Middleburg Eccentric™

Middleburg's Only Locally Owned and Operated Newspaper

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Creative Attractions Page 13

Salamander Doubts - Audit Woes

Council Struggles with Funds, Futures, PR

Daniel Morrow

What if Salamander doesn't build its long-debated Inn and Spa in Middleburg? What were the results of the long-awaited "final audit" of the Town's books for fiscal year 2006?

February's expanded Town Council Meeting raised big questions and provided few if any answers as Middleburg continues to work through a difficult period of administrative transition and a doubling of its geography.

On February 8, Council Member Catherine ("Bundles") Murdock raised five questions about what, if anything, Salamander intended to build on its Middleburg property if, "for some reason" their plan to build a world-class Inn and Spa on land recently annexed by the town "fell through."

On the financial and administrative front, the long-awaited, corrected and "final audit" of the Town's books for 2006, didn't make the Council's regular agenda, even though Town Auditor Jeff Mitchell had formally presented his findings at a sparsely attended "work session" on February 5. Mitchell's "preliminary audit report," based in part on incorrectly coded bookkeeping entries, had produced negative stories in national media, complete with caveats about possible violations of state law and million-dollar-level overspending..

Salamander Surprises

Due Diligence, Proffers, and "Vaguely Mentioned Doubts"

During a joint meeting of the Town Council and Planning Commission, called to order an hour before February's regular Council meeting, Murdock directed five pointed questions at the Town's legal and administrative staff, and, indirectly, to the attending press and representatives of Salamander Development.

Murdock, one of three Council Members who had voted against the Town's current agreement with Salamander (and the only such member still serving on the Town Council) noted that her ongoing "due diligence" responsibilities demanded that she raise the questions, while citing other unnamed sources of what she termed "vaguely mentioned" concerns.

Observing that both representatives of Salamander and "the media" were present and urging them "...not to read anything into this...," Murdock noted, "We have fiscal responsibilities . . . we have legal responsibilities to know . . . what if . . . as has been vaguely mentioned . . . what if the resort was not able to proceed as we all hope it's going to . . . . ?"

Noting that the town's professional staff was currently deeply engaged in preparing a new budget, Murdock nevertheless requested that both the Town Planner and Town Attorney "do some research" on what she described as "five very general questions:"

Continued Page 4

Breast Cancer Prevention Fund Created in Middleburg

To contribute to the elimination of breast cancer a charitable fund, with an objective of $300,000 in annual donations and charitable distributions, was recently created by a Middleburg-area resident. The Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Fund has been established and placed with the Piedmont Community Foundation, a 501 (c) (3) organization. Donations are eligible for a tax deduction.

Delaplane's James P. Atkins, whose late wife was a breast cancer victim, conceived the fund as a means to help prevent the disease in others. "I lived with the impacts of breast cancer for nine years," he said, "and since Cheryl left us I have wanted to do more to help eliminate the disease. Now I can.

"So many women suffer from breast cancer in our community," he continued, "but I could find no local fund specific to this need. With our new Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Fund, we will conduct fundraising events and directly solicit funds from local residents. Monies collected will be disbursed annually to worthy local and national recipients whose work has impact for citizens in Fauquier and Loudoun Counties.

"As the Establishing Donor, " Atkins said, "I am just the initiator and the lead for the Fund's activities." A Donor Advisory Committee will work with Jim to select the organizations to be recommended for charitable distribution.

Committee members are Mary Jo Jackson of Rectortown, a breast cancer survivor, Lizanne Driskill whose mother, Nanette White, died of breast cancer, and Sandi Atkins, wife of Jim Atkins.



James P. Atkins, Establishing Donor, Breast Cancer Fund, Karen D. Krei, Executive Director, PCF, J. Bradley Davis, President, PCF

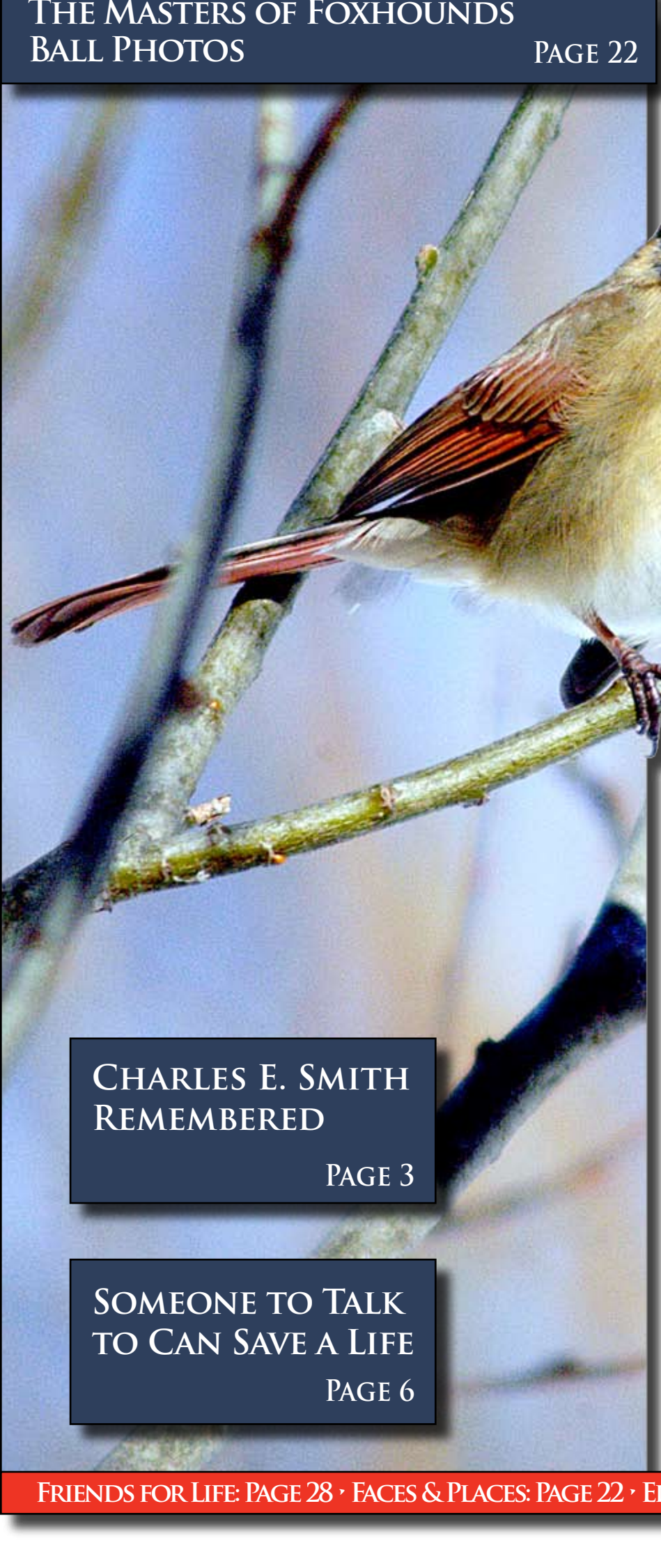
"Our objective is to do all we can to ensure that our daughters, our sisters, our mothers, and our friends do not fall victim to this horrible disease," Atkins said. "Our community can do so much for this cause and our people are so generous, I am very confident we will reach our $300,000 objective on time."

The Piedmont Community Foundation Directors are pleased to work with Jim and his advisory

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Someone to Talk to Can Save a Life Page 6

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News of Note

In the Face of Challenges, Charlie Smith Landed On His Feet

Middleburg Sends Off A Loved and Respected Native Son in Grand Style

When Charlie Smith was young, he fell off a porch and hurt his leg so badly that he could no longer walk to school. It wasn't a long walk, no more than a mile and a quarter, but Charlie simply could not walk.

Dr. Safford, who was treating him in Middleburg, could not correct the problem and finally sent him to Arlington Children's Hospital for treatment. He was there for a long time while the doctors tried to treat him with bed rest. Eventually, they realized that, when he fell, he had landed on his feet and splintered all the major bones in his leg.

"It cracked just like a mirror," he remembered in his oral history in The Black History Committee's Collection in Leesburg's Thomas Balch Library.

They said Charlie's leg would knit together if he stayed off it, but if he walked long distances, the splinters would surely break and it would be impossible for him to ever walk again.

So, the doctors operated and inserted a piece of steel from the middle of his ankle to his knee and from his knee to his hip to replace the splintered bone.

Charlie could walk, but Loudoun County would not let him continue to attend school. The walk was too long and they didn't want to be responsible if he broke the leg again.

From that moment on, Charles Smith educated himself.

Charlie, as everyone called him, was honored at a New Orleans-style funeral and memorial service February 4th. Family, friends, admiring neighbors and colleagues remembered him fondly and well at the standing-room-only event in Middleburg's Community Center on a brisk, sunny Saturday.

As the funeral cortege left the perfectly matched pair of Shire horses from Ayrshire Farm pulled his casket in a caisson for one last drive through Middleburg. The crowd of over two hundred mourners who spoke softly about what a wonderful man Charlie had been and remembered a multitude of stories about his kindness and generosity.

To honor Charlie, Middleburg police reserved his regular parking space in front of the Safeway where mourners covered his pickup truck with notes and flowers.

Polecat Hill

Born in 1933 on Polecat Hill Road, Charlie spent his entire life there as he matured, married Jean Elizabeth Wright, raised nine children, six of his own and three who needed a warm and loving home, and made himself invaluable to almost everyone who lived in the Middleburg area.

He was the only child of William Arthur Smith and Louise Jackson. His father, who was born in Loudoun County, remarried and had two more boys but, as Charlie always said, …"I'm the onliest one by my mother."

Charlie's father's parents, Wade and Katie Smith, lived on Polecat Hill Road and raised him after his mother died in an automobile accident in Warrenton when he was six.

"My grandmother, Katie Bolden Smith, raised twenty-eight children during the depression, and she delivered half of the babies in Middleburg. She did laundry and cooked dinner parties for people, and she purchased the five acres on Polecat Hill Road where I've lived all my life," Charlie remembered in his oral history in The Black History Committee's Collection at the Thomas Balch Library in Leesburg.

One of the people his grandmother worked for was Mrs. D.C. Sands.

When Mrs. Sands was ill with tuberculosis and no one wanted to do her laundry, Charlie's grandmother did her clothes. When later his grandmother asked if she could purchase the five-acre parcel of land on Polecat Hill Road, the Sands family gladly sold it to her.

Katie Smith was born in 1890 and Charlie remembered well her stories about Middleburg at the turn of the century. She attended the old



Middleburg School for black students until the fifth or sixth grade.

"Middleburg was mostly black when my grandmother was young," Charlie remembered. "On the main street in town coming in from the Aldie side there were three or four black families on the main road, and both sides of the street, left to right were blacks up the first block and on the left hand side all the way up the street, all the way to the other end."

"The town was, I would say, better than fifty, maybe seventy-five percent, black. It was an old country farm town where everybody worked on the farm, and you came to town on Saturday night to sit on the street and play guitars."

"They talked about what everybody was doing on the farm, who was planting potatoes and who was digging and who was doing whatever. It was completely a farm and a working community town."

According to Charlie's oral history, Middleburg only had a few merchants when he was young, an A&P, a Ben Franklin and a few small country stores. In addition to Dr. Safford who treated his broken leg, Middleburg also had an African American doctor, Maurice Britton King Edmead.,

"Dr. Edmead came and built a house in Middleburg. He was a wonderful doctor, but he moved to Alexandria after a few years."

Charlie remembered segregation being a serious issue in the 1940's and '50's when members of the black community could no longer go into shops or restaurants.

"We had to go to the back door of The Coach Stop for a beer or a hamburger, it was all like that then."

It was not until 1963 when things began to change.

How did the 'mostly black' community change to such a segregated town? According to Charlie, there was a very simple answer.

Many children of the white plantation owners were not fascinated with either horses or agrarian pursuits, so their parents purchased shops for them to run in the village. Soon, blacks were not at all welcome in the shops under new ownership, and they were excluded from the front doors of the commercial section of town.

However, all the tradesmen, the contractors, the blacksmiths, the stonemasons and carpenters were black. In fact, Charlie remembered, the town was almost all black. The whites were plantation owners and everyone worked for them.

JFK & Jackie

It was not until John F. and Jacqueline Kennedy decided to build a house in Middleburg that things began to change.

"When the Kennedy's came to town, that is what really changed Middleburg," according to Charlie.

When town leaders were advised that the President wanted to live in Middleburg, they built the Catholic Church. When they learned that he would prefer not to have any demonstrations of segregation, they began to integrate Middleburg.

"That really opened up the stores and places where we could not go…; just before Kennedy came to town,"



Charlie said.

Although Charlie never met President Kennedy personally, he saw him several times in town but, as he said, '…they weren't here very long."

When asked by oral historian Chester Ramey if he thought Middleburg's black community had shrunken in size and influence, Charlie responded that, today, there were "…A few blacks around, but nothing like it used to be."

"When I was young, there were two black restaurants in town, now blacks are beginning to come back. My daughter, Tootie, has The Back Street Café and she has tremendous business with everybody."

"There will be a lot more jobs when Sheila Johnson builds her resort and, I think it will do Middleburg a lot of good. She wants to help this town and this town needs the help. There are not enough people to support all the stuff that needs to be done and she is willing to help. I think the town should accept that help."

There are many more fascinating reminiscences in Charlie Smith's oral history.

He speaks lovingly about his children, all six of whom live nearby, his family and his life in Middleburg. His immense intelligence and ability to learn quickly propelled him through many jobs in the area until he found his calling as a sought-after and successful builder.

Charlie worried about how young people would cope in a real emergency, and mused that he and his wife had to put their fresh milk in "store milk bottles" so his children would drink it, and place their fresh eggs in egg cartons so their kids would think they'd come from the store.

Charles Smith lived through times of remarkable change and he loved his life as much as his friends and relations loved him. They sent him off with a wonderful celebration that was much deserved and well earned.

In lieu of flowers, remembrances for Charlie Smith may be sent to Capital Hospice, 6565 Arlington blvd., Suite 501, Falls Church, VA 22014







News of Note

Inova's New CEO Randy Kelley Looks Forward to Meeting Loudoun County's Healthcare Needs

With new facilities to improve access to healthcare underway in many areas of Loudoun County and more on the way, CEO Randall {Randy} L. Kelley is very gracious when he says he takes no credit for the many additions and improvements.

"This plan was put in place by my predecessors," he says, "but in the short time I've been here, I understand and completely support Inova's commitment to expand and enhance our services in Loudoun county."

Inova Loudoun's new Purcellville medical center on Hatcher Avenue is in the pre-leasing phase now, and Inova has signed a letter of intent for a Lovettsville medical center that is scheduled to open once the new town center is complete.

Greatly expanded services at Inova's Cromwell Hospital in Leesburg now include emergency, radiology, acute rehabilitation, physical therapy, a 22-bed psychiatric unit, women's, infant's and children's care and a free clinic. A community health center established as a separate 501C3 will operate as a partnership with the Chamber of Commerce to provide another important healthcare access asset.

The Middleburg medical center will be underway as soon as a suitable location is found, and an Avonlea center is now in the planning stages.

In addition, Inova plans a Dulles South Medical Center on Route 50 that will offer all services when Phase I opens. When Phase II of the Dulles South facility opens it will include an academic and research campus.

Although Kelley has only been at Inova Loudoun Hospital since August of last year, he is already well aware of the challenges that face the county.

"We measure outpatient and emergency care in minutes, not miles," Kelley said. "Traffic is a really significant challenge here for ambulances and for our patients."

Kelley brings more than twenty years of healthcare experience to his new position, most recently serving as President and CEO of the 206-bed Gateway Health System in Clarksville, Tennessee.

Master Gardener

Although he finds navigating the recent fields of ice a radical change from Clarksville weather, Kelley' upbringing in Michigan "prepared him for the worst" in Northern Virginia. As a Master Gardener, he is delighted to be in a zone as diverse and encouraging as he expects to enjoy in Loudoun.

"I hated to leave my roses and my garden in Tennessee," Kelley explained. "But I really look forward to starting again here as soon as the ice permits."

It's easy to understand why Loudoun's Inova Hospital was attractive to Kelley after 20 years in the healthcare industry, and it's just as easy to see how concerned he is about traffic congestion and housing prices that are so



high that 40% of his employees cannot afford to live in the county.

"We have a fantastic staff," he said, "our clinical quality is tremendous, our service is high quality and patient friendly, and all measurements confirm that. We need to continue to grow to meet the community's needs, but we must ensure that our plans for growth closely parallel the needs of the community."

Award Winning Services

Today, the rapidly expanding Inova healthcare campus in Lansdowne is very much in tune with the growing community it serves. Centered around an attractive, modern, bright and welcoming 155-bed facility, the award-winning services include a brand new pediatric care and emergency center that is already serving 32 children a day.

Inova's ambulatory care is thriving and the hospital offers surgeons six operating rooms and a cancer center where prosthetic seeding procedures will begin this spring.

"We will open 28 more in-patient beds and 12 intensive care beds by the end of the year," said Vice President of Communications and Development David Goldberg.

"The truly comprehensive services we offer are simply a reflection of our commitment to the Loudoun community," Goldberg added.

Kelley is particularly proud of the collegiality between his medical and nursing staffs.

"Our physicians are truly outstanding and the receipt of the Magnet Award for Nursing is a wonderful validation of the quality of our staff."

Recently, Kelley promoted Dr. Greg Bentz to chief medical officer to lead the hospital's case management program.

"Greg has been a member of the staff for 16 years and is highly respected by everyone. He will be a tremendous asset as we continue to grow and expand." Kelley said.

Competition

Because Kelley has worked in Tennessee, he is very familiar with Healthcare Corporation of America, the national organization that intends to build another hospital in Loudoun and recently announced plans to develop a new medical campus on Route 50.

Kelley draws a clear distinction between Inova Loudoun being a not-for-profit organization and HCA's for-profit status, indicating clearly that if HCA builds four-and-a-half miles from Inova Loudoun in Broadlands, both hospitals will suffer.

"There are 528 square miles in Loudoun County, why build another hospital four-and-a-half miles from our Lansdowne campus?"

Before Inova purchased Loudoun Hospital, there were complaints about the length of waiting time at the facility and about the re-routing of patients to other hospitals.

According to Goldberg there have been no re-routed patients in five years, and the longest wait has been less than 3 hours for the 54,000 patients Inova Loudoun sees each year.

"This is a highly competitive market," Kelley concluded.

"HCA wants people to believe we have a monopoly but I assure you, more is not always better in healthcare. We are providing expert, affordable, quality services as we expand to meet our community's needs, and we are committed to continue to do precisely that as a partner and as a healthcare provider."

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#10 Federal Street (aprox. 3,100 SF) has two street level retail spaces, and two 2-bedroom apartments.

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Doubts and Woes

From Page 1

1.) What can Salamander build on the property if they do not build the resort? How many houses can be built and on which part of what acreage?

2) What is the status of the open space easement they gave Loudoun County as part of the site plan they gave to the County?"

3) What is the status of the new sewer plant? Are the plans finished? Is Salamander obligated at this point to build [the water treatment plant] if they do not build the resort?"

4) If houses are built instead of the resort, what is the Town's responsibility to provide water and sewer if there is NOT a new sewer plant?

5) What is the status of the wells on the property if the resort is not built?

Council Member Mark Snyder, who voted in favor of the much-debated "Memorandum of Understanding" with Salamander, immediately observed that some of Murdock's questions were moot. "It's a pretty simple task to look in the zoning ordinance and see . . . and know definitively . . . what could be built on that property . . . and what's in the M.O.U [the Memorandum of Understanding between the Town and Salamander] is in the M.O. U."

Snyder, Mayor Davis, and several other council members told the Eccentric that they believed Murdock's questions were, truly, just matters of "due diligence."

Others were not so sure, with at least one source close to the Council speculating that what was once a 100% certainty, might now be closer to 75%.

Zoning Issues

Snyder, noting "we are all in favor of the INN," proposed a number of steps to streamline the zoning, permitting and approvals process for the Inn itself. Noting that a June completion date for finalizing approvals for the entire Salamander tract was "ambitious at the very least," he suggested treating construction of the Inn separately from other, thornier issues such as housing, commercial development, open space on the property, and proffers.

Snyder continued to express concern, about just what level of financial compensation, or proffer, Salamander should and would offer the town in exchange for zoning that would allow a higher proportion of commercial development on Salamander land.

Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk warned that a more precisely worded agreement should be drawn governing how ANY new commercial development would relate to and affect Middleburg's existing "downtown."

Salamander Committed. . . and Surprised

Salamander's Prem Devadas told Council directly that he was committed to moving forward with the Inn and Spa, and had been working closely, and well, with Town Staff to facilitate and schedule zoning, public hearings and other approvals required to meet an accelerated building schedule. (See below)

In response to the linking of an agreement on proffers to completion of the process, however, Devedas noted, "I wasn't under the impression until this moment that the inability to meet our schedule was based solely on the Town Council."

"I wasn't aware, until right now," he repeated, "that it was solely the Town Council. I thought it was a process that David [Beniamino, the Town Planner] had articulated, in which he wanted to take things through very carefully . . . and THAT I can understand."

"I can also understand the Town Council," he continued, but "I think that your wanting to tie in whether we proffer or not, and what we proffer is not what I thought the issue was."

Choosing his words carefully, Devedas continued. "What I'm speaking to, really, is the process that we UNDERSTOOD that was going to take place, and if there's a different schedule, that does not match up with ours, but that everybody thinks can reasonably be achieved, then we would be happy to talk about it. . . . but, again, to be able to put that process off without some kind of idea about what the deal is . . . . is impossible for us to do and meet a reasonable schedule."

Devedas concluded his remarks by assuring Council Member Murdock that now, he, too, would like to get the answers to her questions "as soon as possible as well."

Mayor Davis assured Salamander of the Council's good intentions and asked Town Planner David Beniamino and Town Attorney Liz Whiting to look into Murdock's questions and report back to Council as soon as possible. "Time is money," she said.

Town Finances: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

On December 18, 2006, the Washington Post's Amy Gardner reported that Middleburg had " . . . overspent its $1.2 million budget last year by nearly $1 million . . . a practice that is illegal in Virginia." Citing "an audit report" she continued, "The town used borrowed money intended for construction projects to pay its recurring bills -- also illegal."

Those who read the complete story would discover, on page 6 of the "B" section, that both former Mayor, Tim Dimos, and former Town Manager, Mike Casey, thought what was really just a "preliminary audit report" might be seriously flawed.

Nevertheless, largely on the basis of that report, Middleburg's Town Council raised some existing taxes and fees, and introduced new ones. Mayor Davis, speaking for the council, promised that such a failure of oversight would "never happen again" and Casey's replacement as Town Administrator, Jerry Schiro, assured the Town's citizens that he would henceforth double-check ALL financial transactions personally.

The Good

As reported in last month's Eccentric, the best news coming out of the revision of Jeff Mitchell's "preliminary audit" was the discovery that there was no illegal use of bond money for current expenses. Miscoded capital expenses had created an unfortunate false impression. The new, "final" audit, confirmed that happy news.

Town Revenues for the year, $1,309,349, were $221, 642 greater than the $1,087,707 original budget projections.

The size of the Town's budget deficit was also significantly less than had been originally reported.

Finally, as new Town Administrator Jerry Schiro pointed out, the increases in taxes and fees passed by the Council, though painful, turned out to be "a wise and prudent move" especially with regard to the town's water and sewer rates.

At this point, "our operational costs still exceed our revenues," he noted. "Water and sewer rates should cover the operational costs of the system. Connection and facility fees should fund capital programs."

Unfortunately, Schiro conceded, that means "water and sewer service is expensive in Middleburg" in large part because the system's costs must be paid by a relatively small customer base."

"No what how small the customer base, there is a certain unavoidable fundamental cost associated with the operation of a water and sewer system. Much of this cost, " he continued, "is practically unavoidable, "and is associated with the nature of the business, the requirements for licensed personnel and unfunded state mandates from the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality and the Virginia Department of Health."

The Bad

Unfortunately, the revised "final audit" also confirmed serious overspending and little or no effective financial oversight and control during fiscal year 2006.

According to Auditor Jeff Mitchell, the Town's combined year-end fund balances totaled $190, 452 in 2006, down from $936,891 at the end of fiscal year 2005. During the same period the Town's total debt increased by $1,204,810 and the Town overspent it's operational budget by $54,777.

The Disappearing Reserve Fund

According to former Town Manager Mike Casey, he had recommended that Council take actions which would "draw down" the town's cash reserves. The actual decision to do so, however was not his.

"Council adopted the policy and Council approved a Capital Budget which implemented the change . . . by including a series of projects which would use a major portion of the con-

Continued Page 27

The Salamander Development Schedule

As of February 5, 2007, the Middleburg Town Council, Town Staff and Planning Commission were working with Salamander Development to meet the following schedule. Termed "ambitious" at the February 8 Council session, it is now being revised, with an eye to a July date for a final Town Council approval of zoning map and ordinance decisions.

All Council and Commission Meetings are open to the public.

February 2
Resubmit Site Plan and Special Exception revisions

February 5
Draft of Zoning Ordinance Amendment for mixed use district

February 6
Town Council Work Session on Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Special Exception

February 23
File Zoning Map Amendment Application

February 26
Zoning Map Amendment Submission distributed to review agencies

February 26
Middleburg Town Planning Commission Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan Amendment, Site Plan and Special Exception.

Work Session on Zoning Ordinance Amendment

March 5
First Planning Commission Work Session on Zoning Map Amendment Application

March 8
Town Council Public Hearing on Comprehensive Plan Amendment and Special Exception

March 13
Salamander Meeting with Citizens on Zoning Map Amendment Application

March 26
Review agency comments on Zoning Map Amendment due

April 2
Second Planning Commission Work Session on Zoning Map Amendment with Staff Comments

April 3
Town Council Work Session on Zoning Map Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment

Submit Zoning Map Amendment revisions based on staff comments and work session.

April 23
Planning Commission Public Hearing on Zoning Map Amendments and Zoning Ordinance Amendment

May 10
Town Council Public Hearing on Zoning Map Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment

June
Final Town Council Decision on Zoning Map Amendment and Zoning Ordinance Amendment

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News of Note

Someone to Talk to Can Save a Life

HCA Partners With CrisisLink, Provides Much Needed Hotlines for Loudoun County

When suicide seems the only resort and you have no one to talk to who will listen, understand, and help you back to confidence and health, a telephone call to CrisisLink can mean the difference between life and death.

A nationally recognized and fully accredited organization, CrisisLink has been helping individuals in the Washington D.C. area address and overcome crisis, trauma, depression and suicide for almost 40 years.

Now, in a partnership with HCA Virginia's Dominion Hospital in Fairfax, CrisisLink will begin an aggressive education campaign to make Loudoun and Northern Virginia residents more aware of the Arlington, Virginia service

For decades, urban areas in the United States and Europe have relied on telephone hotlines to help individuals who are depressed but have no one they feel they can talk to about their situation. As depression deepens, hope and the desire to live decline rapidly, and, without a supportive, understanding dialogue can lead to devastating action.

Most people who are suicidal really don't want to end their lives. But, although depression is a medical illness that is treatable, estimates indicate that two thirds of those who are depressed never seek treatment and suffer needlessly.

Stress & Tension

Residents of rapidly growing and changing areas like Loudoun County and Northern Virginia can experience high levels of stress and tension. When they try to tackle their fears and isolation without help, they may find themselves sinking deeper and deeper into depression.

With help, the kind of help provided by a hotline service like CrisisLink., the problems, challenges and fears can be expressed and addressed with understanding and support.

Trula Minton, HCA Dominion's new chief executive officer, has been a leader in psychiatry since the early 1970's, understands how valuable a call to CrisisLink can be.

"A thriving community needs access to all kinds of prevention services," she emphasized. "Understanding that CrisisLink is there to help seven days a week, 24-hours a day will provide an invaluable support structure to Loudoun County and Northern Virginia residents.

"We're delighted to introduce this free and confidential service to the area to ensure that every citizen, no matter what their age or situation, understands that CrisisLink is there to help them, their family members, friends and colleagues."

CrisisLink's Executive Director Carol Loftur-Thun speaks forcefully about the value of talking to someone who's on your side in times of crises.

" Whether it is the sudden loss of someone important in your life, a situation that feels like failure or a seemingly impossible challenge, suicide can seem to be the only answer. We know that, with the help of one of our over 100 volunteers, individuals can overcome obstacles that once seemed insurmountable by simply calling one of our five hotlines."

Since 1999, over 100 sons, daughters, mothers, fathers and friends have resorted to suicide in Loudoun County. Their deaths have devastated families, neighborhoods, schools and communities.

Free & Confidential

In 2004 alone, there were 132 deaths by suicide in Northern Virginia, and in Loudoun suicides outnumber homicides by six-to-one. Suicide is the 11th leading cause of death in the United States among young people between the ages of 15 and 24, and it is the second leading cause of death among college students.

Someone to talk to, someone who can guide you to treatment and community resources, is often a life saver for individuals who feel they cannot cope on their own according to Loftur-Thun.

Calls to CrisisLink overall increased 60%, and calls from teenagers increased 235% in the past two years alone.

CrisisLink originated in the basement of concerned citizens after the 1969 D.C. riots. "It was clear that the mental health infrastructure needed help," said Loftur-Thun.

During and after 9/ll, the hotline service was rapidly integrated into the Pentagon's support service infrastructure and following the events call volume increased dramatically.

Now an award-winning hotline service, CrisisLink offers prevention, intervention and what is referred to as "post-vention" services. In addition to individual interaction following a traumatic event or experience, post-vention includes training for community leaders and services like fire and police staffs.

"We follow the national standard of active listening, crisis de-escalation and resource provision," said Loftur-Thun. "A caring, well trained, non-critical listener who doesn't think you're crazy can be an enormous help in difficult situations."

CEO Minton underscores how often depressed individuals don't know they need help.

"Depression is not as obvious as a fever or a broken bone. Although we now know that mental illness is just as real and treatable as any other illness, there is still a lack of understanding and a real stigma associated with asking for help. That's why a confidential, empathetic listener is so important and valuable."

"If you don't feel right, it's not as easy to realize that you may need help," Minton concluded.

By establishing a rapport with their callers, CrisisLink's staff often becomes a pivotal part of in individual's return to health and confidence.

"We have individuals who call us regularly, and over a long period of time," said Loftur-Thun. "There is nothing better than receiving a call from one of those callers to tell us he or she won't be calling anymore."

CrisisLink will also schedule calls to check in on individuals to make sure they are safe and engaged.

"We can only provide our services with community and individual support," explained the executive director. With call volume up 75% and a staff that has grown 40% since I joined the organization two and a half years ago, our budget has increased 42%.

"That's why our partnership with Dominion is so critically important to us as we increase awareness and access to our services in Loudoun County and Northern Virginia."

Director of Community Relations Megan Descutner will spearhead a countywide education campaign about CrisisLink.

We will work closely with schools, churches and youth organizations to make sure they know about CrisisLink hotlines and when to use the service."

"Everyone needs to know these phone numbers: 1-800-273-TALK; 1-800-SUICIDE; 703-527-4077; 703 -752-5254 OR WWW.CRISISLINK. ORG," Descutner said. "Every child, every teacher, every parent needs to know how to reach CrisisLink.

Each executive emphasized that parents should never feel that, because a family member is struggling with mental illness it reflects badly on them. Parents should not feel alone. They can be confident that treatment is available and that by calling CrisisLink, help and a much better situation is on the way.

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GEORGE WASHINGTON COULDN'T TELL A LIE, BUT DOMINION POWER…

An Open Letter to Dominion Virginia Ratepayers

Dear Dominion Virginia ratepayers:

The Virginia Piedmont was once home to many of America's founding fathers. As we celebrate President's Day, we should remember George Washington surveyed this land, Thomas Jefferson revered it, and John Marshall called it home.

Today, greedy Dominion is proposing to dishonor their legacy by defacing the very land our founding fathers loved. Dominion says a permanent 40-mile scar of power towers and high-voltage cables is necessary to keep the lights on.

Yet arrogant Dominion refuses to give us proof, providing no public data to support its claims.

Instead Dominion is stooping to scare tactics, trying to frighten people with threats of rolling blackouts. The truth?

- **Power capacity in Virginia is "not a reliability concern at this time,"**[1] according to a 10-yr outlook by the North American Electric Reliability Council (2005).
- **All Dominion ratepayers will foot the bill** for this multi-million dollar project while Dominion is guaranteed to earn up to a 12.5% return on investment.
- **Private property will be seized and devalued without fair compensation.**
- According to an official report of the Virginia legislature, **Virginia is not in need of Dominion's proposed transmission line and would receive zero long-term benefits from the upgrades.**[2]

Dominion is one of the most profitable utility companies in the nation. It has contributed nearly $3.8 million in the last ten years to state political campaigns and compensated its Chairman in 2005 with over $8 million dollars. **It's time for good corporate citizenship to trump profit.** While Dominion ranks top in capital build out it ranks last in investment for electricity efficiency and is the 20th largest polluter in the S&P 500. As a country Dominion would rank 34th in the world in terms of pollution.

Instead of spending millions of dollars on a misleading ad campaign, political contributions and lobbying, Dominion should publish its research – if they really have it.

Virginians don't need, don't want and can't afford these power towers. After all, how would George Washington feel about Dominion defiling his countryside, the land all Virginians love?

Sincerely,

VIRGINIANS FOR SENSIBLE ENERGY POLICIES

[1]NERC 2005 Long-Term Reliability Assessment, page 81.
[2]VA General Assembly JLARC Report, "PJM's Preliminary Recommended Cost Allocations for New Transmission Lines," p. 129,130

Tell Dominion!
NO Power Towers
www.EnergyPolicies.org

It's Your Business

John C. Lee, IV is Elected to Board of Directors of Middleburg Financial Corporation



Middleburg Financial Corporation has appointed John C. Lee, IV, to its Board of Directors. Mr. Lee is Founder and Chairman/CEO of Lee Technologies, an award winning, Fairfax based technology company established in 1983.

"John Lee and Middleburg Financial are a perfect match," commented Joe Boling, Chairman of the Board and Chief Executive Officer of Middleburg Financial Corporation. "John has always believed in the importance of providing world class products and services while simultaneously playing an integral role in improving our local community. We couldn't be any happier to have him join our board."

Lee Technologies is nationally recognized and has won numerous awards, including the Small Business Administration Award for Excellence and the Washington Fast 50 Award. Mr. Lee has been recognized for the cultivation of a unique corporate culture that focuses on social and philanthropic community involvement and creating a reasonable balance between work and family. In 2000, Lee was the recipient of the Ernst & Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award. Lee Technologies is based in Fairfax, Virginia but also has offices in Atlanta, Los Angeles, Houston and Seattle.

Mr. Lee is Chairman of the Northern Virginia Technology Council (NVTC), Chairman of the Board of Trustees of Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, serves on the Board of Trustees of Randolph Macon College, and the Board of Trustees of Virginia Foundation for Independent Colleges (VFIC). Mr. Lee was appointed by Governor Mark Warner to serve as a member of the Information Technology Investment Board of Directors for the Commonwealth of Virginia from 2003-2005.

Mr. Lee received his Bachelor of Arts degree in Economics and Business Administration from Randolph-Macon College in Ashland, Virginia. He resides with his family in Middleburg, Virginia.

Scott Buzzelli named Top Producer by Long and Foster Middleburg



Michele Stevens, Branch Manager for the Long and Foster Middleburg Sales Office, is proud to announce that Scott Buzzelli has been named Top Producer for January 2007. Mr. Buzzelli's sales totaled over $2.5 million for the month, and he also led the office in most new listings.

Scott Buzzelli has been active in real estate in Northern Virginia for the past 12 years, beginning his real estate career as a land investor and small scale developer. Mr. Buzzelli's real estate expertise extends to property development issues, financing strategies, and zoning and conservation policy – all subjects of interest to clients seeking homes and land in rural Western Loudoun County.

AH&T and NASDAQ Partner to Serve Public Companies

AH&T Insurance and Carpenter Moore, a wholly owned subsidiary of The Nasdaq Stock Market, Inc. announced an exclusive alliance that will help public companies in the Mid-Atlantic region address their risk management needs and ensure that their assets, executives, and boards are adequately insured.

This partnership brings together AH&T's deep expertise as one of the nation's largest independent insurance brokers with the tremendous resources of Carpenter Moore, including a proprietary library of data, benchmarking and coverage statistics on public companies. Through this alliance, AH&T Insurance is the exclusive insurance broker in the Mid Atlantic region with access to these insurance resources.

"Traditional insurance strategies are failing to keep up with the complex liabilities today's companies are facing. Comprehensive solutions that look at wording, limit levels and allocation, corporate governance and claims management are necessary to avoid unexpected unfunded liability," commented Keith Martinsen, executive vice president for management liability, insurance advisory and brokerage at Carpenter Moore, "AH&T's knowledge and capabilities in these areas are among the best in the industry and we look forward to working with them."

David Schaefer, AH&T principal and leader of their management liability practice added, "We understand that every client's circumstances are unique and, therefore we endeavor to provide attentive, independent, tailored consulting and professional insurance brokerage services to each one. Carpenter Moore shares our approach and together we are a most powerful, effective partner for public companies in this region. The alliance has created a real paradigm shift in what public companies can expect to receive from a D&O broker."

AH&T is a regional leader in the placement of insurance for companies going public with a list that includes UUNET, webMethods, BlackBoard, and Deltek Systems. AH&T represents a large portfolio of public companies, their management and boards that rely on the experience and expertise of the management liability practice group to deliver effective, efficient insurance solutions for the complex exposures they face.

The AH&T – Carpenter Moore alliance will focus on providing professional insurance and risk management services to publicly traded companies in the areas of directors and officers liability, professional errors and omissions liability, employment practices liability and related management liability coverage, such as merger and acquisition and loss mitigation coverages.



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The Editor's Desk

Knowledge is Not Power

When we attended the Dominion Power Towers community briefings a few weeks ago, we asked every company representative we could buttonhole three questions:

- How much of the new electricity capacity would go up on the grid to serve other states rather than being delivered to Loudoun County customers?
- Why couldn't the new lines go along Dominion's existing rights of way?
- Why not simply bury the new lines?

No satisfactory answers were forthcoming.

Now, in the face of severe public displeasure and well-orchestrated pubic opinion campaigns, Dominion has reconsidered their "Power Towers Across Hallowed Ground" approach and indicated that they may run the lines along their existing towers, a strategy their representatives said was "absolutely impossible" a few weeks ago.

This will cost ratepayers, upwards of $200 million, and it still begs two of the questions.

If they were so ill informed about the answer to one question, the decision makers in Richmond and Washington, D.C. should not allow any action at all until Dominion provides satisfactory answers to the other two.

Knowledge may not give us the power we need to stop this entirely, but without it, we'll have no power at all.

Middleburg Eccentric welcomes and encourages Letters to the Editor. Letters must be signed and include writer's name, address and daytime phone number. Please submit letter via email: editor@mbecc.com or P.O. Box 1768, Middleburg VA 20118

Letters to the Editor

To the Editor:

As the mother of two young boys, I was interested in seeing the presentation by Keith Deltano at Loudoun County High School in October. It was billed as a message about sexual responsibility, which I think all parents would agree is a good thing to teach.

Unfortunately, the program fell far short of what our children need and deserve. Mr. Deltano is a comedian, not a credentialed health education professional, and much of the information he presented was both medically inaccurate and sensational.

We all agree with encouraging abstinence as the best way to keep our children healthy and safe. What outcome-based studies clearly show is that the abstinence message is most effective when delivered along with comprehensive information on ways to prevent pregnancy and disease. The kind of fear-based, "abstinence-only" approach promoted by Mr. Deltano is simply less successful, and puts our children at greater risk.

It is troubling to learn that Mr. Deltano has been invited back to another Loudoun school with this message. If this trend continues, it will do a great disservice to our children and our community. Teen pregnancy and STDs are a serious public health issue, and our children deserve all the tools we can give them to make informed, responsible decisions. School administrators need to choose more wisely when asked to approve such programs — our children's safety depends on it.

Kathy Hawes
President, Mainstream Loudoun

To the Editor:

I attended Keith Deltano's meeting for parents at Dominion High School on February 5, 2007. Although I am certainly concerned that parents be aware of and in tune with their children's activities, Deltano's tone was unnecessarily condescending. He presented himself as an expert in addressing issues of stereotyping; yet, his entire performance was a sweeping negative stereotype of wealthy, out-of-touch parents with out-of-control teens. According to Deltano, all parents are technologically incompetent and ignorant when it comes to their children's behavior. Young people are amoral, hormone-driven and prone to group sex because "they have nothing better to do."

Mr. Deltano also discussed the problem of "sexually aggressive females" who now feel "free" to perform oral sex on boys as a result of "those incidents in the 90s." Earlier that morning, he had told the girls that they need to get a ring on their finger – to be married – then when they become pregnant, they can "make the guy pay." I find it irresponsible that in this "sex-saturated", female-degrading culture that Mr. Deltano speaks of so freely, he would make so many female-blaming, female-shaming comments.

There is widespread evidence that "shaming" is a poor parenting technique resulting in higher instances of low self-esteem, depression and delinquent behavior. Deltano advised parents to find the most morally repugnant, sexually offensive lyrics in their children's music library, and force daughters to read those lyrics aloud to their fathers, sons to their mothers. This does this NOT engender respectful dialogue, but rather borders on sexual harassment.

While some of Deltano's information was valuable, it was sprinkled with inaccuracies and presented in such a manner as to negate its usefulness. Deltano referred to his wife's breasts as "hooters", made reference to the infrequency of their intimate marital relations, and told parents he had encouraged school teachers and administrators to comment on their own marital intimacies during the student assembly. I found this obnoxious behavior, thinly veiled as "comedy" to be offensive and disgusting. The purpose of family life education should not be to titillate and entertain at the most base level.

Deltano is NOT a trained mental health professional. His techniques to make our kids keep their pants zipped do nothing to prepare them for serious life decisions. In fact, I am very concerned that young people who DO have sex will walk away with the message that condom use is simply not effective enough to be worth the bother. Sexuality is complex. Abstinence is a whole-life decision best supported by quality communication, good role-modeling and mutual respect between young people and their caregivers. This issue is too important to be treated with vulgarity. Our kids deserve better.

Kimberly LaFave (Parent)
Leesburg, Virginia

To the Editor:

Teens & Parents Deserve More

Sexuality in our culture is typically neither celebrated nor cherished, but rather feared and exploited. While I agree that our teens receive far too many provocative and negative messages about human sexuality from all forms of media, I do not believe that we help the situation by spreading more fear.

As a mother and a minister I was absolutely appalled by a recent presentation I attended at Dominion High School that was supposed to present a humorous look at the importance of abstinence. Instead of providing accurate and helpful information about human sexuality to counter the media rhetoric, the presenter (Mr. Deltano) fanned the flames of fear by portraying young men as ignorant or predators and young women as victims or vixens.

I urge principals of high schools and parents of high school students who have not yet hosted Mr. Deltano's presentation to carefully evaluate the content, impact and outcome of his performance on such an important topic. I am not in favor of teens having sexual relations. However, I am in favor of presenting information and support for teens and their parents with respect, care and accurate information to honor their full humanity.

In peace and faith,
The Rev. Amy DeBeck
UU Church of Loudoun

To the Editor:

As we watch the ongoing federal ethics probes into Loudoun land deals unfold it is important for voters to remember it is not just local supervisors that are being questioned but all those involved in the news stories. Yes, there are some county supervisors but also planning board members, land developers and individual land owners. Signing an ethics pledge with sincerity might be a start, but more importantly we should look at the system that allowed this embarrassing situation to make national headlines. We need to implement processes to prevent further abuses of position.

Critical to this solution will be the creation of an independent counsel or full time Independent Inspector General. At no additional cost to the taxpayer, the county treasurer's position and commissioner of revenue's position could be merged into one (as done in other jurisdictions) and the freed up salary could be used to fund the new Independent Inspector General position. Then we would have a watchdog to guard the henhouse from the foxes.

We need this local independent Loudoun County Inspector General, now. This current BOS should move quickly to start the process to create such a position if they really believe in an open and transparent government to support their recent ethics pledge.

Thom Beres, Col, USAF (Ret)
Chair, Loudoun County
Democratic Committee

To the Editor:

On February 15th, the Board of Supervisors held a public hearing on Ridgewater Park , a development proposal that could be built adjacent to Goose Creek Reservoir. It is well named, as the site overlooks the water source to a large portion of Eastern Loudoun including much of Ashburn. This plan, as put forth by Landsdowne LLC, and other developers, would add 1,946 houses, office and retail, including a medical research facility in dangerous proximity to an environmentally sensitive area -- our drinking water supply! For that reason alone, it is simply the wrong plan, at the wrong time and certainly at the wrong place.

Many Loudoun residents spoke in opposition to this proposal at the hearing, citing their concerns that this developer-driven application seeks to re-zone land from the Transition Area to suburban densities. Should this occur, it would set a precedent for future re-zoning other parts of the Transition Area. On the other hand, none of those speakers who spoke in support of Ridgewater, almost all employed by developers, mentioned the risk to our water supply, or that traffic would worsen by 40,000* daily car trips and that it would generate an eventual price tag of $70 million* in capital and operating costs, much of it paid for by all Loudoun taxpayers. Most of those who spoke in favor of Ridgewater were easily identified by their green lapel stickers, and stood to gain financially, either as employees of developers or firms associated with them.

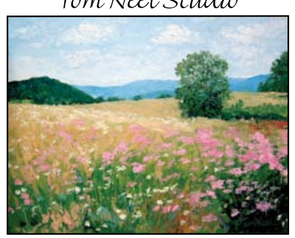
Those of us opposed to this proposal of nightmarish proportions have asked why is it that this development application has so suddenly materialized on the already crowded agenda of the Board of Supervisors? It would appear that once again our Planning Commission has given swift approval of a massive and complex set of documents that would normally take much longer to examine and forwarded them to the BOS at record speed, truly a miraculous feat known as fast-tracking. Could it be that something or someone is driving them forward?

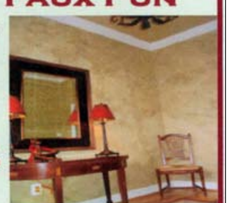
Add to this a recent Community Meeting held at the Broadlands, the first in 3 years, where our own Supervisor Snow discussed a number of local concerns with residents, but neglected to even mention Ridgewater Park. When asked about the Goose Creek Reservoir, and the upcoming hearing on Ridgewater, he professed not to know that the Reservoir served as a major water source for Ashburn. This was amazing for three reasons: 1) he is our representative for the Dulles District, which comprises much of the Ashburn area, 2) he will shortly sit on the BOS dais to hear public comments on this critical issue and 3) he sits upon the Board of the Loudoun County Sanitation Authority. Needless to say this lack of awareness speaks volumes and should send a strong signal that indeed our very health and safety is being jeopardized.

This development should be voted down for all the most obvious of reasons: to safeguard our water supply, to not add to our already overcrowded roads, to not overburden our taxpayers and schools, and especially to keep the Transition Area as the citizens of Loudoun have already decided, as a much needed buffer between our suburban communities and our invaluable rural terrain. Tell the Board of Supervisors to vote no on Ridgewater Park and keep our community healthy.

*Source: Loudoun County Planning Staff

Karen J. Ficker
Ashburn Citizens United

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Beam Us Up Scotty,
From Beyond the Beltway

Ken Rietz

It's the stuff of Science Fiction.

The Evil Empire declares that private property can be seized.

Darth Vader leads hundreds of 15-story tall Iron Men as they march across the landscape shooting electric charges at the people below scurrying for cover.

Vader and his followers bring the ruling body into submission with threats of doom and gloom while offering rich rewards to those who ' play ball.'

Meanwhile, pollution fouls the air of the planet and blocks out the sun.

Where is Captain Kirk?

Unfortunately, it is not Science Fiction but real life, and there is no Captain Kirk.

It is Dominion Power marching across our landscape.

It is Dominion Power spreading campaign cash around, hiring lobbyists to influence legislators and threatening blackouts without proof.

It is Dominion Power polluting our air.

Where are Our Elected Officials

It is our Federal Government who is giving Dominion the power to seize private property. And it is our State Leadership who is failing us.

Dominion Power has shown that spending 3.8 million dollars on campaign contributions pays off as expected. Their wish list sailed through the legislature. They are becoming a self-regulated monopoly.

In the end, the ratepayers will pay the enormous cost of their capital expenditures and all Virginians will suffer the environ- mental impact of Dominion's actions.

Dominion has blinked

Facing growing citizen outrage Dominion Power has moved the proposed transmission line to the southern part of Fauquier county, searching for the path of least resistance.

However, they still have not offered proof of the need for additional electricity for Virginia.

Where are our State Leaders?

WHERE IS OUR CAPTAIN KIRK?

Beam us up Scotty!

Ken Rietz, a resident of Delaplane, is a former Deputy Chairman of the Republican National Committee.

Red vs Blue

Virginia and Loudoun Citizens Deserve Better

Mark Tate - (R)

Loudoun County politicians are all over the news for possible ethics violations.

Members of the Loudoun Board of Supervisors have gotten front-page news coverage from the Washington Post, but not the kind of front page coverage a politician usually wants.

These stories and others about members of the Loudoun County Planning Commission have raised concerns about their actions and possible ethics violations related to business relationships and votes on development projects in the county.

At the same time, we have experienced pressure from the lobbying forces of Dominion Power to get approval for 15-story electric transmission lines through the Piedmont country side. These transmission lines would destroy numerous historic districts, Civil War Battlefields, and Historic Landmarks.

It is shocking to think that it is possible Dominion could condemn this land to erect these power lines and destroy our historic countryside just to ship electricity to the North East to make more profits.

But it is possible, Largely because of the millions of dollars in campaign contributions Dominion has given to Virginia politicians. It has been said of Dominion by many observers that they own the Old Dominion, or at least its elected officials.

To be fair there are some Delegates who have stood up to Dominion.

Delegate Robert Marshall, Delegate Joe May, and Delegate Clay Athey are fighting to stop these lines. Congressmen Wolf and Davis have fought hard on the Federal level along side Senator Warner.

The problem is, these elected officials are the exception. Most elected officials in Virginia have given Dominion Power anything for which they ask.

They are parroting the script form Dominion about rolling black outs even though we all know this is not a real possibility. And they have all given Dominion Power the ability to raise out electric rates by about 25% with the new Re-regulation Bill moving through the General Assembly right now (please call Governor Kaine and ask him to veto this bill).

Even our local Senator in whose district the 15-story power lines will tower seems to be willing to give Dominion whatever they would like. Maybe that is because he has received over $40,000 in campaign contributions.

As many of you know, I am running for State Senate. I believe one of the most important issues in Virginia and in local government is lobbying and ethics reform in Virginia. We need better disclosure laws so we all know of any business relationships between elected officials and businesses that are requesting legislative action

State Senator Potts has received an enormous amount of campaign contributions from the energy industry and Dominion Power. I do not believe he can reasonably represent our views in the Virginia State Senate.

On the local political level I believe it is very important to immediately enact strong ethics rules and disclosure requirements to protect the local taxpayers from decisions that do not represent their best interests.

As a candidate for the State Senate I will make this a priority. These issues are not about partisan politics but rather about what is the right thing to do as an elected official. We deserve to have the agenda in the Virginia General Assembly and at the local government level be set by the citizens

Bush Finds a General

Dan Morrow - (D)

South Carolina Senator Republican Senator Lindsey O. Graham apparently sees Bush as Lincoln, Iraq as the Virginia Wilderness, and Bush's new commander in Iraq, David Petraeus, as Ulysses S. Grant. "He's the General Grant of the surge, " Graham gushed. "He's our last best chance as a military commander to bring about a change on the ground."

Grant, the ultimate "stay the course" general, turned the tide of the Civil War in the east. The last of a long line of failed commanders, Grant refused to see bloody drawn battles as failure. Promising Lincoln that he would "fight it out on this line if it takes all summer," he waged a dogged, bloody, and ultimately successful war of attrition.

In a year and a half, after suffering losses equal to the size of the entire Army of Northern Virginia, he drove Lee to ground in the trenches around Richmond and Petersburg, and then chased him to Appomattox and surrender.

But Bush is no Lincoln and Petraeus is no Grant.

And what Bush found in Petraeus is not the Union's Ulysses S. Grant, but the Confederacy's George E. Pickett.

Pickett, on the third day of the battle of Gettysburg, commanded the last reserves of a great army, in a futile effort to save a lost battle, in a place his commander should never have chosen to fight.

Bush, like Lee, seems to believe that he has no choice but to attack..

And just as General James Longstreet, Lee's beloved "Old War Horse," warned him that no infantry on God's green earth could take and hold the objective chosen for the final "surge" at Gettysburg, Bush has been warned, almost begged, by the very best of his generals, not to commit his last reserves to street fighting in Iraq.

Longstreet's training, his respect for Lee, and his personal sense of honor made it impossible for him to resign, rather than send some 15,000 boys across a mile of open ground toward a little clump of trees.

The failure, however, bore neither Longstreet nor Lees' name. It's Pickett's . . . Pickett's Charge.

Petraeus, like Pickett, feels honor bound to follow orders, and honor bound to be positive about his mission. And though one may question his judgment, no one doubts his courage.

Congress, like Longstreet, risks never being forgiven for lack of enthusiasm for a Pickett's charge, or for giving "defeatist" advice to "redeploy" to better ground.

Petraeus runs the risk of tragic martyrdom.

"That old man destroyed my division," the disconsolate Pickett said of Lee at the end of his career.

"Yes," Jubal Early told him, "but he made you immortal."

Let us hope for the best for Petraeus.

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Pastimes

Gentlemen, Start Your Engines

Seventh Inning Stretch

Alex Cudaback



NASCAR kicked off its 2007 Nextel Cup series this past Sunday in traditional fashion: backwards.

Alone among major sports, NASCAR likes to wow its fans with its marquee event right out of the shoot. No season-long, climactic buildup to the Super Bowl, the World Series, the NBA Championship, or the Stanley Cup for NASCAR; no, for the gearheads and the speed-freaks, it's better to get to the point just as quick as you can.

It usually makes for a heckuva splash and even people who have a hard time watching 43 helmeted, sponsors'-logo-draped drivers muscle their cars around an exaggerated 2.5 mile circle (OK, it's a tri-oval) for four hours can get swept away by it.

No one knows why exactly NASCAR organizes its schedule this way, but it does. Most people point out that the Daytona 500 is the richest of all the races run each year, both in purse and history. How a sport that traces its lineage all the way back to running illegal moonshine talks about its history with a straight face is another question for another day.

Regardless of the reason, the Daytona 500 is front and center for NASCAR, now and probably forever. That's just the way it is. The to-date-not-entirely-worked-out Chase for the Cup is supposed to put some sex and sizzle into the end of the year, but it really is a work in progress, tweaked and twiddled with each off-season to make it more compelling. Whatever. NASCAR likes having a huge coming-out party every year, and, usually, it works.

This year, though, things seemed a little rocky right off the bat. Five teams were penalized throughout the week leading up to the race for cheating, both intentionally and through parts-failure. Unapproved bolts were found on spoilers (cutting weight), cars weren't tall enough (bettering aerodynamics), and one team was even rumored to be slathering something somewhere between Sterno and jet-fuel inside their intake manifold (boosting the octane of the fuel being burned in their engine.)

What in the world had gotten into these guys?

There was cheating in NASCAR! People were horrified.

But why were they so horrified? I mentioned this is a sport that dates all the way back to running from cops, all the better to smuggle illegal moonshine, right?

Guys in other sports cheat all the time, or, at the very least, perform under a cloud of suspicion for huge portions of their career. Fans of those sports seem immune to it.

Look at Barry Bonds of the San Francisco Giants, never proven to have broken any of the rules and on his way to shattering Hank Aaron's home run record, yet still suspected of being the sports biggest cheat and dogged by ever-growing piles of circumstantial evidence that he's been ingesting performance enhancers for years.

Look how Shawn Merriman of the San Diego Chargers, who was actually proven to be a steroid user, served his four-game suspension, and was still selected to go the NFL Pro Bowl at the end of the season.

Look at professional cycling… No, on second thought, don't. Too depressing.

But in NASCAR, an outlaw sport where the fine line between pushing the limits and cheating is often hazy at best, drivers and crew chiefs were clearly and unmistakably engaged in a newly nefarious level of skullduggery and they were doing it at the biggest dance of all.

The cheating was all that people could talk about all week, and NASCAR officials worked overtime to regain control with an ever-increasing list of kiss-of-death penalties handed down. Crew chiefs were suspended, one indefinitely; fines were levied at levels previously unheard of; and points were docked deeper and steeper than ever before. NASCAR did everything they could to make the bitter taste of cheat go away.

At the end of the day, though, it was the drivers who took back control of their sport and showed their fans that, with a few glaring exceptions, everything was going to be ok.

Watching Mark Martin race for lap after lap like he was the man to beat, listening to the announcers will him to the finish line, you just had to find yourself pulling for the guy. You had to be amazed when you saw how sad he was to lose (by 2/100ths of a second!) but how grateful he was that his grew had just "given [him] a chance."

Listening to premier, big-name guys like Tony Stewart and Dale Earnhardt, Jr., suck it up after getting bounced out of the race following major wrecks you had to shake your head and wonder where these guys came from. Not an ounce of blame or "why-me" in any of 'em.

Even Kevin Harvick, the race's eventual winner, came across as a guy just happy to be in victory lane, a guy who knew how lucky he was and how hard everyone on his team had worked to get him there.

And then you began to wonder, quietly and to yourself, if these NASCAR guys were really the ones that had things backwards after all.

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Who Cares About the Weather

Exploring Books

Genie Ford



With Hot Books to Keep Us Warm?

Baby, its cold outside, but you'll find all the warmth you need right between the pages of a good book. One hot little number to start with is *Because She Can* by Bridie Clark. It explores how a nice girl from Iowa ends up working for the queen of evil at a major publishing house. Yes, it's a *Devil Wears Prada* clone, but it's also highly entertaining and pretty darn sexy.

For our local teachers—whom we are honoring throughout February with special discounts—we suggest *Teach Like Your Hair's on Fire* by Rafe Esquith. He is a fifth grade teacher in Los Angeles who has been honored by the likes of Oprah Winfrey and the Dalai Lama! Sir Ian McKellan calls him "my only hero," and he is the only teacher to be awarded the National Medal of Arts. I mention these honors not merely to praise him, but to emphasize his *bona fides*—because in this book he eloquently and powerfully expresses his outrage about the tyranny of testing, the foolishness of No Child Left Behind and other "education reforms" that are anything but. If only we could make this book required reading for every member of Congress—and every would-be president!

Silent Echoes by Carla Jablonski is a suitably creepy time-travel, mystical mystery involving two young women in Manhattan, separated by a century or so. They communicate via some kind of extrasensory link between past and present. This is just right for reading by flashlight under the covers. Oh, why not?! It will put you in touch with your inner child.

Step on a Crack by James Patterson involves the death of a beloved former First Lady, and the mass kidnapping of mourners—celebrities, diplomats, politicians—at her funeral in St. Patrick's Cathedral. The chief hostage negotiator assigned to the situation is in the midst of his own personal crisis. His wife is dying of cancer and their 10 adopted children of various ethnic backgrounds are about to become motherless. This book has been described as a thriller and a tearjerker, but whatever you call it, one thing is certain—it's a huge hit already.

Naked on the Page is the story of one year in the life of writer Jane Ganahal, whose *San Francisco Chronicle* column, "Single Minded," is a hilarious but honest look at the romantic life of a single middle-aged woman. In this book, Ganahal further confronts the challenges facing women of "a certain age." *Kirkus Reviews* describes this as "Carrie Bradshaw meets AARP." For those who have been living at the North Pole for the past decade, Carrie Bradshaw was the principal character of HBO's famous series, "Sex and the City." *Naked on the Page* has that same sassiness, but this time it's accompanied by a healthy dose of reality.

Step back in time with *The Blackest Bird* by Joel Rose. This book is subtitled "A Novel of Murder in Nineteenth-Century New York," and like such books as *The Alienist*, it evokes a time and place so vividly you can almost smell the soot in the air. This story takes a real case, the 1841 killing of Mary Rogers, a sales clerk in a Manhattan tobacco shop whose customers included James Fenimore Cooper, Washington Irving and Edgar Allen Poe. If you like spooky h*Ysabel* by Guy Gavriel Kay is a present-day fantasy set in Aix-en-Provence, in particular, in the Saint-Saveur Cathedral. Fifteen-year-old Ned is accompanying his photographer father on a six-week shoot of the cathedral when he stumbles upon an ancient conflict, at the same time that he meets an American girl. Together they become embroiled in a dangerous, 2,500-year-old love triangle. This is an exciting fantasy for readers young and not-so-young.

A different look at fantasy—the kind that takes the form of misconception and self-deception—is *Power, Faith and Fantasy: America in the Middle East: 1776 to the Present*. Author Michael B. Oren uses stories about individual Americans from the past four centuries, from Protestant missionaries to pirates to, or course, soldiers, to chronicle the American presence in this troubled and turbulent part of the world. In the process, he demonstrates that our involvement in the Middle East is nothing new—we've been meddling there in one way or another for more than 400 years.

If nothing I've mentioned appeals to you, have no fear—we have many terrific books—new and old—to help you banish the winter blues.

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Creative Attraction

The Art of Art

Tom Neel



For those of you who have never purchased anything deemed art, whether it be a painting, print, photo or sculpture, but you find yourself interested, this article is for you. For those of you who already have, come along and join us anyway, and see what you think.

The first art I ever owned, I must admit, I made myself. So, my situation is only a little different, as I had "creative artistic interests" at a very young age, but my "artistic interests", like yours, would have me making many decisions in what to buy and how I would go about purchasing the work of others. How do we make such decisions in a world of amazing diversity? It's far more complex than almost anything else because as you've heard me say before, art is tied to emotion, but the choices can be endless.

Let's use buying a car as an example. There are many choices, but most would break down their decision into models first, driven by need based on priority. That is to say, I need to carry five people, I want all wheel drive, I also need a place for the dog or potting soil, I like blue and I have $35,000 to spend. Those items will determine the needed model and the available choices for you to choose from, of which there will be about two handfuls. Most of your choices will have similar features and options and backed by a fist full of consumer opinions from the internet and friends, you make your choice.

Now, let's try the same thing with art. I need something to fit over my mantle, it needs to work with the things I already have in that room, it needs to remind me of my vacation to Europe, I like blue and I have $5,000 to spend. Unlike the car, those items will open the door to a world of choices to choose from, but let's keep going and see where we get.

Okay, where in Europe? Let's say Italy and so, where in Italy? Let's say Tuscany and so, by the water or hillside village or a particular city or town? Let's say any hillside village and so, what time of year? Let's go with spring. Nope, that was the wrong question. What you need to be asking is more like, do you like poppies, sunflowers or vineyards. See if you said spring, you could only really have poppies as the other choices are not happening or mature in the spring. So, poppies and spring it is. A golden morning, blue sky day, or colorful sunset? You said you like blue, let's do blue sky day. Okay, we're getting somewhere now. Okay, what medium do you like? Medium? Medium, as in oil, watercolor, pastel, acrylic, charcoal or even photography and others. Oil you say? Oil, it is then. How about the style? It could be realism (a level of detail, but colors and shapes are true to form and real life) photo realism (very detailed), impressionism, well, truthfully, impressionism is a 19th century art movement that has now, to some, become a style. Thought of as colorful and loose by nature both in lines and brush stroke, to many it is what they think of when they think of an oil painting so, let's choose that. Now, using all of these determining factors, guess what? You've probably narrowed your selection down to thousands of choices.

Somany choices, how do I choose?

It's not wrong to have a wish list with art, but it is easier to have a feel. Given a chance to have 15 different pieces of art to try in your chosen spot, where all might fit the wish list, one will feel better, or more right for you than the others. This is where emotion has taken over. You may like blue, but why? And will just any blue do? I should say not. When choosing art you need to be honest with yourself and your purpose. Get something that simply matches your sofa and you only get part of the appreciation for that art. You like it because it works with the sofa, it met that criteria and purpose. Get something that moves you and you'll appreciate it completely and add that together with your list, well then, you have a real possession worth cherishing.

So, how do you go about this.... in cars, what is called "tire kicking"? There are a few ways to go looking for art. One is on impulse. You purely let your emotion steer you. You are not looking for anything, just waiting for something that grabs your eye and when you see it, when you find yourself drawn to it, most of the time I can tell you from experience, it's the right piece to buy. I can't tell you how many times I've had people call back and say "Do you still have that painting, the one with.....?" and they go into complete detail they absorbed from their short time with it and you say, "Sorry, it's sold." and they say, "Oh, I knew I should have bought it, it was perfect." They will often then have conversations about how much they loved it and so on, like the passing of a loved one, now that it's gone. If you truly enjoy art, don't let those get away.

The next way to go looking is with something in mind for a particular spot. In these cases, I highly recommend that you take at least one photograph and keep it with you or in the glove box of your car. In fact, this works with many things of this nature and actually taking several and having measurements of the area can mean the difference between finding what you like and complete frustration. Also, when taking measurements, don't try to say I need something 24 X 36. Instead, as an example, measure the area, such as the width of the mantle and also how many inches it is from the top of the mantle to the bottom of the crown molding just above it. Knowing the space you have is a much better thing to be armed with than the size you think you need. If the piece is going above a chest or furniture, which has plenty of wall space around it, then get the width of the top of the chest or object. And maybe in your dinning room you have a hutch and you want two paintings for each side of it, measure on each side from the hutch out to the corner of the wall or the space you have and yes, take your photos.

The other thing you can do in these areas to help you visualize the size you need is to get a piece of construction paper and cut it to an approximate size or if need be, use a full sheet or two, holding them up on the wall with blue painters masking tape. I think this can be good to even have up for a few days to get use to having

Continued Page 14





Pastimes

Things That Make You Go Mmmm...

From Behind the Stove

Brian Lichorowic



Broiled Chopped Angus Sirloin with Wisconsin Fontiago, served atop Sautéd Root Vegetables with Potato Rosti". Nice piece of marketing, ey ? Give the diner a 20 word description for what amounts to nothing more than a open face cheeseburger sitting on oil laden cooked onions with fries cut to look like tomato wedges.

A major pet peeve of mine is having a restaurant menu "read" better than the food served. Overuse of the terms "drizzle", "infused" and the dreaded "reduction", whether in oral or written form, I tend to worry. That's why the simplest of text menus always seem a better choice. If I can get the primary entrée I crave, without all the brew-ha-ha, I'm golden; anything else they do with the dish is all gravy, if you pardon the pun.

I present three recipes in my arsenal sans sales verbiage. All are fairly simple to create; but complex in flavors. The trick is just getting all the ingredients ready before hand.

Creative Attraction

From Page 13

something there. After being around it for a few days, when you are then at a gallery and see a painting you like, your brain will have processed the needed size and it will help you mentally visualize the painting in that spot. Finally, as I've said before, asking for it to be brought to your home is not an unrealistic request. Often, it just takes seeing it in the spot to confirm your feelings about it.

Now back to those feelings. Art can conger up those memories of a stay at the beach, a trip to Europe, a pet you had, your childhood, all seasons and also passion for color, for texture, shapes much more. If you let yourself be open to that, the experience can be very gratifying. Like food, you like how it looks, but taste is more important and taste along with texture and how it looks and smells, is what makes it appetizing. Satisfying your hunger is a quantity driven thing. Satisfying your appetite and palate is a quality driven thing, go for that.

Also like an artist's palette of color, your tongue is arranged to enjoy different flavors, some sour, some salty, some sweet, so, try different things too. Bon "art" appetite!

Tom Neel www.tomneelstudio.com





Fresh Salmon Fillet with a Piedmont Smoked Salmon and Horse Radish Crust

Salmon on salmon? Sounds more complicated than it is. You're adding the crust to one side of the salmon and cooking it skin side down

- 4 lb Fresh Salmon fillets

Marinade

- 2 oz Lime juice
- 2 tsp Shallots, minced
- 2 tsp Garlic, minced
- 2 tsp Peppercorns, crushed

Crumb Mixture

- 1 /4 tsp Shallots, minced
- 1 /2 tsp Garlic, minced
- 3 oz Butter
- 5 oz Fresh breadcrumbs
- 5 oz Smoked Salmon
- 1 oz Prepared horseradish

1. Cut the salmon into 10 portions, 5 to 6 oz each. Rub the salmon fillet with the limejuice, shallots, garlic, and crushed peppercorns.

2. To prepare the crumb mixture, sauté the shallots and garlic in the butter until aromatic. Combine all of the ingredients for the crumb mixture in a food processor and process to a fine consistency.

3. Portion the crumb mixture and cover one side with an even amount of mixture and place on a baking sheet.

4. Bake at 350° for 7 to 8 minutes, or until the salmon is cooked through (flesh should be opaque and firm).

Spicy Coconut Shrimp with Spicy Mango Basil Salsa and Lime Jasmine Rice

Again, sounds more complicated than it is. But if you work it in stages (there's only 5) it comes together nicely. The first time I made this was for a dinner party and called it "Shrimp with Salsa and Rice". It was so good and unexpected my guests' started carving a statue of me on the front lawn. Marinate the shrimp well is the key here.

Salsa

- 1 Mango, peeled, finely diced
- 3 Scallions, sliced
- 5 Basil leaves, julienned
- 1 Lime, juiced
- Kosher salt and freshly ground black pepper

Shrimp

- 2 Fresh Jalapenos, sliced
- 3 cloves Garlic, thinly sliced
- 1/2 piece Ginger, peeled and grated
- 2 tbs Brown sugar
- 2 tbs Soy sauce
- 1/2 Lime, zested
- 1/4-cup Coconut milk
- 2 tbs Vegetable oil
- 1/2 tsp Salt
- 15 grinds Fresh pepper
- 1 lb Shrimp peeled, deveined
- Small handful basil leaves, torn into strips.

1. For the salsa: Combine all ingredients together in a mixing bowl. Make up to a day in advance. Keep covered in the refrigerator.

2. For the shrimp: In a mixing bowl, combine jalapenos, garlic, ginger, brown sugar, soy sauce, lime zest, coconut milk, basil, vegetable oil, salt and pepper. Add the shrimp and marinate for at least 30 minutes and up to 4 hours, refrigerated.

3. Heat a nonstick skillet over high heat. Use tongs or a fork to remove the shrimp from the marinade and place in an even layer in the pan, reserving the marinade.

4. Cook the shrimp until well browned on each side, turning once, about 3 to 4 minutes total. Transfer cooked shrimp to a serving plate.

5. Add reserved marinade to pan, bring to a boil and cook until slightly thickened, about 5 minutes. Pour over the cooked shrimp and serve with the Rice (recipe below) and Mango Salsa.

Lime Jasmine Rice

- 1 cup Jasmine rice
- 3/4-cup Coconut milk
- 3/4-cup Water
- Pinch Salt
- 1/2 Lime, zested

Put the rice, coconut milk, water, and salt in a saucepan and bring to a simmer. Cover and gently simmer until liquid is absorbed, about 12 to 15 minutes. Fluff with a fork and stir in the lime zest. Serve immediately. Yield: 2 to 4 servings

Sea Bass with Lemon and Caper Sauce

A simple, elegant way to prepare a nice fresh piece of fish. If sea bass is not available, any firm white fish can be substituted. Work on your plating and presentation here. Place the sauce under and around the fish

- 2 (6-ounce) Sea bass fillets
- 1 oz Olive oil
- 6 oz Butter
- 1/2 cup Bread (white, or baguette), crust trimmed, cut into _ cubes
- 1/4-cup Red bell peppers
- 1 tbs Shallots minced
- 1/4 cup Lemon, sectioned, chopped and juice
- 2 tbs Parsley leaves, minced
- 2 tbs Chives, minced
- 1 tsp Tarragon leaves, minced
- 1 tbs Capers
- Salt and freshly ground white pepper
- 8 ounces assorted baby vegetables (baby carrots, baby turnips, asparagus tips, yellow zucchini), blanched in salted boiling water.

1. Preheat oven to 350°. Season sea bass fillets with salt and pepper. In a sauté pan, over high heat, add the olive oil and sear fish fillets skin side down first, for 3 minutes or until golden brown. Turn fish over and cook another 4 minutes or until cooked through.

2. Meanwhile, prepare the croutons. Melt 2 tablespoons of butter. Toss with bread cubes and transfer to a baking sheet. Bake in oven for 4 minutes or until crisp and golden in color. Transfer to a small bowl and set aside.

3. In another sauté pan, heat 2 tablespoons of butter. Over high heat, sauté the baby vegetables until glazed. Divide into 2 and mound in center of plate. Keep warm.

4. Add the remaining 2 ounces of butter to the fillets and baste them with the butter. Place a fillet and the red peppers on top of the vegetables. Sprinkle half of the croutons on top and around each fillet. To butter, add shallots and continue to cook until butter turns brown. Deglaze with lemon juice, and add the lemon pieces, parsley, chives, tarragon and capers. When heated, pour half over and around each fillet. Serve immediately.

Comments or Catastrophes? fbts@mbecc.com

Snowdrops and Friends

The Plant Lady

Karen Rexrode



A well established garden can be full of late winter flowers. The snowdrops, winter aconites and Helleborus foetidus are in full bloom, nothing compares to displays that contain hundreds of these enchanting blooms. It takes many years to establish galanthus or snowdrops to the point where there are hundreds. A flower of minute detail, I encourage you to cut a couple of flowering stems and place them in a small vase, say no bigger than a salt shaker. The heat inside your house will trigger the outside petals to rise from their vertical hold and the faintest fragrance will become evident. The flowers are simple, just green and white but patterns of green can vary tremendously between cultivars as well as flower size. The largest flowering forms may have flowers that are as large as a quarter. I have planted the double forms for many years and finally noticed some doubling of petals on a few last year. I have been told that double petaled forms take a few years to exhibit the trait and I am suspect. Often I get bulbs that don't amount to the promises of the supplier. I continue to hope and buy new bulbs, some exceed my expectations.

The winter aconites sit almost flat on the ground and seem to be capable of flowering under a layer of snow. I say that because I only noticed them once the snow had melted away. They are bright yellow and the sight of hundreds of these in flower is the stuff that makes gardeners out of ordinary people, people that never intended to work in the dirt. It takes as many years to establish drifts of winter aconites as it does snowdrops. I have admired a friends for 15 years and her plantings were already 30 years old. She collects the seeds in March and April, sprinkles them on the east side of rocks and walls so that they will flower earlier from the warming sun. It takes about 3 years for the seedlings to flower and its easy to tell that she has been persistent, I'm envious!



Helleborus foetidus is simple, plant a dozen and after a few years you will notice seedlings spreading out from under the mother plants skirts. There must be a protective chemical put out by the roots of the original plant that encourages seedlings to grow and thrive within its boundaries. The leaves on this evergreen perennial are boldly cut and dark green. The flowers are a beautiful soft, almost chartreuse green. A great stand of them grows on the grounds of the Trinity Episcopal Church in Upperville. Green is such a great color in February. No amount of cold has hurt my plants this year, the buds and stems that were bent almost to the ground, are all back up. What a plant! Did I say one dozen, make that two.







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Carole Miller **703-705-9110**



Fairview, Millwood, VA
Commanding views of the famed Clarke County countryside and the Blue Ridge Mountains, Fairview is sited on a rise near the village of Millwood. On 37 acres, the house dates from 1904 with superb additions. Chef's kitchen with family room, 4 fireplaces, gardens, pool, 2 stall barn, greenhouse and garage are some of the features. Ride-out and hunting of utmost convenience. $1,950,000.
Ruth Ripley **540-687-6395**



Highland Farm, Fauquier County, VA
Secluded historic 30 acre estate with frontage on the Rappahannock River with views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. Four bedroom manor home with 2 master suites, stone fireplace and cathedral ceilings. Restored stone guest house overlooking pond. Pool, 5 stall barn, run-in's, various outbuildings and board fencing. Property is offered in three tax parcels. $1,899,000.
Amy Sloane Timbers **540-987-8668**



Coon Tree Farm, The Plains, VA
Very scenic, private 61.4 gently rolling acres surrounding large pond. Log house with 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, small pool and large shop buildings. Many possible new home sites. Sought after location between Middleburg and The Plains. $2,650,000.
Mary South Hutchison **540-687-6885**



Meadowlawn, Purcellville, VA
Circa 1740 complete restoration of original log home with new systems. Five/six bedrooms, five fireplaces, four baths on 4+ acres with bank barn and springhouse. All top quality and historically accurate. $1,245,000.
Carol Fochtman **540-272-4334**



Old Aldie Rectory, Aldie, VA
Circa 1803, handsome brick and frame house in Village of Aldie on 5.59 acres. 4 bedrooms, 6 fireplaces, antique wood floors, up-to-date kitchen, living room, dining room, library, porches, terrace, pool with chef's kitchen, sweeping lawns, stream, hiking/biking trail. $1,195,000.
Ruth Ripley 540-253-5133 Gloria Armfield 540-687-6395



Tavenner House, Lincoln, VA
Exceptional circa 1820 log and stone home on 10.3 acres. 3 bedrooms, 2.5 baths, 10' beamed ceilings, heart of pine floors, pool, spring house, creek, studio. Very private and convenient. $1,175,000.
Patricia Burns **540-454-6723**



Wilderness, Marshall, VA
Located minutes from I-66 on 8.45 acres. 3 bedrooms, pine floors, log walls and sliding doors to the back deck and hot tub. Land is totally fenced into 5 paddocks with a small stream and views of Little Cobbler Mountains. 5 stall antique bank barn. $675,000.
Rick Lowe 703-509-3962 Anita Sisney 703-973-1987



104 Chestnut Street, Middleburg, VA
One of the original houses in "Ridge View," this quaint cottage has just been modernized. Kitchen has been updated with new gas range, refrigerator, dishwasher, and granite counter space. New Carrier heat pump. Solid 1950s construction features wooden floors. Perfect lot for enlarging the existing home. $449,000.
Dave Olimpi **540-729-0354**



Fourth Quaker Meeting House, Lincoln, VA
Restored 1886 historic Quaker meeting house. Situated on a manicured, fenced, half acre yard with mature trees providing privacy. Eight foot double doors, large entrance hall and spacious rooms with hardwood floors. 4 bedrooms, 2 full and 2 half baths. Updated systems, gourmet kitchen with granite countertops. 21 inch thick brick exterior walls, and so much more. $895,000.
Carol Fochtman **540-272-4334**



Tail Feathers, Aldie, VA
Historically restored and extremely charming c.1820 farmhouse, with 3 bedrooms, 3 baths, 3 finished levels. Gourmet kitchen, 2-car garage, numerous outbuildings, 2.3 professionally landscaped acres. Lovely setting, backing to protected area and stream. Lower level could be in-law suite. Possible horse property. Pristine. $895,000.
Patricia Burns **540-454-6723**
Clyde Lamond **540-592-3366**



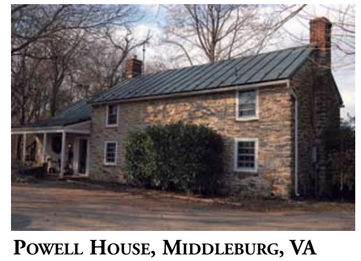
Aldie Road, Aldie, VA
Well-built, 4 bedroom, 3 bath log home with Vermont slate in foyer. Central vacuum, 18 x 20 family room with huge stone fireplace, walk-out basement with bedroom, bath and fireplace. Privately situated at the end of country lane yet minutes from Gilbert's Corner. 7.79 acres are open and wooded and in the village of Aldie. $845,000.
Isobel Ziluca **540-454-2041**



23389 Four Chimneys Lane, Middleburg, VA
Brick colonial on a private lane. 6.9 acres with fencing and run-in shed. Extensive moldings, 4 fireplaces, brick patio. Master suite with "closet room" and built-in cabinetry. Family room with cathedral ceiling, beautiful brick fireplace and glass wall to the patio. Basement with sitting room, media room, exercise room, and home office. $1,599,000.
Rick Lowe 703-509-3962 Anita Sisney 703-973-1987



Stoneridge, Near Middleburg, VA
Pristine colonial on a lovely landscaped knoll in Atoka Chase. It features antique pine floors and cabinetry, gracious living room, dining room and a kitchen that is complete with gas or electric cooking. 3 bedrooms and 3.5 baths. 10 acres with a good sized storage barn and a brilliant rock garden for serene enjoyment. $1,295,000.
Ruth Ripley **540-253-5133**
Gloria Armfield **540-687-6395**



Powell House, Middleburg, VA
Originally a dependency on the property of Levin Powell, the founder of Middleburg. Purported to be the oldest house in town. Completely renovated, on one acre. 3 bedrooms, 2 baths, living/dining room/kitchen combination with brick floor, old pine cabinets and fireplace. The floors upstairs are wide old pine. Possible commercial zoning. $1,300,000.
Nathalie Kaye **540-687-5678**

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Pastimes

Democratic Party Kick-Off Dinner

Committee chairperson Barbara Burgess announces that the Fauquier County Democratic Committee will host its 6th Annual Commonwealth Dinner on Saturday, March 17, 2007, at The Inn at Vint Hill.

This social event traditionally kicks off the local political season for the Democratic Party in Fauquier County. Tickets are $75 per person and for more information persons interested in attending the dinner may call 540-364-2199 or email: chair@fauquierdemocrats.org.

The Honorable Brian J. Moran, the chairman of the Virginia House of Delegates Democratic Caucus, will be the Key Note Speaker. Delegate Moran represents the 46th House District in Northern Virginia. He serves on the Transportation, Courts of Justice and Health, Welfare and Institutions Committee's in the House. He is a member of the Virginia Crime Commission. His elder brother, Jim Moran, represents the 8th Congressional District of Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives. Elected to the House of Delegates in 1995, Delegate Moran is also the managing partner of a law practice in Alexandria, VA.

To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, live Irish music will be provided by Brooksie Wells and Lisa Howard.

Congregation Sha'are Shalom Invites Public to Open House

Congregation Sha'are Shalom will participate in the Open Houses of Faith program by inviting the public to tour the synagogue and meet the congregational family Wednesday evening, March 14 from 6 to 8 p.m. The synagogue is located at 19357 Evergreen Mills Road, Leesburg, Virginia. There is no charge for the event.

Open Houses of Faith is an exciting and educational forum for enhancing public awareness about different faiths in metropolitan Washington. Each participating religious group independently hosts its own Open House to convey basic information about its beliefs and practices.

Participants come to learn about different faiths in a welcoming environment that respects their commitments to their own faiths and beliefs.

Visit www.openhousesoffaith.org for event dates and locations, hints on how to prepare for your visit, and a patch program for Scouts.

For more information about Open Houses of Faith at Congregation Sha'are Shalom, get in touch with synagogue or send an email to Sheri Brown at brown47578@verizon.net.

Congregation Sha'are Shalom, the Conservative synagogue in Loudoun County, balances tradition and change. Affiliated with the United Synagogue of Conservative Judaism, Sha'are Shalom welcomes new members. CSS serves the families and individuals through religious services, education for children and adults, programs for interfaith families, and social events. Founded in 1996, CSS has more than 130 households as members.

For more information, telephone 703.737.6500 or write to CSS at P. O. Box 4518, Leesburg, VA 20177-8577. Visit CSS at www.sha-areshalom.org.



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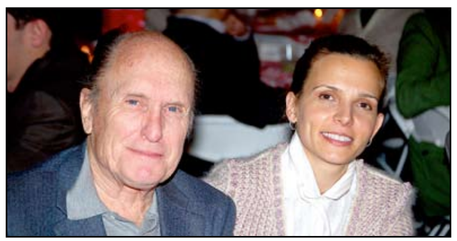
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Faces & Places

PEC Block Party

Wakefield School, The Plains, Virginia ~ February 17th, 2007

Photos By Cindy Pearson

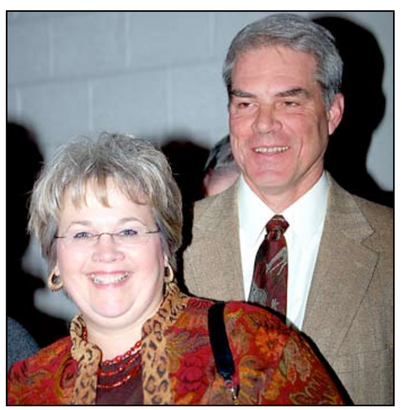
















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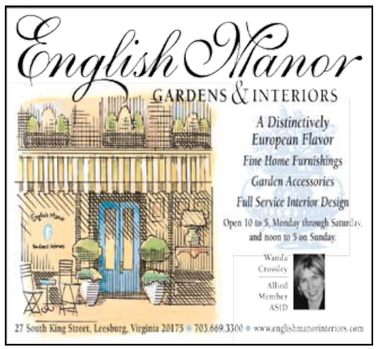


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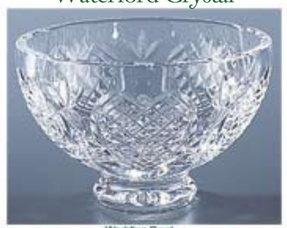


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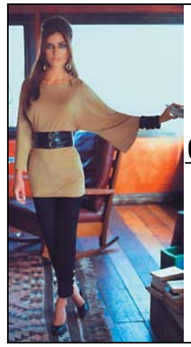


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Faces & Places

The Masters Ball 2007

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Turner Reuter and Betsy Manierre, Orange County Hunt



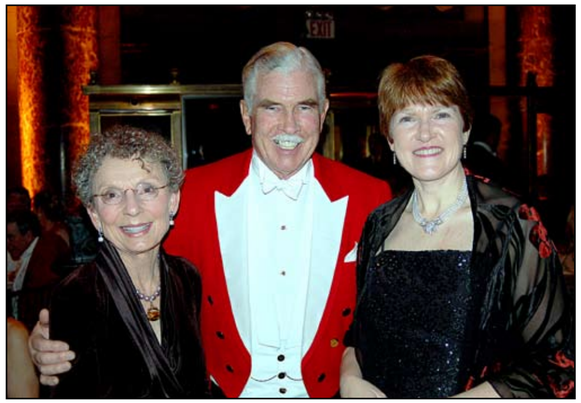
Jeff Blue and Penny Denegre, Middleburg Hunt



Ben Hardaway, Midland Fox Hounds and Dana Reuter



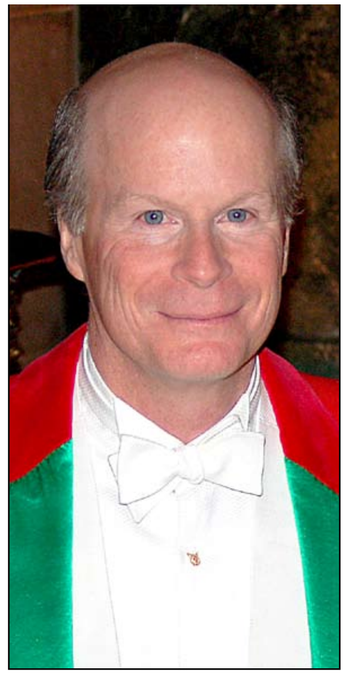
James Atkins, Mary South Hutchison and Nelson Gunnell, Orange County Hunt



Viviane Warren, Malcolm Matheson and Sandi Atkins, Orange County Hunt



Douglas Hytla, Old Dominion Hunt and Sandi Atkins, Orange County Hunt





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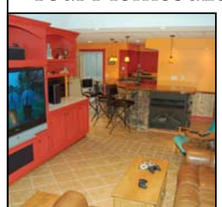
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Things to Do

February 24th 2007

Community Rummage Sale (Over 20 participants!!!)

9:00 – 1:00 in The Hill School Athletic Center. Lots of clothes … household items … toys …. Books … One man's trash is another man's treasure! Great Bargains - Great Treasures - Great fun!

Contact Emily Tyler or Haley Walsh at The Hill School for more information 540-687-5897

March 3, 2007

10th Annual Hometown Fine Arts & Craft Show

The Town of Leesburg Parks and Recreation Department is proud to present the 10th Annual Hometown Fine Arts & Craft Show at Ida Lee Park Recreation Center on March 3, 2007 from 9:00 am to 4:00 pm. Admission is free to the one-day, indoor show. Arts and craft vendors will be selling handcrafted items in the gymnasium and the aerobics room of Ida Lee Park Recreation Center. With a variety of vendors, there is sure to be something to please every shopper. Brighten your home with unique art and home décor, baskets, handcrafted wooden furniture, candles, and such. Indulge in great foods such as apple cider, jellies and spreads, and of course, chocolate. The jewelry selection will include many unique designs that will compliment your spring fashions. There will be something for everyone; even the family pet! The show will feature over 55 local and regional crafters at this annual event. This craft show is the perfect opportunity to find a unique gift. Remember that Mother's Day, graduation, and teacher appreciation gifts will be needed in just a few months. For more information, call Ida Lee Park Recreation Center at 703-777-1368 or visit www.idalee.org.

March 16, 2007

Aldie Elementary PTA Basket Bingo Fundraiser

Aldie Elementary School. Doors open at 6:00pm games start at 7:00pm. All baskets filled. Tickets are $20 in advance or $25 at the door.

For additional information, please call 703-327-6514.

March 17, 2007

Fauquier County Democrats Annual Dinner

The Fauquier County Democratic Committee will host its 6th Annual Commonwealth Dinner at The Inn at Vint Hill. This social event traditionally kicks off the local political season for the Democratic Party in Fauquier County. Tickets are $75 per person and for more information persons interested in attending the dinner may call 540-364-2199 or email: chair@fauquierdemocrats.org.The Honorable Brian J. Moran, the chairman of the Virginia House of Delegates Democratic Caucus, will be the Key Note Speaker. Delegate Moran represents the 46th House District in Northern Virginia. His elder brother, Jim Moran, represents the 8th Congressional District of Virginia in the U.S. House of Representatives. To celebrate St. Patrick's Day, live Irish music will be provided by Brooksie Wells and Lisa Howard.

The Hill School Community Film Series

Each of the six Saturday evenings in the Performing Arts Center will begin with a wine and cheese reception (6:30-7:15 p.m.), followed by the film and a brief discussion (9:30-10:00 p.m)

March 3, 2007

Tomorrow (1972). Directed by Joseph Anthony

Jackson Fentry (Robert Duvall) is a lonely Mississippi farmer whose introverted personality matches his solitary lifestyle. His wake-up call comes in the form of the pregnant Sarah Eubanks (Olga Bellin), whose husband has left her. Realizing that Sarah needs a place to stay, Fentry takes her in and slowly falls in love with her. After she gives birth, the two are married, only to have tragedy strike a short time later. This Depression-era screenplay was written by Horton Foote based on a short story by William Faulkner. Black and White. PG.

April 28, 2007

My Life As A Dog (1985). Directed by Lasse Hallström.

This Oscar-nominated Swedish gem (Mitt Liv Som Hund) offers an honest depiction of the often-confusing nature of childhood. Shipped off to live with his uncle for the summer, 12-year-old Ingmar finds unexpected adventures with the help of the town's warmhearted eccentrics. These experiences give him the strength to accept his life and eventually enjoy childhood. In Swedish, with English subtitles. PG-13.

May 19, 2007

The Apostle (1997). Written and directed by Robert Duvall.

When charismatic but troubled Pentecostal preacher Euliss "Sonny" Dewey (Robert Duvall) discovers that his wife (Farrah Fawcett) is having an affair, he promptly puts the other man in a coma and flees his home state of Texas for Louisiana. Once there, he takes on a new name, renovates an old church and brings new life to a congregation. PG-13. Please contact The Hill School 540-687-5897 with any questions.

Museum Seeks Visitor Service Volunteers

The Loudoun Museum currently seeks volunteers to assist guests as they visit the museum. Duties include greeting guests, providing basic tourist and heritage information, collecting admission fees and answering the telephone. Hours are flexible with both morning and afternoon shifts available. Training will be provided. The Loudoun Museum is located at 16 Loudoun Street SW in Leesburg. Museum hours are 10am-5pm Monday, 10am-5pm Wednesday through Saturday and 1pm-5pm on Sundays. For further information, please email bfriedmann@loudounmuseum.org or call 703-777-7427.

Call to Artists

Art in the Foothills, an annual juried show and sale in Bluemont is issuing a call to artists to participate in the 2007 exhibit. Art in the Foothills is a juried art show and sale held in the beautifully restored Old Dance Hall in Bluemont, Virginia, the third weekend in May. It is a beautiful venue for both artists and the public in a charming small village. All proceeds will go to benefit Friends of Bluemont, a non-profit conservation and preservation organization which is hosting the exhibit.

Dates of show: May 18-20, 2007
Entry packet mailing: March 12, 2007
Entry deadline: April 16, 2007
Contact: Pam Forbes, 540-554-8715 to be included on the mailing list.

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Parents & Progeny

Middleburg Elementary School Open House

Middleburg Elementary School would like to invite you to attend an Open House for prospective students on Wednesday, March 7, 2007. One session will be held from 7:00 -9:00 am and a second will be held from 5:00-7:00 pm. Please stop by for a tour and for more information about Middleburg Elementary and its academic programs.

The Open House is open to all Loudoun residents. Because of a new ruling, Loudoun residents can apply for a special exception for their children to attend Middleburg Elementary. Middleburg Elementary School is known for its strong academic program and for its experienced and caring faculty and staff. Middleburg Elementary graduates go on to experience great success at various public and private secondary schools in the region.

Please stop by for a visit. Middleburg Elementary School is located at 101 N. Madison Street in the heart of the town of Middleburg. You may call the school at 703-771-6680 for more information.

Middleburg Elementary Geography and Spelling Bee Winners

Congratulations to Middleburg Elementary School fifth graders Nathan Longerbeam and Caroline Greer. On January 8, Middleburg Elementary held the annual Geography Bee, sponsored by the National Geographic Foundation. All fourth and fifth graders took a classroom test, and the top nine students went on to participate in the school's Geography Bee. After several rounds of extremely difficult questions, Nathan Longerbeam was declared the winner. Nathan then went on to complete a 70 question timed test which has been submitted for his competition in the Commonwealth of Virginia Geography Bee. Nathan is the son of Lea and Scott Longerbeam of Middleburg.

On January 30, the entire fifth grade participated in the annual Spelling Bee. After a number of tense rounds, Caroline Greer was named the Middleburg Elementary Spelling Bee Champion. Caroline will represent MES at the Loudoun County Spelling Bee in March. She is the daughter of Cindy and Rob Greer of Aldie.

Congratulations also to fifth grader Aaron Mamula who took second place in both competitions. He is the son of Teri Domanski and Ned Mamula of Middleburg.

Conjunction Junction ... What's Your Function

Broadway Junior Production of Schoolhouse Rock Live

Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School's PTA is presenting Leesburg, Virginia with a production of SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! JUNIOR, taking the classic concept of "let's put on a show" and reaching new academic heights through a program titled, "The Broadway Junior Collection®".

Based on the popular television show, SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK, SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! JUNIOR is a hip and fun educational show that teaches audiences of all ages that learning can be fun. Tom, a school teacher nervous about his first day of teaching, tries to relax by watching TV. Suddenly, the Schoolhouse Rock bunch appears in his building's rec room and proceeds to show him how to win his students over with imagination and music. The beloved SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK songs include "A Noun Is a Person Place Or Thing," "Three Is a Magic Number," and "Unpack Your Adjectives."

Teachers, parents, school administrators and friends have witnessed students changed permanently and positively by learning life and behavioral skills – ranging from communication, collaboration and time management to creativity, imagination and confidence – from the experience of participating in a musical theatre production.

Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School will present the Broadway Junior Production SCHOOLHOUSE ROCK LIVE! JUNIOR on March 1, 2007 at 6:30 pm, March 2, 2007 at 7:00 pm and March 3, 2007 at 2:00 pm in the Frances Hazel Reid Elementary School Gymnasium at 800 North King Street in Leesburg, Virginia and are $4.00 in advance, $5.00 at the door. For more information about the show, please call or (703) 771-8893.

Foxcroft School Honor Roll Announced

The following students from Middleburg have been named to Foxcroft School's honor roll for the First Semester of the 2006-07 school year, a school spokeswoman announced Friday.

Awarded High Honors for earning a grade point average of 90 or better, with all grades above 80 were:

Senior Class member Elizabeth Pischke.

Junior Class member Kara McCandless.

Sophomore Janie Lemons.

And from the Freshmen Class Grace Murphy.

Earning Honors, with an average of 85 and no grade below 80 were:

Seniors Kaitlin Brooks, Margot Ferster, Caitlin McNaughton, and Whitney Spreadbury.

Junior Michael Babus.

Sophomores Nellie Foosaner and Eroica Williams.

Freshmen Gabrielle Graves, Meredith Harris, and Alexandra Wolf.

Notre Dame Academy Announces VAIS Accreditation

Notre Dame Academy in Middleburg, Virginia earned full membership and initial 10-year accreditation from the Virginia Association of Independent Schools (VAIS) following a vote by the VAIS Board of Directors January 21, 2007. Membership in VAIS is additive to Notre Dame Academy's existing accreditation with the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools (SACS).

"We are honored to be a full member of VAIS and earn dual accreditation with SACS. This accreditation is the fulfillment of an extensive 18-month process. Our trustees, students, faculty, staff, and parents along with the support of our alumni and friends of the school deserve the credit", said John Borley, Notre Dame Academy's Headmaster.

VAIS has 80 member schools throughout the commonwealth. The accreditation visit was completed in October, and evaluated 76 standards across major areas including instructional programs, governance and administration, philosophy and mission, community of the school, and professional personnel.

"With this accreditation, Notre Dame Academy now has two of the best accreditations in the state as recognized by the Virginia Council on Private Education (VCPE). VCPE is the state's agency for accreditation which authorizes both SACS and VAIS to do accreditation for them," Borley continued. "Colleges recognize the prestige of being accredited by two of the VCPE approved agencies."

The Vinegar Boy

The Middleburg Baptist Church is currently looking for children to participate in a youth choir production of the play "The Vinegar Boy." The choir is being led by John Herndon, with help from the Middleburg Baptist Adult Choir.

The play will be presented on Sunday, April 1, 2007 at the 11:00 a.m. service. Practices are held each Wednesday evening at 7:00 p.m. at the church. Several Saturday morning practices will also be added closer to the presentation. Tapes are available for children to take home if they can't attend all practices.

All children are invited to attend. You may call the church office to sign up or to receive more information (540-687-5222). Middleburg Baptist is located at 209 East Federal Street in Middleburg.

10th Annual Notre Dame Academy Student Art Show

Erin Manning, a senior from Round Hill, took top honors and was awarded The Seventh Annual Mrs. Susan Byrne "Best in Show" Purchase Prize Award at the 10th Annual Notre Dame Academy Student Art Show, 10-2-10 , today in Middleburg. The following students were also recognized for their artistic talent. More than 100 pieces of student artwork in five categories were included in the juried show.

Painting

First Prize- Amanda Kim, Junior, Ashburn

Second Prize- Molly Troha, Senior, Leesburg

Third Prize-Lydia Smith, Senior, Leesburg

Honorable Mention- Jenny Kwon, Junior, Chantilly

Drawing

First Prize- Paul Rice, Junior, Ashburn

Second Prize- Kelly Struder, Junior, Hamilton

Third Prize-Sarah Larson, Senior, Sterling

Honorable Mention- Kristen Berg, Senior, Winchester

Photography

First Prize-Lydia Smith, Senior, Leesburg

Second Prize- Kristen Berg, Senior, Winchester

Third Prize-Nicholas Albin, Junior, Chantilly

Honorable Mention-Allison Whetzel, Senior, Broad Run

Mixed Media/Collage

First Prize-Jenah Vaughn, Senior, Purcellville

Second Prize-Paul Rice, Junior, Ashburn

Third Prize-Ana Baltiera, Sophomore, Charles Town, West Virginia

Honorable Mention-Kristen Berg, Senior, Winchester

Ceramics

First Prize-Lindsay Boyd, Sophomore, Centreville

Second Prize-Matt Entsminger, Sophomore, Ashburn

Third Prize-Mary McCarthy, Sophomore, Broad Run

Honorable Mention-Claire Babilonia, Junior, Leesburg



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Doubts and Woes

From Page 5

siderable cash balance," Casey told the Eccentric.

Moreover, Casey contends, "Council approved a series of construction contracts which would be financed at least in part with a portion of that cash balance" and at one time actually "approved an increase in a contract to provide a more desirable surface for a parking lot, knowing that it would require an additional $40,000 in funds from that cash balance.

Sources close to the Council note, however, that the approved FY '06 budget only contained capital funds for a fraction of the contractual obligations assumed.

Indeed, the FY 2006 budget, as approved and appropriated, indicated that the reserves would be drawn down by only around about $87,000.

Even that level of draw-down appears to have been controversial. The debate over the Town's reserve funds led to a separate council meeting to approve the budget and, according to some sources, contributed to current Mayor Betsy Davis's Spring, 2006, decision to resign from the Finance and Personnel Committee.

Overspending

Perhaps the most disheartening part of Mitchell's final audit was the department by department documentation of overspending, despite long-standing rules and new policies adopted as late as March, 2006.

Under the rubric, "general government," spending for "Engineering and Consulting Fees" were nearly $22,000 over budget. The mysterious and otherwise undetailed "other expenses" category was nearly $21,000 in the red. Indeed, only the $4,800 per year "compensation of council" line was in the black among "administration" costs.

In the Treasurer's Office, the salary lines for the town Treasurer and an administrative assistant accounted for nearly $24,000 of a total of $31,475 in overspending.

Engineering and consulting fees comprised the largest overspent categories in the Town's Planning and Zoning Department: $22,382 out of a total deficit of $37,896

The audit found the Police Department $46, 037 over budget. Some $22,000 of that was attributed to the mysterious "other expenses" category. The rest was more or less evenly distributed among the overtime and other wages, advertising, fuel and insurance expense categories.

As for Public Works, the department spent $87, 611 more than was budgeted, most of it on salaries, maintenance and repairs, the purchase of parking meters, supplies and equipment.

The Ugly

Problems with financial reporting and Council oversight continue.

When Mayor Betsy Davis convened the regular monthly session of the Town Council at 7:30 PM on February 8, members of the Council found only a one-page Treasurer's Report, summarizing revenues, and expenses year-to-date and a note reading "Financials: Will be Distributed at Town Council Meeting Thursday, February 8th."

When Town Treasurer, Debby Jewell distributed the missing Financials they contained little, if any information required for easy oversight of the town's spending by either the general public or by all but the most actuarially proficient members of Council,

An unannotated "flash report" for January seemed to indicate that the Town's "General Fund" (from which day-to-day operating expenses are paid) was $137,647 in the red. The "Utilities Fund" (from which expenses related to the town's water and sewer system are paid) appeared to be more than $70,000 in the red"

When asked about the report, most Council members either had no idea of what it meant, or referred queries to the Treasurer.

Mayor Davis and the Town Treasurer both later confirmed that "neither the general fund nor the Utilities Fund is in the red." However, she conceded, "The Town Administrator has noted that receipts this year are running behind last year's."

"Starting the year with greatly diminished reserves while also facing diminished revenues is a matter of great concern to the council and increases the importance of seizing all opportunities for finding savings."

The detailed financials that Jewell presented to Council indeed indicated that, among other things, expenditures coded to four budget categories had already exceeded their ANNUAL budgets . . . and that one, "capital improvements, " was, mysteriously, already more than $77,475 over it's annual budget of $0.00."

Because financials had just been distributed and had not been reviewed by Council members, Jewell made no oral report at Thursday's Council Meeting.

Council, having just received their copies of the detailed financials, asked no questions of Jewell.

Mayor Davis later told the Eccentric that, despite appearances, "The treasurer's report was not late."

"The goal," she said, "is to have it available by the 10th of each month, although there are times when the press of other business, such as getting out tax or utility bills, may result in it being completed later."

According to Davis, such delays in reporting have been "standard operating procedure for years." She noted, however, that she and "several council members" had noted that" receipt of financial reports and their completeness became inconsistent in early 2006."

In early 2006, the Council had just adopted a new set of financial guidelines, former Town Treasurer Betty Wolford had resigned, and Mayor Davis, then Vice-Mayor, had resigned as Chairman of the Town Finance and Personnel Committee, leaving that task to former Mayor Tim Dimos.

In conclusion, Davis noted that she and the council "are encouraged by the procedures that the Town Administrator and Treasurer have put in place to assure that payment requests are supported with documentation and that they were authorized in the adopted budget or have been specifically approved by the Council or Town in accordance with the financial management policies."

Premature Conclusions? PR Disaster?

Given the negative stories about Middleburg driven by Jeff Mitchell's unfortunately misleading "preliminary audit," who decided to make that document public and why?

According to sources in the public accounting community Mitchell was faced with a difficult choice when his preliminary review of the Town's books appeared to show rampant, and possibly illegal, overspending and misappropriation.

If he truly suspected fraud or illegal activity, he was honor bound to report it to the Council, and thus, inevitably, make his preliminary findings public. If, on the other hand, there was a possibility that simple accounting errors were skewing first appearances, he could also ethically and honorably review his initial findings with the Town staff and Mayor.

Reliable sources tell the Eccentric that Mitchell, working with Acting Town Administrator Claudia Dornin, Treasurer Debby Jewell, and Town Attorney Liz Whiting, first suggested that his preliminary findings be brought to the Mayor's attention, before he made a formal report to the Town's Finance Committee, and then, to the Council as a whole.

Given the seriousness of Mitchell's preliminary findings, however, Whiting, Dornin, and Jewell all agreed that Mitchell should report immediately to the Council as a whole.

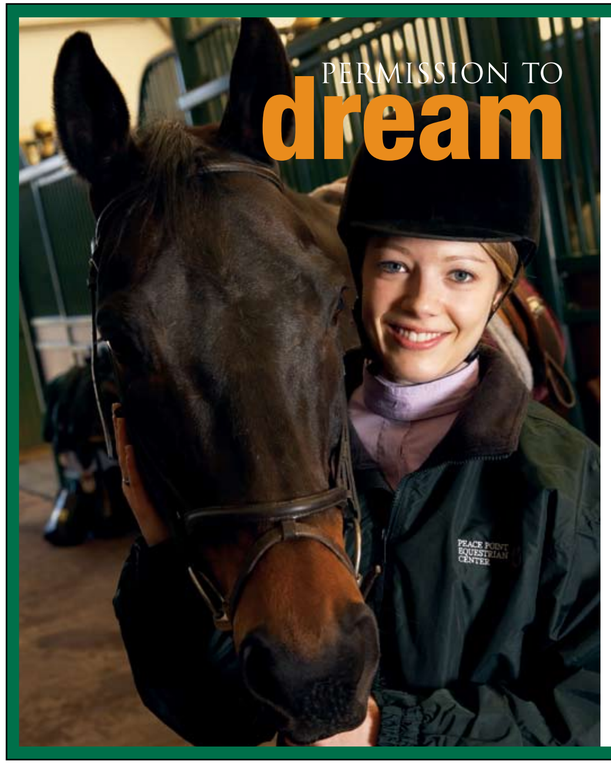
Thus, Mitchell made his "preliminary" report not just to the Mayor, but to a full meeting of Council, skipping the normal process of first airing such matters at Committee level.

In response to questions from the Eccentric, Mayor Davis replied, "It is standard operating procedure for the auditor to present a preliminary report of his findings for review and comment before producing his final audit and Jeff Mitchell emphasizes that he reports directly to the council. Given the gravity of his findings, the decision was made to have Jeff present his findings at the regular council meeting. Although I cannot recall how that decision was made, it is fair to attribute the decision to me. The council and I promised a full accounting of the affairs of the Town and receiving Jeff's report at the regular meeting is consistent with that promise."

So far, no other members of Council have come forward with an alternate explanation. The Mayor, the Vice Mayor, and most if not all the other Council members have, at one time or another told the Eccentric they had no idea why the preliminary audit was made public. Some speculate that doing so was just an unfortunate oversight. Others remarked that "it was always done that way." Darker speculations, linking the premature release of Mitchell's findings to ongoing efforts to justify the firing of Mike Casey, have also surfaced.

Casey himself speculates that Mitchell found himself conducting his audit "without the benefit of be-

Continued Page 30



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HAZEL– This adorable girl had been hit by a car. She suffered a broken pelvis but is now healed and ready to find her forever home! Hazel is about 1-2 years old & good sized. She is good with other dogs & cats too but can be shy with new people at first. other dogs but not kitties. She adores cuddling on your lap!



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SPORT - Sport is a 1 year old bull dog mix, This is such a special guy, he just loves everyone! Funny because he looks pretty tough but truly, he is a sweetheart! Come out to meet him, you'll fall in love!



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ARNOLD–A terrific young castrated male pig who was recently rescued from a starvation case. He is very gentle & people friendly- he needs a farm home as a pet only.



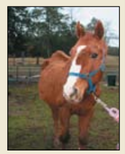
CHARLESTON – Charleston is a cat lovers dream- somewhat temperamental but his looks make up for his quirkiness! Indoor/outdoor or a barn would be best for this handsome guy!



SIMON – Please help this old man- he was scheduled for euthanasia at a county shelter so we gave him another chance. Sweet as can be but needs a lot of people attention!



RACHEL-A super cutie pie! Rachel is a Border Collie mix pup who is full of love, life & energy!



IVY– This gal almost starved to death. We recently rescued her & another TB mare during a cruelty case. Ivy & Flower need a warm barn to rehab in for the winter- please help us help them! We need a good foster home soon!

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Albert's Corner

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



Something is underfoot in the canine community. It's something you might not think about often, but I do. I'm talking about paws, of course. This topic comes to mind now because I just finished walking on ground that is covered in ice and snow, but paws are worth considering every day of the year!

We rely a lot on our paws to help us enjoy life. They act as buffers from the elements, shock absorbers, and sources of traction when we run. Even so, they are a far cry from the well-constructed shoes people wear for protection. Our paws can be vulnerable to all sorts of dangers, including chemicals, extreme temperatures, and sharp objects. With a little bit of care and prevention, however, your help can give us a leg up when it comes to healthy paws!

As I write, the ground is covered in ice. And in many places, it's also covered with salt-based ice melting agents. Most of these chemical compounds are very dangerous for dogs, potentially causing burns to our paws. Additionally, we can get sick when we lick the chemicals off of our paws. When you walk your dog, avoid areas treated with harsh chemicals. When you treat your own sidewalks and driveways, you should use pet-friendly ice-melting agents. A product called Safe Paw is a safe bet!

Even in mild weather, you'll need to think about chemical compounds on the ground. Many common pesticides and fertilizers used on lawns are toxic to animals. Contact with and ingestion of these chemicals can burn paws, cause allergic reactions, or make us sick. Use caution when applying these agents around your property. Do a little research and find out about the many safe alternatives that you or your landscapers can substitute.

Chemicals aside, extreme temperatures alone are enough to cause us lots of discomfort that we feel right down to our toes! Unfortunately, we're very good at being stoic when it comes to pain. In fact, we'll often walk through extreme cold and heat, endure cuts on our pads, and jog with our people even after our pads have had enough. Please remember to think about how the surfaces we're walking on might feel to us. This is especially important in the summer, when hot pavement can feel like molten lava on our little feet.

There are just a few additional basic rules to follow regarding our paws. First, take a few seconds each day to make sure our paws are not scraped or torn and to check for foreign objects stuck between our pads. Second, keep our nails trimmed. You can do that part yourself or have a vet do it, but make sure our nails stay clipped! Third, take note if we're licking our paws obsessively. This kind of behavior can indicate that we are in distress due to food allergies or pad injuries. If you see us licking our paws too often, it's probably a call for help.

I hope you've enjoyed this chance to "paws" and reflect on an important topic. Just remember: if you can imagine walking a mile on our pads, you'll be a much better pet parent with a much happier dog!

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

Breast Cancer Prevention Fund

From Page 1

committee to make the charitable distributions in support of preventing breast cancer.

The Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Fund's first fundraising solicitation will be mailed in February with its first public event scheduled in concert with the Middleburg Spring Races on April 21, 2007. Donations will be requested in return for attendance at a tent on the hill for lunch and an exciting afternoon of racing.

"In 2008, we are planning a bigger event," Atkins said, "to put us well on the way to achieving our first established financial goal. We believe, as our community joins with us in bringing donations to the Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Fund in loving memory of those we have lost in the past, and in heartfelt hope for those we will save in the future, our ultimate goal of breast cancer prevention will be the reality we achieve together."

Donations to the Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Fund will be gratefully accepted by check or charge card. Checks should be written to the Breast Cancer Fund/PCF and sent to Piedmont Community Foundation, PO Box 402, Middleburg, VA 20118. Call 540 687 5223 to make your gift via charge card.

For information about fundraising activities please contact Jim Atkins at 703 447 2302.

For information regarding fund administration please call Karen Krei at PCF, 540 687 5223.

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Doubts and Woes

From Page 27

ing able to work with a permanently appointed Town Manager, who would probably have been able to discuss the issues in a professional manner from a background of experience and education."

The former Town Administrator also speculates "that some on staff and, perhaps some on the Council itself, had an interest in making things look as bad as possible (and, in particular, making me look as bad as possible) to protect themselves in the aftermath of my termination."

No Material Weaknesses?

In transmitting his final report to the Town Council, Jeff Mitchell noted that his audit, " . . . noted no matters involving the internal control over financial reporting and its operation that we consider to be material weaknesses."

A "material weakness," he defined as " . . . a reportable condition in which the design or operation of one or more of the internal control components does not reduce to a relatively low level the risks that misstatements in amounts that would be material in relation to the financial statements being audited may occur and not be detected within a time period by employees in the normal course of performing their assigned duties."

When asked how there could NOT be "material weaknesses" in a bookkeeping and control system that led Jeff Mitchell, a reputable, well-trained, certified public accountant, not to mention a major national newspaper, to conclude that the Town had possibly misspent bond funds, broken the law, and exceeded its budget by nearly $1 million, Mayor Davis replied:

"Jeff's engagement is to report what he finds in his examination of the Town's books and his report was an accurate reflection of what he found. The fact that in retrospect, the Town has been able to shift how certain capital expenditures were classified, resulting in an improved result for our books, doesn't render the auditor's preliminary report inaccurate."

Jeff Mitchell reported that he could follow the receipts and expenditures of the Town and that they reflected that funds expended were expended for public purposes. As a matter of accounting, this may be consistent with concluding that there are not material weaknesses in the reporting."

"The auditor's engagement," Mayor Davis concluded, "does not extend to reporting on the adequacy of communications between the Town staff and its elected officials. In the end, that is a conclusion the council must make."

Other Problems Revealed in the Audit?

When asked about the changes in the Town's cash balances and the excess spending documented in Mitchell's final audit, Mayor Davis replied, "I cannot explain why the fund balance declined or why all departments (other than Economic Development) went over budget other than to note that expenditures beyond budgeted funds were made."

Asked why, she continued, "The council reviewed, revised and approved the budget brought to us by the Town Administrator, she reiterated. I noted earlier that the receipt and completeness of financial reports became inconsistent in 2006. This was also the time when we experienced essentially 100% turnover of staff in the Town office, so I think there may have been a consensus that we needed to let new staff get their feet on the ground."

Davis also continues to lay most of the blame for the Town's financial condition on Mike Casey and, by implication, former Mayor Tim Dimos, who chaired the Finance Committee after Davis's resignation in the Spring of 2006. "The Town Administrator's job is to execute the policies adopted by the council," Davis noted. This critically includes executing and managing the budget approved by the council."

"At the Town Administrator's recommendation, the council adopted financial management policies that added flexibility to his ability to shift funds to perceived needs while, we thought, requiring council oversight and approval of changes of significance in the approved budget.

"The Town Administrator did not seek supplemental appropriations or advise Council of the need to meet expenses beyond the contingencies included in the approved budget."

Mike Casey, as noted above, takes strong exception to Davis's account and assignment of blame.

Public documents confirm that Council received reports of most, if not all the major expenses that, miscoded, led to Mitchell's unfortunate "preliminary audit."

Moreover, Casey insists, "I had developed a draft budget amendment which I planned to place before the Finance Committee as part of the "budget clean up" action which Council had taken each of the previous two years at the close of the fiscal year . . .

I did not present it to the Committee's meeting in July because (1) the Council was still getting organized with its newly-elected members and (2) I was preoccupied with discussions with Mayor Davis and Vice Mayor Kirk about my tenure with the Town."

Getting the Story to the Voters?

Given the enormous interest in the Town's financial status, not only among citizens of Middleburg, but throughout the county and beyond, Mayor Davis was asked why neither the good news nor the bad news reflected in the final audit made it onto Thursday's Council Agenda or into any of the Town Staff's formal reports.

"Jeff had already made his report at Council's Monday Work Session," Davis replied.

Currently there is no provision for citizens attending regular Council meeting to ask questions and have them answered immediately and directly by members of the Council or Town Staff.

Asked if it might be a valuable idea to add to each month's regular agenda a New England Style "Town Hall" session, in which the Council and Town staff respond directly to questions from the public, the Mayor replied:

"We've never had a request from our constituents to include such a session. My experience is that our constituents generally make use of the public comment sections of our meetings, public hearings, committee meetings, Town Office business hours and, yes, even the idle time in line at the Post Office or Safeway to make their views known and get answers to questions. Middleburg is blessed to have such active involvement from its citizens and business leaders."

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Middleburg, Virginia

Built in 1986, stone house with slate and metal roof, 4 bedrooms, 4 1/2 baths, 3 fireplaces, hardwood floors, and rear flagstone terraces, new heated pool and cabana, and 5-car garage. 96.73 gently rolling, mostly open acres with mountain views. $3,900,000.



Stone Ridge

Culpeper, Virginia

Fantastic views from "Stone Ridge" of Longley. 6 bedrooms, 5 1/2 baths, 3 fireplaces, all brick custom colonial on 17 acres with tennis court, pond, and great potential, mature landscaping, and large rooms. Gallery room added several years ago. 4 car garage. $1,595,000.



Brickland Yard

Delaplane, Virginia

Immaculate property on 20 acres in hunt country. Home is completely updated with 2 master suites; one could be a large home office and 3 additional bedrooms. New kitchen and appliances, new baths, hardwood floors, extensive custom trim and new windows throughout. Beautiful views and large all weather deck for outdoor entertaining. Fenced for horses with 2 run in sheds. $1,350,000.



Araglin

Rectortown, Virginia

Originally known as the Seaton Store & Post Office in the 1800's. Today this traditionally styled pre-Civil War stucco farmhouse is a perfect country home, both elegant and charming, with original floors, antique doors and windows and two fireplaces. Great space for entertaining with two large living rooms, covered porches, stone terraces, walls surrounding professionally designed gardens and swimming pool. Extensive plantings. $995,000.



Meadow View

Middleburg, Virginia

Minutes to Middleburg, protected location, 4 bedrooms, 3 baths, 5 fireplaces, screened rear porch. 3-stall barn with tack room, 10 usable acres, 4 paddocks, new fencing, 200 x 150 riding ring. Lovely gardens, private setting. $1,200,000.

Lots for Sale

Markham, Virginia
14 acres $515,000
8 acres in 2 parcels $400,000

Marshall, Virginia
10 acres $439,000
17 acres $549,000

Unison, Virginia
3 separate ten acre parcels $425,000-$450,000

Bluemont, Virginia
31.33 rolling ccres at the foot of the Blue Ridge, wooded and open ground, creek frontage, 5 bedroom perc site $751,920



Commercial Building

Middleburg, Virginia

Commercial or retail opportunity one-half block off the main street in the village of Middleburg. Turn-key space with parking and additional parking available in the adjacent town parking lot. Would make a fine office or boutique. $899,000.

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Kincheloe's Store

Rectortown, Virginia

100+ years ago this was a small village store and today the current owners have blended the old charm of 10'+ ceilings, oversized farmhouse windows, the large wrap around porch and original floors with the modern amenities everyone seeks. A recent addition includes a large family room open to the gourmet kitchen with custom cabinetry, granite counters and a professional stove. The second floor holds a master bedroom, separate bath and home office or studio area with exceptional views from every window overlooking the Cobbler Mountains and large back yard. $850,000.



Putnams Mill

Orlean, Virginia

Traditional home surrounded by 2 acres of mature landscaping located on a quiet gravel road. A charming and immaculate home with light-filled rooms, front porch, large rear deck, finished basement, garage and gardener's shed. $670,000.

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BRENTON



1889 stone farm house on 129 acs. ♦4 BR, 2.5 BA ♦English basement ♦6 FPs ♦Unique circular stairs ♦High ceilings ♦Ornate carved mantels & HW flrs. ♦2-car garage ♦2 BR tenant house ♦Two 10-stall barns ♦9 fenced paddocks ♦Stone walls **$4,500,000**

"ALL WAYS"



Elegant 6000 sf custom built English country manor ♦9.79 acs. ♦4 BR ♦4.5 BA ♦Fabulous stucco residence constructed with superior quality & stunning architectural detail inside & out ♦A beautiful 2BR/2.5BA guest cottage **$2,950,000**

BED & BREAKFAST



Elegant six bedroom inn on 4.29 ac. located in quaint village of The Plains in the heart of famed VA hunt country ♦Profitable, turn-key operation ♦Price includes the business, property, improvements and furnishings **$1,550,000**

MIDDLEBURG HOUSE



Historic stone/stucco Federal residence c1800 ♦Meticulously restored & beaut. dec. in heart of Village ♦Fr. drs from LR & Bkfst. Rm open to gorgeous grdns ♦Mster Ste. w/sitting room ♦Gourmet kit. ♦FP'd study & DR ♦Sep. apt/office **$1,295,000**

WOLF SONG



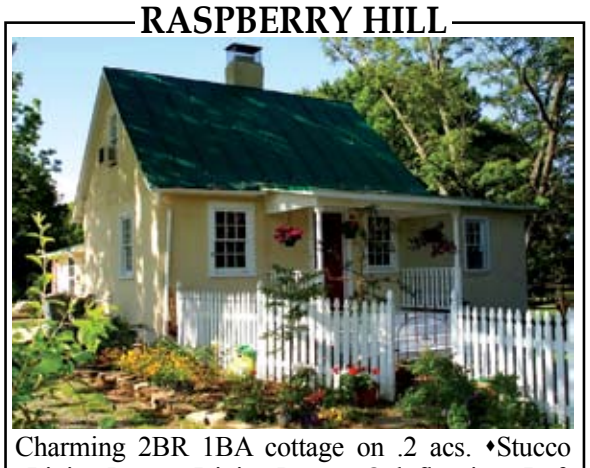
Bluemont ♦Very private mountain retreat on 19+/- acres ♦Custom built cedar home ♦Wraparound porches ♦2 bedrooms ♦2.5 baths ♦Wide plank hardwood flooring ♦Great room with cathedral ceilings, woodstove ♦Open floor plan **$575,000**

MIDDLEBURG



Charming 2 or 3 BR home ♦1+ acs ♦Split rail fencing ♦Completely renovated & decorated w/impeccable taste ♦Vaulted & beamed ceilings ♦HW floors ♦New Kitchen & BAs ♦Study & French doors from the LR to a spacious new deck **$549,000**

RASPBERRY HILL



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