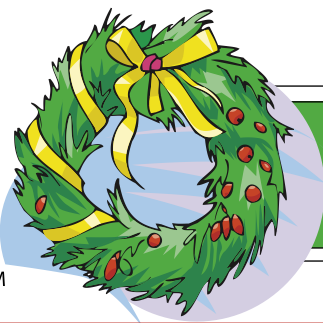




Town Residents Speak Out

Ideas, Concerns and Opinions are Voiced

Monty Tayloe

The imminent deadline for a yes or no decision on the proposed Salamander Inn connection to the town water system dominated the December session of the Middleburg Town Council, and once more, no decision was forthcoming. Outrage and delay were the order of the day.

During the "Public Comments" phase of the meetings, any member of the public may address the council, and Thursday night's comments, both for and against the project, were both passionate and pointed.

In particular, new questions were raised about the "true nature" of Dr. Johnson's offer to fund major improvements to

Middleburg's water system if a connection is extended to the Salamander Inn.

For months, the Council has described the Salamander offers as

tal water improvements to the system would be forthcoming if the council voted to connect the Inn. At the same meeting, Zell also informed the Council that Salamander's \$1.8 million offer would be formally submitted to the Council, in writing, in the form of a letter to Mayor Tim Dimos.

At this month's meeting, however, Mayor Dimos revealed publicly that no such letter had been sent or received. According to Dimos, the Inn's representative had asked for more time to create a formal written

proposal, and that the Mayor, on his own authority, had granted the request. "I can give you some encouragement that dialogue will continue," said Mayor Dimos.

Continued Page 4

"Just discuss it like politicians are supposed to do. If you don't want to discuss it, you are misrepresenting your oath of office."

—Reggie Dawson, Town Resident

too vague and undefined to justify Council Action. At the November meeting, Jeff Zell, Salamander Inn project manager, was more precise, promising that \$1.8 million for capi-

In the Lane, Snow is Glistening...

It's Christmas in Middleburg

Lucy Wittle Goldstein

Snow wasn't glistening this year, and it was too warm for sleigh bells, but "Christmas in Middleburg" went off without a hitch—even in unseasonably warm weather. Middleburg does Christmas very well. Seemingly plucked from a Currier and Ives or Norman Rockwell painting, the town's handsome stone buildings and venerable brick storefronts and

sidewalks lend an old-fashioned sense of what Christmas should feel and look like. One expects good cheer and holiday greetings while walking down the streets, and on Saturday, December 4, anyone who was in town got just that—and then some. From an early morning breakfast with Santa, through the Hunt Parade at midday, through Willard Scott's announcing of the parade, the day of festivities called Christmas in Middleburg was an excellent antidote to anyone who harbored even the slightest "bah-humbug" spirit.

Although Christmas in Middleburg seems timeless, it is, in fact, a relatively new tradition. In 1979, residents and shopkeepers Dudley and Cissy Bunn decided something needed to be done in town during the Christmas season, so they brought in the Kena Scottish Tem-

Continued Page 16

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www.middleburgeccentric.com

Publisher
Dan Morrow

Editor In Chief
Dee Dee Hubbard
deedee@mbec.com

Editor At Large
Jay Hubbard
jay@mbec.com

Contributing Editors
Dr. William Mularie,
Lisa H. Patterson

Contributing Writers
Lucy Whittle Goldstein, Patricia Vos
Monty Tayloe, Karen Rexrode
Bonnie Deahl, Peter Deahl
Brian Lichorowic, Steven Schwartz
Sandra Costin Atkins, Mark Tate
Katie Leach-Kemon, Steven Schwartz
Holly Beth Hatcher

Contributing Photographers
Janet Hitchen, Steven Schwartz

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Middleburg & Environs

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Home Farm Store Opens

Traditional Butcher Opens in the Village—Home Farm Store will offer humanely raised, organic meats, game and poultry to residents of Middleburg and the surrounding area. Fresh meats, cut to order, will be available, as well as menu planning, tailgate parties, and provisions for your freezer. Located in Middleburg's historic Old Bank Building, Home Store Butchers and Graziers will also offer seasonal organic produce, prepared foods, vegetarian sausages, sandwiches, pasties, savory pies and many other delicacies to the customer who demands the very best quality and variety.



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News of Note

Name that Filly A Happy Ending for a Very Sad Story

Patricia Barraza Vos

There’s a new filly in town. She’s looking for love—and a name. For now she’s getting plenty of love (and hay and medical attention and pats and treats) from the folks at the Middleburg Humane Foundation. What she really needs is a name.

To remedy this, the MHF is currently sponsoring a “Name the Baby” contest. By January 6th, all interested and creative parties are being asked to submit name ideas for the furry, nameless filly. The winner will receive a MHF lifetime membership and sweatshirt and have their picture taken with the baby for the next newsletter.

A Very Sad Story

Here’s a little background on the girl in question to get your creative juices going. She came to our area via a livestock trailer all the way from Manitoba, Canada. She was born there at a Pregnant Mare Urine ranch approxi-

mately six months ago, along with hundreds of other foals, all of them the byproduct of the manufacturing process for PMU.

PMU ranches throughout Canada and across the northern United States produce the key ingredient for the hormone replacement therapy that until recently was popular with women seeking to ease the side effects of menopause.

About a year ago the Women’s Health Initiative released a study that indicated that these therapies (Prempro, etc.) could have unwanted side effects of their own, and the use of the drugs has dropped dramatically. However, the pharmaceutical company Wyeth, is still producing the drug, and about 12,000 broodmares are still on production lines (down from about 36,000 at the height of the market.)

Keeping mares pregnant in order to produce the estrogen-rich urine necessary for the drug production does have cer-

tain unintended consequences, most of which come in the form of foals.

Initially the PMU ranchers would sent these unwanted animals off to slaughterhouses.

At some point, many of the ranchers discovered that if they bred nicer mares (mostly draft cross, Thoroughbred and Quarter Horse mares) to decent stallions they could in fact market the foals as riding horses.

Saved by MHF

The fuzzy filly at MHF comes from just such a rancher herself. According to MHF Executive Director Hilleary Bogely, who tracked the breeding rancher down in order to obtain more information about the filly, this rancher has done his best to produce a horse with color, a healthy conformation, and most noticeably, a quiet temperament.

Indeed when Bogely peeked into the round pen at the Fauquier Livestock Ex-

change to choose a PMU baby to take back with her, she saw about 32 nice-looking if young and frightened prospects.

“It was not an easy thing to do,” recalls Bogley, speaking of her task to choose just one from that pen.

After speaking to the gentleman who had come to Marshall to sell the babies at the livestock auction, Bogley understood that any foals that were unsold at this auction would be shipped on to another auction in Indiana. From there, any foal remaining would head to Texas, basically slaughter bound.

As Bogley looked into the pen, one filly in particular was especially curious, calm and interactive. She was beautifully marked and had the strong conformation of a filly that might grow to be a decent foxhunter, or perhaps an eventer—maybe even just someone’s favorite trail-riding companion.

Bogley chose her and brought her home with her oth-

er purchase of the day: Annie, a 19-year-old mare, pretty much reduced to skin and bones.

Bogley and the rest of her crew at MHF went immediately to work on their new charges. Annie is getting healthier by the day, and the filly is handled daily. Soon a trainer will be brought in, to—at the very least—halter train her. Then, once she can be willingly led around and can trailer without worries, she will be formally placed for adoption to someone in the community.

Any horse adopted from MHF, according to its adoption contract, cannot be used for breeding or racing, or be given away or sold. Potential adopters must fill out an application and questionnaire in order to be considered—and, while this might sound like a lot of hoops to jump through just to give a filly a home, history and experience have shown that this method best guarantees a happy outcome for all.

Bogley’s experience is to



be trusted.

She started the farm shelter for abused and neglected animals 10 years ago, and in that time she and her team have placed over 3000 animals of all shapes and sizes in loving, permanent homes. She is quick to point to the numerous volunteers and benefactors that make such an achievement possible.

Dr. Andrea Russell, for

instance, provides all routine equine veterinary care free of charge, while Dr. Norris Adams provides equine surgical care on a pro bono basis.

Back to the filly at hand: she’s a Belgian cross, a bit of a flirt, seems brave, and is very friendly. She’s clever and appreciative. And very, very cute.

So if any of that history

and description sparks a name idea, send it to the Middleburg Humane Foundation, P.O. Box 1238, Middleburg, VA 20118.

Contest entries will appear in the Middleburg Eccentric.

Good luck to the filly and the contest entrants! ✿

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Council Considers Proposal

Continued From Page 1

Dimos’s announcement produced immediate and vocal reaction, including charges that he had overstepped his authority. “I’m agast that somebody who applied to you then asks you to speak for the entire council and that you did it,” said Valerie Kelly. “This application should be treated like any other application.” Comparing the Council with the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors, Kelly quipped, “This is a town government that ought to operate like a town government, not an old boys club.”

Kathleen Lyons, who lives near the Salamander construction site, accused the project’s manager of threatening the Council. Referring to Salamander’s initial assertion that its construction schedule absolutely required a yes or no decision on town water no later

than December, Lyons noted: “Last meeting was the first time actual numbers were presented, and they were presented like a bully.”

Others spoke with equal passion on behalf of the project, asserting forcefully that a Middleburg water connection and potential annexation of the Salamander Inn property would be beneficial to the town. “I am in favor of what I think Dr. Johnson is offering,” said life-long Middleburg resident Ethel Foster.

Several speakers noted that the Salamander offer would have a profound and positive effect on Middleburg’s aging, leaking and potentially unsafe water system, and would bring with it the possibility of reducing the town’s constantly increasing water fees.

Noting that Dr. Johnson’s

offer to help with the cost of re-vamping the wastewater system would probably lower use fees and retard their growth, Sonny Underwood said,

“I think we should open our arms to Dr. Johnson. Big taxes are coming, and water bills dropping would be a big help.” Middleburg resident Reggie Dawson charged that the council has “betrayed their constituency” by moving too slowly on the issue. “Just discuss it like politicians are supposed to do. If you don’t want to discuss it, you are misrepresenting your oath of office,” said Dawson.

No decision on the Salamander connection will be forthcoming until January. A new, formal variation of the \$1.8 million dollar offer is reportedly being drafted by the Salamander legal staff for presentation in time for an early

2005 decision.

Christmas Parade

On a happier note, Mayor Dimos opened the December session of the Town Council meeting by recognizing the efforts of those involved with the Middleburg Christmas parade, pronouncing the event a “tremendous success” with “the largest crowd ever.” The Mayor specifically expressed the town’s special thanks to a long list of volunteers, including locals DeeDee Hubbard and Reggie Dawson of the Middleburg Business Association and Willard Scott, who generously served as the parade’s celebrity announcer. For his efforts, Mr. Scott graciously accepted a gift basket assembled from local businesses. Council member Eura Lewis estimated that the Pink Box, Middleburg’s tourist information center, “served

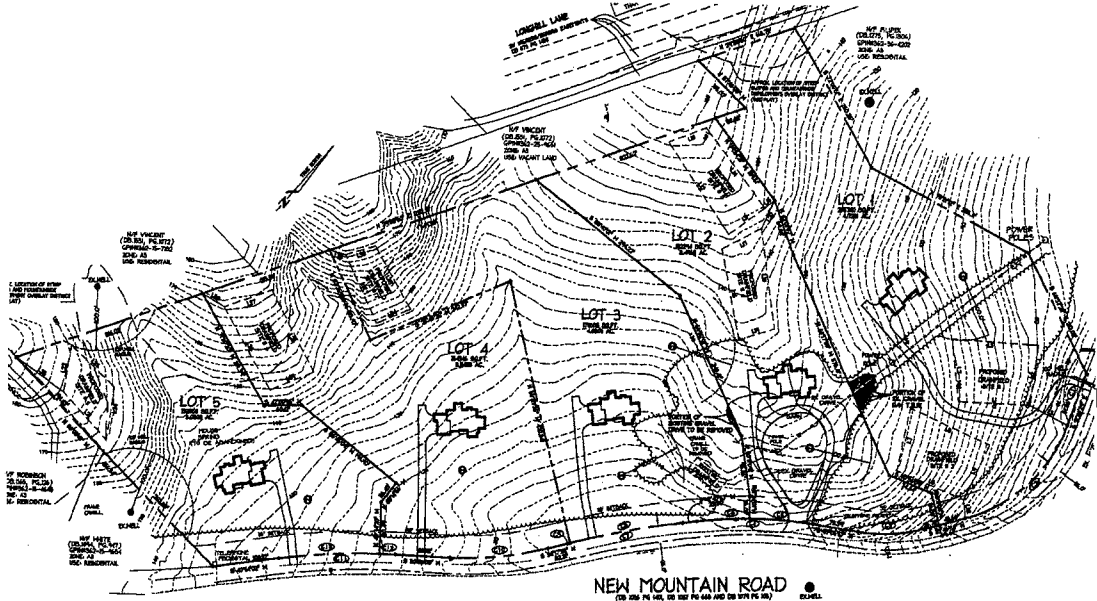
2000 children cookies before we stopped counting.”

The Next Generation of Water Customers

Meetings of the Middleburg Town Council are often attended by a wide range of people, from representatives of environmental groups to managers of multimillion-dollar development projects. In recent months, however, a younger element has been present at the council meetings, thanks to the efforts of Hill School teacher Don Woodruff.

The teacher has brought three to four students to the last few council meetings to watch the council debate the intricacies of water utility reform. “Every eighth grader is going to come once... We’re here to see democracy in action,” said Woodruff.

THE ESTATES at NEW MOUNTAIN RIDGE ALDIE, VA.



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News of Note

Local Designer Keeps the Dream Alive
Wendy Pepper is Two for Two on Project Runway

Glenda Cudaback

As Wendy Pepper’s story continues, she has barely made the cut on two segments of “Project Runway.” Bravo Network’s weekly television competition to choose the best new designer in America.

In order to win, Wendy will have be creative, a fine craftsman, a savvy business person, impervious to criticism, wildly enthusiastic about her viscous colleagues, addicted to mood swings that would Timothy

Leary queasy and, oh yes, a brilliant fashion designer.

Heidi Klum hosts the series in delightful audio and video style. She continues to be terrific to look at, and she’s learning to push her “take no prisoners” approach to the max.

“Fashion is a bitch,” she intones. “It’s a ruthless business. One minute you’re in, the next minute, you’re out.” Each week, when one designer hears, “...you’re out,” the sigh that emanates from the

designer who is next to last on the runway almost topples the television.

That’s where Wendy has found herself in the first two segments of the series. In the first segment, she was in the final six. This past week, she was one of the final two. Pretty scary for the Middleburg designer who believes this is the “chance of a lifetime.”

Grocery Store Gowns

Every week the designers are given an assignment. Week

one’s assignment was Innovation or: create a cocktail dress from, your choice of materials in Gristede’s a Manhattan grocery store that has better than the basics, but is no match for Wegman’s and certainly couldn’t play in the Sutton Place/Delucca’s league.

“For the first time, I felt fear,” Wendy said.

She chose multitudes of

colorful candy to thread into a fabulous evening top that perfectly complimented her beautiful Brazilian model. The only problem was, she didn’t have time to make much of a bottom for her outfit. It would have been fabulous as beachwear, but, sadly, it was a little skimpy for cocktails.

Each week, each garment is judged by three fashion VIPs.



WENDY

Nina Garcia, fashion director for Elle Magazine asked, “Wendy, I see very few clothes on your model.”

“My model is from Brazil,” Wendy countered. “I was working on a Carnival theme.”

“I get it,” Garcia said. Although, she seemed to think Wendy’s creation would be a little over the top even in the meat district of Lower Manhattan, and wouldn’t be appearing anytime soon on the cover as a replacement for the little black dress.

Field was tough on Wendy week one, and came back full steam ahead to challenge her during the critique section of the show in its second week. Something may be brewing here that could explode as we move forward.

Hot designer Michael Kors, and Patricia Field, fashion director for ‘Sex in the City’ also judged the first week. They loved the bright blue cocktail dress made of the plastic back and seat from a 1950s lawn chair one contestant had found on the shelf over a frozen food bin.

Pierre Cardin would have admired this outfit. It was a little Star Wars and sexy a lot. Did it win?

No. The winning outfit was Austin Scarlett’s amazing corn husk dress which could have only been improved with a little better refrigeration before the show. If Austin is not channeling Yves St. Laurent, Middleburg is not known for equine pursuits. But the shock and thrill of the win transported the terrified young couturier into “...one of the most wonderful moments of my life.”

Another wonderful moment for Austin was week two’s show. Because he won week one, he could not lose during week two.

Envy At Work

“Design an outfit that expresses envy,” said Klum as she outlined the assignment for week two. Working with a finite amount of white cotton jersey, the eleven designers were to divide the fabric among themselves, and shop for trim,

dye and decoration at a fabulous fashion district passermenterie shop.

“I struggle with envy,” said one contestant. “Wendy told me she envied me.”

“I have to change my strategy,” said Wendy. “No more nice and maternal, trying to get them to confide in me.”

Aside from the case of the “missing dye,” which cost two contestants a lot of time to resolve, and, toward the conclusion of the search, made one wonder if, perhaps, Ms. Pepper might have been involved, the crises in week two were relegated to bloody hands and fingers and a few lessons in marketing.

Typically, contestants have from the moment they finish shopping for materials until midnight and then two hours on the day of the “show” to complete their creations.

In week two’s segment, they were interrupted before they had completely finished, asked to pick up their designs and jump in a bus to be taken to an auction of their designs.

The designer whose creation attracted the highest bid would be “free” during the third week, in other words, no matter how dismal that designer’s creation on week three, the designer would not be asked to leave the show.

Wendy’s beautiful long gown with a snake sliding down the bare, evocative back did not win.

“I was looking for the exit,” Wendy said. “I was experiencing a lot of envy.”

The winning outfit illustrated envy by focusing on a military theme, sort of a combination of “don’t hate me because I’m beautiful,” but, if you do, let’s get our troops and tanks and settle it once and for all. The tight, olive drab dress had a bodice cut to the navel. Just the thing to brighten the days of the cadets at West Point.

Once again, Nina Garcia, fashion director of Elle Magazine, judged Wendy’s dress harshly. “Why is it unfinished, Wendy? The hemline is totally unfinished.”



Dee Dee Hubbard

Wendy’s attempt to reply was muffled and unconvincing.

“You’re talking a good game,” another judge said, “but the dress doesn’t deliver.”

“I don’t like my weaknesses to be on display,” Wendy sighed.

“When I decided to rush to Miami for the Final Call for Project Runway, I was so excited I’d made the cut to go to New York for interviews that I really felt I had made an enormous achievement.”

“After killing myself to get a video together in 24 hours, waiting three weeks to hear

‘we want you for the cast,’ and realizing that I would be one of only twelve designers in the country honored in this way, it’s crushing to come so close to being asked to leave.”

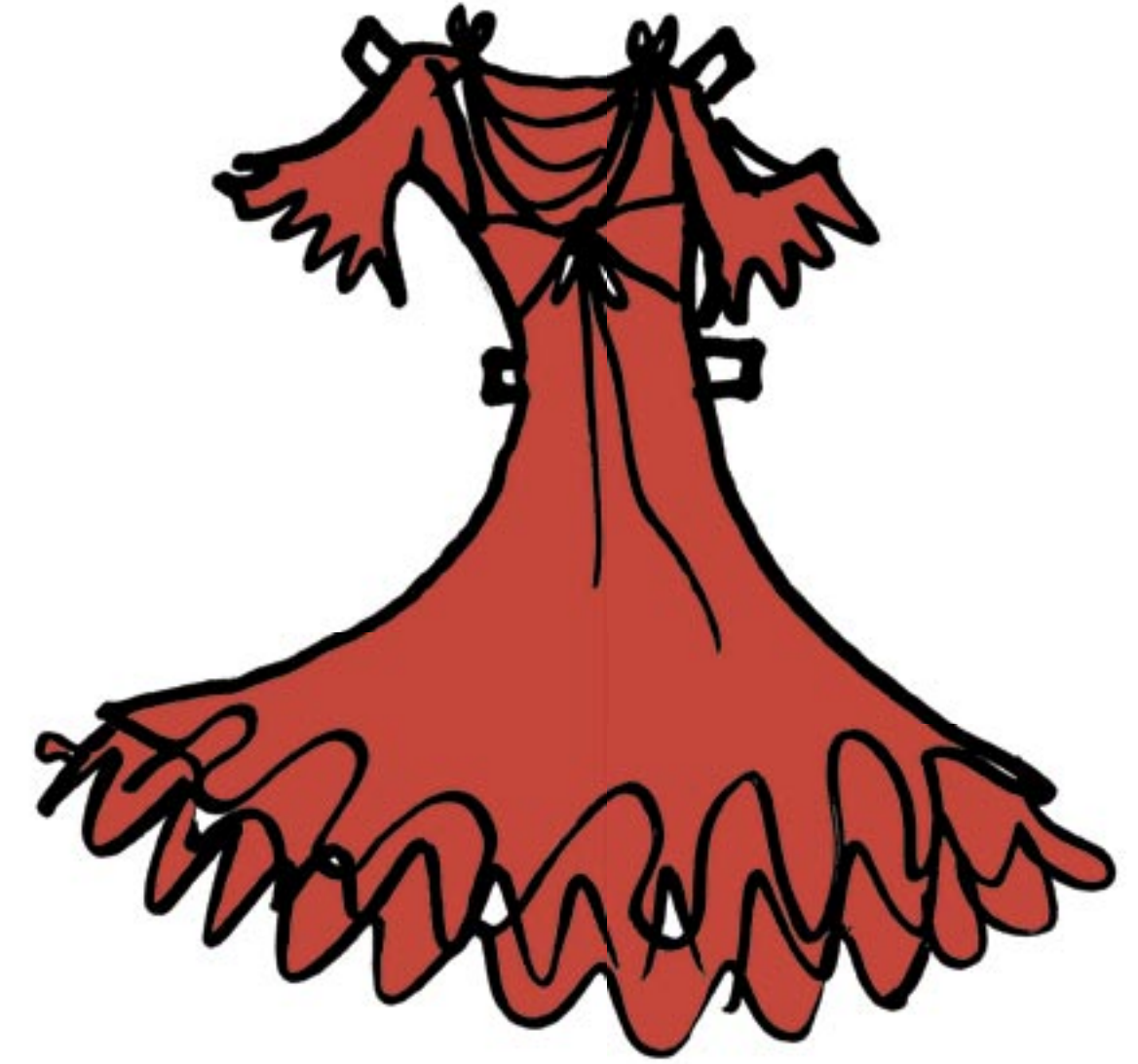
For Wendy, fashion is the eternal desire, the yearning for life to be different.

That, for her, is the fuel of the fashion industry. The fuel she would like to ignite in Middleburg with her great grandmother, Edith Eustis, as inspiration.

“I want to become a force, to drive the bus. By 2018, I want to be a brand of influence

based in this beautiful part of the country. I want the Wendy Pepper brand to spark all kinds of businesses, so we make a significant contribution to the local economy, and illustrate to the world that style and civility reside in my home town.”

Stay tuned to Bravo’s Project Runway to see how close Wendy comes to bringing the prize back home. ✱



Health & Well Being

Seeing Isn't Believing

Topic of Cancer

Glenda Cudaback

Everyone who is worried about breast cancer should read the December 13th issue of *The New Yorker*. It has two howling Santa Clauses on the cover and inside, "The Picture Problem," an article by Malcolm Gladwell on bombings, breast cancer and

the problem with relying on the truth supposedly revealed in "pictures."

Gladwell has written a book, to be published next month, called "Blink: The Power of Thinking Without Thinking." We should all purchase a copy and write him a note to encour-

age him to keep writing about cancer.

Why? Because cancer seems to be evolving faster than we are, and our tools of discovery leave a lot to the imagination.

It is difficult to learn anything about cancer that one can count on as the "truth." Nearly every statement on the topic is couched in innuendo and caveats. And this article is no exception. The author goes forward toward a point, and then backs up, creates a circle of doubt, and envelopes it in "not always," and "not everyone agrees."

When I was first diagnosed with ovarian cancer, I began to realize how many of my friends had fought cancer. Because I had been given a "six-months-to-live" verdict, I wanted and needed people to know my situation right away so no time would be wasted on anything. At first, it was difficult to talk about, but I trained myself well, and soon it was simply my natural response to "How are you?"

My directness seemed to open a door for others. Some were living with cancer, Others were struggling with the cancer of a loved one or friend. Some were simply terrified because it was likely they would have to deal with cancer at some point in the future.

At one point, I could honestly say that almost 80% of my friends were actively fighting breast cancer, or had fought it in the past. It was like a plague, so predictable that it hurt.

A very dear friend from France, Hap Paul, had survived cancer once, but it came back and killed him. He was a veterinarian and had many friends and colleagues who were doctors and scientists. Through Hap's network, I learned that some of the Cold War technology designed to shield us against

weapons might be of use in mammography. Indeed, today, that Cold War technology may be hard at work in your local radiologist's office.

But here's the problem, and the point Gladwell makes over and over and over: The more information we have about tumors, the less we know.

Just as Colin Powell learned after his United Nations testimony, one might see a truck in a picture, but not be able to see what kind of truck it is.

Decision-making based on what one "sees" in pictures can be a life saver. It can also be a fool's folly.

As Gladwell notes in his *New Yorker* article, "Radiologists are, in this sense, a lot like baggage handlers at airports. The chances are that the dark mass in the middle of the suitcase isn't a bomb, because you've seen a thousand dark masses like it in suitcases before, and none of those were bombs—and, if you flagged every suitcase, no one would make a flight. But that doesn't mean, that it isn't a bomb."

From the article, our worst fears are confirmed. Seeing isn't really believing and, even when you can see something that looks like a tumor, chances

are horrifyingly good that it isn't.

What does this mean about mastectomies, chemotherapy and radiation? It means that the more information you have, the more confused you will be. Just as cancer participants learn to appreciate 'negative positives,' you will greatly appreciate learning from a Canadian study that "clinical breast exams" with the fingertip may be just as reliable as mammography.

"There is nothing in either science or technology that has even come close to the sensitivity of the human finger...it is a brilliant instrument...but we simply don't trust our tactile sense as much as our visual senses," says Mark Goldstein, a sensory psychophysicist in the article.

You'll also learn about what the Danes are doing, what's new in X-ray analysis and why, no matter what innovation is applied, breast cancer continues to rise by the same, small, steady increment every year. ☘

Please tell me about your experience with cancer. gcudaback@yahoo.com.

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From the Editor’s Desk

Christmas in Middleburg

We all owe an enormous debt of gratitude to the generous and dedicated citizens who worked tirelessly this year to ring in the holidays with the “Christmas in Middleburg” celebration. We are told that a significantly larger crowd attended the festivities this year and that both business and restaurants reported strong sales.

Visitors from far and wide voiced their enthusiasm and delight from one end of the village to the other, and children who lined Washington Street registered their approval with “Oh’s” and “Ah’s” as The Hunt and The Parade passed by.

Without the dedication of the following individuals, none of this would be possible:

Our thanks go to Reggie Dawson and all the members of the Christmas in Middleburg 2004 Committee; the Saturday Band of Volunteers; Marvin Simms, Mike Casey and the Town Staff; Sharon Pearson, Bill Brown, Bob Dornin, Bill Turnure, Marchant Schneider, Nick Fleming, Anne Regina Cotter, Franklin Payne, Mark Smith, Brad Davis, Claudia Dornin, Carol Thompson, Kenneth Youngs, James Cotter, Aeron Mack Hynes, Carolyn Casey, Willard Scott, Paul Draisey, Tyler Gore, Fritz Hutchinson, The Hill School, the American Legion, the National Sporting Library, St. Stephens Catholic Church, Salamander Development, Laurie Root, Market Salamander, The Fun Shop, Mellow Out, Upper Crust, The Coach Stop and Gary Garrett.

Thanks also go to Matthew Prenda, Donny Carroll, Anne Regina Cotter, James Cotter, Jay Hubbard, Mary Kay Garwood, the Pink Box Docents and Eura Lewis.

May you all have a Happy Holiday and a peaceful New Year.

Rants and Raves

Out of Africa

A few minutes ago I was reading a Newsweek (the one free America memento the Peace Corps provides us with other than the medicine), and I was scanning through the articles. One article with a film director defending his NC-17, claiming the depiction of violence is a greater evil than the depiction of sex; another commenting on Catholic voters in Ohio voting for Bush in order to defend heterosexual marriage. And then I found myself laughing--what luxury we have as Americans to worry about these complex issues. My friend Matt in Wallam, Niger lives in a village full of people wondering where their next meal will come from; the drought reduced their crops by 70%, and the crickets came to eat up the remaining 30%. In Niger, it is the land, not the politics, that defines people’s priorities.

The geography of this sandy, land-locked country has condemned Niger to utter poverty. In spite of her situation, or perhaps because of it, Nigerians are graced with a selfless spirit. Any time a Nigerian has food in front of him/her, the person will automatically invite you to eat. “come eat.” For every Nigerian that has a job, his wages are supporting not only his immediate family, but at least ten of his non-immediate family members

My town takes great care of me. For instance, my community provides me with a

very nice (by Nigerian standards), 2-room house with electricity and a yard the size of half of a soccer field. My friends are constantly stuffing me with food, teaching me Zarma, and instructing this incompetent little white girl how to be a Nigerian Martha Stewart, basically. “How charming,” my mother must be thinking. Yes, I am becoming a pro at sweeping dirt with a handleless broom made from straw.

“So what will she be doing there?” you may ask yourself. That’s a great question. How on earth could I possibly pay them back for all the kindness they have shown me? Simple stuff. Teaching women about hygiene, nutrition, oral rehydration solution. Also, my role will be to find money for self-improvement projects that are dreamed up by Nigerians. (Seeing that our president tends to slash Peace Corps’ budget on a regular basis, I’ve been advised to look elsewhere for funding).

My job title is “Community Health Educator,” but my primary goal is to be educated. The most daunting challenge of my day is simply understanding how things work here.

For instance, why would a nursing mother fast during Ramadan? I saw many mothers who neither drank nor ate from sunup to sundown. They brought their babies in

for their monthly check-ups, and many of the babies had lost up to one kilogram.

“You are endangering the health of your baby, you should stop fasting,” I could say. And I might as well be speaking Greek to them, because this message would fall on deaf ears. Women know that 30 missed days of fasting means fasting alone before the next Ramadan month rolls around. Since women perform much of the work in this society, it is much more difficult for them to fast alone without other women for support.

So instead, I’ll take cues from the maternity nurse: we need to advise women to supplement their diets w/ the right food, and to feed their babies enriched, age-appropriate foods.

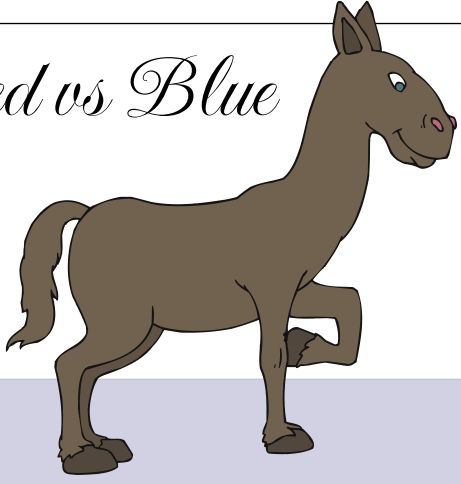
That’s just one example of one of the multi-layered issues in this country. This place has enough mysteries to keep me occupied for the next 2 years, that’s for sure.

Take care, stay well, and I miss you all.

Katie Leach-Kemon
Corps de la Paix

Rants and Raves

Red vs Blue



Each month in this space Mark Tate (Red) and Dan Morrow (Blue) provide absolutely definitive, perfectly reasoned and indisputably global solutions to all the world’s great problems . . . in 150 words or less. Send your problems to Mark and Dan at: redvsblue@mbecc.com

★★★★★★★★

★★★★★★★★

Dan Morrow

Should Donald Rumsfeld Resign as Secretary of Defense?

Absolutely not. It’s too late. He should be asked to resign by the President. For those who have opposed his policies, the reasons are obvious : his mismanagement of the war in Afghanistan and his failed pursuit of Osama bin Laden; his dogged and short-sighted promotion of a preemptive and premature war in Iraq; his failed diplomacy and clumsy planning of the pre-war period; his failure prevent lawlessness, looting and the destruction of Iraq’s infrastructure; his failure, despite repeated warnings, to plan for the ongoing Iraqi insurgency; his disdain for the laws of war; his failure to punish those truly responsible for the atrocities of Abu Ghraib; and most recently, his role in allowing the world to see American troops scrounging in rubbish heaps for rusty scraps of steel to up-armor their HumVees. This horse led us into mid-stream. Time to change him.

Should Senator George Allen (R) and Governor Mark Warner (D) both run for President?

Washington, Jefferson, Madison, Monroe, Harrison, Tyler, Taylor and Wilson. Eight Virginians, but no Presidents from the Old Dominion since the Red Sox won their next-to-last pennant. As much as it pains this died-in-the-wool Democrat to admit it, I would be delighted to see both Senator Allen and Governor Warner taken seriously as candidates. Virginia is the perfect example of a “purple” state . . . demographically blue and politically red . . . and both men have won statewide office. Warner’s the better candidate, of course . . . but having him win by beating Senator Allen in 2008 would provide the same glorious satisfaction of seeing UVA or Tech beat UNC or Duke for the national basketball title. The sweetest of victories . . . and good for the ACC, Virginia, and the game.

What do Red and Blue have in common?

Now that Mark and I have devoted aeons to solving the world’s problems in 150 highly partisan words or less . . . in the spirit of Christmas it might be well to dwell on things that unite us. Despite Mark’s wrong-headed notions about Presidents and Parties . . . I truly admire his devotion to all that’s best about our country. He loves Middleburg and Loudoun and all those who treasure them. It breaks his heart to see any part of them damaged or uncared for. Though I often wish confusion on his candidates and the failure of all their plans, for Mark and all his friends and family . . . and for all those who take the time to read write us about these columns . . . I wish you all the happiest of holidays. Be well. And watch out for Mark. He’s VERY persuasive.

Mark Tate

My friend Dan Morrow must be talking about a different Donald Rumsfeld. The Donald Rumsfeld I know has done an incredible job protecting our nation and our freedoms. He has conducted two wars against America’s worst enemies. He soundly defeated Osama Bin Laden and his Taliban army, forcing Bin Laden to hide in the rugged mountains of Pakistan. He destroyed the fourth largest army in the world, which belonged to a genocidal maniac, sending Saddam Hussein to jail awaiting justice to be delivered by the very people he terrorized for decades. Now Donald Rumsfeld works to equip two new democracies, potential friends for America, helping to create a stable Middle East and safer America. He has done a masterful job at one of the most difficult tasks imaginable, and he should not even consider resigning. He has protected America and our freedom. Thank you Donald Rumsfeld. (By the way, diplomats work for the Secretary of State. Soldiers work for the Secretary of Defense.)

Virginia, the Mother of Presidents, once again steps up to the plate. The citizens of the Commonwealth are fortunate to have two potential Presidential candidates. It would indeed be exciting to have these two very different candidates run for President. Of course I am not sure how anyone could trust Governor Warner again after he promised not to raise taxes and then spent most of his term attempting to raise taxes. Senator George Allen, one of the best campaigners I have ever seen, is known for keeping his word. Warner and Allen are rising stars in their respective parties. Senator Allen is the more likely presidential candidate, with a solid record of accomplishments in both the governor’s mansion and in the U.S Senate. Virginia has produced the more Presidents than any other state, and, more importantly I think, Presidents known for their honesty. It is hard to imagine a Virginian becoming President when his biggest accomplishment is breaking his word about not raising taxes, as Governor Warner has done.



Longfield

Middleburg, Virginia

Built in 1986, stone house with slate and metal roof, 4 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths, 3 fireplaces, hardwood and onyx floors, and rear flagstone terrace. 96.73 gently rolling, mostly open acres with mountain views. Improvements include a 5-car garage, in-ground pool and spa, and cattle barn. \$3,900,000.



Waverly Hill

Middleburg, Virginia

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Morven

Markham, Virginia

Morven is a stunning renovation and has been accepted for inclusion in the National Register of Historic Places. Original portions are from 1826 and 1845. 14' ceilings and original pine floors through parts of this stucco over stone home. The modern addition includes a large kitchen with open family room and fireplace for today's living. Situated on 85 acres of open pasture and paddocks in 4 parcels. Improvements include a stone guest house built in 1819 and a 4-stall King Construction center aisle stable. \$3,500,000.



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Phoenix Hill

Middleburg, Virginia

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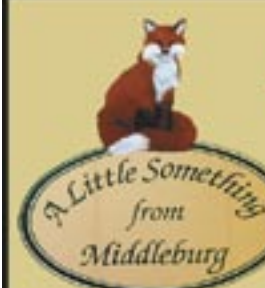
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Christmas in Middleburg

Continued From Page 1

ple Bagpipers and had them play some of their tunes in the streets. Deciding that was not enough, in 1980, the Bunnns, along with Tyler Gore, another resident and merchant, put together the first of the modern Middleburg Christmas parades, though with considerably fewer floats than there are today. But the tradition stuck, and 24 years later, the parade—and the entirety of Christmas in Middleburg, including singing groups, arts and crafts, and food vendors—is still going strong, this year with 51 floats and three announcers.

Mr. Bunn recalls that he, his late wife and Mr. Gore “decided that Middleburg needed something to commemorate Christmas.” He says that, although the spirit of the day remains the same, many new traditions have evolved over the years. One of the most memorable moments of Christmas in Middleburg for Mr. Bunn was when the entire Redskins Band played for the public before the parade started. He also particularly enjoys the annual visit to the parade by the Third Infan-

try Division pipe and drum group from Washington, DC.

Mr. Bunn no longer personally manages Christmas in Middleburg. In fact, this year was the first ever that Mr. Bunn has not personally overseen the hanging of Middleburg’s hand-painted Christmas signs. Happily, however, Mr. Bunn’s traditional duties and holiday responsibilities have been generously taken up by others, including Middleburg Bank Vice President Reggie Dawson and Middleburg Eccentric Editor-in-Chief Dee Dee Hubbard, this year’s co-chairs. But Mr. Bunn remains an integral part of the event, and he has high hopes for the future of the festivities: “Yes, I do believe it will continue in the future,” he told the Eccentric. I think there are so many people who’ve been a part of it that they’ll want to see it continue.”

Mr. Dawson also believes that the future looks bright for Christmas in Middleburg. He was pleased with this year’s parade: “All indications are that everything was outstanding from the

merchants’ standpoint. Weather-wise, I’d give us an A-. We done good.” Having chaired the event some six times, Mr. Dawson knows what it takes to pull off one of the town’s biggest days of the year: a lot of hard work. He says that this year’s event was a “great, great day,” crediting the smooth parking situation thanks to St. Stephen’s Church and Dr. Shelia Johnson, who allowed the town to use their respective properties for parking.

Also new this year was the artists’ fair held on Madison Street. It was so successful, said Mr. Dawson, that one artist sold all her paintings and had to go home to get more. Mr. Dawson’s traditional parade favorites are the Morrisville Equine College Institute, riding on their six-hitch horse team, and the presence of all sorts of animals over the years, including llamas, oxen, zebra, miniature horses and the Humane Society’s adoptable animals. But he said that what “really makes the day” are the floats from all the schools. “The kids’ participation gets us all charged up and raring to go.”

For Betsy Davis, office manager of The Fun Shop and long-time Middleburg resident, “the beauty of it is . . . it’s not huge . . . and it’s not meant to be,” even though the parade has grown considerably over the years. Then and now, she says, nearly anyone can be part of the parade if they really

want to be. A group of Corgi lovers got together, calling themselves the Corgi Brigade, and joined the parade with their dogs. This tradition was so well loved that many of the founders continue to walk in the parade today, even though some of the original members no longer live in the state. Ms. Davis looks forward to Christmas in Middleburg every year, “not just as a business person, but as a resident. It’s a fun day. Christmas in Middleburg has made its mark. People just know to come.” She says that this year she overheard a woman remarking to her husband that Middleburg is a “traditional little Christmas town,” and, she says, it’s that small-town Christmas-y atmosphere that people enjoy.

The Hunt Parade is another tradition unique to Christmas in Middleburg. Each year the Middleburg Hunt meets in the parking lot of the Red Fox Inn so that visitors can see and take pictures of the horses, hounds and formally dressed riders. This allows visitors unfamiliar with equestrian traditions to experience one of the most rarified and unique aspects of Hunt Country. Then the Hunt makes its way down Washington Street, and, with its impeccably dressed participants and beautifully groomed hounds and horses, it is quite a sight to behold. Penny Denegre, one of the Masters of the Hunt, says that this year, more

than 60 riders and 75 hounds participated in the Hunt Parade. Mrs. Denegre says, “It’s a very special thing; the whole community comes together to celebrate the holiday. Middleburg is one of our (the Hunt’s) favorite fixtures.”

Christmas in Middleburg depends on the hard work and dedication of town residents who are devoted to making the season bright. What started as bagpipers playing on Washington Street has turned into a day-long affair, replete with celebrity announcers and hundreds of spectators. However, it still hasn’t lost its small-town charm. Quirky, festive, and a lot of fun, Christmas in Middleburg will be an annual tradition for many years to come. ✻



Jay Hubbard



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Signs of Christmas

Lucy Whottle Goldstein



Just before Thanksgiving, you may have noticed that, little by little, Middleburg began sprucing itself up for the holidays. Out came the Christmas lights on the trees. Up went the red and green and gold window displays in the shops. The strains of Christmas carols wafted into the streets when customers opened the shop doors. Suddenly, it seemed that a Middleburg Christmas tradition—the hand-painted Christmas signs representing iconic figures of the holiday season—were adorning every lamppost in town, ushering in a whimsical take on traditional Christmas decorations.

The woman behind the signs is Emily Sharp—known as Em—a former art teacher at the Hill School, now 86 years old and living with her family on a farm on the Zulla Road. She was commissioned to create the signs at \$300 per sign right around the time that the first modern “Christmas in Middleburg” parade and festivities began.

Mrs. Sharp is extremely modest about the unique signs, which, for many residents of Middleburg, truly mark the official start of the Christmas season.

And the signs are, truly, unique, each designed to be relevant and appropriate to the building and business they’re near. For example, Mrs. Sharp

painted Raggedy Ann and Raggedy Andy to beckon customers to The Fun Shop. A butler holding a plum pudding stands across from the Red Fox Inn. Two singing boys, one black and one white, share the lamppost next to Emmanuel Episcopal Church, which, Mrs. Sharp says, signifies the unity that the Christmas season brings. And Winnie the Pooh and Piglet at the corner of Federal and Madison Streets? Those, says Mrs. Sharp, were just for fun.

Sharp says that painting was always her forte, and that she had always loved making cutouts. For the signs, she first painted her characters on heavy plywood with enamel, weatherproof paint, and then used a saw to cut out the figures. Later she would have Middleburg Millwork do the cutting for her, but the figures were always of her own designs. (She has also made other signs for the town, including a Nutcracker and a Town Crier, both of which are used periodically by the Community Center.)

During Mrs. Sharp’s 15-year tenure at Hill School, she instilled her love of art into many of her students. One of those former students is John

Ralph, now the owner of Quail Run Signs. As a woodworker and artisan who was inspired by Mrs. Sharp, he remembers her as “incredibly fun, irreverent, and hysterical.”

This is the first year Mr. Ralph has ever been officially involved in the ongoing tradition of Mrs. Sharp’s Middleburg Christmas signs, but his timing could not have been better. Many of the original signs were in need of repair. Some were badly damaged, with hands and other extremities bent or completely broken off.

Others seemed to simply need repainting, but they are original works of art. “They need lots of love,” says Mr. Ralph. “and we’re doing all the work they need, gratis.”

Indeed, it would be very difficult to justify the expense of paying for repairs to all the signs given the amount of time and special effort they need. “It’s just untenable to expect anyone to pay for that,” said Mr. Ralph. Because of his love and respect for his former teacher, Ralph considers his generous gift of time and talent both a tribute and a pleasure.

Other Middleburg residents remember Mrs. Sharp and her artwork with the same respect. Betsy Davis, office manager of The Fun Shop, comments, “She’s such a part of Middleburg. The characters are so wonderful. I think of Mrs. Sharp when I look at them. To me, it’s so neat to have these signs. She’s a real ball of fire, so full of life.”

Claudia Dornin, the assistant to the town manager, says, “There’s a stamp from Em all over the town,” including at Hill School where she taught for so long. Mrs. Sharp was responsible for the reconstruction of the playhouse on the school’s property. The characters painted on it resemble the characters on the Christmas signs. Mrs. Dornin believes that Mrs. Sharp’s “heritage is in the signs, but it’s also in her former students who are now artists.” In addition to John Ralph, at

least two of Mrs. Sharp’s former students are now artists.

The Christmas signs are certainly favorites of Middleburg residents because of their memories of Mrs. Sharp, but her signs grab the attention of visitors to the town, as well. On Saturday, December 4, during Christmas in Middleburg, two girls from Leesburg walking down Madison Street with their mother were overheard discussing which sign was the best. The discussion became quite heated, as sister arguments often do, with the debate ending in a draw between the cherubic cutout angel playing a guitar and Winnie the Pooh and Piglet.

Other tourists seemed cheered that, here in Middleburg, beyond the grueling grind of the Beltway and the Northern Virginia suburbs, a town still exists where tradition lives—and where one of the highlights of the season is the



hanging of the Christmas signs painted by a beloved and venerable artist and teacher, and cared for by those she taught and inspired. ❄️

Help for Toys for Tots

Gina Hilleary, co-owner of Joan of Art Custom Framing in Middleburg, says the response to their request for gifts for families in need has been overwhelming this holiday season.

“Wonderful bikes, Tonka trucks and many other delightful gifts are arriving in our store daily,” Hilleary said.

The Middleburg framing shop is a proud sponsor of the nationally recognized “Toys for Tots” initiative created by the United States Marine Corps to help families in need during the holidays.

The donated toys will be delivered to families in the nearby Shenandoah Valley, and Hilleary suggests that while shopping for your loved ones,



it’s good to remember those who must do without on a daily basis. With your help, this Christmas can be very special for a child whose family has very little to share.

If you would like to help, please deliver your unwrapped toy by December 20th to:

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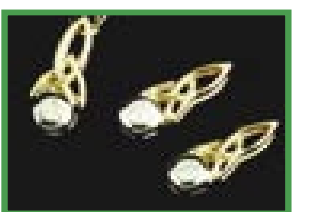


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It's Your Business

Getting It Together!

Helen L. Modly, CFP / CHFC / CDFA

Every December, financial planners are asked for a year-end planning list. The challenge is that each person's situation dictates different year-end activities. For those who really have a handle on their financial picture, year-end planning really takes place about mid-September, not mid-December. How can you get ahead of the planning curve? Get organized!

One strategy that we have used successfully with our clients is the creation of a Family Financial Record. We suggest that clients use either a large, three-ring binder or a separate file box and create index tabs for the following categories:

° **Personal Papers—Documents relating to birth, marriage, divorce, military service, social security, etc.**

° **Sources of Income—Pay stubs, employment contracts, annuity, social security and retirement benefit statements, notes receivable, rental agree-**

ments, etc.

° **Financial Assets—Bank, brokerage, mutual fund account statements, IRAs and other retirement plan statements, appraisals and HUD-1 statements for any real estate, documents relating to business interests, etc.**

° **Taxes—Three years of prior tax returns, personal property and real estate tax records, etc.**

° **Deeds & Titles—Real estate, automobiles, etc.**

° **Insurance Policies/Employer Benefits—Life, health, property & casualty policies and the most recent annual statements of benefits/premiums.**

° **Mortgages, Loans & other Liabilities—all loan agreements, promissory notes,**

a listing of all open credit cards and lines of credit, etc.

° **Estate Planning—Wills, trusts, executor instructions, etc.**

° **Miscellaneous—Other documents of importance**

Many of these documents should be kept in a safety deposit box. This would include original or certified copies of birth certificates, social security cards, records of adoptions, marriages, death and divorce, citizenship and veteran's papers, as well as any stock or bond certificates that have not been deposited into a brokerage account, deeds, titles, and life insurance policies. We suggest that you make a photocopy of each document in your safety-deposit box and insert the copy into your binder or file with a notation as to the location of the original.

It has been our experience that people resist organizing their records because the process is often tedious and con-

fusing. The end of the year is the ideal time to create a Family Financial Record because you will be receiving end-of-year summary statements for most of these items. As you begin to collect these documents for your taxes, make a copy for yourself and file it away.

Once you have this record completed, tell the appropriate family members of its existence and location. For couples where one spouse assumes all the responsibility for the family's finances, or for a single older parent, this level of financial organization will have tremendous value for the

spouses and adult children who must suddenly take over because of a death or incapacity. The completed record, if annually updated, will become a valuable tool. It will streamline the data gathering process for April's tax season, obtaining or refinancing loans, and other financial transactions during the year.

Even more importantly, a complete record will allow you to more easily take stock of your financial situation on a regular basis. It often serves as a gentle reminder to those of us who procrastinate over updating our wills or transferring assets into trusts that were specifically created to hold them.

Going into 2005 with your financial life well organized will help you to recognize and take advantage of planning opportunities all year long, instead of trying to "catch up" in December, when it often difficult to really make a difference. Having your affairs in order is the first step to effective financial planning. ✱

Helen L. Modly is a principal of Focus Financial Consultants, Ltd., in Middleburg, VA. The firm offers wealth management services, including comprehensive financial planning, fee-only investment management, and specialized divorce-related consulting. Ms. Modly is a Certified Financial Planner, as well as a Certified Divorce Financial Analyst. She has lived in Fauquier County for 20 years.



Our Earth

Holly Holly Holly

The Plant Lady

Karen "The Plant Lady" Rexrode

I'm a big fan of garden plants that brighten up the gardens in all seasons. Sure I love my peonies and iris, day-lilies and dahlias but give me something for the month of December! The winter season is always an interesting challenge for the individual that loves to garden. Some people

for a winter show. A local native, Ilex verticillata or winterberry is hard to beat. This naturally occurring shrub grows from Maine to Georgia and there are two, national record holders, both reside in Virginia Beach, the largest one at 16 feet tall and 13 feet wide. This group of hollies is deciduous,

red berries over orange or yellow. Most of the time the birds of spring prefer the fruit, feeding on the berries after repeated freezes and thaws have dissolved the internal acids.

There are two cycles of bloom for the males and females, early and late. Hence one must match up the neces-



refer to winter as drab; I prefer to think of it as a study in the shades of sienna or tan, orange and deep brown. Even as you travel along our local roads you may have noticed how interesting the many browns of winter can be. There is a particularly magnificent hilltop that is clothed in little bluestem, located just past Aldie on Route 50, as you're heading west on the right hand side of the road. Left unmowed from summer, it offers the viewer a glance at the richness of russet brown in the winter landscape. Further west there are beautifully rich colored branches on trees and shrubs, many at the turn as you pass Cobb House Road, still more as you near Fox Chase Farm. On the color wheel these various shades of brown reside between red, and yellow, kin to orange. An analogous color would be red and just as the poinsettia has become a cheerful necessity in December with red bracts, the affect of red indoors is even more powerful outdoors.

There are numerous shrubs that are capable of producing bright red berries for the winter months, but few shrubs can compete with the holly or Ilex

leaving little doubt as to why they are so striking. Imagine leafless stems covered in red berries. Red is the most common of colors for the berries but there are also orange and, yellow berried cultivars. The popularity of this shrub may have first been recognized by the florist trade. The cut stems hold up for a long period and may even last longer if placed in a vase without water. In fact, florists have struggled to keep pace with the demand for the cut branches of winterberry and the demand continues to surge as international markets discover this extraordinary native shrub.

In the garden one must plant a male and a female and extremely dry areas should be avoided. A rich soil with irrigation during summer droughts is adequate for Ilex verticillata culture. Dwarf varieties grow to five feet, and standard selections reach an average ten feet. There are numerous choices when concentrating on types of berries; these include not only color, but size and persistence of fruit. I have found that the mockingbird and cat bird will eat berries during the early months of winter, seeking the



sary male for berry set. The easiest thing to do is plant both an early and late flowering male to ensure pollination, as the flowering period is not always guaranteed (females may shift a little earlier or later). Additionally the prime pollinator, the honeybee, is not as common as it used to be. Keep in mind that the male pollinator will not produce any berries and may be obvious (in winter) when surrounded by fruiting females. Their bloom time extends from the fourth week in May to the fourth week in June, and an ample supply of water in June will help your plants keep more berries. You may consider mulching with composted

cow manure and checking your soil's pH, as it has been found that very acidic soils produce a lower berry set. Local favorites include Ilex 'Sparkelberry', hybridized at the National Arboretum, Ilex 'Winter Red' for its heavy berry set and Ilex 'Red Sprite' a popular dwarf. I recently saw a stand of Ilex 'Winter Gold' with its creamy gold berries and immediately imagined how nice it would look against the yellow branches of a golden thread leafed cypress. By adding the aforementioned russet blades of little blue stem or schizachyrium, this colorful grouping would make for a jolly December garden. ✱

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Fear the Sponge Bobs !!! The Middleburg U-14 soccer team remained undefeated—winning the regular season title and the year-end tournament for 75 teams in the Suburban Friendship League. They won the top tournament division with tough teams from Woodbridge, Ashburn, Sterling, Reston and Chantilly. Congratulations to all the team and Coach Fletcher and Coach Hasse for an extraordinary season.

Notre Dame Academy

Notre Dame Academy will host Admission Open House, Thursday, December 16, 5:00-7:00 p.m. in the Mary House.

For further information, please contact Mrs. Catherine Struder, Admission Director, at 540.687.5581 x3008.

SAVE THE DATE!

December 15 Christmas Concert
December 16 World Hunger Banquet
December 17 Notre Dame Academy Movie Night at the Tally Ho
December 22-January 2 Christmas Holiday Break
January 3 Classes Resume
January 7 Alumni Night at Men's Varsity Basketball Game

NOTRE DAME ACADEMY VOLLEBALL PLAYERS, COACH HONORED BY VISL

Middleburg, Va.- Notre Dame Academy senior volleyball players Ashlynn Nuckols (Upperville) and Emily Springer (Frederick, MD) were named to the Virginia Independent School League Division II All-State team. Shelly Franco, coach of the repeat VISL state champion Dragons, was named Coach of the Year.

Foxcroft School AP Scholars

Three current Foxcroft students and nine '04 grads have earned the designation of AP Scholar by the College Board in recognition of their exceptional achievement on the college-level Advanced Placement Program (AP) Exams taken in May 2004. The College Board's Advanced Placement Program offers students the opportunity to take challenging college-level courses while still in high school, and to receive college credit, advanced placement, or both for successful performance on the AP Exams. About 17% of the more than one million high school students in almost 15,000 secondary schools worldwide who took AP Exams performed at a sufficiently high level to merit the recognition of AP Scholar.

The College Board recognizes several levels of achievement based on student's performance on the exams:

Five (5) students qualified for the AP Scholar with Distinction Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.5 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on five or more of these exams. These students (Class of 2004) were: Meehyun Bang (South Korea), Arlie Cameron (Washington, DC), Lauren Edgerton (California), Jessica Frank (California) and Hannah Wood (England).

Three (3) students qualified for the AP Scholar with Honor Award by earning an average grade of at least 3.25 on all AP Exams taken and grades of 3 or higher on four or more of these exams. These current Foxcroft students are: Kathryn Grant (Virginia), Vanessa Vallecillo (New Jersey) and Elicia Williams (Virginia).

Four (4) students qualified for the AP Scholar Award by completing three or more AP Examinations with grades of 3 or higher. The AP Scholars (Class of 2004) were: Elizabeth Appenzeller (Arizona), Jessica Brown (Kentucky), Mong-Shu Ho (Taiwan), and Virginia Kerr (Kentucky).

Most of the nation's colleges and universities award credit, advanced placement, or both based on successful performance on the AP Exams. More than 1,400 institutions award a full year's credit (sophomore standing) to students presenting a sufficient number of qualifying grades.

The College Board's mission is to connect students to college success and opportunity. It is a not-for-profit membership organization committed to excellence and equity in education. Founded in 1900, the association is composed of more than 4,500 schools, colleges, universities, and other educational organizations. Each year, the College Board serves

over three million students and their parents, 23,000 high schools, and 3,500 colleges through major programs and services in college admissions, guidance, assessment, financial aid, enrollment, teaching and learning. Among its best known programs are the SAT, the

PSAT/NMSQT, and the Advanced Placement Program. The College Board is committed to the principles of excellence and equity, and that commitment is embodied in all of its programs, services, activities, and concerns.

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Pastimes

The Whole Fish Story

From Behind the Stove

Brian Lichorowicz

I'm supposed to eat more fish. I think I went off fish in my college days after years of forced child labor preparing weekly for the infamous "Fish Fry Fridays."

We bought our fish whole, and cleaned and boned huge amounts of Northern Pike and Haddock. I cleaned and fileted unreal amounts of whole fish. In college, I got "Filet-O Fish" and "Mrs. Paul's fish sticks" out just like everyone else. It all tasted like, well, not fish.

It certainly didn't taste like a fresh snapper with lemon and dill or a broiled grouper or a fresh smoked local rainbow. These fish, prepared well, verily earn their own food category in your soul.

Certain fish dishes I seem to remember very well.

A whole Red Snapper Vera Cruz cooked over an open fire with a pineapple/apple/ red pepper salsa. A true Dover Sole with about two whole lemons and a 1/2-pound of butter on it, and Bo's grouper sandwich on the dock's in Key West. Yea... that's fish.

But I'm in Virginia, so finding a variety of fresh whole fish, without paying a premium, is a chore. We're all subject to that white, spongy, farm-raised-chemical-fed, unknown stuff that's attached to blue Styro-foam. But that's just my own opinion, and it seems the Gorton's Fisherman has a road or something around here named after him.

Buying a whole fish is good for a couple of reasons—the big one is that fish stays fresher longer if intact. The other being that, per pound, it's substantially

less expensive. Doing five minutes of labor yourself can save a few bucks and generally provide a better product.

If you haven't cleaned, and de-boned a fish before, go to <http://www.i4at.org/lib2/cln-fish.htm> and learn.

While you're at it, learn to filet one also; that's even easier. We, as a species, have been doing it for centuries. Think of it as your own little CSI episode. This skill has a high "cool factor" for kids. Besides, we've gotten so lazy with portioned, ready-to-eat food that we forget simple basics.

All the major chains, for the most part, will have two or three types of whole fish on ice. But Thursdays at the Bestway Supermarket, Grade Market Hispaniola in Herndon, VA, is a whole different ballgame.

Bestway is a chain of three stores in our area, with the Herndon store being closest to Middleburg. It's one of the few Hispanic groceries store in the area with a strong ethic on freshness and food quality.

As you enter, moved toward the very back of the store on the left, the seafood section. You'll naturally smell it first; it is, after all, a fish section.

Dozens of clean stainless steel tubs filled with fresh whole fish appear before you. A variety of snapper, trout, whole flounder, spanish mackerel, buffalo, rockfish, something called a "Porgie" and fresh croppies, all fresh with crushed ice over them. Many of them swam the day before.

Ask for Charlie. Just yell, he'll yell back.

He can find you the perfect specimen. Ask him

how to cook it, and he'll tell you, "Fry it!" Seems Charlie fries everything. (Remember when looking for fresh fish the telltale sign is a clear eye. I was taught that with fish, cloudy eyes usually means it's been there awhile. It's not scientific, but it works. Call it a personal standard.)

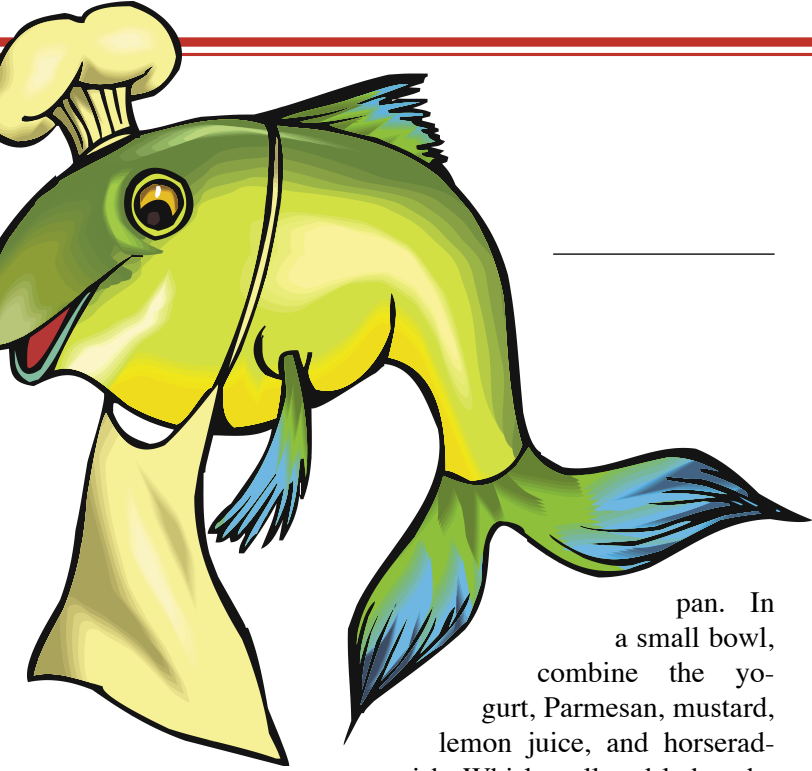
I grabbed a couple of whole lane snapper that were so fresh they winked at me. Also some rainbow trout and three whole flounder. There are certain types of fish we've never had—and in some case it's best we don't—but a little variety can open a new culinary door for you.

Whole Trout Foil Wrap

4 (whole) 10-inch trout
2 red bell peppers, chopped
2 lemon
2 sm scallions (green onions), chopped
1/2 tsp thyme chopped
1/2 bunch fresh mint, chopped
2 peaches, off the pit

4 tsp butter
Salt and pepper
Hot sauce to taste

This is incomparable when cooked in a campfire. One of my favorite studies has always



pan. In a small bowl, combine the yogurt, Parmesan, mustard, lemon juice, and horseradish. Whisk well and lather the mixture over both sides of the fillets.

Broil about 8 inches from the heat (NOT the top rack!) turning once, for about 6 minutes. A brown crust will form on both sides, or until the fish flakes easily with a fork. If you have a good German Alsace you've been saving, now's the time.

Baltic Stuffed Lane Snapper

Eggs, butter and heavy cream. If there's away to make fish un-healthy this is it. I gave this an esoteric name because it sounds better than "My grandmother's only fish dish she would make if she got stuck feeding you on a Friday." Any semi-light-colored meat fish will work.

4 (whole) snapper* (I used lane snapper)
2/3 cup rice
1 cucumber—large, peeled, seeded and coarsely chopped
1 bunch spinach, cleaned and chopped
1/4 tsp salt (for cucumbers)
2 hard-boiled eggs, coarsely chopped
1/2 cup scallions, finely chopped
1/2 cup parsley, finely chopped
1/4 cup chives, finely chopped
1 tbs salt
1/8 tsp white pepper
1 tbs heavy cream (to 3 tb if needed)
1/4 lb butter (one stick)
6 tbs dry breadcrumbs
1/2 -cup boiling water
*** Remove head leave the tail on fish.**

We're cooking for four people here.

Cook the rice as you would normally until it is still slightly firm, then set aside. In a small bowl, toss the chopped cucumber with 1/4 tsp of sea salt. Let it sit for 15 minutes, and drain and dry a bit with a paper towel.

In a small saucepan, melt 2 tbs of butter, add onions and cucumbers and sauté until soft and transparent but not brown. Transfer to a large mixing bowl and add chopped eggs, cooked rice, parsley, spinach and chives. Season with salt and pepper and moisten with heavy cream, adding more if the stuff-

ing seems too dry. Mix together lightly but thoroughly.

Wash the fish inside and out under cold running water and dry thoroughly. Fill the fish with the spinach-rice stuffing; close the opening with toothpicks and crisscross kitchen string around the toothpicks, as you would lace a turkey. Presentation is always key.

Preheat oven to 350 degF.

In a baking dish or roasting pan large enough to hold the fish, melt 1/4 lb butter;

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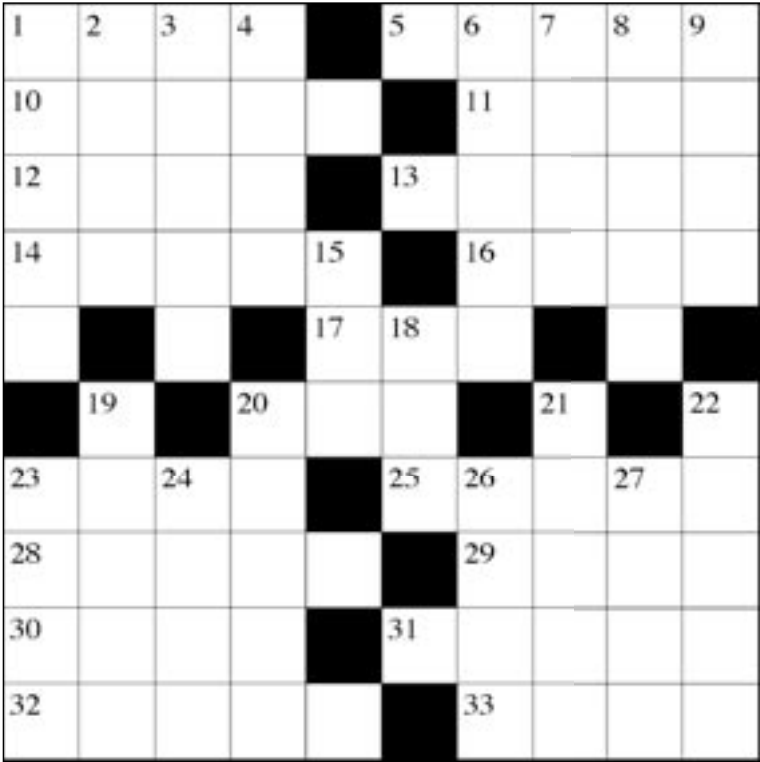
October Crossword

ACROSS

- 1 Pleasingly pretty
- 5 Academy award
- 10 Musical drama
- 11 Central part
- 12 Bereft
- 13 Ribbons
- 14 Insert
- 16 Wife of Jacob
- 17 High mountain
- 20 Attempt
- 23 Spurt
- 25 Finished
- 28 Grecian architectural style
- 29 Notion
- 30 Complacent
- 31 Spank
- 32 Taut
- 33 Formerly

DOWN

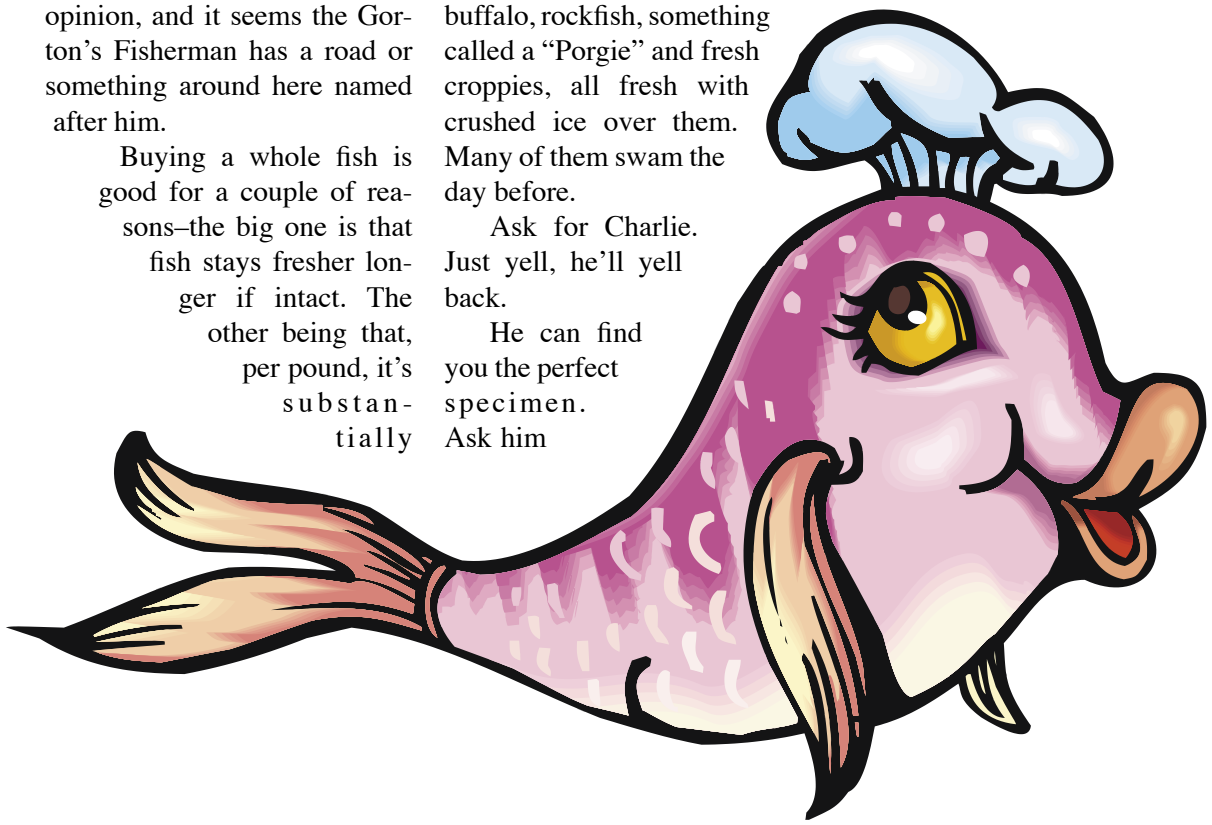
- 1 Paroxysmal pain
- 2 Atop
- 3 Curt
- 4 Sea eagle
- 6 Skin of the upper part of the head
- 7 Priests cloak
- 8 Regions
- 9 20th letter of the Hebrew alphabet
- 15 Sailor
- 18 Alkali
- 19 Finnish name of Finland



- 20 Femoral region
- 21 Mammary gland in cows
- 22 Modify

- 23 Essential point
- 24 Cozy
- 26 Greek goddess of victory
- 27 Long fish

Last Month's
Solution on 8



Friends for Life

Middleburg Humane Foundation

OH MY GOODNESS!



Have you EVER seen cuter puppies?! These itty bitsy little kidlets are unbelievably adorable & full of personality! Their mom (Honey) is a 9 pound Chihuahua/ Jack Russell Terrier cross & dad is a small rough coat Terrier. They will be ready for adoption after December 28th when they will be 7 _ weeks old! Call soon!

I BELIEVE IN MIRACLES!



Hi- My name is Honey and I am the mom dog of 4 adorable little babies. We were living in a dirty pen with a barrel as our only protection. When the kind people at MHF found us on Thanksgiving

Day, we were very cold and very hungry. Thankfully, they rescued us and now we live in a warm shelter with a cozy bed and plenty of yummy food. Please help my dream come true- all I want for Christmas is wonderful forever homes for my babies and me too!

PLEASE ADOPT ME!



Hi- I'm Mary! Me & my four sisters were rescued on Thanksgiving Day! Our mom is a small Beagle & I don't remember my dad at all. We are very healthy & happy now that we are warm and have full tummies. We just got our first vaccine so we are ready for you to come take us home! All we want for Christmas is our own forever families.



MARMY- A super special young lady! Marmy has a big bubbly personality that goes along with her big bubbly body! She is a Sharpei/ Great Dane cross, about 11 months old. Marmy has started obedience classes and is doing beautifully! Marmy needs a lot of room to play and run, she would make a fun family friend.



SYDNEY- 2 year old Lab/ Rottweiler mix. "Beauty is only skin deep". I am looking for that special person who recognizes that truth! I used my head to protect my puppies when someone threw a caustic material at us. I'm best friends with all of the animals here at the shelter and I love the kids that visit too! If you're looking for devotion and unconditional love, I'm your man!



CHELSEA- Chelsea has a long sad story. Fortunately she is now with us and we will be sure to find her a wonderful new home. Chelsea is a 4 year old Shepherd mix. She is extremely quiet, gentle and loyal. She would make a wonderful companion for a retired person.



LEONE- A lovely 14 year old Chestnut TB mare. Leonne is a great babysitter with excellent ground manners. She has never been ridden but loves people and to be bathed & sprayed with the hose! She is an easy keeper too. Leonne has a few friends like Starsky who need lawn ornament/ babysitter homes as well.



MAIZEY- A gorgeous 5 year old, 13H Arabian cross pony mare. Maizey was rescued 3 years ago- we found her starving in the woods, eating only bark to stay alive.

Maizey can be ridden lightly at a walk trot but needs an experienced rider. She has good ground manners & is full of personality.

Contributions to Middleburg Humane Foundation are tax deductible.

MHF • P.O. Box 1238 • Middleburg•VA 20118 • 540 - 364 - 3272

HERE KITTY KITTY- Boy do we have gorgeous kittens! We have a group of absolutely gorgeous Himalayan mix kittens that are now 8 weeks old as well as some cutie pie litters and individual orphan babies. Everyone is AIDS/ Leukemia negative, have started their vaccines and dewormings. The spay/ neuters are included in our \$80 adoption donation. Ask about our "Buddy Program" that helps keep friends together!



BEAR- Poor little Bear. Bear has lived his entire life in a large breeding kennel. He is 13 years old, 8 pounds,



and has several medical issues. But he is an absolute doll and we have fallen madly in love with this little guy. He is very gentle and loves to be cuddled in your lap. He has a guardian angel family who has offered to help with his dental and medical expenses so we will pursue his neuter and dental soon! Bear truly deserves a place where he can live out his life in a gentle, loving home.

VINNIE

Vinnie was rescued from a slaughter sale last week. His paperwork shows that he was at the New Holland PA. sale recently and the dealer who brought him to the sale said that he had bought him from an Amish family. Two

little boys rode this pony all day until we were fortunate to be able to buy him. Vinnie is sound, attractive and fun to ride. He is a bit sour right now and deserves some down time and genuine TLC.

WILLOW

A full figured gal with plenty of love to share! Willow is a great big gorgeous cat with a great big personality! She is about 8 years old and declawed. Willow loves to lounge all day and give head butts. If you adopt this young lady, you will never be lonely again!



Albert's Corner

A monthly column for people who share their homes with four-legged friends.



Dear Your Majesty Santa Paws Sir:

If, by chance, you have taken time out of your busy schedule to read this fine publication, I would like to ask for your consideration of an important issue. (To my readers, I apologize for using this column for my personal letter to Santa, but I'm sure you will share my concerns.)

Recently, I learned that not all dogs and cats have homes. Santa Paws, do you know about this? I understand that this is a huge problem, and I am frankly very upset about it. I visited a shelter with my people and saw heartbreaking things! I admit that before I found out about this, my Christmas list was a mile long. Now, however, I feel guilty asking for so much stuff.

In fact, I do not want anything at all for the holidays. Instead, could you please give my gifts to homeless dogs and cats? I don't know if you are able to visit the homeless pets since they don't have chimneys, but you should find a way to visit them! There are so many wonderful animals out there just waiting for the greatest gift of all: adoption. (Maybe you could adopt some dogs to pull your sleigh. I'm sure the reindeer are tired after all of these years.) In the meantime, all of the homeless animals would appreciate toys, treats, and money to pay for their care. It would not have to be very much at all; every little bit counts.

My favorite local cause is the Middleburg Humane Foundation, but there are many rescue groups all over the state and country that desperately need help. All of them have big hearts and big bills to pay, which is a difficult combination. Just think of the role model you would be if you gave to all of the needy animals! Maybe children and adults alike would begin giving their time and donations throughout the year.

I very much respect all that you have to do between now and Christmas Eve, and I know that the elves are working overtime. It's just that this is so important, Santa...so important!

Even though you won't be bringing gifts to my house, I want you to know that you are still invited to come over. I'll have treats and water for you, and I promise not to bark at Rudolph this time. Also, if you simply can't resist bringing me one squeaky toy because I've been such a good boy, I will understand and accept it graciously.

Thank you Santa Paws,

Albert P. Clark

Albert, a Jack Russell Terrier, is Chairman of the Board of Wylie Wagg, a shop for dogs, cats, and their people, in Middleburg. 🐾



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The Manor House at the Retreat circa 1799



In 1799 Thomas Parker built a house on this site that he named "The Retreat." This dwelling later became the home of his grandson, Judge Richard E. Parker ("Hanging Judge Parker"), who presided over the trial of John Brown in 1859. The original house still stands, overlooking the 18th green at Virginia National Gold Club. Rich with Civil War history, on July 18, 1864 this property was the site of the Battle of Cool Spring the only significant Civil War battle fought in Clarke County, Virginia.

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All Work for Our Pleasure



A Child's Christmas at Oatlands

Steven Schwartz

The caretakers of Loudoun County's own Oatlands Plantation in Leesburg have infused the historic house and grounds with the magic of Christmas as seen through the eyes of children. This beautiful estate has been the home of many children in its 200 years, and is open for today's families to see how our ancestors celebrated the holidays.

The mansion's impressive interior spaces are filled with glowing trees and holiday decorations, and down at kids' eye level are toys and games from years gone by.

Under the supervision of David Boyce, Executive Director of Oatlands, a large and dedicated staff of 37 people manages, maintains and guides visitors through the mansion and its grounds. A protected National Trust for Historic Preservation site, Oatlands is a pristine and untouched 360-acre oasis surrounded by the fastest-growing county in the U.S. Visitors can leisurely stroll around the park-like estate with its 25 buildings and magnificent 4.5-acre, 200-year-old formal garden. All this has to be maintained, and Oatlands' endowment covers only a fraction of the cost to manage this large property, so grants, admission fees, retail sales, numerous events and generous donations help make up the difference. There are the Carriage House and Potting Shed Gift Shops filled with unique decorations and gifts where you can cross some items off your holiday shopping list.

Dedicated interpretive guides like Bobbie Frazier, a former teacher, are garbed in historic costumes and are ready to guide you through the many rooms of the house. They are trained to tell the stories of the residents and their famous guests that make this piece of American history so interesting.

If you and your kids are curious about how children of the past celebrated the holidays, take them to "A Child's Christmas at Oatlands." The displays can be seen through December 30th; catch the special Evening Candlelight Tour on December 18th, from 5:30 pm to 8:30 pm. Admission rates are reasonable. Hot cider & cookies are served.



"A Child's Christmas at Oatlands"
Monday-Saturday 10:00 am to 4:00 pm
Carriage House Gift Shop & Potting Shed are open daily. Closed December 24 & 25.

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A Little Bit of Heaven by the Bottle or the Glass

Steven Schwartz

Just a few miles south of Middleburg on The Plains road is the enchantingly beautiful Piedmont Vineyards. Owner Gerhard von Fincke bought the business in February 1998 from Elizabeth Furness who had converted the former dairy farm to a vineyard back in 1973. You can't miss it—pull in when you see rows of grapevines arch over graceful hills and valleys.

"Wine grapes are picky about where they grow best," says John Fitter, Piedmont's winemaker, "and Burgundy grapes grow very well here." Each year's harvest has yielded 5 varieties of Chardonnay—Hunt Country (2001, Lot 02, and Vintage 2002), plus a Native Yeast 2002, and Special Reserve 2001. For reds, Piedmont offers a Merlot 2002 and a Little River Merlot 2003. Each has a distinct flavor imparted by Fitter's skill in choosing stainless steel vats, and/or oak barrels. If you're over 21 years of age (and you can prove it—remember to bring your ID), you can sample each variety to find your favorite. Hard to believe it's so close to the city, people come to sit on the patio that *Washingtonian Magazine* called in October 2003, the area's "prettiest picnic spot."

von Fincke is bullish on Virginia as a good place to make wine. "There are some people who have never tasted a Virginia wine, and I invite them to come here to see for themselves that our products are as good as those from California or Europe." In fact, in 1999, a Piedmont Chardonnay was awarded a Gold Medal in the International Wine Challenge in London, the largest wine competition in the world. In addition, the company has won two Silver, two Bronze and two Special Mentions in that same competition. Ask for Piedmont's wines in local stores and fine restaurants.

The Winery has a comfortable tasting room with a cozy fireplace for sampling wines on chilly winter days, and a retail area filled with wine-related gifts and decorations. Tours of the winemaking process are mainly on weekends.

So, if you love wine, do yourself a favor and head to Piedmont Vineyards where you can spend a pleasant time with friends sampling great wine and enjoying the beautiful countryside.

Piedmont is open all year, closed only on Thanksgiving, Christmas Eve, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day.



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CHESLEY



245 Acres in Old Dominion Hunt Territory
 ♦Magnificent manor home with domed-stair hall ♦Ballroom ♦Parlor ♦Library ♦Gourmet kitchen ♦Hidden room ♦Hidden stairway ♦Ornate and gilded detail throughout ♦Pool ♦Established gardens ♦Ponds ♦Pastoral and mountain views ♦Studio ♦4 stall barn ♦Outdoor ring ♦Paddocks
\$5,900,000

DEER POND MANOR



Elegant French provincial residence in story-book setting ♦48+ acres overlooking a serene lake and orchard ♦Features 4 finished levels ♦4 Bedrooms, 5.5 Baths ♦Library ♦5 Fireplaces ♦Au pair suite ♦Fabulous pool and swim spa ♦Gorgeous gardens ♦Flagstone terraces ♦Gazebo ♦Ideal for gracious entertaining ♦Includes three 10+ acre parcels
\$2,600,000

WEST WIND



Orange County Hunt Territory Wonderful brick 4 bedroom home with attached garage on 20 acres ♦ This property has many complimentary extras: pond, pool, gardens, terraces ♦ Well located for the commuter with easy access to Route 66, yet tucked away, offering complete privacy ♦ With beautiful mountain and pastoral views
\$1,990,000



*Wishing everyone a
 joyous
 Holiday Season*

ALLWYN COURT



Ideal horse property situated at the foot of the Blue Ridge Mountains ♦Well designed 16 stall barn w/2 wash stalls, tack room, office, hay storage ♦All stalls 12x12 ♦32+ board fenced acres ♦Attached indoor arena 70x178 ♦2 lg fields ♦2 paddocks ♦Stucco main house w/3 BR, 2 BA ♦Small tenant house ♦Upperville area ♦Piedmont Hunt Territory
\$1,700,000

FELDSPAR FARM



Charming Circa 1800 farm on 13+ rolling acres ♦Beautifully renovated w/beamed kitchen & luxurious master ♦3 additional BR's w/2 BA's ♦Private office/studio ♦Original fireplaces ♦Finished lower level ♦Wonderful 5-stall stone bank barn ♦Gorgeous pond and spring house ♦Stone walls ♦Ideal for horses ♦Located on a picturesque country lane
\$1,290,000

SUCCESS FARM



IBeautiful, rolling, open grazing land ♦175 +/- acres with beautiful views of the Blue Ridge, Massanutten and Allegheny mountains ♦20-30 wooded acres ♦Ponds ♦3 Bedroom tenant house ♦Old bank barn ♦Property is in VOF easement like many farms in area ♦30 minutes West of Middleburg ♦Warren Co.
\$875,000

CAELI FARM



Beautiful rolling land with mountain vistas, stone walls, 2 barns, several old structures & more ♦406 +/- acres ♦Water features include Hungry Run & The Little River, a pond and wetlands as well ♦Great views in all directions with many house sites ♦Entire property is in a conservation easement and is to be divided into no more than 3 parcels ♦OCH territory
\$4,850,000

For further information regarding the properties above or for any of your property requirements please contact any of our qualified agents. All inquiries shall be held in the strictest of confidence.

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