

Op-Ed: Just the facts

BY FORMER PURCELLVILLE MAYOR KWASI FRASER

As Ronald Reagan insightfully remarked, “The nine most terrifying words in the English language are: I’m from the Government, and I’m here to help.” True economic growth thrives when government embraces an environment that is fair, honest, and predictable for all.

Hosting a meeting at 8 a.m. on a workday to outline a vision crafted by two politicians, one of whom was the recipient of large campaign donations from a 21st Street developer, does not empower our local businesses. Instead, you should allow businesses to shape the vision and take action based on our community’s comprehensive plan. Despite challenges, over the past eight years, small businesses have invested over \$6 million

in downtown Purcellville, demonstrating resilience in the face of setbacks like the stagnated misaligned development scheme on 21st Street.

Contrary to misinformation, my record speaks for itself. Along with Town Council, we reduced the debt we inherited by ten million dollars, secured \$10.5 million in ARPA funds through my advocacy with other elected leaders from the National League of Cities, and witnessed a doubling of meals tax revenue, over \$1 million in nutrient credit bank revenue, welcomed hundreds of new businesses, implemented millions in road infrastructure improvements, and experienced a significant increase in property values throughout my tenure as mayor.

While water fee revenue exceeds the water utility fund debt by over four times,

and sewer fee revenue exceeds the sewer fund debt by two times, a majority of Town Council raised water and sewer rates because they refuse to acknowledge their appetite for uncontrolled spending.

As the Town’s record shows, in 2019 we adopted the modest annual increases in water and sewer rates as recommended by Davenport; and we were told by Davenport that these modest increases would ensure predictability throughout the remaining life of our inherited utility debt.

However, a year later we were told by management that we needed to significantly raise rates above the modest increases agreed to just a year prior; even after we received \$10.5 million in ARPA revenue we did not budget for. This reveals the town’s issues with financial forecasting and uncontrolled spending on operational costs.

It’s concerning to observe that this is the only jurisdiction in Loudoun County contemplating a \$2.5 million charge to



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ratepayers for PFAS remediation, despite the prevailing uncertainties surrounding this issue.

While other Towns collaborate with state and federal agencies to have the polluters and federal government pay for future unknown PFAS concerns, your approach

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Draft zoning ordinance withheld from planning commissioners sparks pushback

BY VALERIE CURY

During the April 18 Purcellville Planning Commission Meeting the town’s planning staff appeared to be obstructing, by direction of members of the town council and town management, planning commission efforts to complete the zoning ordinance rewrite – by refusing to return the latest version of the draft zoning ordinance to the planning commission. Also, staff is independently pursuing alternatives to the zoning ordinance that the planning commission had

already reviewed and approved. They are charged with insuring that the zoning ordinance reflects the citizens’ aspirations expressed in the Town’s Comprehensive Plan.

“I have a couple questions about the status of the zoning ordinance that we have previously discussed,” said Vice Chair Ed Neham. He asked for the articles “that have been more or less settled.” That way “it doesn’t all come to us as a waterfall,” when the ordinance has finally finished staff review.

Planning Manager Boyd Lawrence said

staff had a discussion about when to let the commissioners have the zoning ordinance draft. Based on Summer Wilkes, the Town’s Zoning Administrator’s “communication with the town council,” he said, “we are going to probably wait. Well, we have to wait till May 8 after the joint meeting. Then we’ll get more direction on that.”

Lawrence said the editing of the zoning ordinance is “for the most part done.” He said “some articles could be condensed and there might still be some formatting that’s done.”

Neham asked, “So is the document in a condition where we can start looking at it? I don’t see that there’s a need to have to wait for authorization from the town council to start reviewing it.”

Lawrence said, “There is a red line draft and it’s been updated.” “But primarily we do have the draft, yeah,” said Lawrence.

Commissioner Nedim Ogelman said he felt like “we have been working on trying to fulfill citizen wishes and the wishes of the town council that approved the Comprehensive Plan and I am hearing all of these initiatives that have nothing to do – aren’t based in the Comprehensive Plan or related to what people said they would do when they ran for office.” He gave an example of the “town mayor saying he was going to run on slow growth, and

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I walked away from being told I would spend more time in a wheel chair as an Amputee – 300 hundred miles this season in fact.....



Thank you John!

My name is JR and this is my story.

I contracted the influenza virus and became septic which resulted in bilateral transtibial (below the knee) amputations. This was a huge blow for me because I was never sick in my life. I was always active and this happened at 64 years of age.

I lost all faith in the prosthetic treatments that I received because of the pain and discomfort and no matter what the prosthetist did, my activity did not improve, in fact it got worse with every treatment. I was told that my very active lifestyle was over and that I would spend more time in a wheelchair. I was devastated.

Then I met another amputee, Ben B, that did everything and more than what he had done when he had both legs.....he was competing in Spartan races and even water skiing and snow boarding double diamonds! He referred me to John Hattingh CP, CPO,(SA), LPO, M.Sc at Prosthetic Care Facility of Virginia in Leesburg....and that's when my life changed for the better.

From the first consult John was very thorough. He did a full evaluation, limb exam, nerve test, muscle strength test, test for contractures and evaluated my current prosthesis and why they weren't working for me. He then suggested a treatment protocol based on my goals.



Once the documentation was in order, he proceeded to cast me standing up which was a first for me. I received my test sockets within 3 days, not 4 weeks!....and they fit so well that I could walk out of his office and go and test them for a week.

The day after I got my first pair of diagnostic test sockets from John, I got on a plane to go and help my buddy at a gun show....I was in seventh heaven. I had no pain, no discomfort and I didn't need my wheelchair. Upon my return some adjustments were made and I got my final prosthesis....still no pain and my activity started to improve. I did not have any restrictions. My strength and muscle tone improved again and instead of focusing on my prosthetic limbs, I was focusing on getting my level of activity up.

It is now 5 years later and I am enjoying my life and activity. This season, working as a guide for hunters with my dogs, I will have walked over 300 miles leading hunting parties on uneven terrain. To cope with the change in my limb volume, John gave me Revo Adjustable sockets which I can adjust on the fly. This has been a game changer.

I have put so many miles on my prostheses, that I wore them out and had to get a replacement pair. Every time John treats me he comes up with better sockets and better components. He has given my life back to me for which I will be eternally grateful.

If you are struggling with your prosthetic treatment, I suggest you go and speak to John, he will come up with a comfortable and functional solution as he has done for so many patients. He sees patients from all over the world and offers a destination program.



Purcellville Florist to celebrate 50 Years

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

As Purcellville Florist approaches its 50th year, owner Sherry Rose Garrison sits in her workspace preparing orders and contemplating the years. Having just completed the prom juggernaut last weekend for students at Loudoun Valley HS, Garrison and her team get to work on a wide array of corsages and boutonnières for the prom at Woodgrove HS. This is just another busy week for a business that has stood the test of time.

Garrison has been creating floral designs since she was 15. Flanked by shelves of a variety of vases and ribbons of every color and texture, she reflects on the decades she has been in the flower business, "There used to be three local florist shops, in Leesburg, Berryville and in Lincoln. They were all owned by Mr. Holmes Gregg and since my sister was doing the bookkeeping at the Leesburg shop, I was able to work part-time there." It was Garrison's flare for design and her interest in art that initially got her the job, but

she quickly caught on in terms of the wide variety of tasks required by a florist.

Garrison continued to hone her floral arranging skills taking a job with a big florist (Fuqua and Sheffield) in Richmond while she studied Health and Physical Ed at Virginia Commonwealth University. She returned to Purcellville, got married and as the three aforementioned florist shops had been sold, she was then managing the Leesburg location. When the opportunity came to work in a shop in Purcellville, Garrison went for it as she knew the new owner, Evelyn Thompson, from her days at Hill-top Florist in Lincoln.

Purcellville Florist was at first located in the "breezeway" which is now home to local businesses such as Purcellville Pub, Belly Love brewery and several others. Their initial space was small until they moved up to a larger space (where Petite LouLou is now located). Garrison speaks of how all of the business owners would get together to decorate the breezeway, making it a wonderful place for Townspeople to gather.

From that location they moved to Maple Avenue (where Finn Thai is now) and stayed for 15 years. Purcellville Florist then moved to the spot where they are currently located on Main Street at

the west end of town. Garrison indicates that they have been there for about 13 years.

When asked what her favorite flower is, Garrison says that one would think it would be the rose as that was her maiden name. "I guess I was destined to work with flowers with that being my name," she says. But her favorites are flowers that come in white like tulips, peonies, ranunculi, hydrangea and roses.

People's preferences have not changed much since the 1970s but the



Sherry Rose Garrison with her daughters Kristie (Jones) and Melodee (Shepherd) holding the clock painted by local artist Patricia Taylor Holz. Their email is purcellvillefloristva@gmail.com.

Internet has altered customers' ideas for arrangements. Rather than leaving it up to the florist to create a design, many present an image they've seen online and ask for that to be reproduced. Garrison indicates that she misses the days of always being asked to come up with interesting and creative designs. However, there have been amazing requests over the years. "Oh, we've done a bus, a baseball, an elephant, an American flag, and we do angels," says Garrison.

One misconception in the floral business is that the customer has contacted the local florist directly. There are many "order gatherers" out there who most people do not even realize they have contacted.

The price of the order then contains a "middle-man" expense. Moreover, if something is not satisfactory, there is often no recourse because the customer was not in direct contact with the florist. Garrison advises to always make sure the website and the phone number belong to the actual florist. That is the best bouquet bang for the buck as well.

Purcellville Florist being a longtime part of the business community also means that the owner and family are part of the fabric of the town. Garrison says,

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Editorial: Gaslighting permeating Purcellville

“Gaslight” was a film of the 1940’s in which a husband tried to convince his wife through the flickering of the ominous gas lighting that she was going mad; “losing it,” in today’s vernacular.

OPINION

The term has made it into the present-day to mean a manipulation the purpose of which is to make people believe something is true that, in fact, is not; a question as important today as it was in 1945 when Ingrid Bergman won the best actress Oscar for her performance as the wife in the film.

Purcellville’s Vice Mayor Erin Rayner used the concept of gas lamp to describe the gas lighting she proposes to use in a revitalization, if one could be called that, of Purcellville’s Historic Downtown Area centered around 21st Street. She said she borrowed this idea from

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A Board of Supervisors Meeting

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Ceremony

Everyone expected the April 10 Board of Supervisors’ Public Hearing to be brutal. There were at least four contentious items and every seat in the Board Room of the Government Center was filled. Most estimates were that the meeting would continue until at least 3 a.m. Chair Phyllis Randall was pessimistic and had searched for ideas on shortening the hearing. Then the local clergy had an idea – conduct the meeting as if it was a religious service to set a calming tone.

OPINION

“Why not?” Randall thought.

At 5:59 she gave a signal and the lights dimmed. A stentorian voice in the back of the hall bellowed instructions, “Ladies and Gentlemen, please be seated.”

The room was almost dark when a young girl, wearing a white robe, walked serenely down the aisle, holding a large candle which she placed on the center of the dais. The room lights came up slightly.

Then a tinkling sound. A black-robed elder swung a censer from side to side, dispensing an aroma around the room. It was silent as the audience absorbed the scent.

Randall spoke softly into a microphone. “Welcome, all. Let’s try something

that would let us work efficiently and amiably. For this meeting, I’m reducing public comments to two minutes. I’m asking my colleagues to talk only when they believe an issue needs fulsome discussion. What do you think?”

There was polite applause. A few gave forth with a cheer. A teenager from Valley took the mic, “I like that smoke, but dudes, it was weed!”

So much for that fairy tale ... and the fairy tale that growth is good.

A Nine-hour Meeting

At 6 p.m. on April 10 the Board of Supervisors convened a regularly scheduled Public Hearing. The meeting ended nine hours later – 3 a.m. Even then, several major items had to be deferred to a later time.

Fortunately, squabbles are local. National issues don’t seem matter as much. Perhaps that’s because Supervisors shy away from that minefield. Perhaps national issues don’t seem to affect our daily lives. Perhaps it’s because there are only nine Supervisors and they try to be amiable.

Leadership

Leaders often get hit in the back by arrows, or at least by complaints. I’ve heard many undeserved complaints about Phyllis Randall. Expecting “perfect” voting records is unrealistic. A fair

standard is a voting record that generally aligns with my opinions; honesty, a sense of good government, and clear independence from special interests. Some special interests are multi-millionaire land barons who would fight their grandmother for a dollar bill. I’m a populist and they make me sick.

Back to Randall. Go to a meeting and you’ll see that every citizen has a chance to be heard, that time limits are enforced not just against citizens, but against fellow Supervisors. She is often a better advocate for western Loudoun than western Loudoun’s Supervisor, Caleb Kershner, though sometimes her vote can be inexplicable

Politics

Voters prefer politicians who don’t come across as a politician. Two good examples are Matt Letourneau and Kristen Umstattd. One Republican and one Democrat. They often vote the wrong way (that is, not the way I wish they’d vote) but they are accessible and will listen and then articulate the reasons for their positions.

The Meeting Unfolds

After the Pledge of Allegiance Chair Randall covers housekeeping items, such as reminding the audience of time limits.

The next items are administrative:

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Let’s choose one of our own for Purcellville Police Chief

Dear Editor:

I understand that the Town of Purcellville is conducting a nationwide search to find a candidate to replace Chief McAlister who retired from the Purcellville Police Dept. in April. As a business owner and a resident here in Purcellville I feel we have a really qualified candidate that is presently with the Purcellville Police Department.

LETTER

Lt. Barry Dufek joined the

PPD 8 years ago after serving 16 years with the Loudoun County Police Department, many of those years in a management position. What adds to Lt. Dufek’s qualifications is that he and his family have been residents of Purcellville for 12 years.

One item that separates him from other members of the PPD is that he checks in with business owners now and then to see how we’re doing and to

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High user rates and lack of transparency a grave concern

Dear Editor:

The Purcellville Town Council majority has passed the Fiscal Year 2025 budget, after holding two budget meetings. I did not support this budget. The budget includes rate increases for water and sewer of 16% and 18% respectively. Just two years ago, however, Stan- tec, the town’s utility rate consultant, recommended

LETTER

increases of 5% for water and 7% for sewer – and indicated the same annual rate increases would keep the Utility Funds solvent until our utility debt ends in 2040.

The town’s FY25 budget includes a 9% increase in General Fund expenditures. The average pay increase for town employees is budgeted for 6.3%, consisting of a 3.2% cost of living

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The “Special Exception” strikes again and again

Dear Editor:

Another destructive vote from our Board of Supervisors that will permanently alter the landscape from Snickersville Turnpike as you enter the Village of Philomont. The seven-acre property, purchased long ago with community raised funds, was home to one of the

oldest horse shows in Virginia and was a gathering place for the community for over 60 years.

This highest point in Philomont will soon have an 18,500 sq. ft. suburban standard firehouse design with two acres of asphalt that will forever dwarf nearby historic homes with an incompatible building six times their size.

The truth is documented for future residents. The end result will be that the county will own almost 12 acres of Philomont, and that is half of our designated National Register area.

Philomont VFD closed its membership in August 2022 when two of us with almost 40 years of PVFD membership applied to rejoin. The 501c3, volunteer organization said, “no more members.”

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Just like nothing (else) on earth: Aldie Dam

BY TIM JON

Proof of Loudoun County's identity as a conundrum – or a vortex of mysterious forces – rears its head again as I approach this story of one writer's search for the Holy Grail of the day, only to utterly fail in the attempt to find the physical manifestation at hand – in this case being a simple plot of land in a familiar, historic little community.



TIM JON

No – it wasn't a harrowing search for the true sources of the late '90's horror flick, *The Blair Witch Project* (shot just across the Potomac in Burkessville, Maryland) or a one-man invasion of the secretive complex on top of Mount Weather, to find out just what in the heck goes on up there – or a hair-raising attempt at some shots of the historic toll house just off the Route Seven interchange with Route 28 in Sterling.

I was just looking for a place called Aldie Park. Now, we're all familiar with the popular tourist destination in this Village, the Aldie Mill, protected, promoted and preserved for our examination. In fact, we visited this spot several

years back for this series, and I also covered events associated with the Mill back in my days as Radio News Director on AM 1200 in Leesburg. So, while I claim no expertise in local geography, I can at least find my way around well enough to get myself safely home.

Not this time. I mean, I got home OK, but the pursuit failed to turn up the elusive subject, and I had to settle for a slight change of plans. Having driven up and down the gravel surface of Route 632 – the Aldie Dam Road (and



being tempted to insert another descriptive, yet sacrilegious term in there) far enough to notice the signs indicating an oncoming dead-end, I reversed course and headed back to the road's namesake, an ancient-looking structure lying along

the Little River, just few feet from the ever-busy Route 50 as it passes through the community.

Now, if the Aldie Dam actually comprises part of the ghostly Aldie Park under question, I saw no evidence in the way of signs, official parking areas, or other facilities we normally associate with a public park.

Having said all this, my stop at the historic Dam was very interesting. Any time I find moving water flowing through a series of outdated, man-made contraptions, out of the way of motor vehicle or foot traffic, count me in. It was as if my search for the "Park" had never taken place; as far as I was concerned, the barely-a-trickle of water running over the spillway at the elbow of the River – at least the day I visited, I would have called it a Creek, or Run, or similar terms indicating a narrow channel and sleepy current.

After getting a general lay of the land and liquid, I followed my instincts and negotiated my way right down to the water – the 'tail' section bubbled and percolated over and through a rocky stream bed that invited closer inspection; I obeyed a personal rule when under these circumstances: stop, look and listen.

I'm nearly always rewarded – when in a secluded spot for the first time – if I just stand and breathe, and let Nature do the thinking as well as the talking. The traffic on Route 50 could have been miles away as long as I let the spell of the moving water simply run its course.

And that could have served as the day's entire lesson; most of us – judging from personal experience – have been taught since the age of self-awareness that we always need to be doing something – preferably something constructive – specifically in the way of monetary value.

Now there's nothing wrong with industriousness – in developing skills and earning a living – I've pretty much followed a strict work regimen throughout my life; I find it just as rewarding and perhaps critically important in maintaining physical, mental and spiritual health – to find – and learn to savor those morsels of time in which we do absolutely nothing – we simply are. To my finding, until I'm acceptable (to myself and the universe) at this level, the rest of my so-called accomplishments carry little value.

So, I stood; the River flowed. And it was good. I got in touch with my breathing and heartbeat, took as many photos as I desired, then decided I needed a closer look at the ramshackle-looking dam just a few feet upstream. And, as you remember, we did just that.

Mindfulness for Families: Cultivating Peace and Connection

In today's fast-paced world, finding moments of peace and connection as a family can be challenging. The demands of work, school and extracurricular activities for the kids often leave little time for more meaningful personal interactions. However,

there can be real benefits to prioritizing and integrating mindfulness into family life. Practicing mindfulness as a family can serve to reduce stress, enhance emotional bonding, and create greater peace and harmony.

Mindfulness as a term has become quite common in everyday conversations, but what is mindfulness and what exactly does it mean to be more



Ask Dr. Mike

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

mindful? Mindfulness is the practice of being present and fully engaged in the moment, without distraction or judgment.

It involves a conscious direction of our awareness to the here and now, acknowledging and accepting one's feelings, thoughts, and bodily sensations simply as they are. Applied within the family context, mindfulness can help members appreciate their experiences

and interactions with one another more deeply, fostering an environment of understanding and acceptance.

The positive impact of mindfulness when practiced as a family can be profoundly wonderful. In the DMV, families face a myriad of stresses, from the pressures of daily commitments to the pervasive influence of digital media, and there often doesn't seem to be enough time in the day to get things done for many.

Mindfulness helps mitigate these stressors by enhancing emotional regulation. It teaches family members to

respond to situations with awareness rather than impulsivity and/or emotionally pressured reactivity. This shift in behavior is critical, as it promotes a more peaceful family life and dynamic by decreasing conflicts and enhancing communication.

Research on mindfulness has shown that, as a practice, it can decrease stress, increase empathy, enhance relaxation, improve focus and concentration, improve performance at school and work, increase emotional awareness and even decrease relational conflicts.

So, how does it work? To incorporate mindfulness into everyday family routines and family life, I offer the following

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Lot 74 in the Town of Purcellville is still missing – and no answers yet

BY VALERIE CURY

At the April 18 Planning Commission meeting, commissioners are still looking for answers to what happened with Lot 74 which is in the Town of Purcellville and part of the Catoctin Meadows Homeowners Association. The address is 601 N. 21st Street and the property has been owned by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors since 2018.

GOVERNMENT

Planning Commissioner Nedim Ogelman said, “I ride my bike, I see these signs that say ‘You’re leaving Loudoun County’ or ‘You’re entering Purcellville’. As an incorporated town with a charter on file in the commonwealth, I’m still perplexed over the idea that the county has jurisdiction over the town.”

Ogelman asked Planning Manager Boyd Lawrence “what is the status of Lot 74” as he could not see it on the map. Lawrence said former Lot 74 has been recorded by

the county and that’s why it’s off the list. “It’s closed.” He said it has become an easement.

“What does that mean?” asked Ogelman. Lawrence reiterated that Lot 74 had been recorded as an easement.

Commissioner Ron Rise Sr. said it had been recorded as being extinguished, not an easement. “It was an extinguishment.” Rise Sr. said at the last planning commission meeting that the attorney said it was still in the R-2 zoning district. “So based on what you just said it can’t be in R-2 anymore, which means our zoning map is again wrong.”

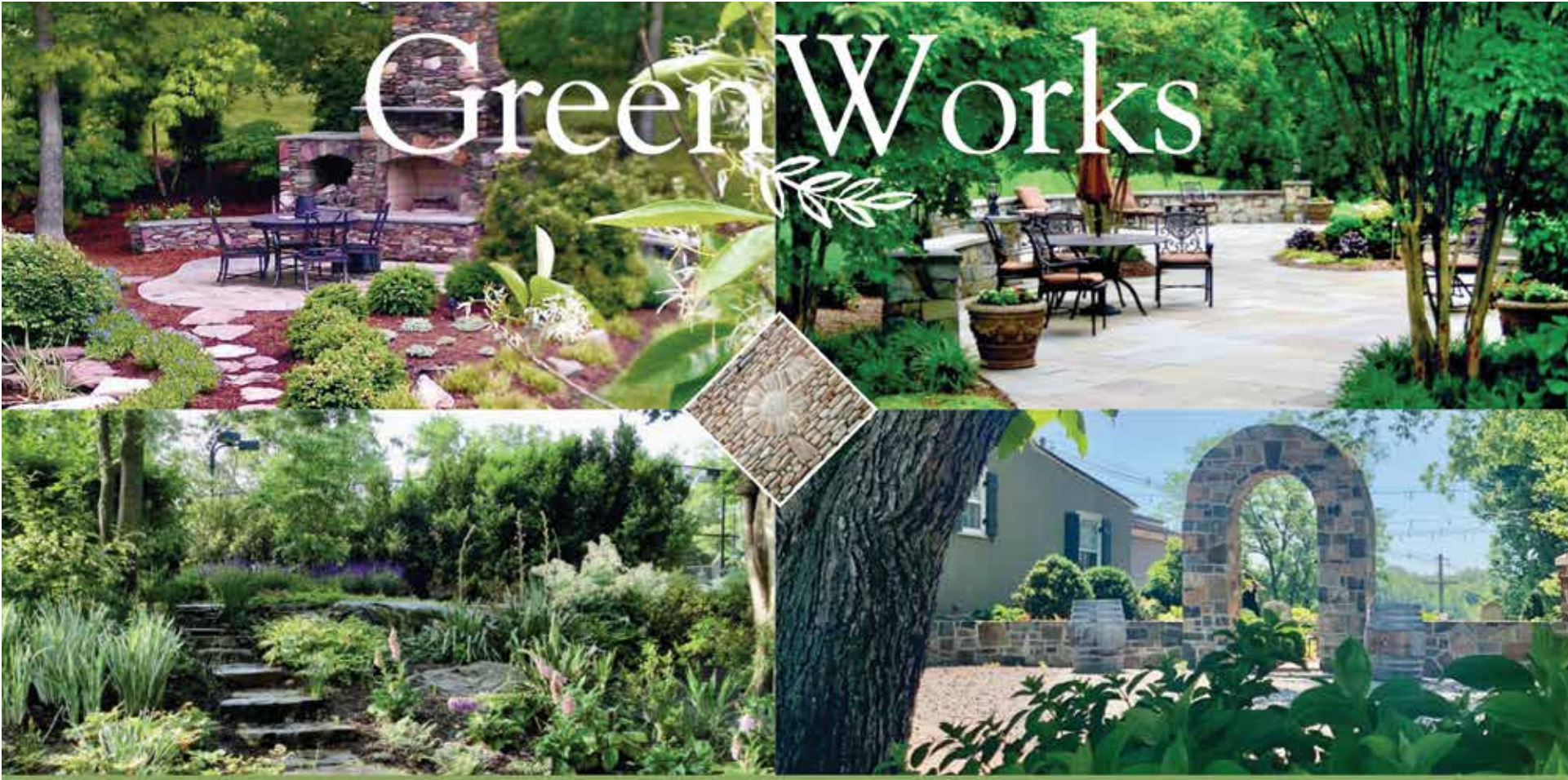
“This property was extinguished out of the town with no due process by the staff of the county and by the staff of the Town of Purcellville.” This was “done without any oversight and knowledge of the town council and without any information for this commission or any public hearing,” said Rise Sr.

“So the county has come in,

purchased a piece of land—both staffs worked outside and made this decision to extinguish a property out of the town. So it no longer exists.” Lot 74 – the land and not the house – was also protected by the Historic Corridor Overlay District, said Rise Sr.

Rise Sr. was referring to July 12, 2022 when then Director of Planning and Economic Development Don Dooley signed off on extinguishing Lot 74 from the Town of Purcellville and the Homeowners Association of Catoctin Meadows. On that very same day County Administrator Tim Hemstreet signed the Deed of Easement as well. There were no public hearings nor was the public process followed.

Town attorney Gifford Hampshire advised the planning commission to discuss this issue in executive session at the next planning commission meeting on May 2. It will go on the agenda for that meeting.



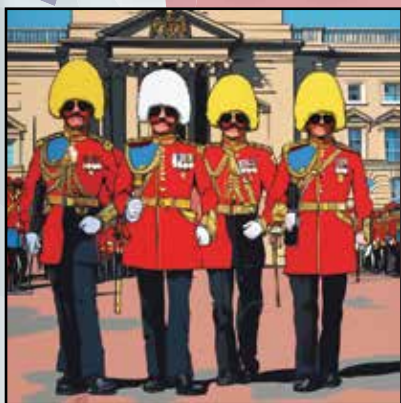
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Western Loudoun Recreation Complex public meeting set for May 6

Loudoun County invites members of the public to attend a public information meeting to learn more about the county's plans for the Western Loudoun Recreation Complex in Purcellville. The

Western Loudoun Recreation Complex project includes the design and construction of a new 83,000- square-foot recreation facility with an aquatics center, and a park with up to ten athletic fields, four diamond fields and six rectangular fields on a 142.71-acre site – located at 36716 Main Street. Supported amenities will include athletic field lighting.

The center will include meeting/Class-rooms, a gymnasium, kitchen, fitness center multi-purpose rooms, and a running track. There are plans for an aquatics center with a competition pool and also a splash play area, and much more.

The master plan identifies a potential

future 40,000 sq.ft. library.

The public information meeting will be held Monday, May 6, 6 - 7 p.m., at the Franklin Park Performing and Visual Arts Center, 36441 Blueridge View Lane, Purcellville. The purpose of the meeting is to provide interested residents with an overview of the project, including the estimated project schedule, and information on the public input process.

Following the presentation, questions about the project will be answered by county staff as time allows. Residents will have the opportunity to provide input on the design of the future complex during the meeting on a provided comment form.

Comments may also be submitted through the online comment form at loudoun.gov/westernloudounrecreation; by mail to Sean Haislip, Loudoun County Department of Transportation and Capital Infrastructure, PO Box 7500, Leesburg, Va, 20177; or by email.

All comments related to this meeting must be received by June 1. Please reference "Western Loudoun Recreation Complex" in the subject line.

More information—including a link to sign up for email and text updates on the project—is posted on the Loudoun County website at www.loudoun.gov/5921/Western-Loudoun-Recreation-Complex.

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The BOS lobs the ball out of their court and approves Village at Clear Springs

BY REED CARVER

Over 1000 dwelling units of various types were approved by the Board of Supervisors early last month. The developer, Leonard S. "Hobie" Mitchel, whose project is called the Village at Clear Springs, is comprised of 230 single-family detached homes, with 121 being age-restricted. 667 single-family attached units will have 153 age-restricted units, and 12 designated "attainable." The next housing type is 180 multi-family, "affordable" attached apartments.

GOVERNMENT

The applicant applied for zoning map amendments and special exceptions. Before the project was approved, approximately 50 homes would have been allowed on the 246 acres. The property was zoned Agricultural Rural AR-1, and it is located in the Transition Policy Area.

Most of the site is within one mile of the Leesburg Airport. It is between the Dulles Greenway and Evergreen Mills Road.

Since Jan. 10, Mitchel's company, Clear Springs Development, LLC, will be required to inform prospective buyers of the proximity to the Leesburg Airport, and the homes will be constructed with noise-mitigating materials.

The development will have parks, gardens, trails, a children's play area, and a tree canopy preservation area, which is subject to change based on construction needs. The neighborhood will also include an indoor tennis facility and 28 outdoor courts.

Staff said that multiple issues like building heights and intensity, are inconsistent for the proposed area. The tennis facility exceeds height limits, and the multi-family attached units in particular are not intended for the TPA and are contrary to the County's 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

In order to account for the increased traffic on Evergreen Mills Road caused by the density in this development, the applicant is proffering \$16,623,561 worth of improvements to the road.

Public concerns

John Ellis spoke on behalf of Save Rural Loudoun. "Eighty percent of the homes built will not fall under the limits of attainability." Traffic congestion would increase, along with greater stress on all infrastructure, which would increase county spending, and taxpayer's obligations, he said. "Additional student population would increase operational spending by \$7-\$10 million ... which would amount to an increase of \$108 - \$142 million dollars over 10 years."

The county should pay attention to costs to taxpayers, especially when future data center revenues are uncertain. Further, the subdivision would add 8,000 vehicle trips per day, he said.

Loudoun Chamber Government Relations Manager Theo Stamatis said the application can address the County's unmet housing needs. The smaller homes are within reach for many, allowing them to build wealth over time, he said.

Leesburg Vice Mayor Neil Steinberg said that houses steadily encroaching on the Dulles Airport have produced complaints over the years, even though the buyers knew the airport was close. "I fully sympathize with the residents, but the airport was in place before the homes; this application will raise the number of residents under the flight path to over a thousand."

Cheryl Harper said the development belongs in a suburban area, not right next to the Rural Policy Area, across the road. She asked for revisions. "What good is the zoning ordinance when we approve things that are double, triple, of what is by right?" another speaker asked.

Al Storm, a 40-year resident, and a member of the committee of Habitat for Humanity, said affordable housing is a key need, and he is thankful for the 12 units. "Our members are people the community relies on every day; they need to live close to their work."

Tia Earman, Piedmont Environmental Council Senior Land Use Field Representative said, "This dense, intense development stands in stark contradiction to our County

Plan, and our County's goals, strategies, and guidelines." Earman added, "The TPA is our most vulnerable area and it's developments like Clear Springs that undermine its integrity and purpose."

The Supervisors speak

Supervisor Kristen Umstattd (D-Leesburg) said she will not support the project. "I do believe it is way too much density, and is the beginning of a change in attitude that will result in denser and denser development." Over \$7 million more per year will be required for the schools, she said, and, "the costs of this project will outweigh the tax revenue of this project."

Supervisor Laura TeKrony (D-Little River) said she could not support the project. "My reason ... is the multi-family units in the Transition Policy Area; it's not envisioned within the transition compact neighborhood. There will be two units at a height of 45-50 feet ... We need diversity in our housing, not multi-family attached."

Supervisor Matt Letourneau (R-Dulles) said "I'm very familiar with the [noise] contours. We have an area in which residential development is not permitted, and areas where it is permitted." It would be "arbitrary and capricious," he said, to deny based on the noise alone. "I do have concerns about the density of this development ... [but] We're striving to be more than a bedroom community, and this is one of those things that can help us achieve that."

"If I could vote for this application twice I would," said Vice Chair Juli Briskman (D-Algonkian) "We have such a unique opportunity to bring the [tennis] headquarters to Loudoun County. We talk all the time about diversifying our economy, and this is it."

Chair Phyllis Randall (D-At-Large) said, "We spend taxpayer money to educate children ... If anyone says 'I want to see affordable homes but' ... that means you don't want to see affordable homes. We want to have

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

Remembering Ruth Chastney McHenry

Ruth Chastney McHenry of Philomont, VA, a well-known physical therapist medical provider, passed away on April 7, 2024, she was 83. Ruth was born in Athol, Massachusetts November 1, 1940.

She was dedicated to her loving husband James (Ray) McHenry, and a devoted mother to her sons, Duncan H. McHenry and John R. McHenry both of Philomont, VA. She is also survived by her wonderful grand-daughter, Josephine Anna McHenry of Hamilton, VA and brother, Alfred J Chastney of Royalston, Massachusetts. Ruth was preceded in death

by her father, John J. Chastney, and her mother, Nellie Anna Brazaukas.



Ruth attended Athol High School where she graduated with high honors. She then went on to earn a Bachelor of Science degree in Physical Therapy from the University of Connecticut graduating in 1962.

She had a fulfilling career in the physical therapy and rehabilitation medical field, starting at Helen Hays Rehabilitation Hospital in West Haverstraw, NY, then moving to Miami, FL in 1963 to work

with the "Crippled Children Society" in their school therapy and rehabilitation program.

She met and married her husband Ray while in Miami. They relocated to Loudoun County and settled in Philomont in 1971. Ruth worked through the Loudoun County Health Department in Home Health Therapy Rehabilitation until 1988.

Ruth then founded her own private practice, "Leesburg Physical Therapy and Sports Medicine" with locations in Leesburg, Lansdown and Purcellville, VA. She sold her practice in 1998, but continued to work part time, helping her private practice physical therapy

friends until 2005.

Ruth enjoyed traveling, cooking, boating and fishing, reading, playing cards and being with her many friends that she so richly cherished. She will be remembered for her dedication to her family, her successful career in physical therapy, and her love for all of her friends. In lieu of flowers, the family is asking that contributions be made in her name to: Inova Health Foundation Neuroscience, 8095 Innovation Parkway, Fairfax VA, 22031 or online @ join.inova.org/neuroandspine.

A memorial mass was held for Ruth at St. Francis de Sales Catholic Church in Purcellville on Wednesday April, 24 which was followed by a Celebration of Life reception at Magnolia's restaurant in Purcellville, VA.

Loudoun offers grant trainings for nonprofits

Loudoun County continues to offer free professional development opportunities for nonprofits serving Loudoun County residents, with new trainings scheduled for May and June. The opportunities include an introductory training open to all nonprofits

and a specialized series of trainings, which will be open to a maximum of five organizations.

GOVERNMENT

The Grants 101 Introductory Session: Pre-Proposal Activities training will provide guidance on government grant seeking and application management best practices for local nonprofits. Loudoun County government staff will provide an overview of pre-proposal activities such as prospecting and standard grant proposal components. Participants will gain an understanding of what makes a strong government grant proposal and how to set their organization up for success with government

grants. This training may be attended by individuals as well as teams.

May 7, 10-11:30 a.m. - Virtual

Details and a link to the registration form may be found at loudoun.gov/GrantTraining.

Nonprofit organizations that serve Loudoun County residents are encouraged to apply for the Spring Professional Development Grant Cohort, which will explore the various facets of government grant seeking and proposal development. Participants will develop proposals in response to relevant funding notices over a series of in-person training sessions at the Loudoun County Government Center during a six-week period in May and June. At the end of the six weeks, organizations will have a complete set of standard proposal components and a tailored application package for a relevant state or federal government funding opportunities for their organization.

The training is free, but space is limited to five organizations. Nonprofits working to create a systematic development program are encouraged to apply.

Descriptions of the individual sessions and a link to the application for the cohort may be found at loudoun.gov/GrantTraining.

The professional development opportunities listed above are part of the county's efforts to help nonprofits and their staff to develop stronger grant applications; hone the skills and knowledge needed to find, apply for and receive grants; learn from subject matter experts and their peers; and receive technical assistance on a broad range of topics.

To sign up for email and text messages from the county regarding information of interest to local nonprofit organizations, including county grant and professional development opportunities, visit loudoun.gov/GrantTraining.

March jobs numbers support Virginia's economic momentum

Gov. Glenn Youngkin has announced that according to BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics ("LAUS", or "the household survey"), the number of employed Virginians increased by 2,758 in March to 4,454,530 and nearly 204,000 more Virginians employed since January 2022. Non-farm payroll

GOVERNMENT

employment grew by 16,500 in the month, the largest month of gains in over a year.

"Since day one, our pro-growth policies have led to consistent job growth in the Commonwealth – bringing the total to nearly 204,000 more Virginians working. When Virginians do well, Virginia does well, and strong job growth continues to fuel record revenues for the Commonwealth," said Youngkin.

"The economic momentum we're seeing in Virginia comes from the supportive environment we have for individuals and businesses to thrive. We will continue to build on the progress that's yielding proven results as we work together to expand investments in education and workforce development, robust infrastructure, safe communities and economic development opportunities."

According to BLS LAUS, Virginia's seasonally adjusted unemployment rate in March decreased by 0.1 percentage points to 2.9 percent, 0.9 percentage points below the national rate. The labor force decreased by 2,914 to 4,588,603, and the labor force participation rate decreased 0.1 percent to 66.5 percent, while the number of unemployed residents decreased by 5,672 to 134,073. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

"It is not surprising that the Commonwealth is a leader in employment growth based on the policies we have been pushing

forward to add more people to the workforce and develop a strong, skill-based talent pool," said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater. "We will continue to build on this progress and keep Virginia a great place for individuals and businesses."

"March's employment figures suggest that Virginia's economy has been expanding at a solid pace," said Secretary of Commerce and Trade Caren Merrick. "In a little over two years into the Youngkin administration, the Commonwealth has added a record number of new jobs and the highest level of labor participation in more than a decade."

BLS publishes an additional employment figure from its Current Employment Statistics Survey ("CES" or "establishment survey"). The CES survey uses payroll records of establishment employers and is designed to provide a count of jobs under which the employer pays unemployment insurance.

The LAUS survey is based on household interviews conducted each month for the Bureau of Labor Statistics and provides comprehensive data on the labor force, including those who are employed and unemployed. Establishment survey data reflects changes for updated seasonal adjustment factors, and industry classification conversions (NAICS), as part of the annual benchmarking process.

The household survey only distinguishes between whether a person is employed or unemployed, whereas CES counts each employee that is on an employer's payroll. CES excludes business owners, self-employed persons, unpaid volunteers and private household workers, and those on unpaid leave or not working because of a labor dispute.

For more details, visit the Virginia Works LMI website at <https://viriniaworks.com/>.

Large-scale pump and haul requests for new construction on hold

During its April 16, meeting, the Loudoun Board of Supervisors adopted an interim policy that will not permit the approval of large-scale pump and haul systems that serve new construction until a new resolution or ordinance regulating those systems has been adopted.

The Board's action is in response to an increase in the number of pump and haul requests for large-scale operations and addresses concerns about environmental risks associated with them. The adopted interim policy excludes low-volume temporary pump and haul applications for new construction with sewage volume of less or equal to 1,000 gallons per day.

Pump and haul systems are used when an existing sewage system has failed or is not available. They can be used for residential or commercial properties. Wastewater is stored in a tank until a truck can remove it and haul it to a wastewater treatment facility.

Such requests are permitted under the Virginia Administrative Code. Loudoun has approved 95 permanent pump and haul applications over the years, compared to 12 in Fairfax County, five in Prince William County and two in Clarke County. Fairfax and Clarke counties do not allow the use of permanent pump and haul operations for new construction.

The state permits three types of pump and haul systems:

- **Emergency:** Approval less than 12 months when an existing on-site sewage system has malfunctioned and is being repaired.
- **Temporary:** Approval for less than 12 months for construction and connection to an on-site sewage system or sewage treatment plant.
- **Permanent:** Approval for more than 12 months.

The Loudoun Health Department can issue emergency and temporary pump and haul approvals, while the Board of Supervisors must approve permanent pump and haul systems.

Historically, the Loudoun Board has typically approved applications for permanent pump and haul systems where public infrastructure is imminent, and with relatively low sewage volume of between 750 and 1,500 gallons of wastewater output per week, or in instances where an existing onsite system has failed and there is no alternate repair or replacement option. The County has received applications with volumes as high as 420,000 gallons per week.

Properly installed permanent pump and haul systems still pose an environmental risk based on multiple points of potential failure. There is the potential for overflow if there is a surge in volume or if the

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

BOS will reconsider Tillett’s View Application – reduced by 40 units

During the March 19, business meeting, the majority of the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors voted to reconsider its previous vote on March 13 to deny a residential development application known as Tillett’s View (LEGI-2023-0031, Tillett’s View).

GOVERNMENT As a result, the Board may approve or deny an amended application on the same project. The revised proposal is scheduled to be heard during the Board’s May 15, public hearing.

“I heard the concerns from the surrounding community regarding this application,” said Broad Run District Supervisor Sylvia R. Glass, in whose

district the proposed project would be located. “After the Board’s vote to deny, the applicant reached out and offered to improve the application by reducing the density of the development by 40 units to a total of 357 units on the 50 acres, which addresses some of our concerns and prompted the Board’s willingness to reconsider the application.”

The proposal for Tillett’s View that the Board previously considered requests to rezone approximately 50 acres of land near Waxpool Elementary School to allow the construction of 397 homes, including detached units, townhouses and multi-family units. During the March 13 public hearing, the majority of the Board voted

to deny the application based, in part, on incompatibility with existing residential development and concerns about the traffic impacts to the surrounding road network.

The Tillett’s View applicant, Pulte Home Company LLC, has informed members of the Board of an intent to replace a type of multifamily residential unit known as a two-over-twos with townhouses, resulting in a reduction of 40 homes. The details of an amended application, including any associated proffers, must still be finalized prior to the May 15, public hearing at which time the Board will consider an amended application.

New information regarding the

application will be posted on the county’s website in advance of the public hearing at loudoun.gov/bosdocuments.

The application is currently scheduled for the Board’s public hearing on Wednesday, May 15, at 6 p.m., in the Board Room at the Loudoun County Government Center, 1 Harrison St. SE, in Leesburg. Members of the public may sign up in advance to provide input to the Board. More information about providing public input is posted online at loudoun.gov/signuptospeak.

Residents may contact members of the Board at any time by phone and email. Contact information is posted

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Purcellville Farmers Market celebrates successful launch

The Purcellville Farmers Market is moving full steam ahead. Just launching a few weeks ago, the Farmers Market is well on its way to becoming the Saturday morning hot spot thanks to the support of the community and local vendors. The market has quickly become a beloved community hub, attracting residents and visitors alike with its diverse offerings of fresh produce, meats, baked and artisanal goods.

Since its grand opening, the Purcellville Farmers Market has seen a steady increase in foot traffic and

vendor participation, showcasing the growing demand for locally sourced and sustainable products.

"I am thrilled by the incredible response and support we have received from the community since launching," said Silas Redd, Farmers Market Organizer. "Our goal was to create a space where residents could connect with local farmers and artisans while enjoying fresh, healthy food options."

"The success we've seen in just a few weeks is a testament to the strength and vitality of our community," Redd continued, "Each

week the foot traffic and the number of vendors has grown and that is such a gratifying feeling."

"Everyone is invited to join in growing the momentum and join in supporting our local farmers and artisans while enjoying all that our market has to offer," said Redd.

The Purcellville Farmers Market is open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 11 a.m. at 142 E Main Street, behind Nostalgia Boutique. Look for Main Street signage in the front of the building.

For more information about the market or to become a vendor, please visit www.purcellvillefarmers.com or follow @PurcellvilleFarmersMarket on Instagram and Facebook.

The Middleburg Community Farmers Market opens for the season

The Town of Middleburg has announced that the Middleburg Community Farmers Market will open for the season on Saturday, May 4 from 9 a.m. – noon. The market is located in the parking lot of the Middleburg Town Hall at 10 W Marshall Street. The Middleburg Community Farmers Market will be open every Saturday from May 4 through Oct. 26.

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CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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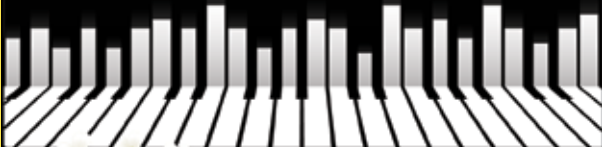
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Katelyn Miller selected as a Cooke College Scholar



Photo: Courtesy of LCPS

Katelyn Miller, a senior at Loudoun Valley High School, has been selected as a 2024 Cooke College Scholar. This year's recipients were chosen from a record number of applications residing in all 50 states, the District of Columbia, Guam, the Northern Mariana Islands and Puerto Rico. All 60 recipients were notified of their selection on Friday, March 29.

Cooke College Scholars have the opportunity to graduate with as little debt as possible and receive comprehensive advising and other program support. The award, which is last-dollar funding after all institutional aid, can provide as much as \$55,000 per year to pursue a bachelor's degree at an accredited undergraduate institution.

achievements and resilience of these students have truly impressed us."

Katelyn was very excited to hear of the award, sharing how the financial advantages opened up other college options for her. She is interested in studying either mechanical or aeronautical engineering and has been accepted to both Harvard and Georgia Tech. "I had to double-check the email when I heard I won," Katelyn said. "I was pretty astonished, and it's still sinking in."

In addition to Katelyn's strong academic record, she is involved in a number of extracurricular activities, including being a student pilot and volunteering at

"We extend a huge congratulations to the impressive new cohort of Cooke College Scholars," said Seppy Basili, Executive Director of the Jack Kent Cooke Foundation. "This year, we saw a record-breaking number of applications, and the remarkable

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

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DRAFT ZONING ORDINANCE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

preserving the character of our town.”

Ogelman said the commissioners worked hard on “turning the citizen’s desires in the Comprehensive Plan into zoning. I don’t understand what the delays are.”

Town Council Member and Planning Commissioner Chris Bertaut said, “I have not heard any substantive reasons for the planning commission not to get started on the red line draft. Most of what’s still to come for the draft is add-ons.”

“So I think that we would make better work, faster work of this simply if we started work on the red line draft as it exists today,” concluded Bertaut.

Commissioner Brian Green said his concern is “geared around timing and resources. We know that we’ve got some members of the Planning Commission whose terms are concluding in August. As a body, we have come together to suggest some form-based fundamental changes that are key to the minds of the folks who sit on this commission.

“My fear is that if this gets dragged out longer, and those terms are not extended [by the now pro-growth majority on town council] per our request, we are going to lose that body of knowledge and expertise from the folks that are on this team.”

Green said it would be better for the commission to get the draft ordinance earlier, before the commissioner’s terms end in August. “But we have asked for their terms to be extended.”

Vice Chair Neham asked Planning Manager Lawrence if the town staff would give the commissioners the red line copy of the zoning ordinance draft by the end of the week or by Monday. “Boyd, do you think you would be able to accomplish that?”

“I will review that request tomorrow and with direction I’m given,” said Lawrence.

Neham said, “I don’t understand that part. What direction would you be waiting for?”

Lawrence answered, “Well, we have been advised to wait until the joint meeting. That’s kind of the point of whether there’s going to be changes, or whether we are going to go with the draft as is. That’s kind of the direction I was provided.”

Commissioner Green said, “That’s confusing to me.”

Vice Chair Neham said, “I didn’t understand that there would be that kind of direction provided from council regarding what I consider normal process of handling the zoning ordinance. I didn’t realize that the council was going to take it upon themselves to review bits and pieces of whatever they have of the ordinance to influence some kind of changes in direction here.”

Lawrence said that part of the issue was what Zoning Administrator Wilkes had privately presented to town council members.

Lawrence was referring to a public presentation Wilkes intended to present to the planning commission during their regular meeting regarding an idea she had of town overlay districts. Instead, some council members privately intervened and directed her to brief town council members two at a time to avoid it from becoming a public meeting.

Neham said he didn’t “see why that would stop us from reviewing all the other parts of the documents that are available.”

Commissioner Ron Rise Sr. said he would like to see the definition section of the zoning ordinance, “hopefully that’s in some state of completeness.” He said it “should be something easy that we could go over and make sure that it is where it needs to be.”

Commissioner Ogelman said he didn’t “understand this process” and it didn’t seem like the proper process. “For years after we’ve been working on this document and somebody comes along and says ‘Yeah we’re going to improvise here to change things.’”

Said Ogelman, “I want to know for this process as a whole, how it’s an improvement on our attempts to fulfill the Comprehensive Plan. What is this discussion doing? How is it linked to our Comprehensive Plan?”

“I shouldn’t need to wait until May 8 for this special meeting. Has our Comprehensive Plan been somehow vetoed or skuttled?” Ogelman asked, “What is it [staff’s proposed alternative districts] doing to improve or better align with our Town’s Comprehensive Plan?”

Commissioner Bertaut asked rhetorically if “this change in direction with respect to the process for reviewing the zoning ordinance – was this voted on by the town council?” Lawrence answered, “Not that I’m aware.”

Bertaut said, “So why are you taking direction from individual town council members on this matter?”

“Well, direction I’m taking is more from the zoning administrator’s communication with the town manager and the assistant town manager and then her communication,” said Lawrence.

“But just for the record,” said Bertaut, “the town council has not voted to implement this change in direction.”

Vice Chair Neham said, “It seems that certain persons in the town administration or council have determined that the zoning administrator’s work product should not be presented to us until they had reviewed it and now we’re just sitting and waiting for them to say ‘OK, that’s good or not good’ and apparently they are going to want to sit on that until the joint meeting in May. I just don’t

understand why we would have to wait for something that seems normal and obvious,” Neham concluded.

Ron Rise Sr. said that there wasn’t “a lot of transparency going on.” Addressing Lawrence, Rise Sr. said, “I can see it in your body language. There’s something being driven from a different place that’s out of process. I feel your uncomfortableness with that.

“This is a problem for this town, if this is what’s going on. If this is being kept in the dark and we are going to come to a meeting on May 8 without any preview – a commissioner is supposed to be ready to come to a meeting by reviewing information” before they come to a meeting.

“It sounds to me like most of us are going to walk into this meeting cold and I don’t like that.” Rise Sr. said, “It is wrong.”

Lawrence said the May 8 meeting is a public meeting and there will be an agenda.

Ogelman asked again if the planning commissioners “could see the work that you have been doing for us?”

Lawrence responded, “I will find out if we can release the draft and the zoning map.” He said, “It’s not for me to say so. I will review that.”

Vice Chair Ed Neham asked, “So it is the town manager or the assistant town manager who are making that decision?” Lawrence responded “It’s the leadership of the town.”

Neham pointed out that the joint meeting on May 8 is to level set on a number of issues. He said the zoning ordinance document “is a piece of work we should be reviewing now,” and has nothing to do with level setting.

Town Attorney Gifford Hampshire said that in every jurisdiction he’s been involved in the planning commission continues to work on the draft, until such time as the planning commission thinks it is ready to present to the town council for its consideration with the commission’s recommendation. He said if the commission has a charge to work on the zoning ordinance “that’s what you ought to be doing.”

PURCELLVILLE FLORIST, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3

for example, she coached local softball for 18 years. She also donates unused flowers from the week to area churches.

Thinking back on Purcellville Florist’s five decades, Garrison says, “We are so appreciative of the Purcellville community and beyond for their support throughout the years. We would also like to thank local artist Pat Taylor Holz for her artwork on our 50th Anniversary Clock.” Standing the test of time indeed.

EDITORIAL: GASLIGHTING, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

San Diego California’s Historic Downtown. Using a million-person metropolis as the model for a new gateway to a revitalized business section of small-town Purcellville is indeed a Brave New World. Rayner left open if and how Purcellville’s government would accomplish this and for whose benefit.

One has to wonder whether the term gas lighting could also be used to describe what Mayor Stan Milan, Vice Mayor Erin Rayner, and Council Members Caleb Stought, Kevin Wright and Mary Jane Williams are advancing to justify a large increase—unprecedented might be a better word—of water and sewer rates. These double-digit rate increases over a period of years, certainly aren’t what any of these representatives proposed when they were running for election. We note that council members Chris Bertaut and Carol Luke opposed the new town budget, as well, lamenting in the strongest terms the haste in which the whole sorry mess was passed.

Purcellville can continue to be a great small town while maintaining some fiscal prudence without dipping into its citizens’ pocket books with huge rate increases. The power to tax is a power that must be wisely used whether it is the taxation power or the power to raise rates on our basic necessities.

Are we dipping ever so slightly into hyperbole in linking gaslighting and this recent council’s actions? A resounding yes. But sometimes it is necessary to alert and be a watch dog on behalf of the town, its future, and its past.



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OPINION: BOARD OF SUPERVISORS, CON'T. FROM PG. 4

Conveyance of a utility easement, approving a temporary polling place in Leesburg. "Business Meetings" are a bit different from Public Hearings, and begin with ceremonial resolutions like "The Board of Supervisors applauds the 4th grade class at Powell Elementary for its 39th place award in the national Irish Step Dancing competition."

This takes time even though there are no disagreements and each passes unanimously.

Squabbles

Six items required public discussion and a Board vote; four were particularly important.

One was an initiative to preserve 70% of a property's prime agricultural soils. An All-American slam dunk, except it wasn't – fat cat land barons contended that this standard would end their conservation easement business or hurt the value of their properties.

Not only are they greedy, their arguments are wrong. For one thing, the County retained the Kimley Horn engineering firm to evaluate the density argument independently. That firm did not see any problematic effects when prime soils are protected, yet many supervisors didn't seem to care. The vote on this was rescheduled for June.

I thought the prime soils question was selfishness personified, but another proposal was worse. The volunteer fire company wants to build a spiffy new facility on an undeveloped seven acres in the heart of Philomont Village. I won't get into the weeds. Instead, here are my general thoughts on people's character.

On one side were long-time residents who don't want the huge new building. Their preference was to renovate the existing building. On the other side were a cabal of irritable firemen and a smirking fire chief.

The most contentious proposition was for a 4.8 million square foot data center

on Belmont Ridge Road. The Board Room had been full, and I think a majority of the audience had come to oppose this scheme.

The applicant was shocked at the opposition and asked for permission to resubmit its request. It did so, reducing the data center's size to 1.3 million square feet, which will come before the Board at a future date. We won! Note that this project could give up 72% of its original request and still be a viable development. Perhaps the County overfills its feed trough. Why not a 72% reduction of everything, everywhere?

There is concern that they'll come back later for more, but we're taking this as a win.

One last vote was not controversial, though it should have been. A developer proposed a huge subdivision called The Village at Clear Spring. Here was a case of a promoter convincing people that a cow was a horse.

I've never seen such a sleek and slick rezoning package. It sold the idea that a huge commercial tennis center was just swell, as was increasing density from 50 by-right residences to 1,000 houses. This is in the Transition Policy Area but the only transition I see is money flowing into the developer's wallet.

The cow was a gigantic subdivision, but with that package, the Board and many citizens were certain that it was a horse. The developer won.

The lesson is that we need to get involved at the earliest stages of review. Rest assured that a successful developer is regularly pressing his case to Staff. The public generally knows nothing about development proposals until very late in the approval process. Transparency demands that there be significant public notice as soon as any large application or rezoning is requested.

Charles Houston is a former office building developer and a rezoning cynic.

LARGE-SCALE PUMP, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12

system alarm fails.

In addition, hauling wastewater presents a spill risk that increases with volume. For example, a 420,000-gallon per week system could require as many as 118 pump truck visits per week.

Permanent pump and haul operations are only intended as a last resort method to address an existing public health risk. County staff has consistently recommended that construction approvals should align with the pace of

utility infrastructure development to prevent development from outpacing infrastructure availability. The pending permanent pump and haul applications to serve new construction do not address public health risks and are not supported by the wastewater policies of the 2019 Comprehensive Plan.

For more information about wells and onsite septic systems, as well as the permit guidelines for an emergency pump and haul, visit www.loudoun.gov/5744/Wells-Onsite-Septic-Systems.

KATELYN MILLER SELECTED, CON'T. FROM PAGE 12

the Purcellville library. "My grandmother was a librarian, and it has always been a passion of mine," she said.

In addition to the Cooke Award, Katelyn has received three other scholarships to assist in her collegiate pursuits. When asked what advice she would give to next

LETTER: LET'S CHOOSE ONE OF OUR OWN,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

see if there is anything he can do for us.

Lt. Dufek is an asset to the PPD and our community. I feel he will be a fantastic Chief of Police for many, many years to come. So I hope the Town can promote within instead of hiring someone who probably never set foot in our town.

*Michael Oaks
Purcellville*

LETTER: THE "SPECIAL EXCEPTION",
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

They also removed voting rights of lifetime members. Now they will have yet another massive structure called a "standard" firehouse, to park their "standard" too large for our area firetrucks, that cannot even access many western Loudoun driveways.

How about that ambulance that has been parked in one of Philomont's bays for the last 3 years, with no staff to run a call? Did you know that 75% of 911 calls are medically related? Suck it up Philomont area, stay healthy for 2 more years. The powers that be can't fit even one more staff person in the current 9,000 sq. ft. building, which currently houses 4 staff.

Attention all of Loudoun, that is the danger of approving Special Exceptions. Whether it's another data center, or 1,077 housing units in the Transition Policy Area where only 50 houses were allowed, or a proposed firehouse that blatantly violates the 2019 Comprehensive Plan, nothing is safe. The Village Conservation Overlay District and CR1 zoning should have protected us. But it didn't.

Why do we have a Comprehensive Plan or a Zoning Ordinance when the elected officials continue to interpret, and ignore facts from impacted residents, environmental and preservation groups?

Loudoun is being "Special Exceptioned" into another overdeveloped county.

*Madeline Skinner
Philomont*



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LETTER: HIGH USER RATES,
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

increase, and an additional 3.1% for merit-based salary increases.

Overall compensation in the General Fund increased 12% over the current fiscal year, due to adjustments for market conditions, promotions, and time in grade. According to the Federal government the cost of living increased by 3.5% for the year ending March 31, 2024.

This town manager, like his predecessors, pointed to pay scales in nearby cities as the reason to increase employee pay by far more than the increase in cost of living. This assumes that the only competition for town employee jobs is in other municipalities.

The Kuhn annexation application is 117- acres with over 1.2 million sq.ft. of industrial. The town does not have enough treated water for this annexation. Budgeted is \$271,000 for the Short Hill Wells Water Treatment Plant. This project would coincidentally supply nearly the exact amount of treated water needed for this proposal. This is just the beginning of the costs to the town residents if this annexation is approved.

The FY25 Fiscal Plan also has \$2.5 million, which will add more debt burden to the citizens of this town on top of nearly \$50 million debt inherited from the Lazaro administration. This is allocated for PFAS, which are pollutants regulated by the Environmental Protection Agency. However, Purcellville is not on the list of jurisdictions that need to treat PFAS and the mandate to treat it doesn't go into effect until 2029.

The current council majority is not transparent with the public vis-à-vis meeting with the development community. Just before the Kuhn annexation proposal was filed with the town, certain council members along with town administration met with the developer and his team out of public view to discuss his proposal. Meetings with any developer to discuss a project should be done in a public meeting.

Citizens of Purcellville should be concerned about the dramatic rise in their utility rates. It hurts the poorest of our community. Meeting with developers privately is unacceptable – do it in a public meeting!

*Chris Bertaut
Town Council Member*

year's seniors, Katelyn said, "Start early!" She was also very thankful to LCPS. "I've had a lot of help getting to where I am, and I appreciate it."

Save the date for the 54th Annual Bluemont Fair on Sept. 21-22

The 54th Annual Bluemont Fair will be held on Sept. 21 and 22, from 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, traditional, blues, and country music, free children's fair, petting zoo, llamas and alpacas, quilt display, and gardener's shed. There will be blacksmithing and stone wall building demonstrations, homemade food/baked goods/jams and jellies. The fair offers a pie-baking and pickle-making contest. Antiques and collectables, wine and beer garden with gourmet treats, Bluemont history slide show will also be part of the fair's offerings.

There is much more including Snickersville Academy, which is 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 offer a special exhibit. Be on the look-out for delights throughout the entire village. There are so many things that are 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, age 9 and under are free, and parking is free as well. The fair will be held rain or shine.

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



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Review of *Mamma Mia!*

BY ZOE KORFF OF HERITAGE HIGH SCHOOL

Whether under the sparkling lights of a disco ball or the bright Mediterranean sun, Stone Bridge High School danced, jived, and electrified with an irresistible production of *Mamma Mia!*

Written by Catherine Johnson and scored by the hit songs of ABBA, *Mamma Mia!* has become one of the most well-known jukebox musicals of the modern age. This spectacle of a show premiered in 1999 at the West End's Prince Edward Theatre and has since gone on to successful Broadway runs, international tours, and a blockbuster movie of the same name and sequel in 2008 and 2018 respectively.

The musical follows Sophie, a young adult in the days before her wedding, as she embarks on a quest to determine her father's identity by inviting three men from her headstrong mother, Donna's youth. However, as the wedding approaches and Sophie's plan begins to go awry, she is forced to reckon with her own self-discovery.

Accompanying many talented vocals, Stone Bridge High School's pit orchestra gave an impressive performance in each of the seemingly never-ending musical numbers. The orchestra took on this



Lila LeCount and Rowan Coon in Stone Bridge High School's production of *Mamma Mia!*

unorthodox score with grace and skill, authentically performing the iconic tunes.

Lila LeCount's Sophie started and ended the show with a beautifully light vocal performance, but showed range throughout. Especially impressive was LeCount's performance in "Voulez-Vous," where Sophie is tossed around during a chaotic and high energy dance number while her potential fathers all confront her, establishing LeCount as a true triple threat as she portrayed Sophie's growing confusion and overwhelm, all while dancing enthusiastically and singing powerfully.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

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Memories of and a Memorial to the Army Security Agency

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

This year, Memorial Day is May 27. The federal holiday was established to mourn and to honor those who died while serving in the United States Armed Forces. To date, there is no actual memorial at Arlington National Cemetery dedicated to those who passed while performing their duties in the Army Security Agency.

The Army Security Agency was formally established in post WWII. With its roots in WWI signals intelligence, the organization was renamed twice during the course of WWII. Their secret operations and code-breaking capabilities saved thousands of lives – they contributed to the allied forces' ability to gain the upper hand to win the war. Post WWII, the Army Security Agency, as it came to be known in 1945, maintained worldwide field stations.

The very nature of the Army Security Agency's support of war efforts and in turn, efforts to maintain peace, was extremely technical, at times incredibly dangerous, highly classified and top secret. Intelligence gathering missions did have deadly outcomes.

For example, more than several Army Security Agency aircraft were lost during the Vietnam War with many "silent warriors" never making it home. In fact, the agency was not even recognized as being in Vietnam. Rather, it was referred to as Radar Research.

Having sworn to secrecy and under heavy penalties, soldiers in the Army Security Agency could not share their work with family and friends, sometimes not even with those they worked with unless "as needed." Never compromising the mission was not only physically risky but put tremendous mental strain on those in the Army Security Agency.

Even in the years following the Army Security Agency's being officially absorbed by the United States Intelligence and Security Command in early 1977, the ingrained training to maintain silence stayed with those who had served. The U.S. government only recently declassified certain information with regards to the activities in countries such as Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, their surrounding areas as well as in other parts of the world.

With this declassification, Veterans of the Army Security Agency slowly began to speak about their experiences and reach out. Due to the long history of secrecy, many were reluctant to share at all.

Mark Gunderman (ASA '75-78) gives a little history of how recent gatherings of Army Security Agency

Veterans came to be: "Pre COVID, fellow ASA members, Bill ("Jake") Jacobson and Harry Newman connected via an ASA Facebook Group, the National Army Security Agency Association, and met for lunch one day.

"During discussions, it was realized that many more ASA Veterans were probably located in the area, and they needed to get together. So, it was decided that they would try to organize a monthly gathering. A notice was put out on the NASAA Facebook Group, and it was astounding how many of this relatively unheralded group of Veterans responded and joined the luncheons."

A luncheon is held monthly either at Smokin' Willy in Purcellville or in Winchester at Mission BBQ. While Veterans from the greater Northern Vir-

same Special Forces Airborne School in Vietnam at different times. George Trogner was a member of the same unit I commanded at Fort Bragg, after I was reassigned.

"So, though we never met while in service, we have a connection. Secondly, it is therapeutic in many ways to share experiences that we could never do before due to the highly classified nature of the experience. Probably 90 % of our activities have been declassified now, and it is really neat to even be able to talk about them." let alone talk with people that had 'been there, done that, and even have the t-shirt.'

Bill "Jake" Jacobson indicates that unlike some Veterans in the group, his military «career» was a short one. After being drafted in 1967, he enlisted in ASA because as he says, "there was no ASA in Vietnam [so] of course, after finishing Morse Code and Direction-finding schools at Fort Devens, I received my orders for Vietnam where I met some of the best friends I've ever had."

Jacobson continues, "Harry and I connected just before the COVID pandemic, compared our experiences in ASA and set out to put together a group of like-minded ASA Veterans with the goal of reliving our shared histories. Sadly, we fear, the public history of the Army Security Agency will die with the last of us."

The efforts to establish an ASA memorial have been in the works for over seven years. In 2017, an extensive presentation was made to the National Cemetery Remember and Explore Subcommittee. Numerous letters of support by high-ranking members of the U.S. military, foreign embassy representatives, members of Congress, Virginia U.S. Senators Kaine and Warner as well as ASA Veterans and their survivors made for a compelling justification for the proposed memorial. Preliminary design plans for the memorial were also submitted.

As of 2024, the "Unsung Heroes of the Army's Unknown Unit" have no such national memorial. This is not due to lack of funds and ample space at Arlington National Cemetery is thought to be available. After three unsuccessful attempts, hopefully now a Congressional Bill will again be put forward for a full House vote so that on Memorial Days to come, the Army Security Agency will have a memorial dedicated to those who quietly saved uncountable lives "because we were never there ... although, we were."



Army Security Agency Veterans (pictured left to right) Rich Terry, Karen Terry, Jim Tillery, Bill "Jake" Jacobson, Don Armstrong, guest Sarah Christian (Dick Henson's daughter), Gary Leopold, Harry Newman, Bob Chase, Bill Campbell, Dick Henson at the Purcellville luncheon.

ginia area catch up with their lives current day, they also reminisce, recall and reflect. These are experiences that were long buried and can now, for the most part, be shared.

Harry Newman says that as he enlisted in 1966, he had "no idea what Army intelligence was all about, let alone what ASA did in the Army." Newman says that, "Firstly, it is rewarding to just be able to talk with people that had the same experiences as I did, and perhaps knowing the same people as I served with. Jake Jacobson and I, as it turned out, had the same First Sergeant. Dick Henson and I attended the

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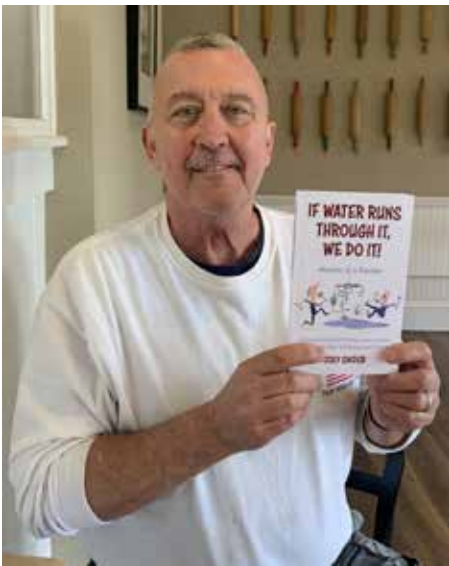
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Local retired plumber writes memoir

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

For over forty years, Joey Snider’s plumbing business, J.R. Snider, Ltd. operated out of the Middleburg area. Having learned the trade from the age of 12 from his father, the late Ray Snider, Joey Snider took over the business after college and became a master plumber as well as a water treatment specialist.

In 2023, after selling his business and retiring, Snider contemplated his next steps. As a man always on the go, he was quick to realize that he was eager to pass along not only his institutional knowledge but he wanted to inspire a new generation of workers as well. Writing and self-publishing a book was the ticket. Snider made contact with a publishing platform and



“If Water Runs Through It, We Do It: Memoirs of a Plumber” was recently released.

Snider’s book is aimed primarily at those who may be wondering what direction to take either post high school, college or even those at a crossroads later in life. He believes that the possibilities are endless as long as a strong work ethic and a desire to learn are solidly in place. Credibility, Kindness, Respect, and Understanding are the core values on which the business is based and Snider kept these, along with many more strengths, posted on the wall of his business office.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 23 »

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LOCAL RETIRED PLUMBER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

Further, his book contains chapters such as “Intestinal Fortitude;” “Balancing Career and Family;” and “So You Really Want To Be An Entrepreneur?” Team building skills (“Snider’s Riders”) and commitment to the job are some of the many topics covered not only by definition but by learning from Snider’s years of experience, his successes, problem solving and lessons learned.

Where the stereotypical image of the cigar-chomping, burly plumber lugging tons of heavy tools may be from generations past, both changes in work materials and technology have made the job not only lighter but user-friendly.

Take for example working with cast iron pipes in contrast to PVC or hanging a tankless water heater

on the wall as opposed to wrangling massive water heaters. A change in perception of the industry has therefore opened up opportunities that many thought not possible.

Snider is also predicting that Artificial Intelligence will play a significant role in the industry. He believes that AI savvy employees will be highly sought after in his former line of work.

Snider’s book is also highly entertaining, as one can imagine, with tales of the people, places and surprises in dark recesses that he has encountered. He repeatedly made a mental note over the years jokingly saying, “I’ll put that in my book when I retire!” Of course, the curious will want to know such things as “what is the strangest thing you’ve found in the pipes having been flushed down.” Snider has a whole section devoted to that.

The praise for the book is outlined in the opening pages as a multitude of personal testimonies speak to high quality of Snider’s work as well as his compelling memoir. Snider and his office family have interacted with many different types of people and businesses. These testimonies reflect the great esteem in which Snider is regarded. They show deep appreciation for the book as a guide as well as a quality representation of being in the service industry.

Snider says that he hopes his short stories, his opinions and advice are interesting and inspirational to both young men and women curious about the trades. “If this book helps one person find a hidden passion, then I will be very happy and proud and consider my time well spent,” he concludes.

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MIDDLEBURG FARMERS MARKET,
 CONTINUED FROM PAGE 14

the Middleburg Community Farmers Market this year. Vendors for the 2024 season include Dark Hollow Farms, Hess Orchards, Hidden Creek Farm, Double Creek Ranch, The Preppy Pretzel, Cobbler View Farm, JNRG Healing Co., Tummy Yummy Candy Apples, MM Coffee Farm, and Willoughby Farms & Flowers.

During the 2024 season, local purveyors will offer homemade pickles, jams, jellies, honey, coffee, pork, grass-fed beef, fresh-cut flowers, various baked goods, and a

variety of seasonal fruits and vegetables.

The 2024 season of the Middleburg Community Farmers Market will also feature the Children's Entrepreneur Market. Sponsored by the Middleburg Community Charter School, this special kid-only section of the farmers market will allow Loudoun County students ages 5-18 to exhibit their small businesses and craft products throughout the market season. Parents can visit the following link to sign-up: Children's Entrepreneur Market. Middleburg Community Farmers

Market is still accepting vendors for the 2024 season. Prospective vendors may visit www.middleburgva.gov/297/Farmers-Market for operating guidelines, terms of agreement and an application. Contact Kim Shelly, Market Manager for the Town of Middleburg at middleburg-farmersmarket@middleburgva.gov for additional information.

Please check the Middleburg Community Farmer's Market website for additional information. Dogs on a leash are always welcome.

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REVIEW OF MAMMA MIA!, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 20

All of Sophie's relationships contained great chemistry, but especially impressive was that between her and Paul Finamore's Bill, who displayed incredible comedic timing and instinct as well as poignant moments of genuine connection.

Moreover, Lydia Rouse's Donna interacted seamlessly with Sophie, weaving a gorgeous mother-daughter dynamic. Rouse balanced Donna's headstrong snark with her maternal, softer side, resulting in a well-rounded character.

However, no Donna is complete without her Dynamos; Emma Kleinhans's Tanya and Stephanie Long's Rosie provided both comic relief and stellar vocals, establishing the characters as not only part of the trio, but also vibrant and personable individuals.

With denim, gold, and glitter, the costuming team, led by Miranda Ridgely, brought the truly dynamic trio of the Dynamos to life. The team sewed the three iconic disco outfits, as well as thrifting and utilizing existing resources to create multiple

costumes for each character that reflected their personalities.

Similarly dynamic was the scenic design of Lila LeCount, Sophia Liebermann, and Valentina Smith. Employing the use of two turntables on the otherwise stationary set enabled great spatial storytelling and separated each setting distinctly, and the weathering and set dressings truly created environments that felt livable and authentic.

In order to bring these sets to life, a run crew led by Kyle Beshore and Kylie Jackson worked seamlessly with the stage managers, Jerry Wang and Colin Leary. The run crew carried out many visible transitions, costumed appropriately in "Donna's Tavern" shirts, with ease and never diverted attention from the story. Such smooth transitions were aided by the extensive planning and organization of Wang and Leary.

Between tear jerking poignancy and catchy, electrifying dance numbers, Stone Bridge High School's *Mamma Mia!* balanced spectacle with sentiment in a truly lively production.

OP-ED: JUST THE FACTS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

raises questions about the true purpose of this budget item. Is it genuinely for unknown PFAS impacts, or does it aim to support proposed annexations that will require increased water infrastructure?

Leesburg has released extensive PFAS findings, yet refrains from allocating CIP funds given the associated uncertainties. Conversely, Purcellville has not disclosed comprehensive PFAS data but commits \$2.5 million of ratepayer funds for speculative PFAS concerns, despite not being listed among communities mandating treatment for confirmed PFAS contamination. It's evident: what you cannot measure you cannot improve regardless of how much of the rate payer's money you throw at it.

Further, it's encouraging to witness the owners of the vacant buildings on 21st Street actively revitalizing the area, liberating the business community and visitors from the constraints of the stagnant and misaligned development scheme which has been going on for nearly 14 years. This mayor and the Town Council majority, however, are eager to work out a deal quickly with this developer whose permits will expire in June 2025.

In November I look forward to casting my vote for candidates who steadfastly prioritize truthfulness, transparency, fiscal responsibility, and community collaboration to pave the way for a prosperous future for Purcellville.

ASK DR. MIKE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

practical tips and strategies:

Mindful Listening: Encourage family members to practice mindful listening. This involves listening to someone without planning a response or judgment. Being fully present – without a device in your hand, exhibiting good eye contact, asking open ended and probing questions, and being attuned to and reflecting a speaker's feelings, also, paraphrasing and summarizing are some of the best ways to be a more active and mindful listener. Mindful listening can enhance communication and deepen relationships.

Mindful Eating: Share meals without the distraction of electronic devices as a family. Use mealtime to fully experience the food you're eating and enjoy the company of your loved ones. This in turn can make meals more pleasurable and less rushed. Research has shown that children who are raised in families that eat at least three dinners a week together do better socially, emotionally and academically when compared to children who are not raised in families that eat meals together on a regular basis.

Nature Walks and/or Getting Outdoors: Taking walks in nature and observing the surroundings by using all senses together as a family, can foster mindfulness. Being together as a family outdoors can be a calming activity

that brings a family closer to nature and closer to each other. With the weather getting warmer now, this is an easy and timely go-to way to practice mindfulness as a family.

Bedtime Meditations: Introducing short meditations and/or mindful breathing exercises before bed can improve meaningful connections and promote calm. Even just connecting with your child and reflecting on the events of their day can increase mindfulness. This practice can also help everyone unwind and end the day with a sense of peace, gratitude, and contentment.

In closing, mindfulness offers profound benefits for families, from reducing stress and enhancing emotional regulation to strengthening the family bond. By adopting simple mindfulness practices, families can create a more peaceful and connected home environment and dynamic.

Here's to making the journey towards mindfulness a collective adventure; one that can, with effort and time, transform your family's dynamic and lead to lasting, positive changes.

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.

THE BOS LOBS THE BALL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

people come live in this county who are teachers, who are firefighters, who are wait-staff, who are nurses, the way you have that is by approving attainable homes."

Supervisor Caleb Kershner (R-Catoctin) made the closing remarks. "These are very hard votes, but this is a very deliberate process ... to get to this point

... All of these large applications - none of them are going to be perfect quite frankly. They're not going to be the densities that we want, and that's why we work so closely with everybody involved ... not everybody's always happy, usually there's some give and take; there's no utopia in land development." he concluded. The motion passed 7-2.

BOS TO RECONSIDER, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

at loudoun.gov/bos.

In addition to attending in person, members of the public may watch the public hearing on cable TV (Comcast Channel 23 or Verizon FiOS Channel 40) or online at loudoun.gov/meetings.

Watch the March 13, discussion of the

Tillett's View application at: loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7626?view_id=89&meta_id=243249&redirect=true.

Watch the March 19, discussion of the motion to reconsider at: loudoun.granicus.com/player/clip/7631?view_id=89&meta_id=243586&redirect=true.

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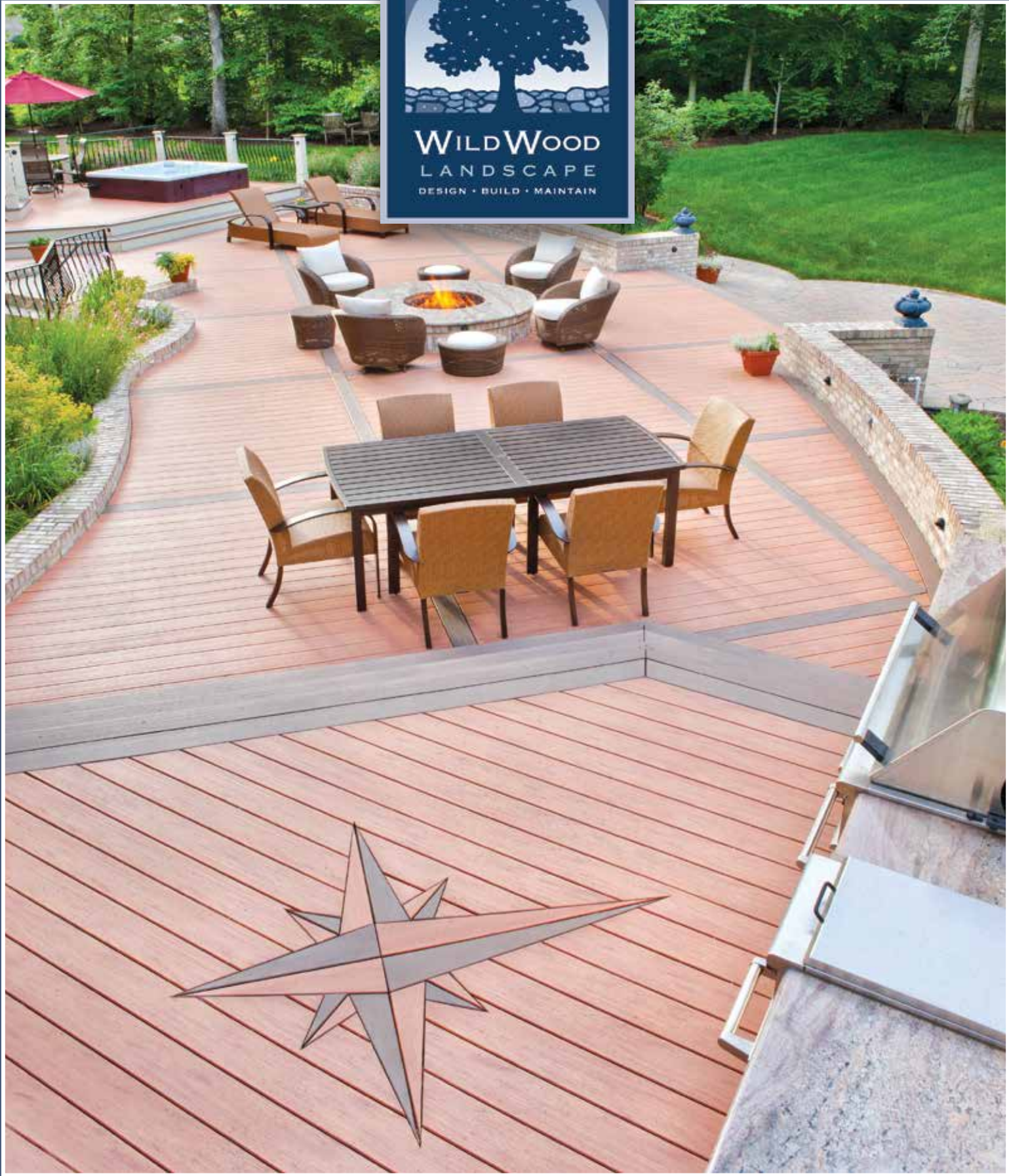
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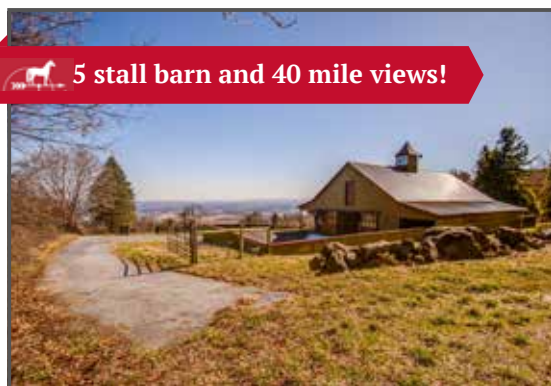
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