

# Majority town council still peddling rate hike justification with “political insert”

BY VALERIE CURY

At the June 11 Purcellville Town Council meeting, comments were made during the council comments portion regarding the political insert in the town utility bill. Also, council voted 3-2, with Mayor Stan Milan, Vice Mayor Erin Rayner, and Council Member Kevin Wright to demolish the Pullen house at a cost of \$49,260. Council Members Chris Bertaut and Carol Luke voted against. Previously supporting the decision to demolish the Pullen house but not present for the vote were Council Members Mary Jane Williams and Caleb Stought.

**GOVERNMENT**

Council Member Chris Bertaut said, like all citizens, he received the “political insert masquerading as justification for

the recently adopted [utility] rate hikes.” He said the insert was done without his knowledge or permission. He asked that his name and Council Member Carol Luke’s name be removed from the insert and a revised one be issued.

Bertaut said the insert lacks in “substantiated data and follows the ongoing narrative championed by Mayor Stan Milan, Vice Mayor Erin Rayner, and Council Members Caleb Stought, Mary Jane Williams and Kevin Wright.

“They claim that previous town councils could have drastically reduced our debt had they not pursued the restructurings and refinance of 2013, 2017 and 2021.” This restructuring was, however, done on the advice of “our financial experts at Davenport and Company,”

said Bertaut. He pointed out that the majority omits “what their alternative strategy would have been and what the cost would have been to the residents of Purcellville.”

Explaining further, Bertaut said the “insert falsely implies that the 2017 and 2021 restructurings pushed our debt repayment out by ten years. In reality it was the 2013 restructuring that extended the debt repayment by four years, while the 2017 and 2021 actions extended it by a total of six years.

“Moreover, the 2017 restructuring led to the retirement of about \$2 million in water utility debt through a process called debt defeasance—a significant fact our management team seems to have overlooked in the face of unsubstantiated



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claims by our current leadership.”

Bertaut pointed out that the 2020 refinance achieved a lower interest rate without extending the debt payoff period. “Yet this fact goes unmentioned,” he said.

Going over some of the specific numbers from the utility restructurings and refinance, Bertaut pointed out that the “2020 refinance resulted in \$817,608 in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 12 »



# Community leaders search for solutions to increasing miles of power lines

BY REED CARVER

Dominion has announced four new transmission line projects in Loudoun.

Speakers representing major associations took turns presenting information on the lines on June 11, in a Piedmont Environmental Council meeting at Heritage High School.

**GOVERNMENT**

The Loudoun Transmission Alliance and the Lansdowne Conservancy argued for the Aspen to Golden 500 kilovolt lines to be buried, rather than strung at an average height of 160 feet along Rt. 7.

The Conservancy is an umbrella of the homeowners association that represents the residents of Lansdowne. It protects

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# Bishop serves with the next generation of U.S. Naval Aviation Warfighters

BY SPECIALIST JOHN OSBORNE

Ensign Oliver Bishop, a native of Ashburn, is serving in the U.S. Navy where naval aviators learn the skills they need to fly missions around the world.

Bishop, a 2018 graduate of Thomas Jefferson High School for Science and Technology, joined the Navy 18 months ago. Bishop also earned a bachelor's degree in mechanical engineering from the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign in 2022.

"I joined the Navy for the camaraderie and to be a part of something bigger than myself," said Bishop. "The last thing I wanted to do was spend my career in a cubicle."

"Growing up in Ashburn, I am more cognizant of the opportunities I was afforded," said Bishop. "I also learned that in life you have to blossom where you're planted."

Today, Bishop serves as a student pilot assigned to Training Air Wing Four (TRAWING 4) located at Naval Air Station Corpus Christi, Texas. TRAWING 4 comprises four training squadrons that conduct Primary, Intermediate, and Advanced flight training for Navy, Marine Corps, and Coast Guard pilots.

"I love the team aspect of the naval aviation community," said Bishop. "It's a shared mission with a shared purpose."

The air training program focuses on the increased complexity of today's aircraft. After successfully completing the rigorous program, naval aviators earn their coveted "Wings of Gold."

After graduation, pilots continue their training to learn how to fly a specific aircraft, such as the Navy's F/A-18 Super Hornet fighter attack jet, the F-35 Lightning strike fighter jet or the SH-60 Seahawk helicopter. These aircraft take off from and land on Navy aircraft carriers at sea.

Navy aircraft carriers are designed for a 50-year service life. When the air wing is embarked, the ship carries more than 70 attack fighter jets, helicopters and other aircraft, all of which take off from and land aboard the carrier at sea.

With more than 5,000 sailors serving aboard, the aircraft carrier is a self-contained mobile airport.

Aircraft carriers are often the first response to a global crisis because of their ability to operate freely in international waters anywhere on the world's oceans.

With 90% of global commerce traveling by sea and access to the internet relying on the security of undersea fiber optic cables, Navy officials continue to emphasize that the prosperity of the United States is directly linked to recruiting and retaining talented people from across the rich fabric of America.

"We will earn and reinforce the trust and confidence of the American people every day," said Adm. Lisa Franchetti, chief of naval operations. "Together we will deliver the Navy the nation needs."

"I am most proud of receiving my commission and of being selected for naval aviation," said Bishop. "Serving



Photo by Mass Communication Specialist 1st Class Anna-Liesse Hussey

means being a part of something bigger than myself. This is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity to participate in world affairs."

Said Bishop, "I want to thank my parents, Jeff and Piera, my sister Elizabeth, and my grandparents for supporting and encouraging me to start on the adventure of a lifetime."

*Specialist John Osborne is a Senior Chief Mass Communication Specialist with the Navy Office of Community Outreach.*

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# The Great Purcellville Utility Fable: Tall Tales and Higher Bills

BY KWASI FRASER, FORMER TOWN OF PURCELLVILLE MAYOR

In early June, I opened my Town Utility Bill and was unsurprised to find a political insert laden with misinformation, attempting to justify the substantial rate increases endorsed by Mayor Stan Milan, Vice Mayor Erin Rayner, and Council Members Mary Jane Williams, Kevin Wright and Caleb Stought.

This insert seeks to deceive the citizens of Purcellville into believing that our restructuring and refinancing strategy necessitates these significant rate hikes and the pursuit of annexation to boost town revenue. They cling to the fabricated narrative that our town faces a revenue problem rather than a spending problem, yet they recently voted to demolish a building to replace it with a parking lot, foregoing revenues from taxes and utilities.

With the insert they have finally corrected their previous misstatement, which suggested that only the 2017 and 2021 debt restructurings occurred, by acknowledging the 2013 refinancing that took place before I assumed office. However, they conveniently omit the 2020

refinancing that lowered our interest rates without extending the debt. Let's address the falsehoods in their insert.

Under the heading of "How Our Utility Rates Are Set," these officials assert that rates are based on estimated annual system costs, yet fail to categorize these costs, dedicating the rest of the paragraph to debt discussions without mentioning operational expenses like the annual \$1.1 million siphoned from the utility fund to pay the General Fund. It's no surprise they avoid discussing other operational expenses, as it would contradict their revenue problem narrative.

In explaining bond issuance and payment, they omit the specific terms in the bonds that prohibit prepayment. This raises the question: where would these officials have found funds in 2013, 2017, and 2021 to pay off the principal when it was not permitted by our bondholder agreements? They neglect to mention the 2017 debt defeasance process and the millions in cash flow savings from our restructuring and refinancing efforts documented during our deliberations.

They present an unsubstantiated cost figure for the 2017 and 2021

restructuring, without detailing the 2013 costs. They continue to falsely claim that principal payments were deferred via the 2017 and 2021 refinancing, without informing citizens that the 2017 restructuring enabled faster principal repayment than the 2013 refinancing and retired millions in debt through defeasance.

Contrary to their statements, the Town has never missed a scheduled principal payment on the water and sewer debt. They omit the cash flow savings from the debt restructuring and refinancing we inherited.

If these officials want to educate us about utility debt, they need to tell the full story, starting with how we arrived here, the debt terms that prevented early prepayment, and the Town's prior lack of resources to pay off the balloon payments. Each refinance and restructuring resulted in cash flow savings and reduced average annual payments and bought us time – a fundamental reason people refinance.

Their insert's graph fails to show:

- The events in 2010 leading to our significant debt

- Cash flow savings from the 2013, 2017, and 2021 restructuring
- The 2020 refinancing and the interest rate reductions
- The millions retired from debt defeasance in 2017
- Alternative options to restructuring and refinancing given our bond agreements, limited funds, and rising operational expenses

Regarding the Town's receipt of American Rescue Plan Act funds, the insert fails to explain the efforts behind this achievement, presenting the \$10,559,884 as if it magically appeared from federal legislation.

They disregard the years of lobbying and advocacy by myself and other elected officials through the National League of Cities to prompt Congressional action. The hours of preparation during Congressional week in DC to articulate legislative priorities and bring vital tax dollars back to our communities are overlooked. ARPA funds were not a stroke of luck; they resulted from our hard work to drive legislative action.

In discussing whether utility rates

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

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## The Dirt Controversy

BY CHARLES HOUSTON

Four years ago, the Board of Supervisors unanimously passed a Board Member Initiative to protect prime agricultural soils. Despite the original 9-0 vote, it's taken forever to translate that BMI to actual zoning code as a ZOAM (Zoning Ordinance Amendment) which the Board did on June 12.

What does it do? The text for the new ZOAM is confusing. It does protect *some* prime soils, in *some* instances. In other instances, it gives developers an escape route.

Conservation people finally won something, though not all we wanted. It was a huge struggle, a bare-knuckle fight with a handful of land barons and zillionaires. It was their intransigence that made everything take so long. They succeeded in weakening the final bill.

### Motives

The psyche has always fascinated me. In the fifth grade I wrote a paper on schizophrenia. It was only a page or two, but I

got an A+ for it. Many years later my world included some difficult people, especially my then mother-in-law. So I bought the then-latest version of DSM – the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual for mental disorders – to see what diagnosis might fit her. It was fascinating and I found myself “diagnosing” various people. Including myself.

That's relevant to the squabbles over the Prime Soils ZOAM. It is probably wrong to assign motives to the good guys and the bad guys, but I'll do it anyway.

### The Good Folks

The Good Folks outnumbered the Bad Folks many times over, but the squabble was an even fight. The overarching sentiment for the Good Folks was a love of the land, for farming and for our way of life. The second-most obvious sentiment was fear: Transmission lines, data centers, cluster subdivisions, loss of good land for agriculture, general sprawl. The Good people were passionate.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

## Purcellville residents beware of scams

BY BEN NETT

As I walk door-to-door in Purcellville, meeting residents as part of my campaign for Town Council, I take the opportunity to share a warning about increasing scams targeting our citizens.

Fraud is a multi-billion dollar problem, yearly, and our status as one of the wealthiest towns in the wealthiest county in the United States makes us a prime target. Those successfully targeted include young and old, rich and working poor, white-collar professionals with advanced degrees and blue-collar workers with high school diplomas.

The victims of these scams represent every demographic and socioeconomic status. Victim losses of the cases I have personally worked range from hundreds of dollars to hundreds of thousands of dollars. One such case turned

federal, leading to a SWAT team takedown in a Purcellville neighborhood and the disruption of a nationwide theft and money-laundering network with multiple arrests nationwide.

Successful resolutions of these cases, however, are few and far between. Put simply, law enforcement does not have the resources to thoroughly investigate every fraud. This is due to manpower shortages, the complexity of financial crimes investigations and, frankly, limited technical expertise on the part of most law enforcement professionals. The “probability of solvability” is our metric.

What all victims have in common is a deep-seeded feeling of shame. “I should have known better,” they tell me. “I can't believe I fell for that” is another frequent utterance. “I knew something wasn't right, but I went along

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

## The need for leaders with character

Dear Editor:

I am dismayed by the position of many that character flaws in political leaders can be overlooked if the political agenda of those leaders aligns with their views. My position is that the character of our political leaders matters greatly. A leader with poor values and character will have an overall negative effect on the country that cannot be counter balanced by the accomplishments of their political agenda.

**LETTER**

Recent events have demonstrated how leaders of low moral character have caused great damage by encouraging

others to behave dishonestly, to hate, to condone violence, and to change established democratic norms of equity and fairness.

People with differing opinions and perspectives are labeled as enemies, persecuted, and purged. As a result, short sighted and dangerous decisions are made based on limited perspectives as opposing voices of reason are drowned out. Corrupt leaders enact laws to limit dissent and to restrict voting rights so they can remain in power. Once in power, it is increasingly difficult to remove them, even if their actions prove to be increasingly harmful.

If our leaders exemplify well established norms of honesty, respect for others and for the law, and selfless service, then the citizens will likewise be inclined to emulate those higher values for the good of all.

People of good character exist on all sides of the political spectrum. People are not good or bad because they have different political viewpoints. However, how they treat others and how they pursue those political agendas reveals their good or bad character. Pursuit of a political agenda does not justify lies, law breaking, contention, threats, bullying,

and demeaning or dehumanizing rhetoric. It is our responsibility to elect people of high character who will support our political viewpoints by means that are honorable and fair.

Let us have the moral courage and integrity to demand leaders of character. Let us see clearly and not excuse a leader's poor character for the sake of a political agenda. Let us use our votes to elect leaders with character for our own good and for the good of our democratic society.

*Dan Fairholm  
Ashburn*

## Investigation needed regarding BOS taxpayer-funded trips

Dear Editor:

I remain concerned regarding the international trips taken by the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors to Ghana and Uruguay. These taxpayer-funded trips, which included stays at a luxury casino, beach photo ops, and winery visits, have raised serious questions about government transparency.

**LETTER**

Despite being a year since the scope of these trips was uncovered, there remain many unanswered questions. Why were these destinations chosen? What benefits did they bring to the county? Has all the money identified as improperly used for hotel upgrades been reimbursed to taxpayers? And why did the fiscal data used to publicly justify the trips include references to unrelated

grocery stores?

The Board of Supervisors formally opposed transparency legislation proposed by state Senator Russet Perry in the most recent legislative session. This lack of transparency is troubling, especially where our hard-earned taxes are involved.

Where are the investigative authorities on this issue?

Given the dismal track record of government transparency in Loudoun County, it is imperative that both the Virginia Attorney General and the Loudoun Commonwealth's Attorney launch a formal investigation. The citizens of Loudoun County deserve the sunlight that such an inquiry would provide.

*Brad Bucher  
Sterling*

## Leesburg Town Council adopts 2025 legislative agenda

The Leesburg Town Council has adopted its 2025 Legislative Agenda.

The adopted Legislative Agenda includes several Council legislative priorities, such as calling for an amendment to the state code to require counties to distribute revenues generated from the plastic bag tax back to towns within their jurisdiction; encouraging enhanced benefits for emergency dispatchers; discouraging attempts to circumvent local zoning authority, particularly for short-term rentals and accessory dwelling units; and requesting clarification from the

General Assembly on local roles and responsibilities pertaining to marijuana legislation.

The Legislative Agenda also includes the Town's position statements and legislative priorities in several focus areas, such as, but not limited to, land use, the environment, public safety, and utilities.

The adopted 2025 Legislative Agenda can be found online at [www.leesburgva.gov/government/mayor-council/annual-legislative-agenda](http://www.leesburgva.gov/government/mayor-council/annual-legislative-agenda). The 2025 Virginia General Assembly Session will convene in Richmond in January 2025.

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# Just like nothing (else) on earth: Mount Hope Baptist Church

BY TIM JON

This wasn't what I came for; the morning of my visit to the subject of today's verbal (and physical) foray. I was planning on collecting images from an abandoned farm site in Ashburn and there are not many of them left in that area, but I discovered that the property was very much inhabited – so I took a look around and weighed my options.



TIM JON

And this is where it gets interesting; I always pride myself on finding places that will leave an impression on all senses – inside and out – preferably for the better, and in this case, I'll have to admit that – instead – the source of inspiration found me.

I had simply made a couple of turns to reacquaint myself with the neighborhood around the old Village of Waxpool near the junction of Route 659 – Belmont Ridge Road – and Waxpool Road – just east of Beaverdam Reservoir, and found myself turning into the parking lot for Mount Hope Baptist Church.

Now, there was a lot to like about this location: inspiring, historic architecture, an even older churchyard adjacent to the structure and lawn, (being a weekday morning) solitude, a distinct sense of

individuality and character, a relative sense of peace, despite the proximity to nearby traffic, and even the name itself.

It's taken the time between my morning photo session and the day of this actual writing to fully filter in and absorb how important that little word 'hope' can be. Thinking over some of the memorable events between that visit and 'now,' of course I can recall some personal victories as well as losses; I would say the same for worldwide events as well. And, you know, sometimes it's tempting – and seemingly easier, somehow – to mark time by tragic occurrences near and far.

Maybe I'm a fool (and I'd have lots of folks agreeing with me here) for allowing the metaphor to carry me in this direction, but I prefer to think and feel that events transpired to have the facility named 'Mount Hope' to influence my life's actions, thoughts and feelings. It's kind of a case of deciding which 'magnet' had the greater power. I'd say, certainly not the one within me.

Now, I mentioned earlier that the local



Church possessed a sense of the historic: I believe their current sanctuary dates back to 1899, and the nearby Mount Hope Cemetery (looking at some of the fading headstone inscriptions) reaches even further into antiquity.

Oh, and I mentioned the place-name of Waxpool at the outset: you can still see a re-creation of the Waxpool General Store

and Post Office at the Loudoun County Heritage Farm Museum located in Claude Moore Park in Sterling, which we've visited together during an earlier story. In another lifetime, I covered the early timeline of that facility as well with its founding source of inspiration, Former Director of Agriculture, Bill Harrison.

But, to return to our current tale of Hope. Now, without being able to place a numerical value on the item, I nearly always gain a sense of permanence and 'groundedness' in visiting a place with such obvious connections to the past.

Going back to my initial theme of discovery, 'Hope' has existed here for quite some time. This leaves yet a deeper mark – at least to me – that I was drawn to the

place. And, yes, the Church building itself is quite a sight: a mostly-wooden structure of white, with black shingling and steeple, leaving stark contrasts with both the sky and any nearby surroundings.

If you take a drive through 21st Century Ashburn, Virginia – or pretty much anywhere in this part of the Commonwealth – I believe you'll agree that the style of architecture from 1899 offers a sharp distinction with that of today's structures, and – that many of the historic buildings we formerly used as landmarks to recall our surroundings are no longer standing.

But 'Hope' has survived; I trust that this religious facility and its traditions will endure far into the future, including the times of your, and my personal gains and losses – as well as the world's triumphs and tragedies. I choose to see the universe in this way, based on my own evidence; remember, Hope found me on that recent, adventurous morning in Ashburn. I'm sure it can find you, as well.

Oh, and remember: the Church will have an easier time finding you if you keep an eye out for that tall, black steeple reaching out of the black roofed, white-painted wooden building just off Belmont Ridge Road. Just sayin.' Sometimes, even Hope needs a little help.

## What is Sharenting and is it bad?

BY MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER, PSY.D.

"Sharenting," which is a portmanteau of the words "parenting" and "sharing," is a relatively new pop psychology term that involves the act of a parent excessively posting pictures, videos, updates and stories about their child or teen's life. And while a lot of pop psychology terms aren't very helpful, I think this one is.

As a psychologist who works a lot with children and teens, the topic of parents digitally oversharing sensitive information about their children comes up frequently in therapy and with the action at times causing real problems and emotional upset for the youth.

So, what does sharenting look like, and how can posting about your child or teen online be such a bad thing?



### Ask Dr. Mike

By Michael Oberschneider, Psy.D.

Examples of sharenting could include excessively posting about your child's personally upsetting experiences (e.g., posting about your teen getting a speeding ticket), posting your child's report card or posting other awards or acknowledgments. It could also include excessively posting baby pictures and information about developmental milestones (e.g., posting photos of your son or daughter potty training, their first tooth, etc.), posting about a prank involving your child, posting an X-ray of your child's broken arm, excessively posting

about your child's hobbies, interests or personality style, posting about birthday parties or celebrations and posting stories about personal family moments involving activities, pets or friends.

Of course, as parents it's perfectly fine to provide updates about meaningful moments of our children to our family and friends on social media, so at first glance, the above list may not seem problematic to many parents.

When it comes to sharenting though, the issue isn't simply about sharing the occasional photo or video, but rather, it's about parents oversharing personal or sensitive information about their children, which can later lead to unintended consequences regarding a child's social

life, mental health, future endeavors and safety.

Again, as a psychologist, I have repeatedly seen, firsthand, the damaging impact a parent's social media life can have on the parent-child relationship when the parent overshares information.

Oversharing can shame, embarrass or cause insecurities or unhealthy comparisons for children, which in turn can cause a rift in the parent-child relationship. In extreme cases, and over time, oversharing information about your child can lead to a loss of privacy for your child, your child being cyberbullied or bullied at school, or to your child experiencing anxiety, sleep problems, depression, and reduced physical activity and social involvement.

Regarding safety, there are serious risks and consequences to putting too

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »



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# Lt. Barry Dufek chosen as new Purcellville Chief of Police

The Town of Purcellville has chosen Lt. Barry Dufek as its new Chief of Police, effective July 1, 2024. The Purcellville Town Council confirmed the appointment at its June 25 Council meeting.

“The Town conducted an extensive search with the assistance of the Virginia Association of Chiefs of Police to identify the individual who would best serve Purcellville and the Police Department,” said Purcellville Mayor Stanley J. Milan, Sr. “Barry has proven to be a dedicated leader in our community and a solid leader committed to public safety.”

Lt. Dufek has 24 years of law enforcement experience, the last eight with the Purcellville Police Department. He is a graduate of the 281st session of the FBI National Academy and holds a master’s in public safety from the University of Virginia. He is a graduate of the Leadership Loudoun executive development program and has served as the President of the Emerick Elementary School Parent-Teacher Organization.



“I am deeply honored to have been chosen as the next Police Chief for the Town of Purcellville,” said Lt. Dufek, who has been a resident of the Town for 12 years. “My commitment as the new Chief will be to foster a strong, collaborative relationship with our community, prioritizing safety, trust, and transparency.

“Together, we will work to create an environment where every resident feels secure and valued, and where our collective efforts make Purcellville a thriving and inclusive place to live, do business, and visit. I am

excited to work with such a talented group of individuals and look forward to the next chapter of the Purcellville Police Department. I also would like to thank Dave Dailey for serving as the Interim Chief during this transitional time for the department.”

Lt. Dufek succeeds former Police Chief Cindy McAllister, who retired on May 1, 2024, after nearly nine years of service to the Town of Purcellville, and with more than 42 years of law enforcement service in northern Virginia.

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# Coalition seeks to involve the voice of leaders in agri-business

BY REED CARVER

Representatives of the multiple associations that seek to preserve either the historical, or natural resources of Loudoun met on June 26, at the Purcellville Train Station. The Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition meets there every last Tuesday of the month at 4 p.m., and the meetings are open to the public.

Emily Houston, with the Waterford Foundation moderated the June meeting.

In participation were: Trinity Mills with The Loudoun Wildlife Conservancy, Madeline Skinner with the Historic Village Alliance, Gem Bingol of Piedmont Environmental Council, Jim Hanna and Alex Newton with the Loudoun Transmission Line Alliance, and John Ellis with Save Rural Loudoun, among others.

The Coalition keeps members up to date on current land-use decisions, pending projects, and shares their ideas for future Coalition actions.

As the County re-evaluates Rural Standards in the Zoning Ordinance over the next two years, Maura Walsh-Copeland

led the discussion about how stakeholder representatives will be chosen.

The Board of Supervisors ultimately begins the selection process. Currently there are three categories, conservation/agricultural, residential, and tourism/business, requiring nine representatives, who can choose 36 different stakeholders.

The hope for this design is that the right expert will be placed in the right role. Each meeting will be very specific, limited to one topic, like: equine uses, mountain overlays, wineries/breweries etc.

As of press time, discussion on lead selection should continue on July 17, in the Transportation and Land Use Committee. The coordinating leads will be finalized in September.

Jonathan Tourtellot, with the Destination Stewardship Center, spoke about the intersection between tourism and love of place from his experience with National Geographic. He wants the coalition to work together to begin a new approach called "destination stewardship," in which business leaders who depend on the preservation of rural Loudoun will

join the coalition's advocacy and conservation groups.

"We don't have a coherent whole," he said. "What's broken is care for the destination. Tourism is not necessarily broken, so tourism is a new tool in our bag."

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »



Alex Newton with the Loudoun Transmission Line Alliance.

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# County receives feedback on Western Loudoun Recreation Complex

BY GRACE BENNETT

With a projected completion by fall 2028, Loudoun County has outlined a plan to construct a new 83,000 square-foot recreational complex just outside the Town of Purcellville. It would occupy a 142-acre site at 36716 Main Street, and the area would include up to ten athletic fields, fitness-oriented indoor spaces, an aquatic center, and a master plan for a potential future library within the property.

Joe Celantano, VMDO, Consultant, introduced the goals of the project: “[to] build a unique, functional, and state-of-the-art recreational complex to serve the western Loudoun population, provide access to recreation in a natural environment—design for the focus on sustainability, energy efficiency, and preserving natural habitats where feasible.”

The proposed athletic fields would be broken up into two types: diamond and rectangular. The number of fields may be adjusted between eight and ten as the design phase progresses.



The fields will be equipped with lighting, fencing, public utilities, road access and parking. They will feature groundwater well irrigation, landscaping, restrooms, concessions facilities, staff offices, meeting rooms, storage, scorekeeper and umpire areas, a maintenance facility, picnic pavilions, and bleachers.

During an initial meeting which took place on May 6, presenters stated that they would strive to manage the effects of field lighting to minimize the impact of glare and general

ambience so as to preserve the beauty of Loudoun’s night skies. Lights would be constructed and powered only where and when necessary. The county, however, does not currently have a different footprint for western Loudoun concerning lighting, as most residents prefer dawn-to-dusk athletic fields.

During the meeting on June 27, those working on the project further clarified that fields

bordering residential areas would be at a lower elevation and would have lights downturned and operated with manual shutdowns. Buffer zones would be put in place between fields and nearby affected residential areas, however, the exact distance between the recreation center and residential properties was not mentioned.

The recreation center will be complete with a variety of amenities ranging from gymnasiums, running tracks, and multi-purpose rooms to administrative office spaces, kitchens, and classrooms. An aquatic center with competition and leisure pools, spas, spectator seating areas, two wet classrooms, a splash play area, and associated locker rooms would come as part of the project. The county has also suggested an area for indoor and outdoor pickleball, a rock-climbing wall, an outdoor fitness area, and a diving pool.

By the May 6 meeting, the county had already conducted several investigations on the site for the planned complex. The Boundary Line and



Site plan with citizens’ feedback on pink sticky notes.

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »

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# “But I advocate for the citizens of the town”

– Planning Commissioner Nedim Ogelman

BY VALERIE CURY

At the Purcellville Planning Commission on June 20, commissioners asked why there was a need for a Request for Quotation for a Historic Downtown Master Plan and Design Guidelines proposal. It was subsequently amended to a Request for Qualifications and reissued on May 30 with a due date of June 12. There was no council discussion in public or vote about putting out the RFQ.

There is a master plan in the comprehensive plan’s list of priorities and it is listed as a midterm effort. The initiative is to update the Comprehensive Parks, Recreation, and Open Space Master Plan. The only references to the downtown area are to sustain the Historic Downtown area.

Updating the zoning is the second short term priority for the comprehensive plan. The first priority listed is to update the Townwide Transportation Plan, which has been sidelined due to a lack of funding.

Purcellville Mayor Stan Milan has insisted that the completion of the zoning ordinance has been taking too long, despite knowing the company which was hired by the town returned the draft ordinance in a form that needed extensive work. Milan experienced this when he worked on the zoning ordinance while serving on the planning commission. He was then town council liaison for two years.

**However, at the June 25 Town Council Work Session, Milan**—along

with Vice Mayor Erin Rayner and Caleb Stought—expressed their displeasure over what they felt was the planning commission rushing to get the zoning ordinance completed. The draft zoning ordinance rewrite was finished in January and handed back to the planning department for formatting and implementation. The final draft is supposed to be ready in early July.

In September 2023, Milan attended the planning commission meeting to show his support and thank the commissioners for their hard work on the zoning ordinance rewrite. This was right before he did an about-face on his campaign promises of slow growth.

His campaign literature in 2022 when running for mayor stated: “Our zoning should be guided by our comprehensive plan. Adhering to the Town’s Comprehensive Plan reflects an official who listens to the people and is not setting out to satisfy the persistent special interests lobbying the town. Zoning provides a firm guide to how the town and its neighborhoods can grow, develop, change, or not change.”

At the June 20 planning commission meeting, Planning and Development Director Summer Wilkes said that the town has received six RFQs from firms. She said the town will have a review committee for the Historic Downtown Master Plan and Design Guidelines.

The committee will be comprised of Summer Wilkes, Economic Development Advisor John Heather, Planning Manager Boyd Lawrence, Division Manager Parks and Recreation Aime Ware, Assistant

Town Manager Diana Hays, and Procurement Specialist Kathy Elgin.

Commissioner Brian Green asked if the proposals would be made public—Summer Wilkes replied, “Not during the review process.”

Vice Chair Ed Neham asked, “What could the respondents be proposing? Are they talking about something they could bill [or] their qualifications?”

Wilkes replied, “Both.”

Commissioner Ron Rise Sr. said, “The last time we spoke, you said there was no money being spent. There are six full-time employees on this project. They are not actually charging, but anytime you spend time on anything—that costs citizens money.

**“So this is costing the town and we should be keeping track** of what it is costing the town,” he stated. The time associated with town staff working on this also takes time away from working on other things, he added. “That to me is concerning because this isn’t supported by the comprehensive plan.” He said it is a burden on the taxpayers of the town.

Commissioner Nedim Ogelman said the point about the costs “is a very good one ... and it just fortifies the resolution we passed previously requesting that there be some transparency and accountability for our democratic process for how the citizens’ money is going to be used.”

**“Right now, it is just as clear as mud** where the legitimate authority is coming from to pursue this,” Ogelman said. The planning commission previously voted 7-0 that they do not support “pursuing that effort right now,” he said.

The planning commission, he continued, rather supports “getting the zoning ordinance aligned with the existing comprehensive plan. Many of us believe that the focus area [in the comprehensive plan] that included 21<sup>st</sup> Street addressed the development of 21<sup>st</sup> Street.”

Ogelman said that he does not want the commission’s effort to develop a zoning ordinance reflective of the comprehensive plan to “in any way

be stalled by additional effort to relook at this particular area of town.”

Wilkes said she doesn’t believe that it will slow down the process. Referring to the RFQ Downtown Master Plan and Design Guidelines, she said, “It is clearly supported by the comprehensive plan.”

Ogelman disagreed, saying, “I have to definitely take issue with that. I know the comprehensive plan; I can site you verse. To this date, you have never once cited any part of the comprehensive plan that referenced or supports this.”

Ogelman said that Wilkes has asserted “that the comprehensive plan supports this, but what would help me, certainly, would be for you to point out [the passage].” He does not want to see “a sort of long twist—inference. It’s just not in there; I can say that.”

Wilkes said she would put a report together. “It would be better for me to put it all on paper.”

Ogelman asked if it was going to be “a report that actually cites line and verse—or one that takes a six-step inference to something?”

“The real victim here in all of this is the transparent democratic process.” He said it was clear to him how our comprehensive plan came to be and who voted for it.

“What is unclear to me is what is driving this desire to have this downtown master plan. What I need to see is the stakeholders that are driving this. I need to understand if those stakeholders are citizens of the town or people with other interests in the town” who do not live there. “Up to now, that is not clear.”

**Wilkes said, “It’s important to the business owners of 21<sup>st</sup> Street” to do the master plan.**

Ogelman responded, “Okay, so now you are talking a little bit more about who are the stakeholders that you are advocating for in this process. But I advocate for the citizens of the town.”

Wilkes interrupted, “So do I.”

Ogelman answered, “Well, if you are advocating for the citizens of the town,

CONTINUED ON PAGE 18 »

## Virginia unemployment rate drops to 2.7% as national rate increases

At the end of June, Gov. Glenn Youngkin announced that according to BLS Local Area Unemployment Statistics (“LAUS”, or “the household survey”), Virginia’s seasonally adjusted unemployment rate continued to decline, reaching 2.7 percent in April, 0.1 percentage points below the rate from last month, and 1.3 percentage points below the national rate, which increased by 0.1 percent to 4.0 percent over the month.

“We continue to see the results of our pro-jobs strategies with Virginians joining the workforce in record numbers, having the most Virginians employed in the history of the Commonwealth and Virginia’s unemployment rates declining for the third consecutive month,” said Youngkin.

“The underlying strength of Virginia’s economy is clear, but with persistent inflation continuing because of federal policies, we will continue to exercise caution and remain laser-focused on fostering an environment to expand job growth, opportunities and build a workforce for the future,” he said.

BLS’ Current Employment Statistics Survey (“CES” or “establishment survey”) reported non-farm payroll employment gains of 8,800 jobs in the month of May, totaling 242,600 jobs added since January 2022. According to BLS’ household survey, the number of Virginians working decreased this month modestly by 974 to 4,454,159, resulting in 203,000 more employed Virginians since January

2022.

The labor force decreased by 5,946 to 4,578,538, and the labor force participation rate decreased to 66.3 percent, as the number of unemployed residents decreased by 4,972 to 124,379. The labor force participation rate measures the proportion of the civilian population age 16 and older that is employed or actively looking for work.

“The Commonwealth’s unemployment rate continues to decline, which is positive – but we remain focused on increasing labor force participation leading to economic mobility for even more Virginians,” said Secretary of Labor Bryan Slater.

“Our overall economy remains strong, and we

CONTINUED ON PAGE 24 »

## Leesburg council approves Meadowbrook Neighborhood Center Rezoning

The Leesburg Town Council has approved a request for a follow-up rezoning of the Meadowbrook Neighborhood Center.

**GOVERNMENT** When the mixed-use project was approved in December 2022, one of the land bays was put on hold to enable the Town to develop zoning standards for a Continuing Care Facility. This rezoning completes the concept plan for the Meadowbrook Neighborhood Center project.

The applicant, Traditional Land LLC, was seeking approval of a rezoning application and a special exception to amend the concept plan and proffers for Meadowbrook Neighborhood Center Land Bay F, 8.2 acres of vacant land off South King Street near its intersection with

Evergreen Mills Road.

The requested amendment would allow the undeveloped land to host uses such as a 12,000-square-foot childcare center (subject of the special exception); a 175,000-square-foot Continuing Care Facility with 175 dwelling units; 5,000 square feet of retail space; and 14,300 square feet of office space. The Continuing Care Facility could include independent, assisted living, and/or nursing home uses.

With the approval, the applicant will now begin the site plan review process with the Community Development Department. More information on the project can be found by accessing the Town's eTRAKiT system at [www.leesburgva.gov/etrakit](http://www.leesburgva.gov/etrakit).

## Loudoun County seeks developers for Affordable Rental Housing Financing Program

The Loudoun County Department of Housing and Community Development has issued a Request for Qualifications for one of its affordable housing financing programs for developers - the Rental Housing Acquisition and Preservation Loan Program.

**GOVERNMENT** The purpose of the RHAP Program is to preserve affordable, multi-family rental housing units in Loudoun County by making funding available for the acquisition and preservation of land for rental housing that is either market affordable or affordable through rent restrictions.

The RFQ will provide Loudoun County with a pool of certified

developers who will receive priority consideration for RHAP loans. Project applications will be required to meet county priorities for the program. Once approved by the Board of Supervisors, developers will remain certified for 12 months. Pre-qualification opportunities will be issued annually.

The RFQ closes Thursday, August 1, 2024. Interested developers must submit the required documentation in the RFQ to be considered for certification. For program requirements and guidelines, visit [loudoun.gov/multifamilyfinancing](http://loudoun.gov/multifamilyfinancing).

For more information about the RHAP program, email [housing@loudoun.gov](mailto:housing@loudoun.gov).

### MAJORITY TOWN COUNCIL, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

savings from a lower interest rate on the General Fund debt, and it did not extend the payoff period for the debt, which is 2034." The General Fund is supposedly separate, but it hinders the Utility Fund by charging this fund \$1 million annually in chargebacks. The Utility Fund must pay those chargebacks to the General Fund, Bertaut said.

For sewer debt: "The 2013 restructure extended payoff to 2034. The 2017 restructure extended it from 2034 to 2038. The 2020 refinance did not extend it, and the 2021 restructure extended it from 2038 to 2040," he explained.

In 2021, then Council Member Milan supported the 2021 restructure he now criticises.

For water debt: "In 2013, the restructure extended payoff from 2032 to 2033. The 2017 restructure extended it from 2033 to 2038. The 2020 refinance did not extend it, and neither did the 2021 restructure," said Bertaut.

Bertaut pointed out that the insert also stated that "PFAS [Per- and poly-fluoroalkyl substances] did not affect the FY25 water rates. I have yet to hear our utility consultant agree with that statement. In the past, Stantec has used rate-leveling to avoid rate shock. Rate leveling works by accepting a higher rate increase in the next fiscal year—FY2025, in this case—to avoid a much higher rate increase in following years."

The majority of town council approved adding a debt of \$2.5 million

for a yet undetermined need to treat PFAS in 2029.

**"Where do I start?" asked Milan.** He said in reference to Bertaut's comments, "I don't know how you can separate yourself from a document that was part of the budget decision and not be wanting your name on that."

"The budget was approved by a majority on the council, and even though you were not in the majority to approve it—you voted against it—but the body as a whole is represented on the document."

Defending himself, Milan, who is running for Mayor against Bertaut in November, said, "The data that was represented on the chart was a result of the data from the budget."

**Changing subjects and hitting back at Council Member Carol Luke,** Milan said Luke's comments on the "revitalization of dilapidated buildings on 21st Street is a mute [sic] point." He said the buildings have been renovated and are occupied by four businesses.

"So, I am trying to figure out where there are dilapidated buildings on 21st Street. Some of the buildings like White Palace is [sic] being renovated and it's taking a while for that to occur."

Milan was referring to Luke's council comments about the town focusing its energy, staff time and funds on doing a master plan. The plan would be complete with roadway infrastructure changes of the Historic Downtown District, and it would slow roll the planning commission's efforts to

finish the zoning ordinance, which has been identified as a top priority.

Luke asked how many of the properties on and behind 21st Street are owned by one entity. This question was for the sake of the only properties in the area that have been either sitting vacant or blighted. Two years ago, the owners of the Vineyard Square project terminated their renters' leases so they could show "progress" on their active permits.

These properties are part of the Vineyard Square project on and behind 21st Street, which has been approved for commercial use plus 40 condos and six stories. The developers of the project have had active permits for 14 years, but they have failed to move forward. They need significant infrastructure additions in the area to accommodate even a portion of their project.

Luke asked if there were active building permits on these properties. How long have these permits been in existence and when do they expire?"

"Have these buildings deteriorated during these 14 years? What substantive actions have taken place to maintain or improve the condition or usefulness of these properties? Does the Town of Purcellville have any laws that govern the responsibility of property owners in commercial areas to maintain and improve their commercial properties in an effort to maintain a viable commercial area? What effect would allowing a given commercial property to deteriorate and/or stand empty on the adjoining properties

[have]?"

Luke said the town is already in debt and now will spend tens of thousands to "meet the needs of one developer" by doing a fourth charrette.

**Even though Milan ran on selling the Pullen house** for redevelopment to retire the Parks and Recreation debt, he did a complete reversal from first voting to list the property for sale to approximately six months ago voting with the council majority to cancel the sale of the property. The Pullen house had a cash offer for \$350,000. It also would have generated water and sewer revenue.

The cost to the town for demolition is \$49,260. In addition, the town will disconnect utility access. For a vacant property which does not have any hookup to town utilities, the cost to connect is nearly \$50,000.

Bertaut said the sale of the property "would have relieved our citizens of Parks and Recreation debt."

Milan said the space could be used for 45-48 parking spaces. Nearby parking lots in town with 40-plus spaces have more parking than would be created if a parking lot were built on the Pullen house property.

Over 15 years ago when faced with a blighted town-owned residence, instead of tearing it down, then Council Member Nick Pelchar worked with Good Shepherd Alliance, who completely rebuilt the home. Since that time, it has been used as a home for new mothers. The organization eventually bought the home from the Town of Purcellville.

# Susan Khalil is running for Purcellville Town Council

Susan Khalil was born in Philadelphia and grew up in Bucks County, Pa. She is the descendant of Italian immigrants who taught her a strong sense of family and hard work at a very early age. "I was taught to stand up for my values and never be compromised. Personal integrity was paramount. There are a lot of things one can lose in life and recover from, but integrity is not one of them," said Khalil.

Khalil has had a career in mortgage banking asset management, overseeing multi-million-dollar portfolios of commercial, industrial, and multi-family real estate. She currently holds a position in finance for a national non-profit.

She has lived in Virginia since 1986 and moved to Purcellville in 2000. "I chose the Town of Purcellville because I wanted to raise my children in a small town with a wonderful and caring community," said Khalil.

Khalil said her two grown children always look forward to coming back to the Town of Purcellville to visit. "It is a place where they can relax and they always eagerly anticipate showing off their hometown to their friends. They so appreciate what growing up in this town has meant to them. They feel very fortunate to have had this privilege."

Khalil said she is running for Town Council "because Purcellville is special and I want to keep it that way. It is necessary to keep the environment of this town a low key, welcoming and a relaxing place to come home to, whether it be after a work day or just for a visit."

Said Khalil, "We will lose our hometown atmosphere if we allow our town to be infiltrated with aggressive housing and commercial and industrial growth through annexations. Nonsensical annexations will ruin what we have."

Her vision is to always be moving towards bringing Purcellville into tomorrow, "but doing so without compromising our town's charm and traditions, and most importantly, without creating any further financial burden for our town residents. The potential financial effect on our residents will always be my first consideration when evaluating existing and new projects."

Khalil said she will always put citizens first, not developers. Purcellville has a quieter, slower and more intimate lifestyle. "We do not want to be Leesburg or Ashburn. I am not for extending our boarders through annexations which will change the character of our town with more traffic, higher taxes and higher utility bills," said Khalil.

She is running on a slow growth platform and says "the way to preserve our special town is through our zoning ordinance. That is currently where the big fight is now with the majority of the town council delaying the completion of our zoning ordinance rewrite until they change the make-up of the current slow growth planning commission at the end of August."

The Town of Purcellville's elections this year are Nov. 5, and early voting starts Sept. 20.



# Arnburg announces run for Purcellville Town Council

Jonathan "Jon" Arnburg, his wife Cassandra and their four children have called Purcellville home since 2021. They moved to Virginia from Illinois in 2020 for a job at Inova Health System.

Arnburg is a seasoned leader with over 15 years of experience in public safety and emergency management. Currently serving as the System Senior Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management for Inova Health System, he oversees strategic planning, policy development, and program implementation to ensure the safety and security of Inova's personnel, facilities, and resources.

Arnburg builds and leads high-performance teams, fostering a culture of preparedness, and implementing best practices in emergency response. He collaborates closely with internal stakeholders, government agencies, and community partners.

Prior to joining Inova Health System, Arnburg has held positions at Mercy Hospital and Medical Center in Chicago as the Director of Public Safety and Emergency Management, at FEMA as a Strategic Planning Specialist, and the Deputy Emergency Management Coordinator and Firefighter for the Borough of Englishtown, NJ.

"I am a committed public servant with a career in strategic planning, open and honest communication, and fostering collaboration. I am skilled at breaking down barriers and building consensus," said Arnburg.

"I have led numerous initiatives that have driven positive change and sustainable growth. My expertise in fostering transparent and effective communication ensures that all stakeholders are informed and engaged, creating a foundation of trust and accountability."

Said Arnburg, "As a candidate for town council, I am focused on promoting slow, responsible growth, always ensuring the residents' best interests are at heart. I

believe that maintaining the town's unique character is essential to preserving its charm and ensuring a high quality of life for all residents." He said his approach emphasizes careful consideration of growth opportunities, balancing progress with the need to protect the community's heritage and values. "I am driven by a desire to create a bright future for my children and all the town's youth. My dedication to service, combined with my strategic mindset and community-oriented values, make me an ideal candidate to represent and lead the town toward a prosperous, well-balanced future, that values family, community, and the preservation of the town's unique character for generations to come," said Arnburg.

Arnburg and his family have woven themselves into the fabric of the Town of Purcellville's community and its small-town traditions. He is a devoted family man and passionate community volunteer, with a deep commitment to preserving the town's character for future generations.

Arnburg and his wife have devoted countless hours to their children's schools, their neighborhood HOA and local youth sports, demonstrating their commitment to making a positive impact at the grassroots level.

Active in the local community, Arnburg volunteers at his child's school, contributing to various programs and activities that enhance the educational experience for all students.

His involvement in youth sports underscores his dedication to fostering teamwork, discipline, and healthy lifestyles among young people. He has built strong relationships with families and gained a firsthand understanding of the community's needs and aspirations.

Arnburg is running in the Town Council election on Nov. 5. He is running in the Special Election for the seat vacated by then Council Member Boo Bennett. The term will be for two years.



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# Loudoun Launches Rural Historic Villages planning process

Loudoun County has begun a planning exercise focused on Rural Historic Villages, places that reflect the county's historic settlement patterns, while preserving and enhancing the social and cultural heritage that characterizes Loudoun's Rural Policy Area.

The Board of Supervisors initiated a Comprehensive Plan Amendment in April to establish criteria for identifying communities as Rural Historic Villages to develop a current list of RHVs to incorporate into the Loudoun County 2019 Comprehensive Plan. Once an updated list of RHVs is identified in the Comprehensive Plan, the county will establish a process and timeline to create small area plans for each village.

**Small Area Plans:** A small area plan focuses on a particular unincorporated area of the county,

such as a village; solicits input from that community; and considers each community's vision for their village, addressing issues such as traffic, road networks, community spaces and amenities, historic preservation and land development that will be refined during the planning process. Small area plans should consider and reflect the distinct character of each village and establish a framework to guide and manage future growth within the village and its immediate surroundings.


The existing RHVs were established during the 18th and 19th centuries around historic mills, railroad depots or major crossroads, later developing as commercial and mercantile business centers that served the surrounding farming communities.

**Current Village Planning Efforts:** Prior to the approval of the RHV CPAM, planning had already

begun for St. Louis, and that work will continue. In addition, Lucketts will retain its current place next in line for a small area plan. Work on the Lucketts plan will begin as the Board considers adoption of the St. Louis plan.

**Next Steps:** Community engagement is an important part of the Rural Historic Villages planning process. The county expects to hold focus group and community meetings in the future. Members of the public will also have the opportunity to provide comments on the CPAM at Planning Commission and Board of Supervisors' public hearings. Information about opportunities for public input will be posted at [loudoun.gov/ruralvillages](http://loudoun.gov/ruralvillages).


For more information read the April 2, 2024 Staff Report (CPAM-2024-0004, Rural Historic Village Classification).



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# A Slice Above the Rest

BY LIZ TENNEY JARVIS

One may ask if Purcellville has reached its limit as yet another pizza offering sets itself to open in mid-July. However, Knead Wine is not like any pizza anyone has enjoyed unless they have visited the original location in Middleburg. And now the beloved specialties of Knead Wine will fill the space previously occupied by Vocelli restaurant in The Shoppes at Main and Maple complex.

Knead Wine, Middleburg opened August 1 of 2020, tapping into the need for take-away food options during the pandemic. Owner Jarad Slipp had intended to open a steakhouse but at the eleventh hour, he decided that opening a sit-down restaurant at that time would have not made much sense.

Knead Wine enabled Slipp to utilize his expertise in wines as well as his knowledge of finer ingredients. It was a smashing success and in the spring of 2022, he opened Tremolo Bar just down the street. All the while Slipp maintained his relationship with Delaplane's RdV Vineyards as their Estate Director.

It has been quite the journey for Slipp to end up opening a location in Purcellville. From his teen years, he realized that the culinary arts were for him – he headed out to learn and train at The Culinary Institute of America and ICIF in Italy.

So driven was Slipp that he toughed it out in some of the top gastronomic arenas. Gordon Ramsey in London for example, where he spent an impressive year cutting

his teeth with the chef whose infamous, ill-tempered reputation would terrify most into oblivion.

Slipp also worked in the prestigious Casa Vissani in Italy, Fiamma in New York City, and CityZen in Washington DC. At these various locations, he gained valuable experience running everything from front of the house to what goes out-the-back-door. From DC's CityZen restaurant, it was not long before his position with RdV (plus aspirations for his own endeavors) had him end the commute and move to the more appealing western end of Northern Virginia.

Slipp knows how it's done and how it's done properly. Through years of training and tests, he has moved through the four levels to become one of the few hundred Master Sommeliers in the world.

Becoming a Sommelier takes years of education and experience; it means one must know all aspects of wine, how to serve it, its production and history, and how wine is to accompany certain foods (though that is becoming more of a personal preference than a set-in-stone mandate). Point being, those in Purcellville will soon enjoy his unpretentious approach to great wines.

At Knead Wine, one can then choose from Slipp's walls

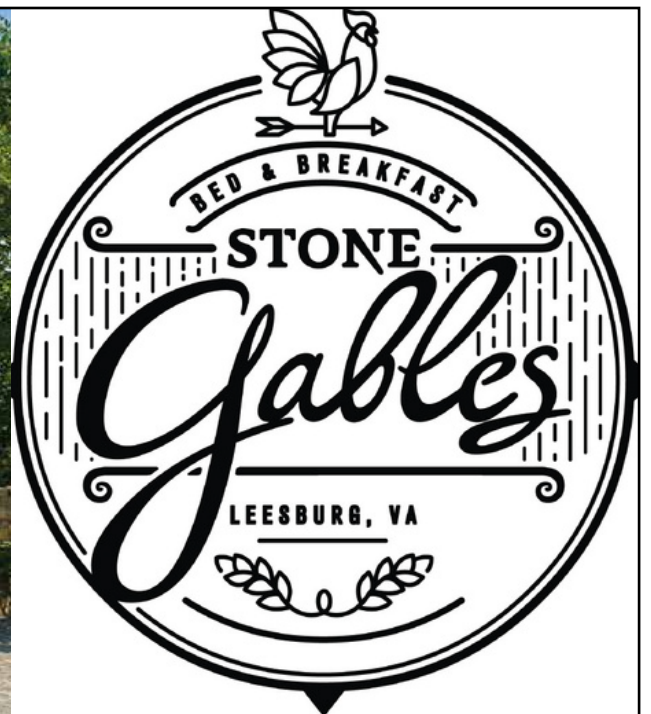


Knead Wine's Jarad Slipp cutting the "Rhoads" pizza. The ingredients are tomato sauce, mozzarella, fennel sausage, pepperdews and basil.

of his handpicked choices of \$20 and \$45 wines. Any bottle from one side or another is all one price. There are also higher priced wines for those looking to enjoy something special. The curated list of wines will be available to order with meals in-house for a flat corkage fee (no matter the price of the bottle).

Slipp observes that Neapolitan style pizza is so floppy that it is traditionally cut with scissors. While his pizzas are similar at first glance, a sturdier dough is needed for takeout so he utilizes flour made in

CONTINUED ON PAGE 22 »



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**COMMUNITY LEADERS SEARCH, CON'T. FROM PAGE 1**

their property values, and seeks controlled development.

A video presentation assembled by the Conservancy, on the Aspen to Golden line featured community leaders, the pastor from Community Church, the large church off of Rt. 7 in Ashburn, just east of Claiborne Pkwy. The Aspen to Golden lines, if installed above ground, will pass by the church.

**Undergrounding can provide the same amount of power,** Leo Rogers, the County Attorney said in the video. The Director-At-Large of the Lansdowne Conservancy said that this line will negatively impact the property values of surrounding areas and devalues their properties. Maryann Mueller, a member of Lansdowne interviewed in the video, said it "makes Virginia unlivable."

Bryan Turner is the General Counsel with the Lansdowne Conservancy. He hosted a discussion with Brian Conroy, who spoke about the engineering side of things and the process of how it would be done. They estimate completion in June of 2028 to put lines underground, calling this a hybrid solution. The presentation of expert testimony was hosted by Turner. "From a technical standpoint and an aesthetic standpoint, it only makes sense," he said.

The State Corporation Commission will consider this undergrounding proposal in the coming months. They urged the community to request the SCC to come out to Loudoun and make their decision so the public can weigh in. On Sept. 18 the case will be heard, and a local hearing will be requested, so citizens can attend. It is very important to testify at that time, he said.

Dominion's solution is 180-foot towers, the tallest thing in Loudoun County, he said. This will impact all of Rt. 7.

**Turner argued that Europe and Asia are already burying lines,** and

high lines will be a hazard to the INOVA hospital, and vulnerable to storms. He cited that Dominion has said they cannot bury lines, but he believes it is more a statement of preference. "What I would recommend you doing is question them at all times," he said. "We have to bring in power, there's no question about that," but, "we should not have to do your job," Turner said, addressing Dominion, "bury the damn lines!"

**Lines will impact agri-businesses, which in part, depend on aesthetics,** said Sue Manchin, president of the Waterford Foundation.

She spoke about the NextEra Line, (mid-Atlantic resiliency link) (MARL) going through western Loudoun. "Our fight is very far away [from Bryan's]," she said, but nonetheless they need to work together. The power of 6 million homes, is the power that is needed, she said, and it all goes to data centers from coal plants in West Virginia.

Bill Hatch stressed that the way to preserve rural Loudoun is through prime soil conservation. John Adams, a local cattle farmer, said too much growth is drawing away natural resources, and leaving farms lacking. "I've been around long enough to form some opinions on data centers," he said. "The bottom line is there's too much reliance on data centers, which are 40 percent of our tax base. I say, no more data centers until we solve the energy supply situation," he said, which elicited full applause.

**Cherish Loudoun's historic places,** urged Robert A Pollard, Chair of the Loudoun County Heritage Commission.

There are 200 surveyed historic cemeteries in Loudoun, Pollard said, using a slide from the Loudoun County Mapping Department.

While this is not explicitly planned, Dominion could theoretically bulldoze a cemetery, and move the remains elsewhere, destroying the sense of place. Loudoun even has protected

forests, in district overlays. Lines will destroy these resources, he said.

"You can't go very far without stepping onto natural resources in the county," said Pollard, citing Gordon Pond, in Sweet Run State Park. There are 300 miles of unpaved roads, which are one of Virginia's most endangered places. Unpaved roads are a time capsule of "hundreds of years, to a distant past," he said.

"Where they [Dominion] see empty spaces, we see what you cannot put a dollar sign on," Pollard said. "The point is, NextEra, that you can't rip through without disrupting our natural environment ... It will deface forever, the things that are worth fighting for."

Easements are critical, while they are keeping land out of development, they are also land which does not lead to developments that will strain the county budget.

**There are three weaknesses of NextEra,** said Jim Hanna, Chair of Data Center Working Group, Loudoun preservation and Conservation Coalition. They don't mitigate the eco impacts, they don't minimize scenic impacts, and they fail to consider existing right of ways.

Hanna said PJM knows there is a risk of public opposition, which will lead to expensive time delays. They planned to meet with NextEra in June, and will release documents to the public, and hold community meetings this fall. "We will continue to strenuously oppose... [the lines]," Hanna said.

Gem Bingol, Senior Land Use Field Representative with PEC, acknowledged the snowballing effect of data centers. In Virginia, 57 million square feet are already built or under construction. Loudoun has more than double the density of Beijing China, which is the second contender. "Yet, the proposals keep coming," she said, "there is a realistic potential to triple the amount of centers." Bingol said that citizens are supporting the data center industry through their taxes.

The 20-year power expectations of PJM have risen every year they were evaluated, due to data growth. PJM is the regional transmission operator for Virginia and surrounding states, Bingol explained. They are responsible for being sure the power is there when the switches are turned on. Dominion is already guaranteeing sharp power demands into 2038. They released a flier, months ago, that says by 2035, they expect the average energy bill to be doubled.

The necessary new lines will require billions in investment, which citizens will pay for, via taxes. "We are footing the bill for this industry," Bingol said.

Dominion will have public meetings in late July, or early August.

**Finally, the US Department of Energy is planning the National Interest Electric Transmission Corridor.**

It is overruling SCC's and state powers, said Bingol. It is planned to come from Ohio, through West Virginia, down through Loudoun. This power will be connecting to coal and gas plants as well, in Fort Martin and Harrison, WV.

People are in the pathway of the NIETC and they have no idea, said Bingol. A study is coming out this fall called the JLARC study, to support regulation of data centers. It is being conducted by the legislature in Richmond.

Power increases in five years may be 340%, said Turner, and A.I. is replacing the old processing. It will use 60-80 kilowatts per rack, 6 times more than cloud storage. "It created enormous power problems. If you stopped tonight, demands will still go up five to six times in coming years."

Turner recommended attendees to view Buddy Rizer's lecture on the coming use of micro-grid, which is power generation on site, with gas, and nuclear. "You bring your own power," Turner said. "Advanced re-conductors, part of the micro-grid, are being used in Europe, it's existing technology."

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**OPINION: THE DIRT CONTROVERSY,**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

**The Bad Folks**

These guys were dispassionate and only cared about one thing – money. Their opposition was couched in general terms such as “Property Rights” and “Downzoning.” Many of these people went one step further and stated that the ZOAM would reduce the value of their land. That’s pretty good evidence that, most of all, they were driven by money. Funny, the leader of the Bad Folks is already incredibly wealthy. I need to find that DSM and see what might fit him.

Despite months of wrangling, the parties could not come up with anything that satisfied both sides. They came very close until the King of Konservation had a last-minute demand that gutted the ZOAM. I could be wrong about this, but I believe he threatened that if the ZOAM passed, he’d never do another easement in Loudoun. Classy.

Another bad guy actually threatened to sue the County if the ZOAM passed. Impressions are made in the first few seconds and this guy did himself no favors. Slovenly dressed and with an angry mien, he simply shot himself in the foot. It was wondrous.

**Gropper**

William Gropper was an American painter of the Social Realism School, which focused on the Depression Era

conflict between the rich and the poor; he was a committed radical. Gropper’s most important works were caricatures of bombastic tycoons, with enormous heads, lording it over the people.

Aside from differences in cranium size, his paintings remind me somewhat of the King of Konservation.

**The American Scene**

This school of art popped up in the middle of the 20<sup>th</sup> century. It depicted ordinary people, particularly farmers, working hard. Some of its more famous members were Thomas Hart Benton, Grant Wood (“*American Gothic*”) and John Steuart Curry.

Their celebration of the ordinary man reminds us that his importance can be greater than that of tycoons. The county belongs to the people, not land barons or outsiders. Passing the prime soils ZOAM is a small step in that direction.

**To Recap**

Passing the ZOAM is worth celebrating since we are usually the losers on land use issues. Opponents of land conservation usually win to the detriment of regular citizens. In this case the opponents showed their true selves, which were not pretty.

It was encouraging to hear various objections raised by the Bad Guys and then see them shot down. Central of their objections to the ZOAM was that it

would reduce density (i.e., the number of houses that may be built upon a property, couched as acres-per-house.) The greater the density that can be built upon a property, the more valuable it becomes.

The Good Guys pointed out specific language in the ZOAM that protects the existing density of five acres per house in the northwestern part of the county.

The Bad Guys slid by that fact and started ranting that their development costs would be higher if the ZOAM passed. Some land barons believed this; I didn’t.

**What’s Next?**

State law requires counties to update their comprehensive plans every five years. The current plan was passed in 1999 and it’s now 2024. We need to start work now, but whatever group leads the effort should primarily be citizens, not developers, engineers, realtors or their accomplices.

I bet that most complaints Supervisors get are related to sprawl. The answer? Cut the current allowed density by half. Better yet, just say no to more development. Period.

*Charlie Houston considers himself a conservative populist. He misses a lot of the past and dislikes a lot of the present. Sometimes he misses his old job – developing large office buildings. He lives in Paeonian Springs.*

“**BUT I ADVOCATE...**”, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

nothing should be more important than the most transparent language that’s in our comprehensive plan. Then you wouldn’t need to take the time to do a report on this ... to justify doing a master plan ... Tell me one line; tell me one page that supports this master plan idea.”

Town Planner Jordan Andrews said the RFQ addresses the design guidelines and the widths of roads and streets and that will be in the master plan.

Community Development Advisor John Heather said in an Economic Development Advisory Committee meeting that the extension of O Street, from 21<sup>st</sup> Street through to Hatcher Avenue, would be in the master plan. O Street is currently a dead-end street, and the developers of the Vineyard Square project need to circulate traffic from their development onto Hatcher Avenue.

Ogelman asked, “Are we talking about the design guidelines that we have been asking for [over] the past four years?” This is something the Board of Architectural Review was supposed to take on, said Ogelman.

Andrews answered yes. Ogelman asked, “Then why are you all talking about the comprehensive plan?” Ogelman wanted to know with respect to the road networks “what this master plan is supposed to provide net of what we already have.” He said this looks like “a do over of what citizens wanted in their comprehensive plan.”

**OPINION: PURCELLVILLE RESIDENTS BEWARE,**  
CONT. FROM PAGE 4

with it anyway.”

This sense of guilt often leads to delays in reporting the crime to law enforcement, which further hinders successful outcomes. Even when the crime is solved and the perpetrator apprehended, restitution is another battle unto itself.

With that in mind, I implore my fellow citizens to heed the following and, further, have a sit-down discussion with your loved ones in order to mitigate vulnerabilities. As an underlying principle, remember this: If you don’t know the caller, don’t trust the caller.” That goes for emails, knocks on your door, text messages, pop-ups on your computer, and any other unsolicited outreach. If you’re not the one initiating the dialogue, be suspicious.

Indications of a possible scam include the following: Being approached out of the blue; being asked for your personal details and/or bank details; being put under pressure to make a decision; being asked to keep it a secret; being offered something that seems too good to be true.

It’s also important to understand that scammers usually sound very nice and polite on the phone, exercise great patience, and can be very

convincing. They are expert manipulators and have enough experience to anticipate questions and expressions of doubt and thus provide reassurances in order to deceive you.

Today’s financial scams are ever-evolving, thanks to new technologies like artificial intelligence. Scammers are now able to capture and manipulate the voices of your loved ones, indicating they are in distress and in need of immediate financial help. Caller ID can be manipulated to display absolutely anything, to include “Police.” Indeed, law enforcement is often impersonated, with scammers sending phony but very official-looking arrest warrants or supposed failure to appear notices for jury duty, simultaneously demanding payment of fees to avoid immediate arrest.

If you believe you are speaking to a scammer, hang up or otherwise disengage and notify police. If you give the scammers the information they want, your money may be gone for good. Financial transactions involving apps, Bitcoin, gift cards, overseas wire transfers and the like can be impossible to trace. Again, law enforcement does not have the resources to thoroughly investigate every successful scam.

Share this information with your family members, young and old, and report fraud attempts through the Federal Trade Commission’s official reporting site at <https://reportfraud.ftc.gov>. If you believe you may have provided sensitive information to a scammer, you can place a fraud alert on your credit report. Free weekly online credit reports are available from Equifax, Experian and TransUnion.

Purcellville was ranked the “Safest City” in Virginia for 2024 based on available data from the FBI’s National Incident-Based Reporting System. Let’s work together to make Purcellville the most fraud-proof city in Virginia.

*Carl B. “Ben” Nett is a former member of the Presidential Protective Division of the U.S. Secret Service, a former Intelligence Officer with the National Clandestine Service of the CIA, and the former Director of the Military Commissions Privilege Team at U.S. Naval Station Guantanamo Bay, Cuba. He is on a second career with the Purcellville Police Department and routinely handles financial fraud investigations. To obtain a free copy of his Scam Awareness Brochure, contact Ben at [nettfortowncouncil.com](mailto:nettfortowncouncil.com).*

**OPINION: THE GREAT PURCELLVILLE UTILITY,**  
CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

increased due to PFAS, they mention the \$227,000 PFAS Pilot Study Grant but omit the over \$2 million of debt adopted in the current budget for PFAS. The same budget where these officials voted for substantial rate hikes.

If no PFAS-related costs were factored into the FY25 utility rates, where will the funds come from to service the over \$2 million PFAS debt they advanced and adopted? What are the rate increases allocated across? It’s certainly not only for existing debt, given that annual water revenue prior to the rate hikes was 400% of the annual water debt payment, and annual sewer revenue was 200% of the annual sewer debt payment.

The budget reveals that most of these increases, particularly in the water fund, are directed towards operational expenses and future infrastructure to support annexation and development.

We had put in place a robust strategy to tackle the sewer debt, the sole significant debt burden in the Town. This strategy involves reducing or eliminating the millions in annual chargeback from the General Fund to the Utility Fund, utilizing portions of the substantial meals tax revenue to pay off the debt, and aggressively pursuing grants for Capital Improvement Projects.

Mayor Milan campaigned on these very solutions, yet now he has reversed course. It’s time for our leaders to honor their commitments and address the real issues, rather than concocting crises and misleading the public.

# Netflix's Latest Film *Hitman* Misses the Mark

BY NAOMI FRASER

“What if your ‘self’ is a construction? An illusion, an act, a role you’ve been playing every day since you can remember?”

This question is the driving force behind Netflix’s latest sensation, *Hitman*. Loosely based on a true story, *Hitman* follows Gary Johnson (Glen Powell), a mild-mannered professor who works for his police department on the side, setting up surveillance for murder-for-hire sting operations.

Content working behind the scenes, Gary’s world gets rocked when his team tasks him with going undercover as a *Hitman* during one of their operations. Though initially terrified, Gary finds he has a knack for the job and quickly becomes the department’s go-to man. Trouble arises, however, when he meets and falls for Madison (Adria Arjona), an unhappy housewife desperate to kill her husband. As the still-disguised Gary grows closer to the woman, he falls deeper into his character and becomes trapped in a battle between duty, identity, and desire.

Though Director Richard Linklater skillfully blends comedy, drama, romance, and action throughout the piece, I don’t believe *Hitman* lives up to the hype. From predictable character arcs to dull stretches of storyline, the film left me unimpressed. However, before I delve into my critiques, it is worth highlighting some of the great things *Hitman* has to offer.

First and foremost, the *Hitman* cast knows how to act. Glen Powell delivers a stellar performance throughout the entire film. Whether playing the mundane Gary Johnson or one of his eccentric *Hitman* personas, Powell expertly uses body language, vocal inflection, and line delivery to give each character a distinct personality.

Furthermore, Powell’s talent at subtly slipping in parts of Gary’s “real” personality through the cracks of the *Hitman* facades makes for a fun watch and amplifies the film’s overarching question surrounding self-construction: Can a person ever transform themselves entirely, or will parts of who they were always peak through?

Adria Arjona’s star power shines just as brightly. Her portrayal of Madison as an abused wife desperate for freedom elicits the audience’s sympathy and establishes the character as someone to root for. Similarly to Powell, Arjona also masters portraying dual personalities within one character. As she pivots Madison between conflicting character traits, she forces the audience



Rating:  
3/5 stars

to question how well we know the woman and how much of our sympathy she truly deserves.

Having hit on how great Powell and Arjona perform individually, I must touch on the magic they create together. Their chemistry is

electric. Whenever Gary and Madison share the screen, the audience can feel the magnetic pull drawing them closer together. Whether in funny times or sad, slow-paced, or action-packed, Gary and Madison’s connection burns bright and keeps us waiting around for more. Regardless of how you feel about the film, you’ll want to continue watching to see the lovebirds’ fates.

With all this being the case, I was surprised by how underwhelmed I felt watching *Hitman*. While there were moments of action and intrigue, the film was unexpectedly slow. I believe the film’s tight focus on Gary’s internal struggles over his identity added to this problem.

While there’s nothing wrong with centering a film on a character’s interiority, the story should include a supplemental level of external conflict — especially in a so-called action movie. For long periods throughout *Hitman*, nothing interesting happens on screen. The film eventually picks up and sustains its momentum until the end, but it ultimately fails to make up for lost time.

Another major problem lies in *Hitman*’s portrayal of Madison. While Arjona delivers a strong performance, her character’s arc is lackluster. When we first meet Madison, she is an intriguing character with depth.

As the film progresses, however, she devolves into the femme fatale archetype and becomes more of a sex symbol than anything else. Considering Madison’s potential for growth, I was disappointed to see the direction the filmmakers chose to lead her.

Ultimately, *Hitman* misses the mark. Even when taking the strength of its cast and the chemistry between Powell and Arjona into account, the film still disappoints. It’s not terrible — entertaining moments occur throughout, and the overall concept is intriguing — but you’re not missing out if you choose to watch something else.

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### COMMUNITY

“As someone who is currently serving in

the military (21+) and the federal government (17+), I’m grateful to serve Purcellville and the local surrounding communities through Mail It All. As “Your pack and ship neighbor,” it’s as important for us to always strive for excellence, as it’s important to continue providing the needed services and provide potential new offerings. I look forward to meeting everyone in the community,” said Marc Poblete.

Mail It All offers a variety of services, including shipping with major carriers such as FedEx, UPS, DHL, and USPS, as well as mailbox rentals, notary services, packing supplies, and more. They will be continuing to enhance their offerings to meet the needs of their customers.

“We are incredibly grateful for the warm welcome and support from the community and our goal is to provide the best service possible and to be a trusted resource for all mailing and shipping needs in Purcellville,” said Kathy Poblete.



## Adjusted Hours for Carver Senior Center begin July 8

The Loudoun County Department of Parks, Recreation and Community Services announces that the replacement of the flooring at the Carver Senior Center will begin on Saturday, July 6. During this time the facility will operate during adjusted weekday hours and will be closed each Saturday in July.

Beginning July 8, the Carver Senior Center will be open from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m., Monday through Friday.

The maintenance work is anticipated to be completed in August.

### Important Carver Senior Center Schedule Updates

- All congregate and

home-delivered meals will be served each weekday.

- Weekly activities will end promptly at 1:45 p.m.
- Transportation buses will depart the center at 1:50 p.m.

During the scheduled floor replacement, patrons of the Carver Senior Center are encouraged to visit the Ashburn Senior Center, the Dulles South Senior Center, the Senior Center at Cascades and The Senior Center of Leesburg. Loudoun County PRCS senior center membership holders receive access to all five senior centers.

Participants of the co-located Mac Brownell Adult Day Center will be provided services at the Loudoun County Adult Day Center (Leesburg) or the Eastern Loudoun Adult Day Center.

The Carver Senior Center is located at 200 E. Willie Palmer Way in Purcellville. For more information about the center, visit [loudoun.gov/carverseniorcenter](http://loudoun.gov/carverseniorcenter).

## Halloween Party in the Woods looking for sponsors and volunteers

Discover Purcellville has announced that the 13th Annual Halloween Party in the Woods will be held Oct. 26, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. It will be held once again at Dillon’s Woods adjacent to Fireman’s Field, which is located at 250 S Nursery Avenue, Purcellville.

There will be costume contests in 6 divisions, from infants to adults with over \$2,500 in cash awards and trophies. There will be games for the kids along with face painters, balloon artists and an outdoor movie theatre. Discover Purcellville will have an expanded international food truck court for your dining pleasure, as well.



“I am looking forward to our 13th Annual Halloween Party in the Woods. I can’t wait to see all of the creative costumes,” said Michael Oaks of Discover Purcellville.

Discover Purcellville a 501(c)(4) community nonprofit puts on this free event for the citizens of Purcellville and surrounding areas. “We depend on local businesses sponsorship to help support the event,” said Oaks.

If your business would like to be part on the largest free event in Purcellville, please email Michael Oaks at [DPurcellville@gmail.com](mailto:DPurcellville@gmail.com) for more information. Also, Discover Purcellville is seeking volunteers to assist with the games, setting up and other activities. Credit will be given for public service.

## Remembering Kenneth Evans Nichols

Kenneth Evans Nichols, 94, passed away peacefully in his sleep on June 24, 2024 after several years of declining health. Ken was a life-long resident of Purcellville, VA, having been born there in a house on Main Street on March 20, 1930.

Ken’s passion was working at Nichols Hardware, a business founded in 1914 by his father Edward E.



Nichols, Sr. Ken began working there after school as a child in elementary school and became a full-time employee (and part-owner) after graduating from Fishburne Military School in 1948.

He and his brother, Edward Jr., eventually obtained full ownership of the business from their father. Ken was never happier than when he was at “the store” and

he continued to work there until his health issues forced him to stop at the age of 89.

Ken spent 9 years in the late 1940’s and 1950’s serving his country as a “part-time sailor” in the Aviation Supply Division of the Naval Air Reserve. He was also active in founding the Purcellville Business Association and received its “Member of the Year” award in 1985.

He was predeceased by his parents, Edward Sr. and Sarah (nee Leach) Nichols, his beloved wife of 46 years, Frances (nee Shiley) Nichols, and all of his siblings and their spouses:

Edward Jr. and Meg Nichols, Milton and Ruth Nichols, and Frances Annie and Bart Hendrickson.

Survivors include his son, Donald (Valerie Campbell), grandson Geoffrey (Shania Ripken), and great-granddaughter Sophia Ripken – all of whom reside in the Hillsboro area. Other survivors include his sister-in-law Pauline DeHaven of Winchester and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral services and burial will be private. In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to the American Cancer Society or the Humane Society of Loudoun County.

# A Cappies Review of Independence High School's production of *Mean Girls*

BY TALIA LYTLE OF ST. PAUL VI CATHOLIC HIGH SCHOOL

Mean girls have been around since the dawn of high school, but the cult-classic sleepover favorite premiered in 2004 with a script written by comedy icon Tina Fey, and based upon a self-help book published in 2002. The musical premiered locally at the National Theater in Washington, DC in the fall of 2017 before opening on Broadway in 2018. It was most recently adapted into a movie musical in January 2024.

Set at a high school in suburbia, *Mean Girls* follows the adorably dorky Cady Heron, who is attending high school for the first time after moving back from Kenya. Trading the wild terrain of the African savanna for the rambunctious landscape of North Shore High School, Cady encounters "The Plastics," a group of queen bees led by the conniving and gorgeous Regina George and her backup girls: the anxious, considerate Gretchen and lovably aloof Karen.

Of course, no teenage drama is complete without a love interest, found in the form of boy-next-door Aaron Samuels. As Cady tries to navigate the complexities of North Shore, she is aided

by the vibrant Damian and witty Janis, who help her learn about the effects of lying and changing who you are to fit in.

With hair full of secrets and a brain full of stress, Katie Wetzler perfectly encapsulated Gretchen Weiner's anxious nature and the effects of Cady, Janis, and Regina's manipulation on her self-esteem in the song *What's Wrong With Me?*, providing a serious lesson amongst a comedic landscape.

Paul Hartmann in the role of the confidently fierce Damian showed comedic prowess in many notable moments, like his joyride on his grandmother's scooter and his energetic tap dancing in *Stop!*

Of course, no iteration of *Mean Girls* is complete without the world-burning Regina George, played by Annie Jackson. Jackson pairs perfectly with Chase Danzenbaker's Aaron Samuels in *Someone Gets Hurt*, where Regina flirts with Aaron in a calculated attempt to make Cady upset. The number clearly shows

the difference between the characters, with Jackson's controlling Regina and Danzenbaker's easily-persuaded Aaron.

Rounding out notable moments of the show was Janis's show stopping number *I'd Rather Be Me*, a self-confidence anthem that brings the musical's message of empowerment home.

Samantha Shroeder matched Janis's artsy punk vibe with her raw vocals



Samantha Shroeder, Allison Clark, Paul Hartmann.

Photo: Rebecca Danzenbaker.

that emphasized the song's emotional undertone and message. The show's ensemble supported the many iconic characters throughout *Mean Girls* whilst also bringing energy to the show through their execution of the rhythmic choreography from the ITPA Choreography Team.

Costumes, done with evident consideration by the ITPA Costume Crew, play an important role in emphasizing the differences between characters and their arcs throughout the musical.

Janis's patchwork jacket displays her character's rebellious nature and Cady's gradually tighter and shorter outfits mirror her character's personality shift as she spends more time with The Plastics.

Starr Davis, Sydney Foxx, Sawyer Jaffe, and Mickey Etheredge's stage management and the ITPA Stage Crew's execution stand out with their notable omission of blackouts for scene transitions. Instead, actors on stage would serve as stage crew by rolling in parts of the set during scene transitions, a technique that led to full immersion and flow for the duration of the production.

*Mean girls*, teenage drama, and "calculus" may always be a part of the high school experience, but there was nothing mean about Independence High School's charmingly hilarious production of *Mean Girls*.

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## Safe Routes to School Bike Distribution Event connects students with bikes

Recently at Leesburg Elementary School, 19 refurbished bikes were distributed to students as part of a series of bike distribution events organized by Loudoun County Public Schools Safe Routes to School program and involved several community partners. The Safe Routes to School program also hosted a similar event at Sterling Middle School.

### COMMUNITY

According to Kelly Smit, Safe Routes to School coordinator, fifteen of the bikes were donated by Maverick Bikes, a bike shop in Leesburg. The shop refurbished the bikes and delivered them to the Leesburg Elementary event.

The Loudoun County Sheriff's Office also donated four refurbished bikes for this distribution. Doug Landau of Abrams & Landau, Ltd. donated new helmets for each student. He also attended the distribution to help fit the helmets and to provide other support.

Lisa Campbell of Bike Loudoun supported the event by helping make sure each student's bike fit properly and providing some basic guidance to students who did not know how to ride a bike. Also in attendance were the Leesburg Elementary Family Liaisons who helped connect the

students and their families with the program.

In addition, each student received a bike lock and bike light provided through a Virginia Department of Transportation QuickStart grant. "We have to make sure everyone stays safe on their new bike," explained Smit.

Smit said bikes are important to the students of this Title I school as they provide basic transportation, a way to get around their neighborhoods and a way to be with their friends. Smit explained that the Safe Routes to School program also distributes bikes to middle and high schools. For the older students, having a bike provided transportation not only to school but also to jobs.

As the event progressed, the students entered the gym with their parents. Appropriately sized bikes had already been selected for them. Smit and fellow Safe Routes to School coordinator Janice Jennings paired the refurbished bike with its new owner and had them select a helmet. Campbell provided guidance to those who needed it or cheered those who did not. Landau helped adjust seats or pump tires up a bit more. The students were visibly excited to be new bike owners.

### A SLICE ABOVE, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 22

America. Gluten-free is offered but in limited quantities plus at an extra charge due to the dough making process required.

The toppings at Knead Wine range from the familiar like pepperoni (but this is not your bulk over-processed kind), the freshest mozzarella or basil to the combinations that have made it a location that many will trek miles to reach.

One example is the "Page" – pizzas are mostly named after musicians – topped with Tomato Sauce, Mozzarella and Provolone, Calabrese Soppresata, and Chile-Spiked Honey. Or the Harrison which features Crispy Speck, Mozzarella, Bosc Pear, Gorgonzola Dolce, and Fried Rosemary. One can Build-Your-Own as well. These are individual sized pizzas so one's choices are entirely their own. However, Slipp wryly states that, "you will never, ever find pineapple on a pizza here ... or green peppers."

In keeping with the primarily Italian influence, the value is placed on quality, ingredients that are in season and even a speciality of a certain region. Slipp therefore sources the best which may come from an area known particularly for that one item. One topping may come from a small purveyor in Canada while another might be locally sourced.

Slipp indicates that as far as the Purcellville location, they are ready to hit the ground running. "The nice thing is that we've opened before – the difference is that in addition to take-away, this (Knead Wine) will have seated dining and there will be some additions to the menu," he says.

Looking around the permit-pending stylish location in Purcellville, one can see that with soon to be hung, large framed maps of the various global wine regions, Knead Wine will be a totally different dining experience. With Jarad Slipp's history and background, the Town is about to be immersed in the best that the world has to offer.

### RECREATIONAL COMPLEX, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 10

Topographic Survey, Preliminary Geotechnical Survey, Wetlands Delineation, and Underground Utility Mapping investigations were complete. An update during the June 27 meeting confirmed that the Site Utility Location, Tree, Cultural Resources, and Septic System Surveys have been recently completed as well. The results of some surveys are still being reviewed. A well analysis is still under way; however, the county is in talks with town management to supply town utilities to the site.

A thorough Traffic Impact Study will be undertaken in September and October once schools are back in session. The county is considering the best access points for both emergency vehicles and the general public according to the results and the county's formal Site Plan Review. Officials said they seek to avoid potential cut-through traffic through communities of nearly a hundred homes and are contemplating an emergency exit through an established neighborhood.

"But again, I do want to stress ... that we're going through this traffic impact analysis," said Cody Smith, a Kimley-Horn consultant. "All of this is going to be formally studied once we get our traffic counts in the fall when school is back in session and we're able to clearly model the movements in and out of this park. That will ultimately inform exactly what the final improvements are going to look like here at the site entrance."

The project will be in compliance with 35/40-foot building height restrictions according to the zoning ordinance requirements defined in 7.05.02.C.1.

The current composition of the property is agricultural fields, natural areas, wetlands, and a farm pond. The current landscape—especially

hedgerows—is being used to guide the outline for the complex. County representatives said that sports fields will be balanced with natural parks, local wraparound trails will be connected, and pollution from dog off-leash areas and parking lots will run off into storm ponds.

The plan also shows up to seven parking lots ranging in size from massive to small. Since the county has the same footprint for both eastern and western Loudoun County, there is no consideration to date for using pervious surfaces rather than asphalt for the parking lots on the 142-acre property. While pervious surfaces permit fluids to percolate through solid matter into the ground below, impervious surfaces such as asphalt force the fluids to slick away as runoff.

The project will move forward with the plan for a future 40,000 square foot library. The location of the library is currently undetermined. Three different plans for the full complex's layout have been proposed, and project managers are receiving public feedback to consolidate one master plan.

Those in attendance at the June 27 meeting were invited to leave comments on the various design options. Many were in favor of placing the library and indoor recreation center closer to the front of the property with buildings set back from Rt. 7. The public also voiced a preference for natural shading in the proposed dog off-leash area. Residents wanted pickleball courts to be expanded and covered. Residents also suggested outdoor basketball courts.

The full design phase is intended to begin in the winter of 2024 with the estimated start of construction in summer 2026. For questions or comments, go to [dcti@loudoun.gov](mailto:dcti@loudoun.gov) or call 703-737-8624.

### COALITION SEEKS, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 9

The fact that tourism facilitates education, and therefore affection for rural places remains under-utilized, he said.

Tourtellot felt the development pressure was urgent. "The kettle is beginning to boil," he said. "What we don't have are leaders; everybody here is overloaded." Leaders of rural businesses certainly have a stake in conservation, since poorly-planned development can irreparably damage their business. Tourtellot identified that an economic argument needs to be made to the Board of Supervisors. New faces, he said, speaking out of concern for their businesses, will be heard.

Del. Geary Higgins, (R-30), attended the meeting to update the groups on the progress of relevant bills in the Virginia Legislature. He is involved with conservation, since he is on the Counties, Cities, and Towns committee. He spoke about a bill that requires a 30 day's wait to tear down a structure after anyone voices a concern. Local control needs to be prioritized in local decisions, he said. Richmond sees Northern Virginia as a cash cow, but they lack education on the region's agricultural attributes. "The greatest impact is to have people know what's going on," he said.

Skinner discussed possible ways for the County to differentiate protocols for eastern and western Loudoun, so the whole County does not become homogenized. Examples Skinner offered for western Loudoun were smaller fire trucks called "Brush Trucks" which can navigate narrow driveways and gravel roads, and more frequently distributed fire stations with smaller footprints.

Jim Hanna reported that the Transmission Line Alliance is in conversation with NextEra Energy, and their efforts to sway the decision-makers against installing lines near Waterford are looking effective, but not certain at this time. He also said Loudoun's rural roads won an award from the Department of Economic Development.

# The Great Race passes through Purcellville



On Tuesday June 25, The Great Race came to the Walsh Family Farm in Purcellville, a little after noon. Ken Walsh, a previous participant, showed some of the racers and attendees the Walsh collection, which included dozens of 409-powered Chevrolets and drag cars. The lunch stop at the Walsh Family Farm was catered by the Purcellville Pub.

A Porsche caravan showed up to view the race, as well as other vintage car enthusiasts and nearly 1,000 spectators. It was an instant festival!

After leaving the farm, participants stopped at the Shell station in the Downtown Historic District, where they filled up with gas, compliments of the Walsh family. There were approximately 120 automobiles this year.

They then began to make their way north to Pennsylvania, and Gettysburg.

The Great Race is an antique car race, with cars from all over the country. The first race was held in 1983, and it is open to vintage models built in 1974 and earlier. They race varied routes each year, for about

CONTINUED ON PAGE 25 >

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**WHAT IS SHARENTING**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 6

much information about your child out there on-line for all to see. Research in this area has shown that parents can share as many as 1000 pictures or more of their child online by age 5 years of age. On Facebook, for example, many parents, also unknowingly, post confidential information – i.e. they reveal their child's name, their child's school's name, their child's date of birth, etc.

This sort of information can be later used to obtain even more information about your child by bad actors (e.g., obtaining a child's social security number through the Dark Web for identify theft) or to digital kidnapping (i.e. obtaining photos of children or teens for personal use) or cyber-kidnapping (extorting someone vulnerable remotely and demanding ransom money from family members). Sadly, predators are increasingly using information

gathered from social media sites along with AI and evolving technologies to sexually exploit children.

So, how as a parent do you strike a balance between sharing meaningful moments regarding your child or teen with your loved ones and friends online without oversharing what could become problematic for your child now or later? Here are a few thoughts to consider.

Before posting something about your child or teen online, be mindful of what's motivating you to post. How does posting a certain photo or an update of your child add value and who's benefiting from the posting? Are you posting the photo or update more for you or for your child?

Before posting, consider including your child in your decision to post. If your child or teen asks that you not post something personal, be respectful of their feelings.

Before posting, consider posting

privately. Posting a family vacation photo online is one thing, but maybe you don't need to post a photo online of your child crying after he got his tooth pulled or his looking horribly ill on the couch home from school for a sick day.

Before posting, ask yourself, how will my child or teen feel about my posting five or ten years from now? Remember, whatever you post today, may be accessible online for years to come. Thus, your child may not want his high school or college friends or coworkers later in life to discover those once cute but now embarrassing childhood moments.

If you find yourself wanting to post photos or other information about your children a lot, I invite you to reflect on why that is. Perhaps your motivation is healthy, but it's also possible that your posting is serving a deeper emotional need or problem you might want to address.

Be mindful, and remember most of us didn't grow up with this challenge. Consider your adult self and what you would want publicly available before you share.

*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.*

**VIRGINIA UNEMPLOYMENT RATE**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 11

continue to see elevated interest from businesses looking to grow and invest their next dollar right here in Virginia." said Secretary of Commerce Caren Merrick. "This is demonstrated by the continued employment increases we have seen in non-farm payroll over the last several months."

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 BLS and provides comprehensive data on the labor force, including those who are employed and unemployed.

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.



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**THE GREAT RACE**, CONTINUED FROM PAGE 23  
2,300 miles total. The Founder, Tom McRae, made sure to provide fresh routes for the participants.

Since these cars don't drive on interstates, route-setters pick some of the most interesting historic and back roads to travel on. It is a competition, with a prize of \$250,000 in

1983, but the race, according to their website, never lost the friendly and easygoing spirit it started with. This year's top prize is for \$50,000.

This year they began in Owensboro, Kentucky, and their final destination is Gardner, Maine, for a total nine-day rally.

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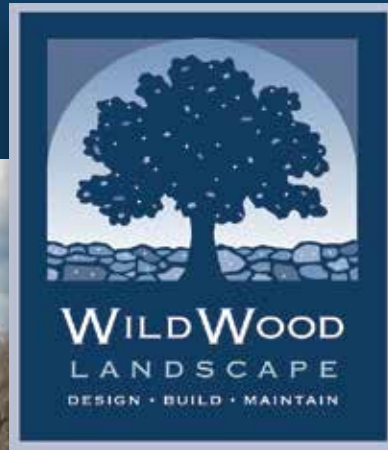
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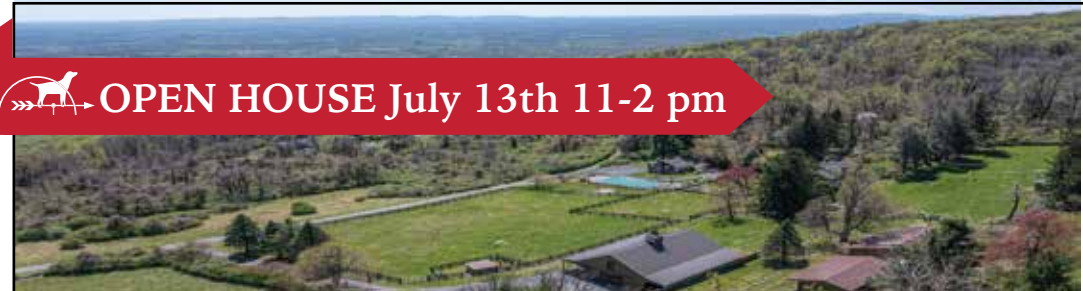
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