work started on the 7/287 Interchange, which is another important traffic improvement for our town.

Throughout the planning process, staff at both the town and county level have worked diligently to ensure the interchange does not negatively impact the floodplain. The hydrologic and hydraulic analysis shows that the interchange is not causing an increase in the Base Flood Elevation. The town has also confirmed that the project conforms with the requirements of the Town's Floodplain Ordinance.

With the start of school, our most heavily traveled intersections are experiencing gridlock. All it takes is a drive along Hirst Rd or Main St at rush hour during the school year to understand how important this interchange is for Purcellville.

BRL: Do you support the Vineyard Square project on 21st Street which is approved for a 6-story commercial and 40 condo building – and the extension of O Street to support it?

Caleb Stought: This project has already been approved by the town. Therefore, my goal with this project is to work with the owners to ensure the project fits the character of historic downtown Purcellville. This would mean working to ensure the building's scale and architecture are consistent with the look and feel of historic downtown. It would also mean working with the project owners so that the street facing shops and restaurants become a contributing part of the local business community, not competition to it. Overall, the project should contribute to the character and economic activity of 21st street, not detract from it.

As for O Street, I do not support extending it as this would be an unnecessary expenditure by the town. There are other transportation projects in town, particularly sidewalk projects that contribute to walkability, where that money would go to much better use.

BRL: Do you support the north west corner of 287 and Rt. 7 Cardinal Corner proposal?

Caleb Stought: This project was presented very recently to council and is still in the preliminary planning stages. What we know so far is it will include a small boutique hotel, a year-round farmer's market, and a locally sourced farm to table restaurant. If done well, I believe this project has the potential to provide services to the community that are not currently available.

However, regarding annexation, I do not believe the town should support annexing this property unless we have the water capacity to support it. There are projects in town limits that will be built in the next few years. We must ensure that Purcellville has the infrastructure it needs to support what is currently within town limits before we consider any annexations.

Our most recent water supply study projected a 100k gallon per day deficit by 2025. Unless we can guarantee utility services to current and planned in-town requirements, I would not support this annexation.

BRL: Would you support the annexation of the Kuhn property located on Purcellville Road?

Caleb Stought: As with the previous question, I do not believe the town should

support annexing this property unless we have the water capacity to support it. Unless we can guarantee utility services to current and planned in-town requirements, I would not support this annexation.

BRL: How would you help keep utility rate increases to a minimum?

Caleb Stought: Utility rates should be set commensurately with the cost the town incurs to provide utility services. Rates should not be raised higher than needed, as this puts an undue financial burden on town residents. Rates should also not be artificially suppressed, as this typically provides a short-term benefit but costs residents more money in the long run. Any necessary rate increases should be done in a consistent and sustainable manner. This helps the town and its residents plan for the future.

There are town projects currently in the planning phase that will be built in the next few years. These projects will contribute financially to our utility systems but will also require services provided by the town. It is critical that we work to shape these projects to ensure they strengthen the financial health of the town rather than weaken it.



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Quentin Walston composes for piano, his jazz trio, and large ensembles, blending memorable melodies and striking rhythms with adventurous improvisations. This program is supported by the Virginia Commission for the Arts.

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- Jazz Breakdown: History and Beyond:** (18 & up) 9/12 & 9/13 5:00 pm
- Music For Dessert Concert:** 9/13 7:00 pm
- Gallery Gathering: Quinten Walston, Abstract – Jazz and Art:** 9/14 4:45 pm FREE
- History of Jazz:** 9/15 10:30 am

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PHILOMONT FIREHOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

the fire department afloat until 2019.

During this time, the volunteer firefighters were appealing to the Loudoun County Fire & Rescue Department to replace their existing station with a new firehouse. Their preferred location: the Horse Show Grounds, half a mile east from the original fire station on Snickersville Turnpike.

This proposal ran counter to the community's hopes to work with the county to restore the Horse Show Grounds for field sports and equine activities. The residents envision a restored grass ring for horse training with a trail connecting to the area's gravel roads.

But it soon became clear that government and elected officials, along with career and volunteer firefighters, county planning and capital infrastructure staffs, were committed to the new station concept as opposed to renovation of the existing fire station.

Meanwhile, the community made the case for renovating and adding on to the existing station.

They pointed to the track record of the county's contracted architects, Lemay Erickson Willcox, now part of FGM Architects. The firm won numerous gold medals for renovations. They are also known for achieving superior results on parcels as small as half an acre, for staying well within budget, and for meeting

specifications for state-of-the-art health and safety requirements.

Several years ago, FGM Architects won a "Firehouse" gold medal for their renovation of the Middleburg fire station—a renovation accomplished without costly temporary quarters.

In 2022, they again won the gold medal for the Fairfax County Fire & Rescue Station 25. The 17,386 square-foot station sits on one acre. Designed to meet LEED Gold Certification, it was completed at a total cost of \$9,887,000.

In 2021, they completed the City of Fairfax Station 33, which occupies a half-acre. The 22,000 square-foot Firehouse gold medal winner cost \$11,148,438.

Replacing a 1970s-era station in Fairfax on just one acre, the firm designed a three-bay station that accommodates up to eight firefighters per shift with room for 14 in the future. It includes a fitness center, kitchen, dining room, dayroom, outdoor terrace, and administrative offices. Most importantly, it incorporates the latest Hot Zone principles to support the decontamination of personnel and equipment after operational events.

The firm did explore renovation and addition options for the existing Philomont station and found them doable. Their focus, however, shifted to designing a new station on the Horse Show Grounds. At several community meetings, it became evident that the

decision makers wanted their new building at the location on the seven-acre property—this despite overwhelming community input to the contrary.

Each presentation for the new station on the Horse Show Grounds met with requests by members of the Philomont community for a renovation study. To no avail.

Finally, a group of Philomont residents enlisted a neighbor and highly qualified architect, Bill Ridge, to design a renovation of the existing station on its 2.2 acres. Ridge, who earned his bachelor's degree at Stanford University and his master's in architecture at Harvard University Graduate School of Design, served as senior lead architect and chief of Architecture, Engineering and Asset Management at the EPA for more than 30 years.

He developed two plans for renovation. He submitted them to Loudoun County Fire & Rescue Chief Keith Johnson. They were also reviewed by FGM Architects and by Scott Worrest, then acting deputy director of Loudoun's Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure. Worrest discussed the designs briefly with Ridge, and FGM Architects had no questions.

Instead of Worrest and FGM Architects going back to Ridge for follow-ups and more details, they bypassed him and prepared the second feasibility study.

FGM Architects hired a company to estimate the project. These cost estimates are on top of contractor price estimates, including 20 percent added to design cost, 22.59 percent added to cost escalation, 5 percent added to the estimated contractor's fee, 2.5 percent added for insurance and bond increases, and itemized general conditions.

With such high estimates based on insufficient detail, Ridge's bottom line ballooned. His two renovation designs measure 20,624 and 23,769 square feet and cost \$22,749,138 and \$24,018,161 respectively. For the smaller project, take away the \$12,441,756 in additional estimates over contractor price, and the price is closer to \$10,300,000.

The new station design at the Horse Show Grounds is 18,500 square feet; it was estimated in 2020 at over \$20 million. The proposed new firehouse construction in the Rural Historic Village of Philomont disregards the county's 2019 Comprehensive Plan for the Rural Policy Area, as it is not compatible with surrounding smaller historic structures now under the Virginia Historic Landmark Register and pending for the National Register for Historic Districts. Philomont is also in the Village Conservation Overlay District.

If a new fire station were to be built at the Horse Show Grounds, which is on

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 >

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CANBY ROAD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

sent an email to residents of Canby Road on August 30 announcing that he is removing the road from the Secondary Road Six-Year Plan and the agenda of the September 13 BOS meeting.

The decision came shortly after the community presented a neighborhood survey to the BOS which showed that 65% of residents were anti-paving. 11% abstained, 12% were not contacted and 12% favored paving.

“Once you pave a road and change something, it’s changed forever,” Randall said. “So it’s really important that if we make these changes to rural and historic places that we darn sure better know that we’re doing it because we absolutely have to for life, health, safety, and not just for convenience.”

The road, which meets East Colonial Highway and Harmony Church Road on either side, already has paved segments at each end. The paving proposal outlined intentions to extend the paved portion by 300 feet on the East Colonial Highway side – just past a development called Longview Crest Place – with an estimated cost of \$300,000.

Despite Canby Road having been part of the Six-Year Plan since May 12, 2021, locals were not formally made aware that their road might be paved.

On December 13, 2022, Longview Crest Place resident Jarrad Smith sent an email to Kershner requesting that a portion of Canby Road be considered for paving. Smith cited safety concerns among the citizens of Longview Crest Place.

“I am familiar with Canby Road and the state of the road in general. I was able to add it to the Six-Year Rural Road plan last year,” Kershner responded, referring to the public hearing on June 15, 2022.

On January 3, following an email chain discussion

between Kershner, Smith and other Longview Crest Place residents, Kershner wrote, “Maintenance is not a solution and at this point I need best suggestions to remedy this situation as soon as possible.”

The Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure administered a poll to 12 homes in Longview Crest Place, where all surveyed residents responded favorably to paving. The president of the Longview Crest Place Homeowners Association, whose home is on Canby Road across from the neighborhood, was left out of the survey.

Canby Road as a whole has approximately 120 homes, which, unless located in Longview Crest Place, were not formally surveyed by the county despite the fact that they live on the road.

Informed by word-of-mouth and informal emails that the issue was to be discussed again at the July 12 BOS public hearing, various locals of differing opinions showed up to share their perspective.

Many expressed dissatisfaction that they were not notified by Kershner or otherwise of the potential paving. However, aside from frustrations over the communication towards locals, citizens along Canby Road took the opportunity to share why or why not they think their road should be hard-surfaced.

Resident Chris Fennell said that the process has not been transparent, noting that paving is “not reversible.” “We moved to Canby Road to cherish the environment,” Fennell said. “Not change it.”

Some characterized constant potholes of the current gravel road as a hazard, while others believed that they benefit the community by slowing down traffic.

“I understand that everybody’s focused right now on the potholes slowing cars down, but I want to call attention to the fact that ... a significant amount of residents

have school-aged children,” Smith said, explaining that a hard-surfaced road in front of Longview Crest Place would be safer for their kids.

Smith went on to recall witnessing cars swerving and driving on the wrong side of the road or into the grass to avoid potentially dangerous spots.

Many attested that the Virginia Department of Transportation completes upkeep and sends trucks to re-gravel Canby Road year-round, but Smith believes that the road is not repaired “as timely as everyone thinks.”

“I think the county’s been very responsible about making repairs to that road, but the issues are significant,” another resident, Lori Campbell, said. “It’s not just a couple potholes. I think that there are huge safety concerns at this point.”

On March 26, Mitch Diamond, active member of the Rural Roads Committee, informed the email chain containing Kershner, Smith and others that he drove the length of Canby Road and saw very few small potholes.

“For the vast majority of the drive the road seemed to be level and normal and fully drivable,” Diamond wrote.

In addition to talking about potholes during the hearing, those who were pro-paving also said that a gravel or dirt road causes their vehicles to become dirty much faster, which is inconvenient and costly to keep up with.

When sharing her thoughts, Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At Large) compared some speakers to those who move into a house nearby Dulles International Airport and then complain about the airplane noise.

“Most people, when they move in, they don’t move in with the promise that their road is going to be paved,” Randall said.

Rural roads are a part of the charm and history of

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CANBY ROAD, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23

rural Loudoun County, according to Randall. Her general support of gravel roads was echoed by many Canby Road locals.

“I don’t believe the paving should extend even one foot, much less all the way down the road,” Citizen Pete Barker said. “I don’t favor turning the neighborhood into a classic suburban.”

Along Canby Road live various equestrians and their horses, dog owners, parents with children, bicyclists and joggers who appreciate the ability to walk down their road knowing that they can hear any vehicle coming and that cars will go slower driving down gravel.

“We are on Canby Road every day ... We walk our dog there and I will say that those potholes, which a lot of people have complained about, are a godsend,” Canby Road resident Robert Meeks said. “This is what stops more people coming down those roads.”

Robert Muller, who lives where the asphalt ends and the gravel begins, shared a similar sentiment to Meeks. He described the potholes as a “saving grace” to prevent speeding and cut-through traffic when Route 7 gets backed up during rush hour or due to an accident.

“This paving plan will just move those potholes 300 feet further down and I’m not sure that’s the best conception of this,” Meeks said.

During the public hearing, Supervisor Michael Turner (D-Ashburn) pointed out that there are certain prerequisite criteria to approve a rural rustic road for paving, the final one being that “the citizens along the road should support the improvement.”

Later, Supervisor Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) made a motion that, in the future, staff should be directed to formally poll all residents and present the results to the BOS. The motion passed 9-0.



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On August 16, the community held a meeting with Kershner in attendance where the details of the plan were discussed with Canby Road locals.

Of the estimated 35 meeting attendees, four citizens of Longview Crest Place announced their favoritism towards the plan, reiterating reasons of safety and convenience in advocacy for hard-surfacing.

Addressing concerns about children being harmed by potholes near bus stops, one resident introduced herself as a former bus driver and explained that Loudoun County bus drivers or parents can easily complete a report of road condition safety if they notice substantial

danger for minors.

Others who spoke up during the meeting expressed their desire to leave Canby Road gravel and for VDOT to continue routine maintenance.

Though much recent contention has been over Canby Road specifically, the Secondary Road Six-Year Plan outlines a construction program to hard-surface not only Canby Road, but also segments of Goshen Road, Hogback Mountain Road, John Wolford Road and Old Wheatland Road.

“With a lot of our rural rustic roads, the road itself is historic, so we have to be really careful what we do and how we do it,” Randall said.



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CANDIDATE: REED, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

some zoning changes and would also need to be annexed into the Town of Purcellville for the purpose of having access to water and sewer infrastructure. It is my understanding that supplying this service costs the town more than it receives from developers' tap fees. This is obviously unsustainable. Likewise, since we are already near the capacity of our fresh water supply, we would likely have to seek costly alternative sources of water, in order to service any newly annexed properties of this size.

One of the stated goals of the Kuhn plan is to move businesses out of the center of town and into the proposed industrial park. This goal does not align with either

the County or the Town's Comprehensive Plans, which reflect the vision of the citizens. Likewise, due to the potential scale of this development, there would be less ability for the town to regulate future land use in the surrounding area.

Therefore, I would not support the current proposal for annexation of the Kuhn property, as it would unnecessarily expand the borders of the Town, as well as assume additional costs and risk. Alternatively, I would support a small-scale version of the Kuhn plan of relocating businesses to a more conducive location, perhaps utilizing potential infill areas already available within the town.

BRL: How would you keep utility rate increases to a minimum?

if the county builds the big new firehouse on it. The volunteer unit will not give the existing firehouse and land to the county. As Rick Pearsall, Philomont Volunteer Fire Department board chair, told Blue Ridge Supervisor Tony R. Buffington (R) a few years ago, for Loudoun County to buy the existing firehouse property the cost would be upwards of \$2 million.

The Philomont community is still asking

Chris Reed: The town water system is budgeted as an enterprise utility fund, designed to be self-sustaining, with the cost of operation and maintenance (O&M) equal to the income from user fees. It is to be funded by our water bill payments, not our taxes. In actuality, the town water rate currently fluctuates, based on the cost of servicing our inherited debt for construction of the wastewater treatment plant and based on O&M costs associated with running the plant. Since large payments on this debt are coming due in the near future, we will likely see substantial increases in the cost of our water, unless we find alternative sources of revenue and practice fiscal restraint.

First, I will remain open-minded and

seek out additional recurring revenue streams, like cell tower rentals, as well as new and creative, one-time revenue opportunities, like the nutrient credit program at the town's Aberdeen property, which generated almost \$1 million.

Second, I will consider keeping the town's cash reserves at a level that maintains the fiscal balance of the system without maintaining an excess. The excess cash could be used to pay down the debt.

Third, I would continue to be cautious toward unnecessarily annexing properties into the town, which would incur costs associated with supplying water and sewer infrastructure to new developments, without resulting in a net-positive benefit to the town.

PHILOMONT FIREHOUSE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Snickersville Turnpike, it would require turn lanes on this historic road.

Complicating the estimates is the Philomont Volunteer Fire Department's ownership of the existing fire station, to include its 2.2 acres, and the seven-acre Horse Show Grounds.

A nonprofit corporation, the Volunteer Fire Department wants to give the Horse Show Grounds to the county—but only

for the renovation of the existing fire station. They have submitted a petition with 451 signatures from Philomont residents served by the fire department service area. This petition was done by walking and driving to neighborhood homes and includes 10 percent from former Philomont Fire Department volunteers.

Board of Supervisors Chair Phyllis J. Randall (D-At Large) toured the fire station and the Horse Show Grounds on

Aug 31.

The plan to build the new station continues to move forward in the process with the submission of Special Exception documents. Members of the public can also provide input at these upcoming meetings, tentatively scheduled for the fall with Special Exceptions and Commission Permits needed from both the Planning Commission and the Board of Supervisors.

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BUILDING A VISION, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

development rights to other land parcels. We could fund that program with a dedicated half-cent from Loudoun's data center personal property tax rate.

All this has been jeopardized, however, by a proposed zoning amendment that would affect our prime agricultural soils. This amendment would carve off a percentage of each land parcel and forbid the landowners from developing that part.

If preserved rural land is a golden egg, this amendment would kill the goose that lays them. It would reduce the value of the land, which would discourage landowners from using conservation easements. Instead, it would incentivize them to sell to developers before the amendment is passed. And unlike conservation easements, its protections could be undone by a later Board.

Support Our Rural Economy

To support Loudoun's diverse rural economy, I've worked to increase our local food production, improve our agricultural education, and develop infrastructure for our equine industry. I've also pushed to establish a Department of Agriculture for Loudoun, and to have us build an equine and agricultural event center.

I've worked extensively with LCPS, the Joint School Board, and the Virginia Cooperative Extension to integrate agricultural education and rural workforce development into our schools. That includes expanding Futures Farmers of America into more schools, and supporting the New Ag School and Think Outside mentoring programs.

Fix Broadband and Roads

To help with our county's broadband woes, I introduced an Emergency Broadband Initiative in 2020. Part of it grew into a \$74 million fiber-to-the-home expansion project, which we funded with a public-private partnership and grants,

not local tax dollars. When that project comes online in summer 2024, it will bring broadband to 8,860 underserved homes.

My staff and I have also relentlessly monitored and promoted vital road projects. We accelerated the Route 15 North widening project to start in spring 2024, secured funding for the Spinks Ferry Roundabout, and kept safety improvements moving for Route 9 and Route 15 South, including the Route 9/287 roundabout.

Protect Our Communities

To help our towns and villages fix issues while preserving their charm, I got the Lucketts Small Area plan added to the county's Zoning Work Plan. As Catocin now includes Bluemont, Hillsboro, Philomont, Purcellville, and Round Hill, I'm pursuing Small Area Plans for them too.

I also introduced and passed the Preserving the Landmark Waterford infrastructure project, got the Waterford/Paeonian Springs Water and Wastewater Project moving, and opened the Lovettsville Community Center and Lovettsville Park. My office rescued the Lucketts Ruritans Recycling program, and kept the original Lucketts fire station from being abandoned after the new firehouse was built.

Finally, I've opposed this Board's increased tax rate every year, because our families need more power over their own money, not less. And I fought the attempt to replace our elected Sheriff's Office with a county-controlled police force, because our residents deserve more of a say in their government, not less.

I'm proud of what my office has accomplished this term. I hope you believe in my vision as much as I do, and that you'll give me the honor of serving as your Catocin District Supervisor for another four years.

DAWN TO DUSK, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

bring out the telescopes for special sky watching programs that can be a lot of fun for kids and adults alike.

Take the Special Exception off the table.

As the meeting closed, Torpy laid out the next step—a meeting to unveil how the ideas could take shape on the land.

Torpy also gave the crowd a heads-up about the park's tennis courts. "I know I've got some credibility issues with this group here tonight, but I want to tell you that the courts are on the rotation for renovation. So, you'll probably see that happening within the next 10 days."

Randall summarized her takeaways. "What I heard at almost every table was

that because the park was not being maintained, the park was not being used, and then the county says, 'Oh, the park is not being used, so now let's do something with it.'"

She went on to explain how the park work could get on a faster track with a Board Member Initiative. County staff can start putting money toward it, like maintaining the park right now and not six years out in the Capital Improvement Program. "I think we have a gorgeous property over there," Randall said, "and we shouldn't wait to maintain it."

Littleton closed the meeting with the news that another meeting will be scheduled in a few weeks. "When you guys get the date set," he told Torpy, "we will get the word out to everybody."

VOTER'S CHOICE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

prime farming soils from residential development is a clear example. A powerful local investor and landowner has threatened the County that, if it takes any action to preserve farmland, he will take his business elsewhere.

His associates argue that septic fields are a "higher and better" use of Loudoun's fertile farm soils than farming itself. These individuals, who disguise themselves as "conservationists," have intimidated County officials and succeeded in delaying and possibly gutting the whole effort.

Another reason is that some supervisors don't acknowledge or take responsibility for the consequences of their decisions. They make heartfelt proclamations about the importance of preserving rural areas and seem to believe that simply mouthing the words will matter. They say they "have not approved a single new home" in the rural area, without mentioning that, in fact, 900 more homes were built there during their current tenure.

In a single five-minute statement last June, my opponent first announced that he didn't want to build any more homes – but then personally intervened to ensure that a subdivision on Fleetwood Road will be expanded from 29 to 246 houses. He stuck to this position despite the protests of

his colleagues, Supervisors Buffington and Letourneau, who described it as "the definition of insanity."

Describing himself to his constituents as another "conservationist," my opponent does not advertise that he appointed a real estate developer to the County's Planning Commission or that his Commissioner has recently proposed to fill up the remaining open spaces in Loudoun's "Transition Policy Area" with thousands more houses. Both gentlemen seem to assume that County taxpayers will be happy to spend the billions that would be needed to build more roads and schools for a large new population.

The residents of our towns and villages are also affected. For example:

- The County continues to push for a high-speed "northern collector" road through quiet neighborhoods in Purcellville – despite the Town Council's repeated requests to remove it from the County's transportation plan.
- In an unpublicized midnight vote, the Board of Supervisors decided to spend \$7 million to buy farmland outside of Purcellville appraised at \$2 million to build a recreation center and other facilities – when it already owned land within the town that was

more suitable.

- Ignoring the Philomont community's wishes, the County insists that it needs to put an oversized \$20 million new fire and rescue station on the village's historic horse grounds – when the current station gets less than one call a day.
- My opponent rejected a \$14 million traffic congestion relief plan for Lucketts, which VDOT offered to pay for, in favor of a \$55 million bypass that County taxpayers will have to pay for. The bypass would go through 400 acres of land owned by out-of-area land speculators, on which developers have proposed to build a large new subdivision.

In our democracy, local voters should decide what is best for our area. In this year's election, we have a clear choice. Voters can choose either the status quo, which leads to more development, more traffic, and fewer farms – or they can vote for smarter growth and protection of the communities and countryside we all love.

If you think it's time to stand up to the developers and finally take some real action to maintain the character and charm of western Loudoun, then I ask for your vote on November 7.

THIRD ANNUAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

Purcellville will be held Oct. 2-8.

Businesses with a current Town of Purcellville business license and non-profit organizations located within the incorporated limits are welcome to register online for free. The deadline to register is Sept. 16.

Businesses and organizations that participate in Celebrate Purcellville will be listed on the Celebrate Purcellville page of the Town web site and in the Celebrate Purcellville passport. Residents and visitors will take their passports to participating businesses/organizations to get a sticker. During the event finale on Oct. 8, Celebrate Purcellville Passports with a minimum number of stickers can be turned in for a chance to win prizes.

The Celebrate Purcellville Finale will take place on Sunday, Oct. 8 from 12-5 p.m. in Dillon's Woods. There will be live music, games, facepainting, local businesses/organizations, and food and drink. People who participated in the Celebrate Purcellville passport program may turn in their booklets during the finale for a chance to win prizes donated by local businesses and organizations.

Businesses and organizations may sponsor Celebrate Purcellville to get additional recognition. For more information about how to sponsor and/or how to participate in Celebrate Purcellville, visit www.purcellvilleva.gov/997/Celebrate-Purcellville.

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DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Academic ventures can be a helpful way to process change. Consider enrolling in a course, attending workshops, or even pursuing a new degree. It's never too late to learn.

Mentoring is also a great way to shift perspective and to find purpose again. With years of experience, you can offer guidance to youngsters.

The nest may seem empty now, but it's brimming with potential. And, while you may be struggling to find purpose as a parent, remember that the journey doesn't end here – in many ways, the journey has only just begun. Your children will always need you; the only change is that they will need you differently as they become more autonomous and independent

in adulthood.

"There are two lasting bequests we can give our children. One is roots. The other is wings." – Hodding Carter, Jr.

Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D. "Dr. Mike" is a clinical Psychologist in private practice. He can be reached at 703-723-2999, and is located at 44095 Pipeline Plaza, Suite 240, Ashburn.

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**20TH ANNIVERSARY, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3**

together and have fun. It's always exciting to find fabulous treasures from vendors and local businesses."

Sign up at PurcellvilleVaTagSale.com. The first 40 to sign up will be listed on the printed map. But no worries – most everyone who signs up will be listed on the website.

Redd said, "After the huge turnout from last year, I am really looking forward to this year's Tag Sale, and I enjoy seeing all the vendors throughout town. I also want to sincerely thank our sponsors, Abernethy and Spencer Greenhouses, and Bank of Clarke County – two amazing pillars in our community. Without their generous sponsorship, this event would not be able to continue."

"We recently received a grant from Loudoun County that will be used to help promote this successful event even further," said Redd. "A lot of people look at the Tag Sale as a one-day event, but the long-term benefits to the Town of Purcellville are undeniable. The Tag Sale is an opportunity for out-of-towners to get introduced to our local businesses, and they do return."

Said Redd, "The reality is the Tag Sale is really the kick off for the fall and winter shopping seasons. People are looking for gift ideas, seasonal clothing options, home décor that reflects the changing weather, and more.

Text Silas at 540 751-8252 with questions or email him at ShopAtNostalgia@gmail.com. It's time to get your "stuff" ready to sell at Purcellville Tag Sale, Saturday, Oct. 7 – rain or shine.

MIKE SANDERS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 18

go forth making good contributions to the world. "I always tell young people ... gravitate to your individuality. You were given skills and wonderful gifts, and you want to use them. If you go out there like this [narrows hands to the sides of his head like blinders] rather than like this [widens hands for an expansive view], you're doing yourself a disservice."

HOUSTON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

traffic and worsen the speeding problem. That's common sense and also a point made by the Federal Highway Administration.

Several citizens fronting on Old Wheatland have put up poignant "Slow Down" signs along the road. I feel their pain and so should every Supervisor.

Proponents of paving always claim that paved roads are safer than unpaved roads. Local facts show that this is wrong and purposefully misleading.

Routes 704, Hamilton Station, and 698, Old Wheatland, both run from Waterford west to Route 9. I studied a VDOT tool showing crash data. Going back a few years, unpaved Old Wheatland shows only four crashes, while paved Hamilton Station Road had 22.

It's an easy conclusion: Paving brings more traffic, faster speeds and more accidents. Don't pave Old Wheatland.

A Historic Tapestry

Our network of unpaved roads is a key part of the county's identity and is an asset appreciated by every resident of the county. Think of these roads as a tapestry, and paving a road here and a road there is akin to nibbling away at that tapestry, a few threads at a time until the tapestry disappears. If we lose our unpaved road network, we lose something that makes Loudoun unique.

That tapestry of unpaved roads is a countywide asset and deserves thoughtful voting by the entire Board, individually and collectively. Paving these roads is not a district-only issue. These historic roads belong to all Loudoun citizens, and on issues affecting these byways, every Supervisor has a responsibility to care for them.

In developing millions of square feet of office buildings for an Atlanta firm, Charles Houston never had to pave a single gravel road. He lives on an unpaved road where traffic is slow and safe.

COME TO THE 53RD ANNUAL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

offer a special exhibit, and be on the look-out for delights throughout the entire village. Fun for the whole family.

The Fair is set throughout the historic village of Bluemont in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains in western Loudoun County, Virginia. No Pets. General admission is \$10, aged 9 and under free, and free parking.

For more information go to www.bluemontfair.org, or call 540.554.2367.

TIM JON, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

had driven almost nonstop, after leaving my home state of Minnesota, with the ink still wet on a broadcasting certificate and the promise of a job as news director at the local radio station— WAGE AM 1200.

On my way through downtown Leesburg, I distinctly recall passing by the iconic little building known as the Log Cabin, on the same block as the Town Hall and parking garage. I was destined to get to know these grounds and the people that walked them in the upcoming weeks, months, and years; that first day, though, everything was new to my senses.

And it met my pleasantly surprised approval; I knew no one in the area, and this being prior to ubiquitous instant communications, I'd had little to go by for gaining familiarity, other than a few local papers sent to me by those at the radio station.

Now, it would be a few years until I'd even meet (now the late) Mervin Jackson; he was at that time serving the Town Government on the Leesburg Planning Commission and the Board of Architectural Review—earning his daily bread with the Federal Bureau of Investigation. Our lives continued: Mervin went on to serve on Council, and I covered every meeting they had for 10 straight years.

But life is anything but predictable and stable. The radio station evaporated, and I went on to earn my keep with the U.S. Postal Service. We would lose Mervin Jackson in the Year 2009; the Town Council created the park in his name a half-dozen years after his passing. It's right there—adjacent to the Log Cabin—on Loudoun Street, next to the Town Hall.

The last time I visited, I felt a great sense of comfort, and seemed to gain an assurance that all was well in hand—much as I did all those year ago, sitting in Council Chambers as the Members would gather to conduct business, and Mervin would enter the room, and you'd smile, because he made you feel that way, and things would get started.

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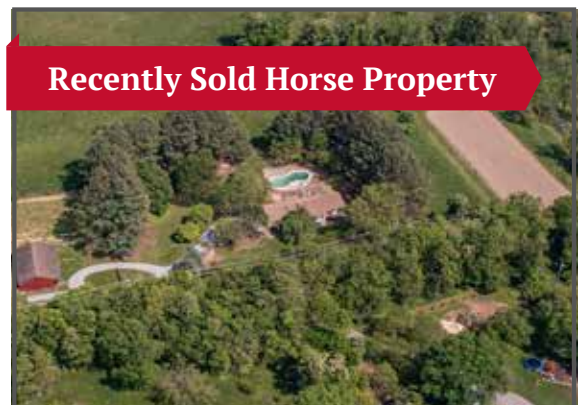
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