



VIRGINIA HORSE SHOW ASSOCIATION 2011 YEAR END AWARDS

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DISCOVERING A CULTURE OF PLACE

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MISSING WATER FOUND

DANIEL MORROW

After one of the best Christmas seasons in Middleburg since the onset of the great recession, Town Staff began the new year by reporting further significant, and arguably outstanding progress on two fronts: 1) an ancient, elusive, and massive water leak, and 2: longstanding issues with the Town's police rules, regulations and standing orders.

The 300,000-Gallons Leak

With the help of the Virginia Rural Water Association the town appears to have found and fixed a massive and elusive leak in the town's water distribution system that, according to first estimates, may well have dumped as much as 300,000 gallons of treated water per month into the town's sewers.

The leak, which had mystified engineers and plagued the town's financial auditors for years had escaped detection, officials said, because they were both singularly tidy and very very quiet.

According to Kenny Reynolds, a 30-

year veteran of the Salem Virginia water department and now a "circuit rider" with VRWA, water was pouring from an ancient galvanized pipe, buried under 12 feet or more of fill dirt, off Blue Ridge Avenue, near the rear access to the Middleburg Volunteer Fire Department.

Purified water, Reynolds said, poured from the leak and instead of bubbling to the surface, ran directly into a sewer line, accessible only from a twelve-foot deep brick-lined "manhole."

From there the water ran downhill to a pumping station, which moved it to the town's long-beleaguered waste-water treatment system.

There is was purified for a second time and dumped back into the environment, presumably to feed wells, and start the process all over again.

There was no evidence of the leak at on the surface of the ground near the fire station at all.

Closer investigation of the ground near a creek, well below the Windy Hill complex adjacent to the Fire House, revealed that some of the lost water may have wound up there. No one had apparently

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CREIGHTON FARMS MEMBERS WILL LOVE THEIR NEW CLUBHOUSE

Beautifully set overlooking the first and 18th holes of the Jack Nicklaus Signature golf course, Creighton Farms members will find the elegant Virginia Manor Club House that will soon open for members, their guests and families.

As you step onto the wide front veranda, past the black wicker rockers and into the double sitting room, one is immediately welcomed into an American Classic realm of silk wall coverings, pale wedge-wood blue and tobacco carpets and deep, recessed doorways that lead to the Trophy Room, The Library, The Grille Room, Jack's Bar and Lounge, The Billiard Room, and The Board Room.

The sparkling new Pro Shop is just around the corner.

Graciously appointed with delightful paintings, by local Artist in Residence Tom Neel, and fine furnishings, the \$11 million clubhouse is destined to become the heart of the 900-acre Creighton Farms estate.

Close personal attention has been paid to every detail of the new clubhouse by David Southworth, President and CEO of Southworth Development, the owner and developer of Creighton Farms.

"We want Creighton Farms to offer our residents, families and members a truly world class residential and resort community," he explained. "Soon we will open resort style pools, Har-Tru tennis courts and a sport and wellness center."

"We're delighted to be part of this beautiful American countryside, and we intend to be serious stewards of this historic property."

Luxuriously appointed sitting rooms, spa and locker rooms for gentlemen and ladies are located one floor below. Deep Tartan carpets and leather furnishings welcome gentlemen and ladies who may relax in an elegant atmosphere of toasty bamboo, pale silks and soft beige interiors.

Members will also enjoy reserving one of nine stunning guest rooms on the top floor of the clubhouse where one suite of rooms has also been provided.

Every clubhouse floor opens to wide stone verandas and terraces for optimal views of the first and eighteenth holes, and the spectacularly preserved countryside at Creighton Farms. A Certified Audubon International Property, the estate exemplifies the care and respect that has been lavished on it by Southworth.

"Half of the total homesites at Creighton Farms have been sold to builders or residents," according to General Manager Attila Harai. "We also offer splendid Villas, in The Nicklaus Village for residents who want a turn key solution or to downsize, as well as custom built manor homes and enclave estates throughout the property."

Several levels of membership are available at Creighton Farms. For more information on the Club at Creighton Farms, please contact General Manager, Mr. Harai at aharai@creightonfarms.com or telephone 703 957 4800.

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PETER PEJACEVICH 540-270-3835 \$4,450,000



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GEORGE ROLL 703-606-6358 \$3,445,000



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TED ZIMMERMAN 540-454-1399 \$1,950,000



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SCOTT BUZZELLI 540-454-1399 \$1,395,000



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NEWS OF NOTE

OATLANDS ELECTS MICHAEL J. O'CONNOR CHAIRMAN OF THE BOARD



The Board of Directors of Oatlands Historic House and Gardens has announced the election of Michael J. O'Connor of Leesburg as its new Chairman.

O'Connor, although never having lost his Chicago accent, has been in Loudoun County for over thirty years and is actively involved in many civic activities in Leesburg and Loudoun County.

As one of the founders and co-chairs of the Downtown Improvement Association, O'Connor spearheaded many of the changes the Town of Leesburg will undergo over the next few years. He is a sponsor of Leesburg's First Night and has

been active on the Oatlands Board of Directors for eight years; he is on the Board of Governors for Middleburg Hunt, is a Board member of the former Cross Roads; and he has been a Board Director of the Virginia League of Conservation Voters.

Active politically, he has participated, in a bi-partisan manner, in many Loudoun County elections. He was recognized as the 2010 Business Leader of the Year by the Loudoun Democratic Party.

O'Connor is committed to building the local economy and is a local business owner himself. Through Kingdom Enterprise, his Leesburg real estate company, he is involved in many Leesburg downtown businesses. All of the properties he owns are rented and are house successful, vibrant and meaningful businesses.

He is also owner of The Palio Ristorante Italiano in downtown Leesburg which has sponsored events for the Loudoun Symphony, Leesburg Airport, The Leesburg Veterans of Foreign Wars, and many other civic organizations.

O'Connor is also the Owner and CEO of Facilities Solutions Group in Reston, Virginia providing services to corporate and Federal government entities and to the intelligence community.

For additional information about Oatlands, please telephone 703-777-3174 or visit www.oatlands.org.

WILLIAM E. KIRK

William E. Kirk, the son of the late Norman E. Kirk Sr. and Annie Shipman Kirk, died January 15, 2012 at Inova Nursing and Rehabilitation.

Born on December 4, 1927. Mr. Kirk served his country in the United States Army in WWII.

He was predeceased by his brother Norman E. Kirk Jr., his sister, Virginia Fesler, and by his sons, William E.

Kirk Jr. and Anthony Neff.

He is survived by his brother Philip Kirk of Berryville, Virginia and his sisters Joyce Dwyer of Leesburg, Virginia and Lucy Henderson of Gettysburg, Pennsylvania. He is also survived by children Billie Kirk-Munday, of Purcellville Jeffery Neff of Prospect; and Teresa Neff, Purcellville; as well as many nieces and nephews and five loving grandchildren.

WHITEHOUSE AND PORTER HONORED AS “HERITAGE HEROES”

The Mosby Heritage Area Association presented its annual Heritage Hero Awards to long-time preservationists Janet G. Whitehouse and Hope Porter on Wednesday, December 14, 2011, at the National Sporting Library in Middleburg.

"I can't think of anyone more deserving of this award than Janet Whitehouse and Hope Porter," said Childs Burden, Heritage Association President. "Both of these for-

midable women have worked selflessly for decades to help preserve our special area of the country."

Mrs. Whitehouse was a founding member of the Mosby Heritage Area Association 1995, and served on its Board of Directors for many years.

Hope Porter founded and served for many years as Director of Citizens for Fauquier County and played a prominent role in work of the Piedmont Environmental Council.

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Rebecca Poston (540) 771-7520

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Just 2 1/2 miles west of the village of Middleburg, and on a quiet lane in the Aspen Hill neighborhood • Lovely 3 Bedroom 2 Full Bath, 2 1/2 Bath home on just over 2 acres • Master Bedroom on main level • Hardwood, tile and carpeted floors • Brick Fireplace • Crown Molding • Vaulted ceilings • Tray ceiling • Extensive Landscaping • Storage Shed • Private Deck • Attached 2 Car Garage • Full Basement

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NEWS OF NOTE

CHERRY BLOSSOM FOUNDATION PROVIDES CRITICAL BREAST CANCER HELP FOR LOUDOUN AND FAUQUIER WOMEN

One need only read the charming, heartfelt, handwritten letter from Melvina to the Cherry Blossom Breast Cancer Foundation to understand the magnitude of the good works this organization makes possible.

Established in memory of Cheryl Clayton Atkins by her husband, James, and three Middleburg women, the foundation concluded its 2011 fund raising initiatives by awarding over \$100,000 in grants to help women in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties prevent and respond to a diagnosis of breast cancer.

“At the end, when she was very ill, Cheryl asked me to please educate women about, and help women with, breast cancer. So many women simply do not have mammograms, and often, after a frightening diagnosis, they cannot afford to have the treatment they need,” Atkins explained.

“From an early age, her family called Cheryl, ‘Cherry Blossom,’ because of her sparkling personality, so every time the organization we named for her raises enough money to help, it’s as if the help was coming directly from her. I know, she would love that, and I do too,” he said.

Atkins’ personal experience spurs him onward to increase the Foundation’s funding every year. Cherry Blossom Foundation has raised and donated more than \$260,000 since it was founded five years ago. “But our goal is to raise \$200,000 every year to support our mission,” he emphasized.

“We have a tremendous board of directors with officers that include Mary Jo Jackson, who lives with breast cancer, and Lizanne Driskill, daughter of the late Nanette White,” Atkins emphasized. “We also have corporate partners and supporters who have been wonderful, including the girls at Foxcroft School, Middleburg Bank, Applied Knowledge Group, Panera Bread, and many, many others. The community supports the foundation and we know we are doing work that is needed and appreciated.”

“Our mission is to detect, treat, educate, and eliminate breast cancer in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties,” Atkins continued. “We are determined to ensure that every woman in our area understands how important a mammogram is and to ensure that she has the care needed thereafter.”

2011 Cherry Blossom grants were awarded to Inova Loudoun

Hospital, Fauquier Hospital, Georgetown Lombardi Cancer Center, Blue Ridge Hospice, Casting for the Cure, 3B’s Foundation, Loudoun Breast Health Network, Loudoun Community Health Center, and the Tigerlily Foundation.

“We hope to see our supporters April 30th at the Cherry Blossom Golf Tournament at Creighton Farms in Aldie, and, as always, we invite them to walk or run with us in late September at the Cherry Blossom Walks in Leesburg, Middleburg and Warrenton.”

2012 will be a big year for the Cherry Blossom Foundation, according to Atkins. The organization that has helped more than 500 local women to date hopes to double that in the very near future.

“We want every woman in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties to know that we can and will help them understand and deal with breast cancer. We will not stop until we have achieved that.”

For more information about how you can help the women of the area through the foundation, please visit www.cherryblossom-breastcancerfoundation.org.

DISCOVERING A CULTURE OF PLACE

MARK DEWEY



Where I live now, the Blue Ridge isn’t very high. Snickers Gap and Ashby Gap are just 1,000 feet, and the ridge between them rises only half again that high. But it has impressive separating powers. The other day, when I left my house on the western slope at dawn, the sky was clear and starry and the air was cold and dry. It hurt your ears. A mile and a half east of my house, where Route Seven crosses Snickers Gap, the entire Loudoun Valley opens under your gaze, and that day it was full of cream, north and south as far as you could see, a white lake. I held my breath as we descended into it.

Modest as the mountain is, it still seems to separate the east from the west culturally as well as atmospherically. When I lived on the eastern slope, I bought bread and milk in Purcellville and looked to Leesburg for sophisticated needs. Now that I live on the western slope, I keep a PO box

in Berryville, and I’m addicted to the masaman curry at Winchester Thai. You’d think that it was hard to get a thought to go across the mountain. You’d think the mountain had a special kind of gravity that made thoughts flow in the same direction as water.

When I moved from one side of the mountain to the other, I realized that culture is a function of place, both specific to it and determined by it—as specific as a couple of miles, whose minor differences have great determining power. That became clear to me when I learned the story of a cultural event that takes place down the road every year.

It started like this: In the old days the postal service wouldn’t deliver on the rugged western slope, so people had to row across the Shenandoah every Sunday to get their mail at John Miller’s farm. They came after Sunday services, where they had sung gospel music with friends, and they brought the pleasure of song and communion down the side of the mountain with them. They also brought the fiddles and guitars they’d played in church, and after collecting their mail they took up those instruments again to play a faster kind of song. A banjo appeared, and a dobro—Friday and Saturday instruments. And then strangers started coming, for the music, not their mail.

“One day my dad drove down to Richmond and talked to Carlton Haney, who was a promoter and manager,” John Miller, Jr. told me, “and the next day the Carter Family came and sang right over there.” That was 1945. Now the Watermelon Park Music Festival has evolved into an annual event that lasts for three days and attracts many of the world’s best bluegrass players. Last September there were 18 bands, including Ralph Stanley and Bruce Molsky.

Why is it, I wonder today, that I didn’t know any of that until I moved over the top of the mountain?

I’d like to think of this column as an effort to pick the mountain up and hold it in the air, so the separated thoughts and waters of a common culture can flow back together. The two sides of the mountain aren’t exactly the same place, but they’re more alike than different, and together they produce a culture of extraordinary richness. We are lucky, wealthy people.

Mark Dewey is the editor of The Shenandoah Press, a new, non-profit news source based in Berryville. The Middleburg Eccentric and the Shenandoah Press have created a news alliance to better serve our readers. Please visit www.ShenandoahPress.org.

ART AUCTION BENEFITS MIDDLEBURG MONTESSORI



Distinguished and varied works of art will fill the Middleburg Community Center on Friday February 24th, in an unprecedented auction of original artwork from our community’s best local artists. Doors will open at 5:30 p.m. for this fundraiser, which will benefit the Middleburg Montessori School.

“It is always impressive when so many artists come together to support a worth-while cause like this one,” offered Bradley Stevens, one of our country’s leading realist painters. Stevens, a former faculty member at both George Washington University and Georgetown University, is donating a private drawing lesson in portraiture to the winning bidder. ver fifteen artists will participate in the event, including the craftsmen of Plank and Nickel furniture. The auction will showcase the art of Misia Broadhead-Barham, Anthony Barham, Kim Basinger, Armand Cabrera, Hwa Crawford, Mikel Diaz, Richard Dimon, Charles Matheson, Lilla Ohrstrom, Dana Lee Thompson, Dana Volkert, Henry Wingate and Cathy Zimmerman, among others.

Armand Cabrera, known for his alla prima work—paintings completed in one sitting in the studio or outdoors—has donated “Farmhouse,” a stunning 8x10 oil on linen. Armand, a former California-based production artist in the entertainment industry, brings his eye for detail to his exquisite landscapes. His work has been featured

in International Artist Magazine and American Art Collector.

The Virginia countryside is also featured prominently in the work of Hwa Crawford, a juried plein-air artist, one who paints “in the open air” or outdoors. Originally from Korea, Crawford’s love of the Virginia landscape is captured in her tranquil paintings.

The natural world, isolated and enlarged, is the abstract contribution of local artist Dana Volkert. Her compelling work has been exhibited in galleries worldwide and is a must for the modern collector.

LESS CANCER FOUNDER TAKES A LOOK AT CANCER PREVENTION

BILL COUZENS

The time has come to shift the so-called War on Cancer from a cure-focus to one of reducing cancer risks, writes Bill Couzens, Less Cancer founder, in a recent blog post. For 40 years now, billions of dollars have been spent to research a possible cancer cure, yet little attention has been paid to reducing cancer risks.

The war on cancer must include the search for prevention in a real way, through action. We have more cancer now than ever before—not less.

Beginning with Nixon’s War on Cancer in 1971, cancer cure fundraisers have proliferated. While those efforts are appreciated, those efforts, more attention must be paid to how people live their lives

and to striking down the causes of cancer. This reduction of risk focus means that people will have to live their lives differently.

That change includes radically altering our priorities. As a culture, we have looked the other way as profit rose above human health and the environment.

Cancer has essentially become an expected stage of life. Startling statistics indicate that between 1975 and 2004, increased incidences of primary brain cancer, have increased nearly 40 percent, while leukemia has increased over 60 percent among children 14 years and younger. (Children’s Environmental Health Center-Mount Sinai).

The work to reduce cancer risks also provides an opportunity to address other public health issues that may include diseases such as Obesity or Asthma.

Other than the human toll, cancer’s economic pressure is astounding. The worldwide cancer cost burden was \$895 billion in 2008. (Lancet Oncology).

The time to begin a new fight against cancer, before it starts, is long past. Now, we all must make up for lost time.

The U.S. Congress has recognized our work to reduce cancer risks which includes Less Cancer launching the National Cancer Prevention Day, which Michigan and Virginia will recognize on February 4th.

To read Couzens’ blog, please visit: <http://lesscancer.blogspot.com/2011/12/look-at-cancer-prevention.html>

“Three Latin words mean everything to me. And might mean something to you.”

--Tony Hudimac



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NEWS OF NOTE

A NEW 'STITCH' FOR HUNT COUNTRY NEEDLEPOINTERS



For thousands of years, needlepoint has fascinated creative individuals who love to have something to do with their hands while thinking, sitting, listening and planning. Fortunately for everyone in Hunt Country, Stacey Norris has opened a splendid new needlepoint shop called Stitch that would make an Egyptian stitcher swoon with envy.

Located in the heart of Middleburg at 112 Washington Street, the thoroughly elegant shop welcomes customers to an environment that closely resembles a pretty sitting room, or intriguing art gallery. The only difference is that the art on

the walls is needlepoint canvases of all kinds.

Positioned perfectly on flat black walls, there is a canvas to romance the traditionalist, the amateur and the expert. Stacy understands perfectly where she is, and there are charming dogs, horses, and polo canvases to stitch. But you will also find Beatrice Potter rugs for children's rooms, floral pieces of all kinds, sports cars, ballet slippers, fire trucks, puppies, Louboutin shoes, Hermes dog collars and Chanel iPod covers.

Among the services Stitch offers are custom designs and finishing for customers who simply do not have time to stitch.

"The first weekend we opened, a wonderful mix of delightful customers stopped by," Stacey explained. "So many young people love to needlepoint now, I began when my grandmother taught me when I was a child, and I've loved it ever since."

The stylish young shop keeper, who looks as if she might have just finished walking down the runway at a Michael Kors show, is thoroughly enthusiastic about the art of needlepoint.

"Many don't realize that needlepoint was found in the Cave of the Pharaoh that was discovered by Howard Carter of Tutankamen fame. But there have been so many famous needlepointers," she said.

"Mary Queen of Scots, Marie Antoinette, Queen Elizabeth I, Princess Grace and Martha Washington are among those we know about, but men needlepoint too. Rosey Grier, the famous football player published a book about his love for the art."

Also available at Stitch is a beautiful array of wool, silk and cotton to choose from with the new metallic and alpaca threads very much in evidence. Stacey will custom order any thread her customer desires.

"Although I grew up in Vienna, Virginia, I have always loved the Middleburg area," Stacey continued. "I'm so very happy to open my shop here. It will be my great pleasure to help needlepointers in this area and to teach many others who do not yet know how much enjoyment they will receive by stitching."

Please visit Stacey's new shop at www.taigon.com/shops/stitch. Or telephone 540 687 5990.

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Cost: FREE

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WASHINGTON STREET COLLECTIBLES THE PERFECT PLACE FOR A SHOPPER'S PROWL



"I've always loved design," mused the tall, blond first-time retailer. "My husband, Joe, and I are inveterate shoppers and we finally decided that opening a shop was really the logical solution to our passion."

Whether you absolutely must have a beautiful period Mahjong table or someone you dearly love would be thrilled to have a Comet Ranch sign from the early West, you will definitely find something to intrigue your fancy at Washington Street Collectables.

Three porcelain statues of Japanese wise men sit thoughtfully near a stunning hammered metal console side table, and there will be silver, china and Militaria to delight the most discriminating collector.

A pretty turn-of-the-century oval desk, an incredible 18" square silver chest for storage of a major collection with its original ballasts covered with forest green velvet and a small Edwardian wing back chair covered in plaid silk moiré that could have lived happily in Sherlock Holmes' sitting room all combine to create an atmosphere of history and heritage.

"Our price points will allow shoppers and collectors to find something in every price range here,"

Laurel says. "There is nothing more frustrating than being in a shop that has beautiful things, but learning quickly that you simply cannot afford to buy."

"Our prices will attract the youngest collectors setting up their first home and we will definitely cater to the discerning collector who is always searching for the missing piece in their collection."

A twelve-panel, black lacquered Japanese screen with cherry blossoms, egrets and water lilies will certainly not last long, but passers by have already been asking if they might purchase the pair of metal greyhounds by the door or the painted wagon a Washington, D.C. used 100 years ago that is sitting in the window.

"I love the 1923 Tinsley oil of an old west sheriff reigning in his horse," Laurel said smiling. "But I love everything here. I only hope everyone in Hunt Country will find something they love too."

Please stroll by Washington Street Collectibles when you are next in the Village, and make a note to stop in by Valentines Day. Located across the street from the Middleburg Bank.

FUN DAYS AT FOXCROFT SUMMER PREVIEW

Fun Days @ Foxcroft, an exciting new day camp with a variety of programs for a range of ages, invites all interested families to a Summer Preview on Sunday, February 26 from 1:00-4:00 pm.

The Summer Preview, which will offer prospective campers and their families the opportunity to tour the campus and meet staff members,

will be held at the Athletic/Student Center of Foxcroft School. The School is located four miles north of Middleburg, on Foxcroft Road.

Fun Days @ Foxcroft will offer five one-week sessions, beginning July 9 and running through August 10. The core program, Fun Days Camp, is a traditional summer camp program for ages 5-12. Specialty camps for youngsters up to 15 years

old focusing on riding, tennis, theater, lacrosse, aquatics, and engineering are also available in the mornings. Extended care – "Camp OT" – starting at 7:00 am and running to 6:00 pm, and transportation from convenient locations are available as well.

For more information, please visit our website at www.foxcroft.org or call Foxcroft School at 540.687.4553.

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2011

NEWS OF NOTE

MISSING WATER FOUND

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

suspected that the marshy ground near the creek was the result of anything other than natural processes.

The 300,000-Gallon Cost

The primary direct cost of the leak, estimated at 300,000 gallons a month, 900,000 gallons a quarter, or 3.6 million gallons a year, has been, of course, the cost of purifying the water for consumption before it leaked and then purifying again, for release into the environment.

To that should be added the cost, mechanical, financial and environmental, of constantly pumping and throwing away millions of gallons of well water.

Water rates in Middleburg are currently \$42.36 for the first 2,000 gallons; \$14.94 for each 1,000 gallons thereafter.

As for most small, rural communities with their own systems, Middleburg's rates are predictably higher than for larger communities due, among other things, to the town's smaller customer base over which to spread operating costs.

Rates are also affected by water leaks, aging water meters that tend to slow down over time, and billing accuracy, all problems exacerbated in a town with infrastructure as old as Middleburg, with a population barely approaching 700 people.

Middleburg according to Town Administrator Semmes, has made it a priority this year to address the unaccounted for water loss problem in earnest and in a systematic comprehensive way, including the water leak detection study by VRWA, initiating a meter replacement program, and updating the town's utility billing software.

In Middleburg user fees, as a rule, pay for running and maintaining the water distribution and waste water treatment systems and debt service. Capital improvements, on the other hand, are generally funded by availability and connection fees,

proffers by developers (like Salamander), grants and loans.

Fixing the great leak should, at the very least, reduce processing costs which, by some estimates may have accounted for as much as 15% of the well water treated by the town.

Council member Mark Snyder, Council's chief liaison with the Utilities staff, noted that the Town had been worried about the condition of the Town's water systems for years, but all too often had neither the data, nor the money to do much about them.

The town had little choice, he noted but to approach problems piecemeal, by addressing emergencies, and making such other improvements as grants, fees, and other funding made possible.

As data collection and reporting moved beyond Snyder's first DOS-based spreadsheets, concerns rose.

The Town's auditors began reporting significant differences between the amount of water pumped and purified, and the amount of water billed to the town's citizens and businesses.

To address the billing side of that equation, the Town, this year, is at last replacing its old DOS-based billing software with updated Windows-based software.

Leaks also appear to have multiplied or become worse over time. As many were fixed as the town could find and afford to fix. Water mains on Liberty and Hamilton Streets, for example, were replaced in 2005 and on W. Marshall and N. Madison Streets in 2010.

VRWA'S Reynolds used high tech listening devices to eventually discover the great 300,000 gallon leak, moving from valve to valve and pipe to pipe along the system.

Even then, he said, it would have been difficult if not impossible to pinpoint the loss without the help of Town staff, especially Maintenance Supervisor Marvin Simms and

Charlie Triplett of Loudoun Water

The Virginia Rural Water Association is a private, non-profit organization "whose voting members are small municipal and rural water and wastewater systems across the state."

Town Administrator Semmes and the Council are pleased with the progress made so far this year on the unaccounted for water issue. According to Semmes, they are "committed to continuing to address the issue from all angles with whatever resources they can muster with the hope of making the utility system as efficient as possible to minimize costs to its customers."

New Rules for Middleburg's Police Force

Town Administrator Martha Semmes told the Eccentric on January 19 that a first draft of the long-awaited re-write of the Middleburg Police Department's Rules, Regulations and Standing Orders would be presented to Town Council at its last Thursday work session in January. Copies could not made available to the Eccentric before press time, Semmes noted, because she was loathe to release them to the public before members of Council had had an opportunity to read and review them.

The new rules were reportedly drafted by Middleburg's new Police Chief, Bill Klugh with the assistance of the Town Administrator, who had already collected and distributed a small collection of comparable documents from small-town Police departments across the state. Chief Klugh is well known, within the state and nationally, as an expert on community policing.

Pressure to review, revise, and in some cases adopt for the first time, rules and regulations governing how policemen in Middleburg interact with citizens and visitors arose immediately after the co-founder and Editor-in-Chief of the Middleburg

Eccentric was, deliberately lured into a well-planned, very public, well-publicized and humiliating arrest on November 30, 2010.

Falsely charged with fraud, in an amount totaling less than \$9,000, the Eccentric Editor, a 67-year old grandmother and community leader, was lured to her daughter's restaurant under false pretences at the height of the 2010 Christmas session and once there, surprised, arrested, handcuffed, and paraded down Federal Street in a cold misting rain by a contingent of no less than five well-armed policemen, including the former Middleburg Chief of Police.

Pictures of the arrest appeared the next day on the front page of the Loudoun Times Mirror, which paid \$200 for pictures taken by a photographer who had been alerted to the date, place and time of the arrest.

Court testimony and his own emails later revealed Middleburg's former Chief of Police had played a major role in the set up and execution of the arrest and had himself leaked the time, date and place of the pending arrest, contrary to State Police guidelines.

At December, 2010, regular meeting of Middleburg Town Council the Publisher of the Eccentric publicly submitted a formal complaint and a series of questions about the Town's guidelines (or lack of them) governing police conduct in such cases.

Subsequent investigation by the Eccentric revealed significant inconsistencies in the rules governing the Middleburg Police Department, including serious flaws in the department's chain of command. (No one, for example, really knew to whom the Police Chief reported)

On March 11, 2011, the Town announced that its former Police Chief, Steve Webber, would resign, effective June 28.

Just over two weeks later, at it's March 24, 2011 work session, Council requested that Town Admin-

istrator Semmes, Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk, Council Member Bundles Murdock, and the Police Chief at the time, Steve Webber, "develop recommendations to clarify and expand the existing policies regarding the supervision of the Police Chief position and other police officers."

After nearly a year the department's chain of command has been clarified (the Chief reports directly to the Town Administrator) and a new Chief has been hired.

The draft guidelines presented on January 26, 2012, will, however, represent the Town's first formal reply to the questions lodged by the Eccentric in December, 2010.

According to Town officials the draft general orders and special orders will cover three key topics: Arrest Procedures, Use of Force, and Prisoner Care-Transport.

At the January regular session of Council Chief Klugh did not mention his forthcoming guidelines, but reported that "December was "a good month", with "crime numbers being consistent with the past - meaning they were low."

He further advised Council that his officers have "completed their annual fire arms qualification and use-of-force training," presumably consistent with the draft guidelines scheduled for presentation on January 26..

Other News

At its January meeting Council unanimously approved a resolution of appreciation for the work of all those involved in the Town's 2011 "Christmas in Middleburg" celebrations.

Mayor Davis announced that the Middleburg Library Advisory Board would now be sending written reports, unless there was something special upon which they wanted to report.

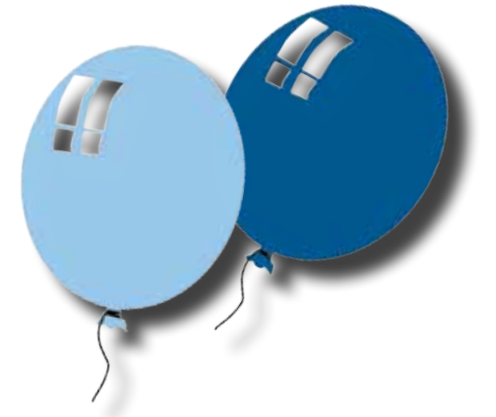
Stacy Sheets, Marketing Communication Manager for Visit Loudoun, appeared before Council to present their latest video, featuring the Mosby Heritage Area Association's Director of Education, Rich Gillespie. Visit Loudoun, she noted, "has produced over forty videos showcasing Loudoun County, one of which earned an Emmy Award."

Janet Clarke, the newly elected Blue Ridge District representative to the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors appeared before Council and expressed her pleasure and honor at being elected. She was, she said, "elected to serve the people"; that she was looking forward to working with Council, and that it should consider her "at its disposal."

Town Administrator Semmes announced that she is already deep into the annual budgeting process and would have "something for Council's review" during its February work session.

Middleburg's Economic Development Coordinator, Cindy Pearson announced a new event: a Winter Sale to be held throughout the town on February 18 & 19. It would be similar to the Summer Sidewalk Sale, she said, except "merchandise would not be displayed on the sidewalks." Participating businesses will identify themselves on the day of sale by displaying blue and white balloons.

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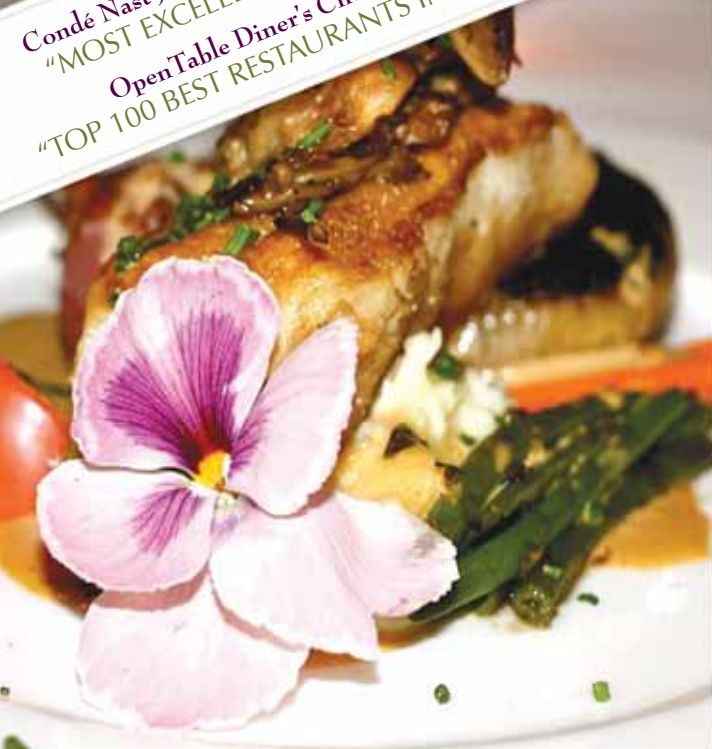
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A VISIT LOUDOUN DESTINATION RESTAURANT

EDITOR'S DESK

2012: A GOOD START

Middleburg's Town Staff has begun the new year by delivering good news on two fronts.

Water

With the help of the Virginia Water Resources Association the town appears to have both found and addressed the mystery of Middleburg's "Missing Water," an effort which first reports indicate may prevent the loss of some 300,000 gallons of purified water a month from the town's distribution system.

What is important about this news is not that it took so long to address the problem but that it has been addressed at long last, as part of an ongoing and systematic effort to correct the system's deficiencies.

Thanks . . . and congratulations.

Police

Working together, Middleburg's new Police Chief, Bill Klugh, and Town Administrator Martha Semmes have delivered to Town Council draft revisions of critical parts of the Middleburg Police Department's Rules, Regulations and Standing Orders. Council began formal consideration of the changes at its last work session in January.

Council and staff began to re-eval-

uate those rules and regulations after formal complaints about the conduct of the former Middleburg Police Chief were lodged by the Eccentric, following the arrest and public humiliation of the newspaper's editor on November 30, 2010, on charges that later proved to be unsubstantiated.

Since the events of November 30, 2010, Town Administrator Semmes has been assigned personal responsibility for oversight of the department.

Acting in that capacity she worked with Middleburg's officers to manage the force after the June 28 retirement of former Chief Webber, and led the recruitment, hiring and integration of a new and well-qualified Chief.

The new Chief, Bill Klugh, in turn, has gotten to know the police force, the town, and the people he serves. He has hired and trained a new officer, and worked with Semmes to draft rules and regulations that will, we hope and believe, prevent what happened on the streets of Middleburg on November 30 from ever happening again.

A good start.

We look forward to both further progress, and unwavering dedication to the oversight required to ensure that Middleburg enjoys both clean water and sound law enforcement.

LETTER

Dear Editor,

Richard Engberg provided some concerns about uranium mining. Let me add a few.

Underground miners in the 1940s, 50s etc developed cancer from inhaling a radioactive gas (Radon) and radioactive dust and from handling their food with dusty hands.

Open pit mines will have radioactive dust blown downwind.

In situ leaching may result in local high concentrations of uranium oxide which, if in conjunction with carbonaceous material (Coal, peat etc) may result in an active reaction. This occurred some millions of years ago in African deposits of uranium ore.

The Union of Concerned Scientists could check this out. 120 million pounds of ore at 2% concentration is equivalent to 3 million tons of material. Disposal is a problem. In the west, the residual ore after leaching (still radioactive) sent dust downwind to sparsely settled areas. Virginia is not sparsely settled. To reduce the mound of residue, some was used to pave roads covered lightly with oil. I suspect many downwind children eventually had cancer. Data should be available to verify or dispose of this conjecture.

entists could check this out.

For several years Purple has been responsible for counting in Section 11 of Calmes Neck Circle, centered on Route 7's Shenandoah River crossing. Section 11 contains about 10,000 acres of farmland, wetland and forest in the southwest corner of Loudoun County, a diversified habitat appearing superficially similar to what it was 100 years ago. Most large farms are in open space easement or an agricultural district. Effect of limited new construction on smaller lots is partially offset by abandoned older houses.

Now some history: During those 112 years "Progress" happened. Roads were paved. Population grew. Agriculture became mechanized. Chemical pesticides were introduced. Bald Eagle population

George Kaplan
Haymarket, VA

CHRISTMAS BIRD COUNT PURPLE

BRUCE SMART

For 112 years, at year end the National Audubon Society has conducted a census of bird species and numbers, now by sampling in 1700 defined "Circles" across the nation. Volunteer counters enter the crisp outdoors, freed from holiday overindulgence and Redskin-related disappoint-

ments, joyfully oblivious to current political rancor. It's a healthy, happy, useful beginning for a new year.

But first, some ecological basics. Each living species requires habitat providing food, shelter and climate suitable to its particular needs. Changes in the makeup of bird populations reflect habi-

tat changes, whether of natural or human origin. Birds are sensitive, mobile and migratory – excellent barometers of Earth's environmental health. Audubon's counts provide a century-long picture of what is happening to the ecology of our nation, important for conservation planning. Homo sapiens cannot survive if the "web of life" which supports his species is destroyed. On the other hand, if homo sapiens disappears, the planet will live on happily without him. It's our choice.

The Northern Virginia winter bird list totals 69 species "regularly occurring," and 42 "occurring in small numbers". Over the years Section 11 has recorded all but a few, but the most in a single winter count is 54. 2012's count team totaled 11, ranging from professional naturalist Byron to inquisitive newcomer Carole. In between were four experienced amateurs, two sporadic enthusiasts and three tolerant spouses. Most had done previous counts together, so the ambiance at mealtime was that of a happy reunion, masking a determination to find at least 50 species. To do so we divided into three area teams.

The morning climax moment for Byron, his wife Valeria and Purple came at a

crashed around 1950, when DDT entered their food chain. Then DDT was replaced by less damaging insecticides; recently, every count has found Eagles. Mechanical corn pickers replaced hand picking. Some might decry "killing jobs," others claim "improved productivity." Harvesting machines spilled some corn. Result: a multitude of Canada Geese now winter locally. The nation's forests were cut, destroying Wild Turkey habitat. Now, the Blue Ridge forest has regrown, and Turkeys are again numerous.

At lunch our three teams combined results - 48 species. Then several members departed for family duties, leaving a cleanup team of three to scour likely coverts, eventually adding five more species: final total 53. Ten days later I still see those sun-lit Canada Geese, circling overhead under a blue January sky.

We live in a wonderful place, surrounded by natural beauty. We are its stewards, so that those who come after us – humans and a myriad of other creatures – may continue long into the future to enjoy what we have today. Christmas Bird Counts will provide information to direct conservation efforts and strengthen personal commitments to that end. Jobs versus productivity" will not matter if we lose man's own habitat.

The morning climax moment for Byron, his wife Valeria and Purple came at a

THE FINAL FOUR

BLUE NOTES

DANIEL MORROW

Haves, Have Nots, and the Last Men Standing

GINGRICH

HAS: Hubris and SC

Newt believes he is a "force of history," the embodiment of the best of best of Reagan, Toynbee, Faulkner, Casanova, Demosthenes and the Pope.. Collecting the baseball cards doesn't make a man a player.

LACKS: Honor

The House and two of Newt's wives discovered that his oath was not worth the breath it took to swear it. Divorce followed. Investigations continue. See Trust.

ROMNEY

HAS: Money and NH

Born to wealth, Mitt now claims he "earned" HIS millions the hard way, "disposing" of assets bought on the cheap, "fixed up" and either mortgaged, sold off, or pushed over the cliff into bankruptcy. You got fired. He got paid. See: Trust, Real Estate, Used Cars.

LACKS: Trust

Two thirds or more of the GOP vote consistently for someone (anyone) but Mitt. The currently passing parade of unelectable alternatives speaks to both their sincerity and their desperation. See: Used cars.

SANTORUM

HAS: Faith and Iowa

Rick believes in his heart of heart that he has special insight into the mind of God and has been called upon by the deity not only to enlighten the rest of us, but to pass legislation that will save us from our own pastors, friends and families, not to mention science, history, technology, and reason.

LACKS: Ordination

Who, the rest of us want to know, anointed Rick as God's spokesman on earth? See Gingrich, Romney, Paul and the beatitudes.

PAUL

HAS: Conviction

Ron is a true believer, with an heir apparent, and a hard core of young disciples carrying dog-eared copies of Atlas Shrugged and Hayek's Road to Serfdom. He would rather be right than President. Half that wish will come true. He doesn't care.

LACKS: Perspective

Ron still lives in a fantasy world and still believes "government" is always "them" and never "us." He forgets that the America to which he wants to "return" was never the American he remembers. He will learn that Rand is not Rand and Then is not Now. See: History, economics, gold standard.



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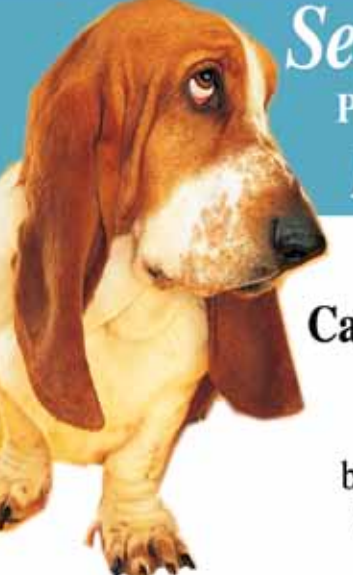
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EDITOR'S DESK

VAN METRE HOMES GARNERS TRASH AWARD IN 2011

2011 FOXCROFT ROAD PIG PEN AWARDS

WILLIAM H. MCCORMICK VMD

2011 was the tenth consecutive year of volunteer action to control trash on the Foxcroft Road. The author conducts this survey as a single observer. However, there are others who also pick up trash on the Foxcroft Road, such as the Middleburg Hunt and the Foxcroft students themselves. Therefore, if anything, the numbers here noted are understated. At a value of 1085, the year 2011 was a shade above the ten year average of 1052.

To aid those first time readers and as a reminder to past readers of this column, the course of trash collection is a 4.6 mile route of dirt and hard road that includes portions of

the Polecat Hill Rd. (Rt. 696), the Foxcroft Rd. (Rt. 626), the Snake Hill Rd. (Rt. 744), and the Millville Rd. (Rt. 743).

In the past year, 1086 individual pieces trash were retrieved from the Foxcroft Road, and most of the trash was recycled. The perennial nicotine champion, Marlboro, accounted for 68% of the tobacco total with Newport second at 15%, and Camel 14%. The relative numbers of tobacco products increased their percentage from 5% in 2010 to 8% of total trash in 2011, the second best year in the last ten. One wonders if Rick Perry could cash in on the publicity from his presidential campaign, and become the new Marlboro Man. Instead of diseased organs, the Marl-

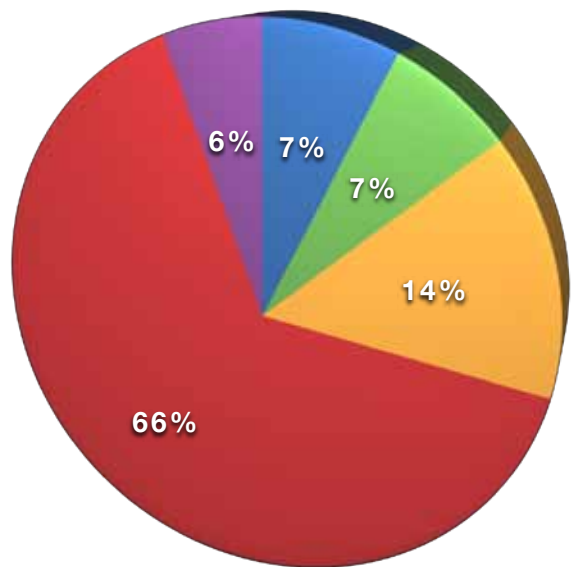
boro pack could be graced with the jackpot visage of a presidential contender, and he would not have to say a word, which in his case would be a big advantage.

In the New Age- Soft Drink category, the competition was between PepsiCo and Coca Cola (76 vs. 103 in absolute numbers or 26% vs. 34% of the soft drink group). The order of the two companies reversed from 2010. Coke was able to establish a clear separation from its oldest rival, PepsiCo, which has been the winner for six out of the ten last years. Warren Buffett is bullish on Coca Cola management and maybe with reason given Coke's surge in popularity vs. PepsiCo.

The Fast Food group suffered a regression to the mean by going from 21% of total trash in 2010 to 13% in 2011. Mickey D's accounted for 42% of fast food and 7-Eleven 26%. Fast food is a money maker so much so that the industry produced an executive to stand for President of the United States. Herman Cain was articulate and personable but seemed to have difficulty when several witnesses came forward to accuse the candidate of making statements that could be described as "something other than the truth." The scurilous accusations of the witnesses did not please the voters, who could also have been concerned about the compensation scheme in the fast food industry, whereby the executives are compensated in seven figures and all others receive minimum wage. Could the "Herminator" have replicated for America what had worked for the fast food industry? Thankfully we will never know.

In the Beer, Wine, and Booze category, Coor's, last year's surprise winner, must take third place to In Bev AB, the parent company of Anheuser-Busch, first and Corona/Modelo second and Miller/Coor's third. The later two were separated by only two containers. Budweiser accounted for a full 11% of all road trash. Corona/Modelo only accounted for 4% of total road trash. Budweiser with 115 pieces of individual

% of Total Years Trash by Type



● Tobacco
● Fast Food
● Generic Cups
● Food Products
● Beverage Containers

trash easily exceeded Coca-Cola's absolute total of 9% (102).

This year the "Egregious Eight" accounted for 50% of all road trash. They are ranked in order of gross trash production:

1. In Bev-AB (115)
2. Coca Cola (102)
3. Marlboro. (79)
4. PepsiCo (76)
5. Mac Donald's (61)
6. Corona/Modelo (40)
7. Miller/Coor's (38)
8. 7-Eleven (34)

In 2011 there was an ebullient entrant into the trash competition in the plastic road sign category, usually an afterthought in the numerical competition. Van Metre Homes was the winner in this category having successfully positioned 17 school bus yellow 22" by 44" signs in the VDOT right of way along the portion of the Foxcroft Road in this survey. The signs directed potential customers toward a "speculation home" on Lieth Lane, just northeast of Foxcroft. The signs said that

a 3-8 acre "spec home" could be had for low 700,000's. Loudoun County taxpayers have graciously subsidized these houses to a tune of \$20,000 in services per house. One might also note that there are more than a few other properties for sale in Middleburg, but the agents usually refrain from putting a forest of signs along the public right of way. One might also think that the presence of plastic signs might degrade the value of said houses given that people generally buy houses in the country to avoid suburban style marketing.

The question remains as to what to do with the signs. Loudoun County officials note that, since no permits are granted to place temporary plastic signs on public or private lands, the signs are by definition illegal. County officials estimate that nearly 50,000 such signs have been removed from Loudoun County roads in the last three years. The Van Metre signs were placed surreptitiously at night and removed at daybreak by citizens. Thus, the signs did not direct anyone except for the public's annoyance with Van Metre Homes. Housing developers have great respect for the law, especially when they can get it to work for them. Why then would a business go out of its way to break the law? Maybe the law could be changed? If Don Trump, prince of developers, were to be elected president maybe these pesky, job killing ordinances would not exist. Chances are that Don Trump would still seek the presidency, if he were drafted by the free market wing of the GOP. We then could unleash free expression by means of plastic signs advertising fast food, antiques, cigarettes, beer, or whatever other entity was dis-satisfied with our current level of road pollution. Ron Paul could also be expected to free developers from the current unreasonable and unconstitutional sign restrictions (there is nothing in the Constitution prohibiting plastic signs).

This year's Foxcroft Road Pig Pen grand prize is awarded to Van Metre Homes, which has gone out of its way to foul its own nest. The liberated plastic signs can be repossessed at the Loudoun County landfill along with fifty thousand of their spiritual comrades.

PASTIMES

HELP OUR BEES

THE PLANT LADY

KAREN REXRODE

Any day with temperatures over 55 degrees brings out the honey bees. The infrequent *Helleborus foetidus* or early flowering witch hazel will be loaded with pollen seekers, a winning strategy for both parties, one is pollinated (a sure bet), the other feeds. These social bees have been beneficial to mankind, in fact keeping honeybees dates back 9,000 years. Scenes painted on cave walls have verified our co-existence and ancient Chinese and Egyptian cultures kept honeybees in hives made of wicker.

The poor honey bee has been assailed by two parasitic mites, partly responsible for what is now referred to as colony collapse disorder or CCD. No single reason has been attributed to the unusually high occurrence of CCD, contributing factors include pesticides (even the miticide used to treat the parasitic mites that attack them), starvation (not enough

sources of pollen) and a lack of immune suppression, which just leads to more questions. Their numbers have dropped all over the world which is very scary. Imagine entire fruit fields that would need pollinated by hand. Imagine the cost of that hand pollinated fruit!

The act of locating flowers by social bees, like honey bees is quite interesting. It's called a bee dance. The mapping or location of each flower is carried back to the hive where the information is passed along as a dance that indicates the location of the flower, relative to the sun. If the source of the food is particularly good, others will join in the dance, altering the dance as the sun moves. Studies have shown that their accuracy can be rated to within twenty degrees in direction and no more than fifteen percent for distance. Three miles from the hive is their working area which is amazing for such a small creature. On many occasions I have seen honeybees on a nocturnal flower prior to its

opening. They will gather and force themselves into the flower while it's still tightly rolled, clearly a bee's dance provided the road map. Imagine having the ability to convey a map (so well) with little more than a dance? As a directionally challenged adult, I find it fascinating.

If you would like to do your part in helping with honey bees or pollination in general, plant native flowering plants, they survive better, flower more. Secondly, encourage orchard mason bees. These solitary bees breed via tubes, like open ends of bamboo or holes drilled in wood. Native bees, non-aggressive (like the honey-bee), they are blue-black in color, hard workers and no threat to honey-bees. Mason bee homes can be found at many nurseries and garden centers. Every little bit helps and best of all, your garden will thank-you, maybe even your neighbor's garden.



THE ARTIST'S PERSPECTIVE

TOM NEEL

In my lengthy time in the art world I've watched a lot of trends, from pop art to posters, portraits, plein air and prints. From the love of the masters to even animation cells. This world of art, and I'm talking about two dimensional art now, has been a roller coaster of artistic and collector trends and preferences. All of it valid I suppose, as the market finds what it likes. But interestingly enough, now possibly a little territorially threatened by an invention called the flat screen TV.

The best friend of a painting has always been the wall. For without a wall a painting has no place to be. Art on walls dates back to that of the walls of caves and marches forward through time, recording history, the world, its people, their lifestyles and belongings. It has recorded passion for color and texture too and in a varied spectrum of styles and mediums. But little credit has really ever been given to the wall (Pink Floyd aside) and its importance to art. Yes, the easel has poorly substituted along the way as a support for a painting, but it pales by comparison to the wall. What would the muralist be without walls? But for sure, what would the fine art painter be without them? Nowhere.

When televisions first entered the home, they replaced the radio as the place families would huddle. Back then the TV as they became known, was bulky and heavy with cathode ray tubes (CRT). It needed a

stand and as time went on even became a piece of furniture. Eventually though they all became black boxes and as they became bigger, more found their ways into hutches or armoires, where they could be hidden when off.

As time went on their modest expanding size wasn't enough, as upper end homes began building home theaters, rear projection TVs started to surface and then came the plasma. The first one I ever saw was of okay quality, cost \$13,000, and was still pretty heavy. But today LCD screens are far less expensive, can be very thin and designed at least as an option, to be wall mounted and wall mounted they are becoming.

As an artist, I define walls in two ways, focal point and secondary. A focal point defines a room. It is the place where the eye should go first as you enter a room and as far as I'm concerned, the place that should not only define the room's interior design, but the room's owner as well. Place a landscape of the Virginia countryside there, it speaks of a sense of place. A portrait, speaks of admiration. Modern art, more likely a passion for color, texture and shape, but a TV? Well, that says something altogether different.

I have to share at this point that my wife Linda and I own "a" TV and we both watch and enjoy it, but I hope it doesn't define us or our home. I can see however with 24 hour news and hundreds of channels, the lure to it. Like a moth to a flame we are drawn in and add

in the flat screen on your PC and phone - the web, youtube, online shopping, video games and the virtual world of it all easily becomes consuming. Trust me, I'm certainly not above some of this addiction myself and I'm convinced that many of us given a single choice of something to stay on when the power goes out, most would chose the TV or PC to withstand our powerless time. We would so likely pass over cooking by watching the Food Network and heat ourselves on someone else's reality, only to parish in front of CNN.

I read an article dated from September of 2010, speaking of the then plunge in LCD sales which stated, "Shipments of panel TVs rose to 52 million in the second quarter, but "only" 38.7 million TVs were actually shipped to retailers." You can stop rubbing your eyes now, you read that correctly. What are we doing, using them as coffee tables too? Weren't we all just recently singing, "Deck the walls with flat screen TVs, fa la la la la - la la la la! Keep them on so we won't miss anything, fa la la

As artists our saving grace is the favorable trend for these flat screened monsters to be on motorized devices which either lower them into cabinets or raise them into ceilings. Off to heaven or hell, but at least sometimes hidden away. Meanwhile art auctions thrive. Still coveted as a possession of depth and true emotion. Art is one which stands the test of time and that which we can be proudly represented by as our

future inhabitants look back on us. But sorry, no it doesn't have a remote.

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PASTIMES

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ALEX CUDABACK

Alex Smith's coronation following the San Francisco 49ers win against the New Orleans Saints two weeks ago was, probably, a little premature.

With one minute left in the third quarter against the Giants this past Sunday, Smith had completed 6 of 14 passes for 138 yards and 2 touchdowns.

Not bad, until you consider 2 of those 6 completions, 101 of those yards, and both of those touchdowns had gone to Vernon Davis, Smith's talented but mercurial tight end.

Point? 4 for 12 for 37 yards through all but 60 seconds of the third quarter isn't the stat line people who got so caught up in Smith's performance against the Saints were expecting.

Bottom line? In today's pass-happy NFL, grinders like the 49ers, regardless of regular season success, aren't going to have what it takes to lift the a Lombardi Trophy in February.

You need a quarterback who can bomb it with regularity every once in a while.

I know, I know.... Both the Packers and the Saints bit the dust pretty early. Sure. But both the Packers and the Saints, while captained by two of the premier quarterbacks of their generation, are also hamstrung by defenses with one glaring weakness.

Neither team puts consistent pressure on the opposing quarterback, and while the Packers led the league in interceptions that's more a reflection of their secondary individually than their defense as a whole. Facing opponents with better offenses generally and better quarterbacks specifically, teams that can't put that other quarterback on the ground consistently are at a severe disadvantage.

So, to win the Super Bowl

in the 21st century, you need a premier, or better than average, quarterback on one side of the ball, and on the other you need speed rushers and maulers who are going to make the other quarterback so unhappy for most of the day that he won't be able to slice and dice the rest of your defense to shreds.

Which is why I picked the Giants and the Patriots to be in the Super Bowl at the very beginning of the season.

I'm sure I've got it written down here somewhere....

Ok, so that might be a slight exaggeration of the facts. Or a monstrous one. Whatever. You can't prove a thing.

But the bottom line is that the Patriots-Giants matchup in store for us on February 5th should be exactly the kind of game everyone hopes for at the beginning of the year: two potent offenses facing off against two angry, pin-their-ears-back defenses.

(Yes, yes, I know, the Patriots defense was ridiculed much of the season, and gave up more yardage than Napoleon in the Louisiana Purchase. But that's absurd. Who cares how many yards they gave up. Bill Belichick's employed a bend but don't break defense forever. Just look at how many total points the Pats gave up during the season; suddenly their defense jumps from second worst to middle-of-the-pack average.)

Interestingly enough, the Giants lead the postseason with 9 sacks. The other two teams with 9 sacks? San Francisco and Houston, both of which have been eliminated and neither of which had the kind of maestro they needed running their offense.

What are the odds the team with the next highest number of sacks also had a stellar quarterback? Pretty good.

It's the Patriots, with 8.



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And though it pains me, this being the 10-year anniversary of the Tuck Rule game that sent my poor, beloved, bedraggled Raiders into a tailspin from which they've never fully recovered, I'm leaning towards the Patriots to win in February.

Not because my heart's in it. Far from it. Trust me, I'd love Eli to win another one. But I just think, at the end of the day, Brady has more weapons at his disposal. Sadly.

Patriots 34 – Giants 30

###

Sad times for Penn State. Considering everything that's come to light over the last few months in State College, I still believe Joe Paterno did more good than harm over his decades in the happy valley.

But I'm still stunned every once in a while by Paterno's strangely myopic attitudes about what may or may not have happened to those young boys at the hands of Jerry Sandusky.

Paterno claimed he'd, "never heard of, of, rape and a man." Really? An 85 year-old man, a Catholic, in the age of the internet, in the 21st century, was completely unfamiliar, had never heard of, pedophilia and forced sodomy? Really??

He went on to say, "I'm happy in one sense that we called attention....that this is going on. It's kind of been like a hidden thing." Seriously? Child abuse, pedophilia and rape are, "like a hidden thing"?

Hidden from whom?

Only those who choose not to look, Joe, only those who choose not to look.

Sad.

Alex can be reached at
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Photograph by Mona Botwick

ASK DR. MIKE

DR. MICHAEL OBERSCHNEIDER

Dr. Mike,

Are you familiar with Parental Alienation Syndrome? My husband and I are separated, and he is saying horrible things about me to our children, which in turn is creating real problems for them. I believe that they are suffering emotionally as a result of his trying to turn our children against me. I recently met with an attorney who told me about Parental Alienation Syndrome and my rights to fight my husband in court for custody due to his husband's behavior. What are your thoughts?

A in Loudoun County

A, Parental Alienation Syndrome was first termed by forensic psychiatrist, Dr. Richard Gardner, in response to

growing custody litigation in the 1980's. It essentially involves the brainwashing of a child by one parent against the other parent with the child's active participation over time in the denigration and alienation of a parent. The justification of the denigration and alienation is unfounded. As a disorder, it is seen primarily during child-custody disputes and cases. The syndrome is controversial, and in my opinion and experience, most courts are conservative when considering it unless there is convincing evidence that a child is being psychologically harmed by a parent. You mention that your children are "suffering emotionally" due to your husband's behavior. If your attorney intends on arguing that your husband is alienating your children from you, your attorney will need to prove that by having psychological evaluations and parenting capacity evalua-

tions conducted on your husband and children. Your husband's attorney, may however, request similar evaluations of you and your children with an independent evaluator of his own. The involved attorneys may also eventually order a formal custody evaluation to determine issues of visitation and custody if you and your husband are unable to resolve your differences as a divorcing couple. Of course, my points are all general here not knowing the specifics of your situation. I recommend you follow your attorney's lead on this but keep in mind that Parental Alienation Syndrome cases can be hard to prove and win.

About this column: Dr. Michael Oberschneider, director of Ashburn Psychological Services, offers advice each month based on questions sent by readers. To submit a question email DrMike@mbecc.com

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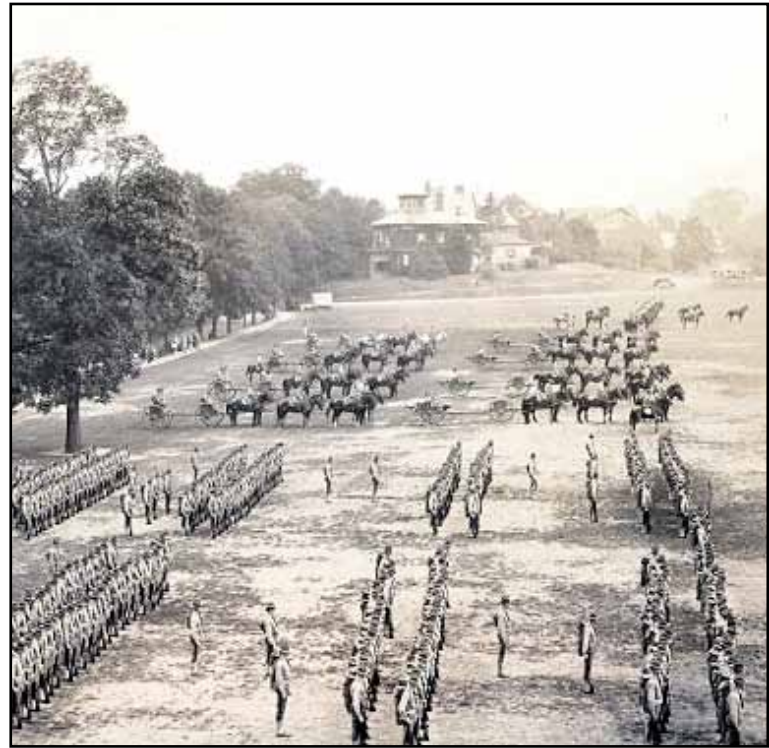
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THE BLACKBURN MURDER



DANIEL MORROW

This is the story of the 1854 murder of VMI Cadet Tom Blackburn, the trials that followed, and the impact of those events on young men and women who would all too soon face the larger trials of the American Civil War.

Part 7: The Gathering Storm

“And what most stimu-

lates their courage is that their squadrons . . . are composed of families and clans. Close by them, too, are those dearest to them, so that they hear the shrieks of women, the cries of infants. They are to every man the most sacred witnesses of his bravery -- they are his most generous applauders..”

-- Tacitus

On Saturday morning, January 14, 1854, Cadet Tom

Blackburn walked across the VMI parade grounds to the Samuel McDowell Moore house to visit his cousin, Mary Evelyn Anderson. He arrived to find her with her Aunt Evalina Moore entertaining his friend, classmate and former roommate, Cadet Alexander Broadnax Bruce.

“Sandy” Bruce was one of the most eligible young bachelors in Virginia, if not the entire south. He was the third son of James Coles Bruce, the builder of “Berry Hill” in Halifax County, Virginia, a planter, businessman (heir to a chain of successful country stores) land speculator, and the owner of more slaves than there were free white citizens of Lexington.

Though rich and handsome, Bruce was by no means the sharpest blade ever drawn from a VMI scabbard. At the time he stood dead last in the class of 1854. With little or no hope of improvement.

When Blackburn walked in conversation at the Moore house turned to mail: letters written, letters received, and how important they were to young men and women far from home.

When Blackburn described a letter he had “written recently,” Evalina Moore interrupted to ask if he had seen the “very ridiculous”

letter Charles Burks Christian had written to his cousin Mary Evelyn, describing it it as absolutely “calculated to produce laughter.”

Blackburn asked Mary Evelyn if the story were true.

When she reluctantly admitted she had, indeed received a letter from Christian, Aunt Evalina suggested she show it to Blackburn and Bruce, just for fun.

Mary refused.

Mary’s aunt said she “didn’t think there would be any harm in showing it, as it was something rich.”

Mary refused again, insisting the letter was really “nothing.”

When that didn’t convince the group, she, complained that she really didn’t feel like going all the way upstairs to fetch it.

At that point Aunt Evalina offered to send a “servant.”

Mary gave in, went to her room, fetched Christian’s note, and gave it to her cousin Tom to read, later swearing that she, herself, had read the note only once and that “hastily” before giving it to Blackburn.

By all accounts her cousin’s first reading of Christian’s note elicited nothing more serious than laughter.

Mary Evelyn said read the letter quietly to himself, except for “ . . . the Latin sentences which he read aloud . . . ” and that he “ . . . smiled several times when reading it.” (Christian had apparently lifted the Latin from a medieval love poem)

Sandy Bruce said Blackburn laughed at every single line, English or Latin, but agreed with Mary that he had read only the Latin passages aloud..

After the “reading” Aunt Evalina pointedly reminded everyone that Christian’s note had read aloud “in confidence” remembering no doubt that Christian had specifically asked that Mary Evelyn send it back to him as soon as she had read it.

For her part, Mary Evelyn said she had “no thought” that the note “contained anything that would create a difficulty” between her cousin and Mr. Christian” or “anything that my cousin could take exceptions to.”

Mary Evelyn Anderson, in fact, firmly believed that the “calumniator” referred to in Christian’s missive was not her cousin Tom at all, but another Cadet she had known for about a year and a half, James White Humes of Abingdon, Virginia.

Humes was both a classmate and close friend of Tom Blackburn. Another of Humes’ friends, Robert “Kit” Carson, also from Abingdon was one of Blackburn’s roommates

Humes would, indeed, later testify that he had heard that Christian “ . . . had made an engagement with Miss Anderson to escort her to church” at least a week before the murder.

He told Blackburn “immediately”, he said, not only about the “arrangement” but about rumors already in circulation, that Christian was to be considered “a suitor” of Miss Anderson.

Humes then strongly advised Blackburn to keep Mary Evelyn away from the man, later swearing that “Christian’s reputation so far as I was acquainted with it was not such . . . that it would be to his cousin’s credit to go to church with him”

As for who, if anyone, should take the matter up with Christian, Humes was certain of at least one thing: it was not to be Cadet James White Humes.

“I considered Blackburn more responsible to Christian than I was,” Humes later testified. In fact, Humes said, he did not consider himself “responsible at all.”

Blackburn would soon clear up all confusion about who said what, about whom, and when.

Humes would become responsible, assigned by the Commanant of VMI to carry the news of Tom Blackburn’s death to the Blackburn family

Sandy Bruce would be spared the indignity of ranking last in his class by the granting of posthumous degree, issued to a Cadet who would have no grades for his last semester: Bruce’s friend and confidant, Tom Blackburn..

To be continued

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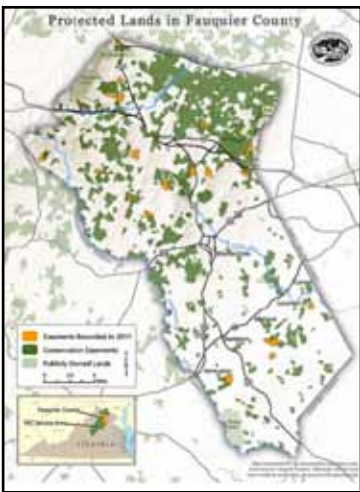
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CHANDLER VAN VOORHIS



A conservation easement is considered a gift to the nation and Fauquier County can be considered one of the nations crown jewel with some 94,500 acres permanently protected. With nearly one out of four acres under conservation easements and much of it center in the Scott District, Fauquier is providing

a national model of balance and sustainability.

For 40 years, the Piedmont Environmental Council has been at the vanguard of protecting the rural heritage of America’s Cradle of Democracy. With success comes new challenges and that horizon is increasingly centered on protecting our watershed.

While easements protect the land from future development, they do not necessary protect our water from non-point source pollution from agriculture run off. Today, agriculture is one of the chief culprits of water pollution. This pollution typically comes from farmers applying too much fertilizer and chemicals to crops and/or allowing cattle to freely roam the stream.

Fortunately, many farmers are beginning to understand the importance of fencing the cattle away from the streams and/or installing riparian buffers. Fencing out cattle from streams can stabilize stream banks, improve water quality, reduce erosion and improve the health of the cattle. Likewise, installing riparian buffers usually require planting trees and grasses along

the edges of streams and creeks. These strips of land help to both stabilize the stream banks while absorbing agriculture run-off before it makes its way to our stream.

Both fencing and riparian buffers help to create a balance and a linkage between private activity and public good. As one of the fathers of conservation, Gifford Pinchot once wrote, “the connection between forests and rivers is like that between a father and son. No forests, no rivers.”

Coupled with easements, these actions provide an enhanced layer of protection.

The other threat to our watershed comes from shortsighted policy. There is a growing push by Del. Lingamfelter (R-Woodbridge/31st) and others to eliminate requirements that developers and homeowners enter into a performance bond or have insurance before installing Al-

ternative Onsite Septic Systems. So, if developers are not on the hook, guess who is? We the taxpayers are.

And what is the failure rate of Alternative Onsite Septic Systems? A report from the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors indicates that 52% of these systems have failed within the first few years of operation. What Del. Lingamfelter is proposing is nothing more than the sub-priming of farmland while creating moral hazard let alone a serious threat to clean water.

So while we have a lot to be proud of, there are hurdles ahead of us.

To help address these challenges, on March 7th at 6 p.m. at the Middleburg Community Center, a Forum will take place to discuss the state of our watershed and to provide information about various landowner assistance programs, financing opportunities of riparian restora-

tion and fencing as well as the chance to learn what other friends and neighbors are doing to create a more sustainable future.

All landowners in the Goose Creek Watershed are invited and encouraged to participate.

After all, what starts out as a trickle on top of the mountain and runs through our farms ends up as a major source of our drinking water. So the actions we take today to improve how we graze, farm and set policies will be felt downstream and at home for years to come.

Chandler Van Voorhis is Managing Partner of C2I, LLC in Middleburg and a member of the Outdoor Writers Association of America. He can be reached at chandler@c2invest.net.



Get the Biz Buzz!

The Middleburg Business and Professional Association invites you to our February Mixer

Tuesday, February 14
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Zack You will fall in love with Zack! He is a 24 yr. old, 16.3h beautiful chestnut Thoroughbred gelding. Zack was once a famous racehorse. This gentleman gets along with everybody, is healthy, & has no issues. A total sweetheart & loves people.



Princess is a very sweet 5-6 year old Lhasa that has had a rough few years. She is incredibly sweet & friendly & gets along with everyone. This sweet little girl is ready for a pampered life with a family who adores her.

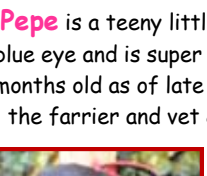
Crumpet is a 2-3 yr. old Cairn Terrier. He loves to be held & gets along with other dogs, but cannot live with cats. He came in with severe flea allergies. He is healthy & has recovered, but is still growing his hair back.



Ebony is a darling kitty born in May of 2011. He has a very affectionate, sweet personality. He gets along well with other cats & would love his own family with which he can snuggle.



Dime & his siblings were born under a local bank to a feral mom. They were very afraid when we brought them in, but have had lots of love from our staff & would love a barn home.



Pepe is a teeny little pony colt with one blue eye and is super sweet. He is about 4 months old as of late October, stands for the farrier and vet & is easy to handle.



Gunner is a medium sized Spaniel mix who is very affectionate, energetic, and gets along well with other dogs. He loves people & has a very easy-going personality. He will need a home with a secure in fenced yard.



Crinkles is an adorable cat who has a huge personality. He was named Crinkles because his ears are crinkled from years of chronic ear infections. He is now very healthy & needs an outdoor or indoor outdoor home with no dogs. He would be a terrific mouser!

Mary is a healthy, petite young adult kitty. She is very sweet, loves attention, & gets along well with other cats. All she wants is a family to call her own.



Salvador is 14 year old Paint gelding who has excellent ground manners, is gentle, very sweet & gets along with everybody. He was severely emaciated when he was rescued but is now very healthy. He is a very special horse!

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Lexi is a 5-6 yr old Shih-tzu that is very sweet & needs a special home. She is on a special diet & requires daily eye medicine. She is housetrained, is good with dogs & good with cats. Lexi will need a quiet home without small children.



ALBERT'S CORNER

A MONTHLY COLUMN FOR PEOPLE WHO SHARE THEIR HOMES WITH FOUR-LEGGED FRIENDS.

ALBERT P. CLARK

I'm always proud to see the tremendous progress happening in the relationships between dogs and people. So many of you regard us as true members of the family and treat us with kindness and respect. The scientific community now acknowledges that our social-cognitive functioning is similar to that of a child (Science Daily, Jan. 5, 2012). It's a good time to be a dog.

While it's true that far too many of us still experience inhumane treatment, there is no doubt that many of us are living pretty amazing lives. For those of us lucky enough to share our lives with people who love us, we eat well, sleep well, play well and thrive. There are a lot of happy pets out there, and I'm thrilled to see it!

Some of the very same people who pamper their dogs, however, often give very little thought to the way other animals are treated. Specifically, the same people who are devoted to the happiness of their four-legged friends might not be very concerned about what happens to their food before it becomes burgers or bacon.

I wish people could remember that we are all sentient beings – including humans, dogs, cows,

sheep and pigs. We're all mammals. We feel emotion. We feel fear. We feel pain.

Please don't get me wrong: I'm not getting on a soapbox about being vegetarian or vegan – that's entirely up to the individual. What I am passionate about is putting an end to factory farming. Decades from now when people come to their senses, the way we treated animals in 2012 will no doubt seem barbaric and ignorant.

What people don't see can hurt them. Turning a blind eye to the horrible injustices that happen to most animals before they give their lives to feed people is simply wrong. All animal lovers have a responsibility to care about what he or she eats and buys, as well as to care about the health and environmental repercussions of factory farms.

The good news is that it's easy to take a stand. Choose certified humane, organic, grass-fed, free-range, local or cruelty-free products. Stop frequenting fast-food restaurants that support factory farms. Sure, making these choices may be more expensive, but it's the only compassionate option. If more people would just stop rewarding companies that mistreat animals, it really could make a difference.

I love that so many people adore their dogs. It feels really good to be on a pedestal. We like the attention. But I'm saddened that my fellow animals don't always enjoy the same kindness from people. I'm disheartened that well-meaning humans unintentionally promote atrocities in the animal world.

If all of this feels a little daunting, it's not. Michael Pollan's books are available to everyone. Food, Inc., is an eye-opening documentary. These and many, many other resources are out there. The ills of factory farms are a very poorly kept secret. The problem is that a lot of people simply don't want to know.

If you haven't taken a stand, there's no time like the present. If you've already taken one, don't be afraid to gently encourage your friends, family and colleagues to do the same. Sweeping change happens when one voice becomes a chorus of voices.

People like to teach us single-word commands. (Speak. Sit. Stay.) I have a gentle command for my animal-loving friends: Care.

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



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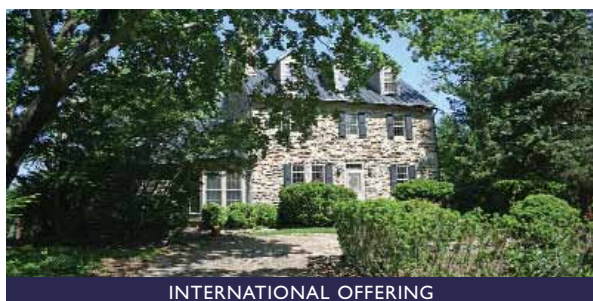
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