Middleburg Eccentric™

Middleburg's Only Locally Owned and Operated Newspaper

Printed using recycled fiber

Volume 10 Issue 2 · www.mbecc.com · May 23, 2013 ~ June 27, 2013

BUY LOCAL

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COMMEMORATION OF THE PRELUDE TO GETTYSBURG Page 3

ISO New Tenants

Daniel Morrow

At the May 9 regular meeting of the Middleburg Town Council, Genie Ford of the Middleburg Business & Professional Association reported on the group's most recent "Landlord Meeting," one of two already scheduled for May.

High on the list of concerns expressed by the dozen or so commercial space landlords in attendance were attracting new tenants, the town's water rates, the impact of the opening of the new Salamander Inn and Spa, and the need to preserve the "unique character" of Middleburg in the midst of what promised to be extraordinary changes in the near future.

According to Ford, many of the landlords were currently "at a loss" about how to fill some of the empty storefronts around town. Some, reportedly, simply "did not know what to do to rent their empty spaces"

All seemed to favor development of a promotional "portfolio" on Middleburg, filled with the latest economic data, visitor counts and shopper demographics, for distribution to those commercial real estate brokers who appeared to stop their search efforts for rentable commercial space "at Route 15."

The landlords' primary goal: to attract unique, interesting new businesses, with "realistic expectations" to Middleburg, and keep them here. The group was clearly not interested in attracting chain stores. The group plans a second meeting on May 29

Town Administrator Martha Semmes noted that she had already begun gathering "information that would present Middleburg in a good light to perspective tenants."

Semmes reported that she has also approached Kennedy Smith, former Director of the National Main Street Center, about consulting services. Smith, said Semmes, "understood small towns" and "was willing to help Middleburg" take advantage of all the new opportunities promised by the fall opening of Salamander.

Funding Change on Pendleton Street

On May 9 Town Council considered and passed a change to Salamander Inn & Spa's proffer of funds to adapt Pendleton Street to serve as the main access route to the front entrance of their new facilities.

Town Planner and Zoning Administrator David Beniamino described the amendment as "a change to the proffers originally submitted by Salamander as a part of their rezoning in 2007." At that time, according to Beniamino, "Salamander was asked to change the features of Pendleton Street at the intersections of Marshall and Washington Streets"

Since then other developments, including a VDOT sidewalk project done last year and a new crosswalk now being planned, led Town staff to believe Salamander's original 2007 proffer was no longer "the best use of Salamander's money at this time".

The amendment allows the town to accept the funds proffered by Salamander immediately, and allows Town Council to be more flexible in the use of the money.

Beniamino noted that the Town Planning Commission had asked the Town Attorney to review the amendment to make sure the money would be spent on the Pendleton, Washington and Marshall intersections.

Prem Devadas, of Salamander Hospitality, affirmed that the proffer amendment was initiated by the Town, not by Salamander, and that his organization considered it a "win-win solution."

Councilmember Kevin Hazard informed Council that "the Planning Commission felt strongly" that the money should be left clearly earmarked for its original purposes, given that "the Town did not know what was going to happen in the future." He understood, he said, that Town Staff "was looking for flexibility" but thought "it would be an error to take the money and not use it on Pendleton Street."

Vice Mayor Darlene Kirk agreed that Pendleton Street was a top priority, but suggested the Planning Commission "would have to trust the Council to do what needed to be done with the money."

Town Planner Beniamino reminded Council that, ultimately, it was "in control of how he and the Town Administrator spent money." The goal of the amendment, he reiterated, "was to give Salamander assurance that its proffer would not be used for another street, but not to tie the Council's hands if the best use of the money was not on Washington Street."

Town Attorney Plowman noted pointedly "that if the proffer language tied the Council's hands too tightly, they could risk losing the funds."

Town Administrator Semmes reassured Council that the Town staff was not "dreaming up" plans for the use of the Salamander proffer. She also reminded Council "that the reason the proffer amendment was [introduced] was because Salamander was going to tear up and rebuild the [Washington Street] intersection in a way that may not be in the end product after the VDOT crosswalk project was done. On those grounds the staff thought it was better to have them give the Town the cash." VDOT, she added, was also appreciative "as this would stretch their project money."

No one had spoken at the required public hearing on the amendment held just prior to Council's discussion. After lengthy further debate by Council the amendment was passed, with only Councilmember Kevin Hazard voting to oppose it.

Pendleton Parking

Council also discussed at length changes in parking that would be required on Pendleton Street in preparation for the opening of Salamander, including the elimination of some parking spaces.

Salamander's Prem Devadas noted that his organization had already been in conversation with most, if not all the businesses that would be affected by the loss of parking. They were neighbors, he noted, and Salamander had no desire to hurt their businesses.

The Resort and Spa, he continued, had already devised a plan to lessen the impact of the Resort & Spa on Pendleton Street. Salamander, he noted, "would direct motorists who were exiting the resort to go to Foxcroft Road if they were traveling east and to go to Pickering Street if they were headed west." In his view, there should thus be little or no increase in traffic headed south down Pendleton Street. Most of the increase, his staff now assumed, would be in traffic headed north on Pendleton, on their way into the Resort.

Mayor Betsy Davis asked that the matter be put on the May work session agenda for further consideration.

Zoning Changes and McMansions

After two public hearings at which no one spoke, Council unanimously passed

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JOY THOMPSON 540.279.3428 — LO8073743 $795,000



40619 Sousa Pl, Aldie, VA - Beautiful luxury home on over an acre in private neighborhood. Open floor plan perfect for entertaining with large family room, gourmet kitchen with granite ss appliances. Amazing covered ceranda and deck. Huge master bedroom with sitting area and elegant bath suite. Hardwood floors upgraded moldings, irrigation system. Great commuter location.

MARQUI SIMMONS 703.774.6109 — LO8075422 $790.000



25577 Royal Hunter Dr, Aldie, VA - Model home for sale! Beautiful NV Remington Place w/ 4 finished levels. Over $1M if purchased new. Professionally decorated with every upgrade imaginable! 5 bedrooms, 5 1/2 baths, gourmet kitchen, sunroom bumpouts, mouldings, built-ins, drapes, landscaped, deck and patio. Ready for occupancy for buyer who wants all options.

MARQUI SIMMONS 703.774.6109 — LO8067048 $889,999



Hamilton Station Rd, Hamilton, VA - Quality, custom-built 6 bedroom stately manor home on 10 acres with pond, barn, vineyard, views, privacy, fenced pastures Hamilton Location - secluded yet minutes to commuter route. Luxuriously appointed. Thermador, Sub Zero, Bosch, Granite counters and bath. Huge bedrooms, gracious marble floors. 4 car garage. elegant circular drive gate.

COLLEEN GUSTAVSON 703.296.2347 — LO8058840 $1.249.000



36004 Bell Rd, Round Hill, VA - Orchard Cottage - Rare opportunity to own a circa 1800 historic stone home with pool, gardens and incredible bucolic, pastoral, unobstructed **VIEWS** Lovingly maintained and restored - 3 bedrooms, Large Living area with Stone Fireplace, original detail in tact, eat in kitchen w/ wood st. Private and serene, yet minutes from town. Won't last!

COLLEEN GUSTAVSON 703.296.2347 — LO8072878 $325,000



161 Hatcher Ave, Purcellville, VA - Great opportunity on 1910 Victorian with approx 2,000 sq ft on almost 1/2 acre. Zoned C-4 commercial in down town Purcellville. This zoning allows for multiple possible uses including retail, office and medical. Street parking and walk to restaurants and shops in down town area.

ROCKY WESTFALL 540.219.2633 — LO7952357 $429,900



6262 James Madison HWY - DEERWOOD - Priced to sell on 63+ Acres in FQ CO. Immaculate 4BR house. MA BR and living area open to pool. High ceilings, french doors, great views. 2 small barns fenced paddocks, creek. Very protected area, private location with access to miles of riding, training farm and polo. Highland and Wakefield schools nearby. Ag-Dist - further tax benefits possible.

REIN du PONT 540.454.3355 — FQ8041395 $1.750.000



Winsome Trail, Purcellville, VA -Catoctin Creeks- Nearly 12 acres with stunning town and country pool. 5 bedrooms on upper level, full daylight. Finished lower level with additional suite/bath. 4 car garage screened porch, 3 fireplaces. BOARD FENCING- HORSES WELCOME! Paved roads - 5 minutes to downtown Purcellville and Route 7 by-pass.



John Wolford Rd, Waterford, VA 20197 - Opporunity Awaits! Great location between 2 historic farms. House has good bones and has fresh paint and carpet. Ready to be taken to the next level. Beautiful views of pond and pasture. Horse boarding next door. Quick access to P-ville via 9, 287 and close to Greenway to Dullus. Sold strictly as is. A little imagination and effort could make this an idyllic country home or retreat.



Innisbrook Circle, Purcellville, VA - Immaculate for model on two board fenced acres. Three lovely finished levels. Very large secondary bedrooms, lower level features rec room, bedroom/den and full bath All new windows and furnaces. Unbelievable energy efficient. Three car garage, close to Purcellville Franklin Park Pools and Theater.

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News of Note

The Outpost Opens with Treasures from Africa, England & Istanbul

Pam and Keith Foster are back in Middleburg from their two-month search through Africa, England and Istanbul for seductive decorative objects for The Outpost, their exquisite shop on South Madison Street.

"We brought back 1,000 amazing pieces" Keith explained. "But it took looking through 100,000 pieces to find the quality and authenticity we and our clients expect."

"It was a wonderful trip," Pam added. "But we are so glad to be back home and to have found pieces that have both style and historic substance."

Clients who met the Fosters when they opened The Outpost last year know they may expect much more than the acquisition of a charming piece when they visit the shop. Keith and Pam thoroughly document the source and history of their inventory so clients may take home something that tells an authentic story.

"Authenticity adds both romance and value to their purchase," Keith continued, " "… and finding fascinating campaign and travel pieces make our search so much fun."

Continued Page 5

Commemoration of the Prelude to Gettysburg

The 1863 Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg & Upperville

In June of 1863, in the Prelude to Gettysburg, Lee's Army of Northern Virginia, screened by the Blue Ridge Mountains, moved north through the Shenandoah Valley to its ultimate destiny at Gettysburg.

Union Brig. Gen. Alfred Pleasonton with his 8,000 cavalrymen was ordered to move across Loudoun Valley and locate Lee's army. The task of Confederate Maj. Gen J.E.B. Stuart with his 9,000 troopers was to prevent that.

Following the skirmish in the village of Aldie, the cavalry fighting spread up the Snickersville Turnpike with the 2nd Virginia defeating the 4th New York in the surrounding rolling fields.

The sharpshooters from the 2nd and 3rd Virginia dismounted and hid behind the stone wall at the Furr House, supported by Confederate cannon. Successive charges by a 1st Massachusetts cavalry regiment resulted in two thirds being killed, wounded or captured. Later, the Virginians were driven from their positions by the 1st Maine Cavalry, concluding the Battle of Aldie.

By the fifth day the battle had spread to Upperville. Four brigades of cavalry, numbering about 6,000, battled each other across the farms known today as Ayshire and Kirkby. In addition, Confederate Captain Roger Chew's four cannons shot devastating canister at Union Colonel William Gamble's three cavalry regiments, but ultimately, continuing charges by the Federals caused J.E.B. Stuart's forces to withdraw to safety on the slopes of the Blue Ridge near Paris.

The Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville covered the five-day period June 17 through 21, but the Union forces withdrew before they could attain Snickers or Ashby Gaps to discover what Lee was up to.

Relive all this action June 14 – 16, 2013, as the Prelude to Gettysburg, the Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg and Upperville are commemorated along Rt. 50 in Loudoun and Fauquier Counties.

Sat. June 15, 10 a.m. cavalry



skirmish in the Village of Aldie, behind Aldie Mill. Between 1 and 3:30 Saturday afternoon the Battle of Aldie will happen along Snickersville Pike. Sunday morning action moves to Middleburg and then to the Goose Creek Bridge for action at 11:15 a.m.

The Tuscarora Brass Band will entertain at Buchanan Hall in Upperville at noon to be followed at 2 p.m. by the Battle of Upperville on Trappe Road. The complete schedule is available at www.civilwarinloudounvalley.com.

PROPERTIES IN HUNT COUNTRY

11 S. MADISON STREET



Commercial C2 Zoning in Middleburg, VA. Central Business District. Prime location. Detached, three level, mixed use. Retail with large display windows on main level, vacant. 3 one bedroom apartments on upper level, fully leased. English basement-lower level leased as workshop. Approx. **8000 Sq. Ft.** Stone building, with 4 parking spaces. **$1,700,000**

Rebecca Poston (540) 771-7520

MALLORY CHASE



Custom built Colonial on **10 acres** with Blue Ridge Mountain views. Chef's Kitchen w/top of the line appliances, adjoining sun-filled Family Room with Cathedral ceiling & double fireplace to Den. Hardwood floors on 1st level, 3 fireplaces. Finished basement w/Rec. Room & Guest Suite. 2-car garage with office space or workout room above. 4-stall barn, tack room, wash stall, sheds & paddocks. **$1,289,000**

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PARKER STREET



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KEYSER ROAD-HUME



Custom built 4,000+ sq ft Cape Cod w/ 4 BR, 4 BA features easy one level living, hardwood floors throughout main fl. gourmet kitchen,woodburning fireplace & French doors from every room provide easy access to the country front porch & screened porch for entertaining family & friends.Huge upstairs rec area and full unfinished basement for expansion. **5.75 acres** in a private woodland setting! **$649,000**

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MOUNT PROSPECT



Rappahannock County-sited on **41 acres** in the town of Washington VA, the main home (ca 1850) has an addition of a gourmet kitchen and 1st floor master (1984). More recent additions include a stone pool house and bacci court, tennis court and a spacious manager's quarters. Extensive gardens complete the extraordinary country estate in the Town of Washington **$2,250,000**

Alex Sharp (540) 219-4425

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News of Note

NSLM Book Fair Showcases Equestrian Authors

NSLM Book Fair Showcases Equestrian Authors Rita Mae Brown, Dorothy Ours and Jan Neuharth

The National Sporting Library and Museum's Book Fair celebrates its third year Saturday, May 25th from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. with three top-rated authors, all-day demonstrations of book binding and conservation, new book sales and the Library's duplicate book sale. All proceeds benefit the Book Acquisition Fund.

The Schedule includes:

- 12 p.m. Rita Mae Brown, New York Times Bestselling author, Fox Tracks (2012) and Murder Unleashed (2011).
- 1 p.m. Dorothy Ours, NSLM John H. Daniels Fellow, Battleship: A Daring Heiress, A Teenage Jockey, and America's Horse (2013).
- 2 p.m. Jan Neuharth, popular Middleburg author, The Kill: A Hunt Country Suspense Novel (2010).
- 3 p.m. Jill Deiss, book conservationist on the restoration of Thomas Jefferson's set of the works of Aeschylus.
- 10 a.m.-4 p.m. Jill Deiss, Cat Tail Run Book Bindery, with demonstrations of book binding and conservation.
- 10 a.m. – 5 p.m. NSLM Duplicate Book Sale, used and new books on equestrian, fly-fishing, fox hunting, hunting, and horseracing.
- 10 a.m.-5 p.m. Jilann Brunett, Second Chapter Books, Middleburg bookseller.

To pre-order the author's books, please telephone 540-687-7016.

The Book Fair is part of the 54th Annual Hunt Country Stable Tour. The Book Fair is a Saturday event only, and the Library will be open from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. The Museum will be open to visitors on Saturday 10 a.m. to 4 p.m., and Sunday 12 p.m. to 4 p.m.

Current exhibitions include Munnings: Out in the Open; Sir Alfred Munnings in Print; and An Artist's Story: Civil War Drawings by Edwin Forbes.



Jan Neuharth

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Waterford Foundation Honored by Preservation and Tourism Communities

Recently, the Waterford Foundation was honored with two very significant awards.

At the Visit Loudoun annual meeting, in front of a packed ballroom at Belmont Country Club, the 2012 Waterford Homes Tour & Crafts Exhibit won the Event of the Year award for large events. This is the fourth time the Fair has received this prestigious honor.

"The Waterford Fair is the oldest, major heritage tourism event in Virginia," said Visit Loudoun board member Rosanna Smith, in presenting the award to Fair Chair Fran Holmbraker. "Throughout the village, historic homes are open for tours, heritage crafts people demonstrate their skills, traditional music and local foods are featured and Civil War re-enactors provide living history.

"After nearly 70 years, the Waterford Foundation continues to enhance, adapt, and enlarge the Fair," she said.

At the Loudoun Preservation Society's annual meeting in Leesburg the Foundation won an award from the Loudoun County Joint Architectural Review Board.

The award was in the "additions" category, recognizing the Old School's new auditorium, reopened in April 2012. The award was presented by Loudoun Preservation Society President Lori Kimball to Foundation Executive Director Ken Rosenfeld and Hans Hommels, chair of the ad hoc committee tasked with rebuilding the auditorium.

The project was cited for the "attention to detail in designing an addition compatible with the historic building and contributing to the overall character of the Waterford Historic District."

This is the second recognition received from the group for the rebuilding of the Old School. In May 2010, the Foundation received an award recognizing the restoration of the historic, 1910 classroom portion of the building following the 2007 fire that destroyed the 1923 auditorium addition.

"It's greatly appreciated that the talent, dedication, and relentless hard work of our Board, staff and volunteers continue to be recognized by the larger preservation and tourism communities," said Foundation Executive Director Ken Rosenfeld.

"As the Foundation celebrates its 70th anniversary this year, we look forward to building on our record as careful stewards of our historic resources, and continuing to play a special role in telling the story of early America."

The Outpost Opens with Treasures from Africa, England & Istanbul

Continued from Page 3

From the framed patchwork of inch-square English cigarette silks to the Ship's Captain's bed sitting atop a beautiful mahogany seven-drawer chest with handsome brass hardware that predates the Titanic by twenty years, it is even more difficult to escape ' The Outpost' without purchases this year than it was last season.

Stunning kilim carpets and a massive yet elegant partners' desk from Buenos Aires frame the back wall of the shop where a superb 1840 Turkish tent panel holds court, competing for customers' attention with Colonel G. B. Archer-Hoblen's black and gold tin traveling estate case.

Individuals who use lots of antlers in their decorating will be delighted with the wide assortment of chandeliers, sconces and wall pieces.

"People quickly understand how much we love turn-of-the-nineteenth-century pieces. Our search for them is most successful in England where the fabulous estates were often furnished with exceptional pieces from the exotic colonies. Hunt Country customers seem to love these pieces as much as we do, and we found some wonderful things on this last trip."

As one browses around, the Han vessels that date from 2,000 years ago and the generous silver traveling cups attract attention. As do the many silver and leather flasks and antique desk pieces that would delight any friend for whom it is difficult to shop.

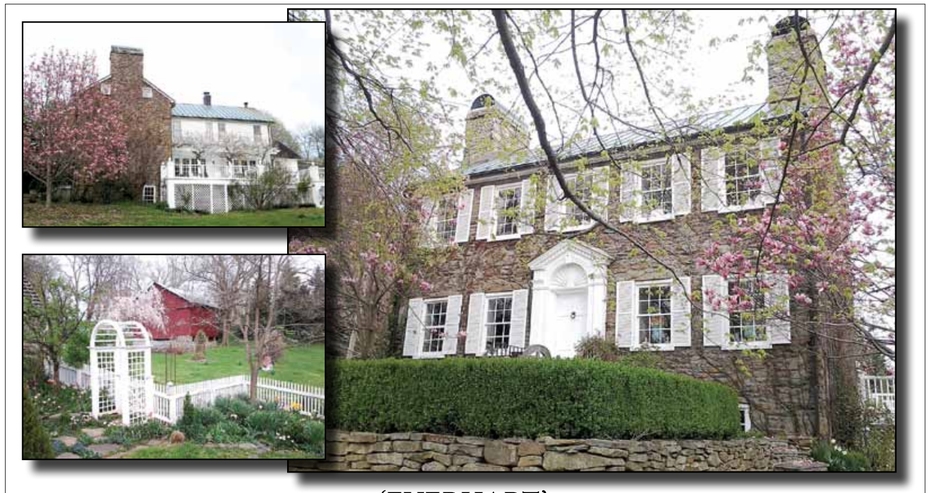
The black and gold specimen boxes might guard a prized collection of butterflies or the biscuits for your next tailgate party. And, speaking of parties, the enormous pine campaign cooler from the late 19th century would be fabulous for your next Hunt breakfast… it has beautifully turned bun feet and is lined in tin with an ice compartment in the bottom to keep your drinks cold. It is in tip-top shape to be wheeled out to provide the morning toddies.

Beautiful African photographs, stellar vintage railroad posters and hand-painted lampshades are quietly settled among the leather furniture and sporting treasures.

"We're back," Keith emphasized, "…and we're so excited about all the wonderful treasures we found!"

You'll find 'The Outpost' at 6 South Madison Street in Middleburg, Virginia Please telephone 540 687 4094 or visit www.keithfosteroutpost@msn.com.

Shop hours are Wednesday through Saturday 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. and from 12 p.m. to 5 p.m. on Sundays.



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News of Note

Land Trust of Virginia Honors Conservationists

The Land Trust of Virginia (LTV), a nationally accredited non-profit land trust that protects open space and natural and historic resources in Virginia, recently honored several citizens in Loudoun, Fauquier, and Culpeper Counties with conservation awards. The awards were presented at LTV's annual "Garden Party to Save Virginia's Countryside," that took place at the Arundel family's beautiful estate north of Warrenton.

The 2013 LTV Conservationist of the Year Awards for Leadership and Lifetime Achievement were given to two prominent citizens who have been at the forefront of conservation in Fauquier County for decades: Mrs. Hope Porter of Warrenton and Mrs. Mimi Abel Smith of The Plains.

Hope Porter is one of the foremost advocates, educators, supporters, and practitioners of land conservation in Virginia. Her accomplishments are well known. She was on the front lines of the battle to save North Wales from a massive residential development during the late 1960s, and has not let up since.

Hope and her family protected and preserved Hopefield, their historic farm in Fauquier County. She has been an active leader and participant in key conservation organizations like the Piedmont Environmental Council and Citizens for Fauquier County. She has educated many people of the benefits of land conservation and the consequences of unbridled development.

Hope was honored for her passion and dedication to land conservation, her steadfast advocacy for sensible land use, and for her incredible success in preserving our countryside and quality of life.

Mimi Abel Smith has been an inspirational leader in the land conservation, historic preservation and equestrian communities for many years. Her leadership and involvement in key conservation organizations has helped preserve thousands of acres of land in Fauquier and Loudoun Counties, as well as throughout Virginia.

With her family, she has preserved and protected hundreds of acres of beautiful land near Middleburg. She has also been a tireless advocate of careful land use, particularly in Fauquier County. Mimi is being honored for her strong support for land conservation and her successful efforts to insure that our critical lands are protected in perpetuity.

The LTV Conservationist of the Year Award is presented to a citizen, board member, advisory board member, donor, or volunteer who has made a significant contribution to the land-trust movement and land conservation in Virginia.

LTV Landowners of the Year went to Jeremy Lee and Susan Lee, Loudoun County

Jeremy Lee's grandparents, Yeager and Mary Gum, would be proud of the steps that their grandson and daughter took to save the fourth-generation Gum family farm from development. Jeremy and his mother, Susan Lee (with the support of her husband, Kenneth Lee) donated a permanent conservation easement on their 239-acre farm near Lucketts in Loudoun County, voluntarily relinquishing development rights for an approved 47-lot subdivision.

The Gum family farm is situated on Route 15, a Virginia and National scenic byway that is also the primary route through the Journey Through Hallowed Ground National Heritage Area. In addition, the farm contains a globally rare wetland community, more than a mile of perennial stream channels that flow into Limestone Branch (a tributary to the Potomac River), and hundreds of acres of important farmland soils.

The LTV Landowner of the Year Award is presented to the Virginia landowner who, by donating a conservation easement on their property to LTV, has made a significant contribution to protecting natural, cultural, and open space values.

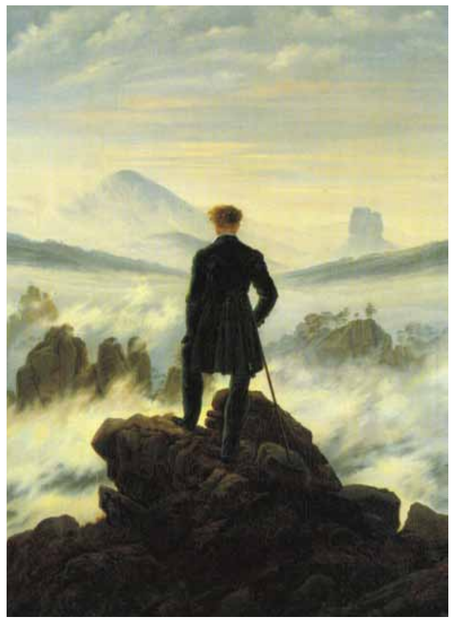
The LTV Stewards of the Year award was presented to Doug and Toni Flory of Culpeper County.

Doug and Toni Flory donated a conservation easement on their 173-acre Culpeper County farm to LTV in 2009. Their stewardship of the property, including their work to restore wetland and stream corridors on the property and their commitment to good farm management and best management practices, is exemplary.

The LTV Steward of the Year Award is presented to a Virginia landowner who, by caring for their property, employing best management practices, and complying with the terms and conditions of the easement on their property, exemplifies the concept of an ideal steward of the land.

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You've Found Your Home, Now Close the Deal!

Real Estate Reality

James Atkins



You have executed your strategy, searched the websites, you are represented by a good realtor or attorney, found the ideal location and home, and now are ready to make an offer, with your pre-qualification letter in hand. But you wonder, how much you should offer and under what terms.

For even seasoned buyers, in today's market where there are many more buyers than sellers, creating a winning offer can be difficult and is frequently unsuccessful; your first offer needs to be close to your best offer and to the seller's asking price.

To determine a fair offer that is within your budget, look at the property's tax assessment value and comparable home sales that your agent can provide. You can find the assessment on county government tax sites or your agent can pull them from the listing and then advise you on the relationship of the assessment to the likely selling price. Remember, however, that assessments lag the current market.

Comparable sales are easily generated by a good agent who can adjust sale prices for differences for square footage, numbers of bedrooms, and other amenities in the subject homes. If the asking price is above the average and has been on the market for more than the current average time, the asking price is too high, so don't be surprised if your realistic offer is rejected; just move on to another property.

A good realtor can sometimes obtain guidance from the seller's agent on the acceptability of a price, the existence of previous or existing offers, and can certainly advise you on the current market. Low ball offers in today's market are likely to immediately create hard feelings in the seller, so, if you really want the home, develop a realistic price.

Other terms can be just as important to the acceptance of your offer as the price. The seller might want a long settlement period to match a child's graduation or a short one to minimize their costs. The seller will certainly be more attracted to a cash offer or one with a high deposit. They will certainly like an offer that does not ask them to spend thousands of dollars to meet the home inspection contingency so you could instead take the option to walk if some expensive repair is discovered.

Keep the offer simple; don't impose decision deadlines and don't initially ask for anything other than the property. First get the offer in negotiation to settle the major points before you ask for the minor items. Seek your realtor's or attorney's advice. When you are ready to present the offer, strive for a personal connection with the seller to differentiate you from the competitors; don't let your agent just send the offer by email, as is so common these days. The best approach is to make the presentation yourself, in the presence of both agents, so you are able to look the seller directly in the eyes and convey your serious interest and the reasons for your offer.

If you can't do that, create a letter to accompany the offer that explains your situation and insist that your agent personally present it to the seller. Some sellers are uncomfortable with this and some seller's agents will resist it because they don't want other agents to meet their clients. That, however, is not helpful to your chances, so ask your agent to put on the charm with their counterpart.

When the seller responds, be dispassionate, strive to understand their position, and try for a satisfactory solution for both parties. If the monetary difference is small, you can sometimes solve it by the realtors' concession of part of their commissions, especially if it is a high percentage; don't be afraid to ask. Finally, always be emotionally prepared to walk away from the offer.

Next month: Selling your home.

James Atkins is President of Homes For Leaders Real Estate. jim@homesforleaders.com

Don't Miss the Magnificent 54th Annual Hunt Country Stable Tour

Don't Miss the Magnificent 54th Annual Hunt Country Stable Tour May 25 & 26

Saturday and Sunday of Memorial Day weekend mark the return of the annual Hunt Country Stable Tour – an event that draws visitors from near and far to the Middleburg/Upperville area.

Magnificent stables open their doors to the public for a self-guided tour offering a variety of equestrian-related activities.

Saturday morning, the Middleburg Training Track opens early (guests may arrive as early as 7 a.m.) to watch Thoroughbreds condition and train.

From the Training Track, many visitors proceed to the M.A.R.E. Center where horse-treadmill demonstrations will take place. Mares with their foals delight visitors of all ages.

From the M.A.R.E. Center, it's a short drive to Banbury Cross Farm, just east of Middleburg, north of Route 50. The large Jeffersonian-style barn of red brick offers 18 stalls. There will be demonstrations schooling green horses and polo ponies, and polo matches on the Banbury Cross polo field. Details of times are outlined in the Stable Tour booklet.

While in Middleburg, enjoy a visit to the National Sporting Library and Museum Book Fair. In addition to a book binding demonstration, bestselling authors will be on hand to sell and to autograph their books. The Museum is open Saturday 10 – 4, and Sunday 12 – 4.

Trinity Church itself is open to the public both Saturday and Sunday, with docents on hand to point out the beautiful stained glass windows and stone and wood carvings. Visitors are welcome and encouraged to worship at Trinity on Sunday; services are held at both 8 and 10:30 A.M. Lunch is served at Trinity from 11 A.M. – 3 P.M., catered by The Back Street Café.

While at Trinity, be sure to check-out the many vendors in tents on the lawn at the Country Fair. Also on the Trinity Campus, a multi-story house has been converted into a Thrift Shop, including a "Boutique" offering many high-end couture treasures.

Other favorite stops on the tour include Heronwood Farm in Upperville where alpacas are raised, Rock Hill Farm, Peace and Plenty at Bollingbrook, Ardarra, Salem Stable, and Trappe Hill Farm.

Visitors to Trappe Hill often bring a picnic lunch to enjoy near the pond between horse-swimming demonstrations. Trappe Hill owner and accomplished author, Bruce Smart, will be on hand to sign copies of his several books.

Jumping demonstrations are planned to take place at 11 a.m. and 2 p.m.. at two venues:: Windsor Farm in Upperville, and Hickory House in Middleburg.

An exciting final stop on the tour is at the Virginia International Polo Club on Trappe Road in Upperville. Weather and field conditions permitting, polo matches will begin at 4 p.m. Sunday afternoon. Each ticket is valid for both days of the tour.

The Stable Tour could not take place without the generosity of the farm owners in the greater Middleburg and Upperville areas. Proceeds from the Tour are used to support the various ministries of Trinity Episcopal Church, Upperville.

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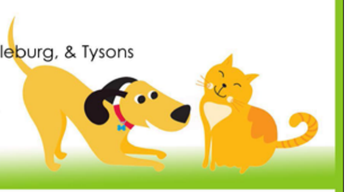
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Faces & Places

Middleburg Hunt Ball

Photos by Dee Dee Hubbard



Jeff Blue, Therese Harmon, Devon Zebrovious, Penny DeNegre, Cathy Handford and Todd Shaffer



Christophe Jouenne, John Denegre and Yvannick Renard



Brandy and Nick Greenwell, Kris Gali and Charlie Carroll



Rich Backett, Amy Joseph, Joanna Templeton, Joan and Steve MacNaughtonHandford and Todd Shaffer



Queenie Kemmerer, Tim Harmon, Linda & Jim Nichols, Jim Nichols and Lois Tuohy



George Kuk, Richard McWade and Doug Kemmerer



Lucy Duncan and Michael Smallwood



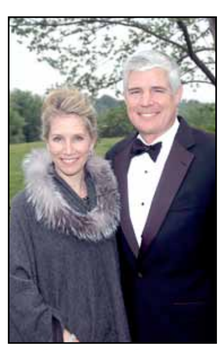
Jan and Geoff Ogden



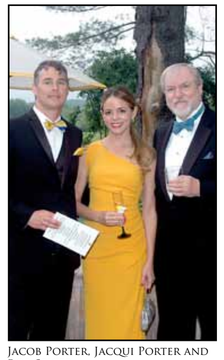


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Faces & Places

Middleburg Acadamy~ An Evening in New Orleans

Photos by Dee Dee Hubbard



Middleburg Academy Volleyball Team Wendy Murray, Coach Maureen DeClementi, Alisa Sampedro, Holly Cunningham and Jean Garrell



Rob & Kelly Horne, Natalie Wiley '14, Naomi Mutombo '15 and David Langhorne '16



Jennifer and Mark Schmitt with Cindy and Rob Greer



Sabine Bibb, Chuck Benefield, Trustee Joe Swiatek and his wife auction volunteer Sally Swiatek, and Brett Bibb



Ann MacLeod and Lynne Kelly



Nick DiVito with his guest Sarah DiAntonio and Brian Hinger with his wife Holly

SAVE THE DATE!

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TOM NEEL

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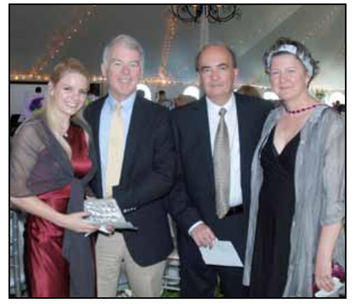
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Auction Committee members (left to right) Pan Benefield, Brenda Singh, Claire Gallagher, Kris Dahl and Tamie Fennell



Middleburg Academy parents Susan and Carl Mitchell



Erika and Morris Offutt (left) with Middleburg Academy parents Andy and Vicky Lewis



Business Manager Brenda Fowler with Edwina Bell, Jeff Kennedy, Trustee Jeff Staples, and incoming Head of School Colley Bell



Head of School Dr. Ron Sykes and Jane Sykes



Catherine Galvin Damewood (class of 2004), Melissa Astorg and Christina Mangano (both of 2005)

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Faces & Places

Bryan Wright Retires

Photos by Dee Dee Hubbard













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Virginia Gold Cup

Photos by Liz Callar - http://www.lizcallar.com/



Grinding Speed Owner Michael Wharton, trainer Alicia Murphy and jockey Mark Beecher



Bucky Slater



Carol Stadfield and her winning Terrier



Billy Howland

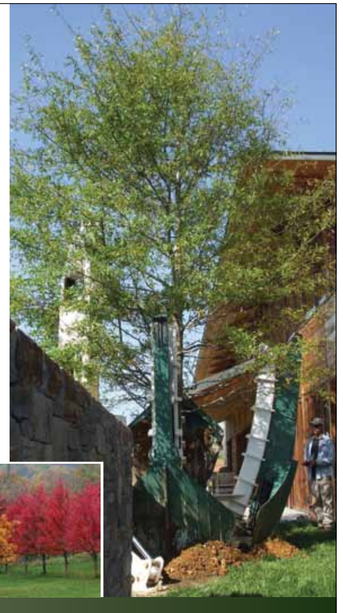
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MODEL SHOWN IN TREDSTEP

Faces & Places

Land Trust of Virginia~ "Annual Garden Party"

Photos by Dee Dee Hubbard



LTV Stewards of the Year: Doug and Toni Flory, Culpeper County



LTV Landowners of the Years: Jeremy Lee and Susan Lee, Loudoun County



LTV Conservationist of the Year Award for Leadership and Lifetime Achievement: Mrs. Hope Porter and Mrs. Mimi Abel Smith, Fauquier County



LTV Chairman, Birge S. Watkins , Peggy Arundel and "Riley" Arundel



LTV Conservationist of the Year Award for Leadership and Lifetime Achievement: Mrs. Mimi Abel Smith Fauquier County



Mike Webert

Life and Leadership

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Duchessa's Salute To Women Veterans

Photos by Dee Dee Hubbard

Recently, a group of female veterans of all ranks and from all branches of the military received a special treat—a shopping spree at Duchessa of Middleburg. Robin Cavanagh, owner of Duchessa, opened her shop to more than a dozen women, inviting them in to fill a shopping bag with specially selected apparel from final clearance merchandise.

Each year, Duchessa donates this stock to veterans' groups, and this year she chose Final Salute, the only organization focusing solely on homeless women veterans.

It was quite a night, as the women tried on a variety of clothing—and in the process had a wonderful time together. Their spirits were clearly lifted, despite the many challenges they face as they return to civilian life.

"Each year Duchessa provides image consultations and apparel for veterans," said Robin. "This year we were honored to add Final Salute to that list because we believe so strongly in the organization's mission."

Final Salute was founded by Captain Jaspen Boothe (U.S. Army and U.S. National Guard), in part because of her own experience as an active duty service person. She lost everything in Hurricane Katrina, shortly before she was to be deployed.

Soon after that, she was diagnosed with cancer and was told that she should leave the military and rely on social services to take care of her young son and find her medical treatment. She recovered from cancer and returned to active duty—and vowed to do all she could to help other women veterans.

"There are an estimated 55,000 homeless women veterans in this country," said Captain Boothe. She explained that Final Salute takes a three-pronged approach to addressing issues associated with homelessness of women veterans: Awareness. Assistance. Aspiration.

"With awareness, we are bringing attention to the American people that homelessness among female veterans is on the rise and their support needs are immediate," said Captain Boothe. "Through assistance, we provide housing and support services and work to prevent homelessness for this at-risk population. Through aspiration, we are instilling in them the belief that their situations are temporary and that their goals are achievable."

There are very few programs that assist women veterans to help them make the transition to civilian life after their military service, and virtually none designed specifically for female veterans with children.

This was unacceptable to Captain Boothe, so Final Salute was born. The organization provides transitional housing or emergency assistance to prevent homelessness among women veterans. All of the women who have been served by Final Salute at one of its homes in Arlington or Fairfax, VA, or Columbus, OH, have found jobs and are now living independently.

Joining the women at Duchessa was Ms. Veteran America 2012, Denyse Gordon, an officer in the U.S. Air Force, who told the women "we've got your six," meaning Final Salute is watching out for them.

As the women shopped among the clothing items Robin had selected for them, their shyness and self-consciousness fell away and they enjoyed themselves tremendously. It was clear these women are like women everywhere—they enjoy trying on pretty clothes, too!









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ISO New Tenants?

Continued from Page 1

two zoning amendments restricting construction in Middleburg's R-2 district.

Both were designed, according to Zoning Administrator Beniamino to "help keep new building lots and tear downs/rebuilds/additions in line with the remainder of the houses in that district."

The first amendment reduced the height allowed for new construction from 35 feet to 30 feet.

The second reduced the maximum allowable lot coverage maximum from 35% to 30%

The change in allowable height, Beniamino noted "would allow for two story houses with pitched roofs" but "would not allow for three story homes." In combination, he observed, the changes should "keep new construction in line with the existing two-story homes in the Ridgeview Subdivision.

Middleburg Elementary

Mayor Davis reported on May 9 that she planned to speak personally to members of the Loudoun County School Board and "would let them know that she would do anything she could" to save the long-threatened Middleburg Elementary School.

Middleburg Elementary, designed roughly a century ago to serve around 140 students, now serves well less than half that number.

For cost reasons alone Loudoun County School Superintendent Ed Hatrick, the Chairman of the County School Board, and a majority of its members now appear more determined than ever to close it

In an effort to save it, Janelle Stewart, President of the school's Parent-Teacher Organization, has been working with parents, teachers and friends to convert it to a Charter School.

On May 13, around 40 people met with Stewart, Blued Ridge District School Board member Jill Turgeon and School Board member-at-large Thomas Reed to discuss progress and next steps.

With luck, according to Stewart, the school may be legally permitted to open as a charter school in the fall of 2014.

Former Town Council Member, teacher, and the mother and grandmother of two generations of Middleburg Elementary students Eura Lewis appeared to oppose the proposed conversion to charter.

Once it achieves "charter" status, children normally "assigned" to Middleburg Elementary would be formally assigned to other schools, most likely Banneker, Aldie and Lincoln. To attend their former "home" school they would then have to formally apply.

Mayor Davis reiterated that, from her perspective, the proposed closing of the school is "a huge concern for everyone" and in her view the Town was morally if not legally obligated "pull out everything it could" to help save it.

Davis told Council that one of her biggest concerns was that "when the School Board discussed the cost to educate a child, all they looked at were the operating expenses divided by the number of students."

Noting that Middleburg Elementary School "shared a principal, combined some of its grades and used part-time employees" she thinks those numbers were "skewed." She also noted that Middleburg Elementary "did not incur water and sewer costs (they are provided free of charge by the town) nor did it have debt service."

She repeated that she was "working behind the scenes" to save the school and insisted that "anything the Council could do to help was important."

The Mayor and Town Council were invited to a tree-planting ceremony to honor Karen Roche, Principal of Middleburg Elementary, scheduled for Friday, May 24th at 1:00 p.m. at the school.

Police News

Senior Police Officer Mike Prince, standing in for Chief Panebiano, reported that the Middleburg Department had played a large role in making an arrest, in town, that closed a breaking and entering case that occurred outside of the town limits.

He was also pleased to report that the long awaited new heating system was at last up and running, just in time for the unseasonably cold weather this spring.

Thanks and Kudos

The Alumni Association of The Hill School has funded a complete restoration of Middleburg's unique hand made Christmas decorations. According to Mayor Davis only one of the Christmas Signs had to be completely replaced.

The Hill School will also allow the Town to store the signs in the Hill School barn, protected by a new set of custom cut cloth protective sleeves, and freeing up badly needed space in the Town Garage.

Mayor Davis and the Council congratulated Fern Bratten, of Salamander Touch, awarded the Front Line Employee of the Year Award at this year's Visit Loudoun's Award Luncheon. Judy Washburn, the Mayor noted, was nominated for the Humanitarian of the Year Award. The Red Fox Inn, Home Farm, Hunter's Head and Goodstone Inn were recognized as destination restaurants.

Town Council appointed Punkin' Lee and Marci Nadler to the Middleburg Arts Council Committee for two-year terms. They will serve through June 14, 2015

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Community Wide Worship Service
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Potluck Picnic Follows the Service
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Participating Churches: Aldie Presbyterian Church • Emmanuel Episcopal Church
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Progeny

Outer Space Beckons Middleburg Academy Students

Outer Space Beckons Middleburg Academy Students this Summer

Two Middleburg Academy juniors have been selected to participate in the 2013 Summer Academy at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, VA. Caroline Greer of Aldie and Jake Singh of Middleburg have been pushing themselves to complete ten demanding web-based modules (due every two weeks since December) as part of their commitment to being Virginia Aerospace Science and Technology Scholars (VASTS).

As a result of the quality of their work and their dedication to the program, both students were among the top 30% (out of more than 500 initial participants) selected to attend the week-long, all expenses paid residential experience in July.

The VASTS program is an interactive on-line science, technology, engineering and mathematics learning experience, highlighted by the seven-day residential summer academy at NASA Langley. Students selected to participate in the program are immersed in NASA-related research through interaction with scientists, engineers and technologists. The program is a partnership between the Virginia Space Grant Consortium and NASA Langley Research Center with assistance from the Virginia Department of Education. The program is modeled after the highly successful, NASA award winning Texas Aerospace

Scholars program developed by NASA Johnson Space Center. NASA Johnson Space Center provides the online learning modules.

Greer and Singh's rigorous assignments for VASTS have been accomplished in addition to their ongoing academic and other responsibilities at their independent college preparatory high school in Middleburg.

Projects focus on providing solutions to real-world challenges, including designing upgrades to be used on the International Space Station (ISS) and a new Crew Exploration Vehicle. The two have also participated in discussion forums on current space-related topics with other Scholars, NASA scientists and engineers, and honing their technical writing skills.

The extraordinary Summer Academy opportunity will include:

- A team project in which students design a feasible human mission to Mars and then present it to NASA scientists, engineers, and administrators; aerospace industry representatives; state legislators; and other VIPs
- Tours of NASA Langley facilities and labs not typically open to the public
- Mentoring by NASA engineers, scientists, and technologists
- Participation in hands-on scientific and engineering activities, including designing, building and field-testing robotic rovers
- Briefings and seminars by astronauts, engineers, scientists and other NASA experts.

They will be housed with other Summer Academy Scholars at nearby Christopher Newport University and could receive up to four college credits upon the successful completion of both the online course and Summer Academy.



Middleburg Academy juniors Caroline Greer and Jake Singh have been selected to attend the 2013 Summer Academy at NASA Langley Research Center in Hampton, VA. The two Virginia Aerospace and Technology Scholars were among the top 30% (out of more than 500 initial participants) selected to attend the week-long, all expenses paid residential academy in July.

Foxcroft Students Named to Elite Governor's Programs

Four members of Foxcroft School's Junior Class have been named to attend 2013 Virginia Governor's Summer Programs, Academic Dean Alexander O. Northrup announced recently. The group, Foxcroft's largest contingent in at least eight years, represents nearly 10 percent of the Class of 2014 and includes the School's first selection to the Governor's Foreign Language Academy for Latin.

Alicia Holz of Delaplane, VA, and Lydia Bubniak, a Leesburg resident, will attend Governor's Summer Residential School for Mathematics, Science, and Technology, and the Humanities, respectively. Kate Eagen of Middleburg was selected for the Foreign Language Academy for Spanish and Lilly MacDonald (Bluemont) became the first Foxcroft student chosen for the Latin Academy.

All four girls underwent a rigorous application process to gain access to these programs, which offer Virginia's most able students an intensive academic experience living for three or four weeks on college and university campuses. Students must be nominated by their high school, which is allowed only one candidate per program, and then must advance through regional and statewide stages based of a number of criteria.

At Governor's Summer Residential Schools, students are involved in classroom and laboratory work, field studies, research, individual and group projects, and seminars with noted scholars, visiting artists, and other professionals. The Foreign Language Academies offer a unique challenge for students who have excelled in language study, often including a full immersion environment.

Holz, a beneficiary of Foxcroft's innovative program in the all-important STEM (Science, Technology, Engineering and Math) fields, will focus on those subjects at Lynchburg College from June 30–July 27. An All-Conference field hockey goalie and head of Foxcroft's environmental club, she is the daughter of Cynthia and Jack Holz of Delaplane.

A talented singer, Bubniak will attend the Summer Residential Governor's School for Humanities at Radford University from June 23–July 20. The daughter of Rita and Thomas Bubniakof Leesburg, Lydia is one of just three juniors elected this year to Foxcroft's Cum Laude Society, an academic honor modeled on the collegiate Phi Beta Kappa..

Eagen and MacDonald, the other juniors named to Cum Laude this year, are both outstanding scholars and athletes. They each have eight varsity letters, several all-conference honors, and team captaincies to their credit. Lilly, the daughter of Cricket and David MacDonald of Bluemont, will study intensive Latin, introductory Greek, and Roman culture at Randolph-Macon College from June 23-July 14.

Eagen, who is also co-head of "Banneker Buddies" (a service group that visits the local elementary school weekly) and a leader in the freshman dorm, will attend the Spanish Academy at Washington & Lee College June 22-July 13. She is the daughter of Dr. Maria Eagen of Middleburg and James Eagen of Purcellville.



Alicia Holz



Lydia Bubniak



Lilly MacDonald



Kate Eagen

Frustrating Finish to Fabulous Season

Foxcroft lax plays tough before succumbing to Covenant

Fred McMane

Foxcroft School's exhilarating lacrosse season ended in frustrating fashion when top-seeded Covenant School of Charlottesville scored the final four goals of the game to win the VISAA Division II Championship Game, 13-11.

Played before an enthusiastic crowd that included more than 50 Foxcroft supporters who had made the two-hour trip to Collegiate School in Richmond, the loss deprived Foxcroft of its first state title in any sport in a year of great athletic accomplishment. Last fall, many of the girls on the team were on the losing end of the VISAA Division II championship field hockey game; others were part of the tennis team's first trip to the state semifinals.

Although the game was disappointing to the players, they could hold their heads high for finishing with the best record in school history (14-3) and reaching a lacrosse state final for the first time. It was a marked difference from last year, when Foxcroft reached its first state semifinal only to be crushed, 17-0, by Cape Henry Collegiate. This time, Foxcroft dispatched Delaney Athletic Conference rival Highland School in a dramatic 7-6 semifinal Friday and contended for the state title up to the end.

"We had a great season," said Coach Patrick Finn. "They should be proud. They played very hard today and never quit. We had our chances."

Although Foxcroft was seeded No. 2 in the tournament, behind top-ranked Covenant, the team led 7-6 at halftime and held a two-goal lead at 11-9 with 12:05 left to play, But Covenant then took control of the draws and eventually the game. Aided by a controversial blocking call that cost Foxcroft possession of the ball right in front of its own net, scoring four goals in the next seven and a half minutes while denying Foxcroft repeatedly.

Foxcroft failed to score in the final 10:54, though it had some chances. A couple of shots hit the post and two other shots from in close were kicked away by Covenant goalkeeper McKinley Clore. In addition, several penalties were whistled against Foxcroft in the second half that gave the ball to Covenant, which took advantage by displayed the kind of clock-wasting ball control that Foxcroft had employed en route to the final.

Covenant's ability to control the draws with co-captain Rachel Rapp in the second half was the turning point of the game, according to Coach Finn. Covenant won 16 draws, including the last four, to only 10 for Foxcroft in the game.

"The draws at the end of the game were the difference," Coach Finn said. "We could not win one in the last 10 minutes of the game. Their girl [Rapp] is tall and strong, and we couldn't take the ball from her."

Senior Olivia Jane Johnson of Rectortown and freshman Alex Grace (Purcellville) led Foxcroft with three goals apiece while sophomore Emma Rogers (McLean) and junior Lilly MacDonald (Bluemont) each scored twice. Senior co-captain Caroline Fout (Middleburg) also had a goal while Rogers and Carter Ware (Middleburg), another senior co-captain, had the only assists.

Senior co-captain Jenna Clark led Covenant with five goals, including two of the final four. Sophomore Sadie Bryant scored the other two that closed the door on Foxcroft's hopes..

Foxcroft, which won eight games in a row to reach the title game, had made it to a state final only twice before in any sport -- last fall's loss to Delaney Athletic Conference rival Fredericksburg Academy and a 2001 state final loss to Steward School, also in field hockey.



Foxcroft captains (from left) Caroline Fout, Elsie Spencer and Carter Ware collected the runners-up award. The topping on Foxcroft's best lacrosse season ever.

Wakefield School to Debut Equestrian Team

Wakefield School is partnering with Beverly Equestrian to offer an equestrian program and competitive school team officially beginning in fall 2013.

"Beverly Equestrian is excited to support the launch of Wakefield School's equestrian program, a wonderful addition to an already exemplary and well-rounded curriculum," said Darrin Mollett, co-owner, trainer, and barn manager at Beverly.

"Beverly's role in the program is consistent with its core principals of preserving open land for equestrian pursuits and promoting the education of horse people and riders. We couldn't be more thrilled with the confluence of education, horses, and community at the Wakefield School."

The school will compete in the Interscholastic Equestrian Association. Riders will train at Beverly Equestrian after school, with transport to and from the center provided. Competitions will take place on the weekends.

The program will require a fee to participate and participation will apply as a Physical Education credit for students.

"I am thrilled that we will be offering this program," said Brian Oliver, head of Wakefield's Upper School. "For years we have supported riders in all of the various disciplines as independent riders, but it was a logistical challenge for our families and it did not allow our student-riders to experience the camaraderie of a Wakefield interscholastic team.

"The partnership with Beverly Equestrian will allow our students-riders to have an equestrian experience that is every bit as distinctive and engaging as their academic experience."

Participating Middle and Upper School Students do not need to own a horse, though some riding experience is required. Riders will train and compete at their individual talent levels. Novice levels will be available.

Wakefield will have some school horses at Beverly, which will serve as Wakefield's home barn.

The program originated with parent volunteers. Parent committees are currently fundraising, coordinating competition events, and working on equipment, budget, rules and regulations.

For more information, please contact Patty Baltazar at pbaltazar@wakefieldschool.org



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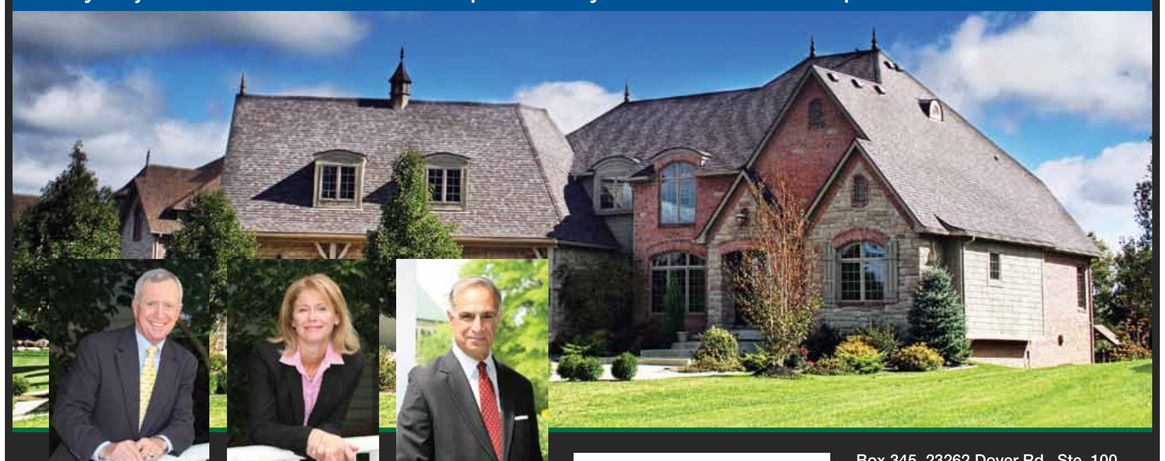
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Pastimes

The Artist's Perspective

Tom Neel



It's 5:30 in the morning, May 9th - my birthday. I've become 58 and I've sat down to write The Artist's Perspective as I do each month. I couldn't be happier, because I live an artful life.

25 years ago - this year, I began a journey. It wasn't my first endeavor, but it would be my most passionate. I've been creative all of my life and have always been one of self taught creative expression. I don't know why, it's just always been this way. My imagination has been my salvation and while it has always been a career asset, it was twenty five years ago that I put my creativity on the front burner, turned the heat up and called myself an artist.

It was the mid 80's and while born in D.C. and raised in Maryland, I was just leaving good pay and a national sales manager position in Long Beach, California, to find myself. I not only found myself, I also found my wife Linda - in Virginia. She had found herself too by opening Leesburg's first art gallery - Leesburg Gallery of Art. I don't believe in coincidence, only the universe.

One of the first paintings I sold was to a young attorney named Kristen Umstattd, who would become mayor of Leesburg. The economy grew, the town grew and it would get a new parking garage, during a downturn. Every decade has its cyclical economic challenges and while 1989 could not have been better, 1990 could not have been worse. For those of you too young, it felt a lot like 2009. Yes, 2009 was worse, but when you've painted your way through a handful of recessions, you learn survival.

But I believe in the universe and the universe actually allowed us to sell the gallery during this rough time and brought us the life changing opportunity of becoming employed by the country's largest fine art publisher. It was Depp's Jack Sparrow, stepping off a sinking boat, right onto a dock without missing a beat. The next three and a half years were like walking through an airport, hitting the people mover and then being jetted off to the future. Every job brings you compensation and education. As an artist liaison, I worked with successful artists all over the country. We gave to each other. Business to them and the understanding of the true artist life to me. They told me to follow my dream.

In 1994, it was time to go jump in the deep end of the pool again and we both walked away from paychecks and benefits to pursue a deeper dream. The economy was better, the dot com era was brewing. As I had never stopped being an artist and now had more than five years of what had become national painting sales under my belt. I was about to become a full time artist.

Today I look back on these twenty five years and the nineteen I have worked as a full time artist, with only pleasure. So many look at the artist's life as risky. It's a shame, as some of the most unsatisfied adults I have ever met, are to me, basically creatively deprived. One needs to understand risk. I have never laid myself off from my business of creativity. I have always intended myself to be successful and busy doing what I love. Last year was my best year. If you want to be a full time artist you must believe in yourself, learn business, know customer service and again, I feel strongly about the universe's roll.

I could give a lifetime of examples of why this is so important, but here's two recent ones. On September 28th I will be celebrating my 25th anniversary. The show "The Land Beneath My Feet" will be hosted by The Hill School in Middleburg, with the night's festivities including a book signing and a short film I am producing - both by the same name as the show.

The film is a look at the "Land" in the landscape painter. One day we were filming along a road in front of an area farm and within 24 hours, the owner of that farm, without any knowledge of this, contacted me to commission a painting of that farm. Okay here's another one. I started writing by saying today, May 9th, was my birthday. On May 4th a couple came into the gallery and bought one of my paintings as a birthday present for her. I asked when her birthday was? Well let's just say happy birthday to her too, as it's May 9th as well! Coincidence? - no. Serendipity? - perhaps. The universe at work? - absolutely!

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Kerria, not just a shrub

The Plant Lady

Karen Rexrode





Kerria is a shrub with multi-season interest, one of my favorites in spring, summer and winter. Broad and mounding, some consider it a groundcover shrub because it produces suckers and can spread as far as 9 feet. Reaching an average height of 4 or 5 feet, the stems arch over, taking up a lot of real estate but doing so in such a lovely fashion. Because of its suckering habit, kerria can be a stabilizer on steep banks or even an accent shrub for the corner of your house where it will wrap around the foundation. Sometimes referred to as the Easter Rose, flowers are produced in early spring and may appear sporadically till fall. Tolerant of drought and poor soils, this is one trough shrub. Ideally it prefers partial sun, growing well under a high canopy where it will arch in such a soft way. Grown in full sun, it's a little tighter but certainly happy.

Named after William Kerr, a 19th century English botanist and Kew gardener, he introduced the double flowering from (Kerria japonica 'Pleniflora') in 1804. We now have a few, very different cultivars including the wonderful single flowering Kerria 'Golden Guinea' which produces flowers that are larger than William Kerr's original K. 'Pleniflora'. The flowers look like small single yellow roses, which also reveals their relationship, they are in the rose family. Another noteworthy selection is Kerria 'Albaflora' with flowers that are pale, creamy yellow. I have been told that this is a rather weak variety that grows more slowly, but I beg to differ, my plant is 3 years old, grown from a single sucker and it is already 5 feet across.

By far my favorite of them all is Kerria 'Picta' which produces leaves that are liberally marked in white. The flowers are single and bright yellow, all fine and good, but secondary to the lovely foliage. If you find kerria at your local nursery, chances are you will skip right over them; in the trade the kerrias are cut and trimmed into small round meatball shapes. If left alone, within 1 year you will have arching stems that are more natural and move with the slightest breeze. In fact it's most appealing month may be December as it holds onto its small, yellow fall leaves that flutter on windy days. A deciduous shrub, the winter stems are green which lends itself to a few planting partners. Consider Helleborus foetidus or the stinking hellebore with it's green winter flowers. I also love it with the native Pachysandra procumbens or Allegheny spurge which will form an evergreen groundcover beneath kerria. Spring bulbs are great under its skirts, especially daffodils and deep purple crocus and better yet, the flush of leaves on kerria will be the perfect bulb cover-upper, you know when you need something to hide all of that curing foliage.



Pastimes

Life is Too Short

7th Inning Stretch

Alex Cudaback

On Monday, May 21st, one of the largest tornados in U.S. history ravaged Moore, OK, just miles south of Oklahoma City.

According to various reports, the tornado's path was approximately 17 miles long and between one and two miles wide.

Casualties are estimated to be in the hundreds, if not thousands.

Fatalities, as of Tuesday afternoon, were confirmed at 24, including 9 children.

The economic effects figure to be in the billions, if not tens of billions, of dollars.

Lives not taken have, too often, been utterly devastated.

Fred Phelps, Jr., son of Westboro Baptist Church minister Fred Phelps, took advantage of Monday's devastation to continue his father's crusade against homosexuality by tweeting, "OK Thunder's Durant flips God by praising fag Collins. God smashes OK. You do the math. #GodH8sFags #FagsDoomNations#FearGod #GodH8sU"

So the Oklahoma City Thunder's Kevin Durant showed support and compassion towards another human being, and the God of the Westboro Baptist Church responded by killing innocent men, women and children…

Really?

Phelps followed up his insightful commentary two minutes later, in case his original, hate-filled thumb-diddling hadn't been clear enough before: "God's wonderful wrath in Oklahoma reminds me: #GodCursesUForFagMarriage #GodIsYourTerrorist #GodWillRepay #GodAvengesHisPeople #GodH8sU"

"Collins," in case you missed it, is *Jason Collins*, the man who came out as the first openly gay athlete playing in a major American sport two weeks ago when he penned an article for Sports Illustrated. The article was well-written, deeply personal (obviously), funny and smart.

In the aftermath, responses seemed largely positive, though I admit my sampling size to be neither the broadest nor the most diverse.

I relied only on friends, family, acquaintances, co-workers and the like to share their personal and second- or even third-hand opinions with me; mainstream media outlets and the internet generally confirmed this rather warm response from professional athletes and mere mortals alike around the world.

There were opponents, of course, people who had "concerns" about a gay man in the locker room, but the arguments they made were generally similar to those first made by those in the military which have since been disproved following the repeal of Don't Ask, Don't Tell.

Personally, I wasn't the least surprised. I was happy for Collins, happy for what this decision would undoubtedly mean for him and his life, but anybody with half a brain and even the most rudimentary understanding of percentages (both of which describe me pretty well) could tell you that the odds were there *had* to be a Jason Collins in the NBA, that, frankly, there had to be a *lot* of Jason Collins's in the NBA, and in the NFL and NHL and MLB.

I'm the only person I know whose godparents are gay. To be honest, I've never known a relationship stronger and more loving than theirs.

So homosexuality for me was never something different or scary or wrong. It just was, as much as breathing or sleeping or loving anybody else.

It just is.

So, like I said, I was happy for Collins, but I wasn't shocked.

From 2001 through this past NBA season, Collins played for the Nets, Grizzlies, Timberwolves, Hawks, Celtics and Wizards. He played center and was average, or as average as an NBA center can be, at best, a standup defender who didn't give ground when even Shaq tried to bull his way to the hoop. In fact, Collins may best be known for leading the league in personal fouls in 2004-05.

In Collins' own words, "I enter the court knowing I have six hard fouls to give. I set picks with my 7-foot, 255-pound body to get guys like Jason Kidd, John Wall and Paul Pierce open. I sacrifice myself for other players. I look out for teammates as I would my kid brother."

This was the guy Kevin Durant of the Oklahoma City Thunder stuck up for, praised, supported.

And, according to Fred Phelps, Jr., and his bile-spewing, hate-promulgating acolytes, it was that friendship, that empathy, that tolerance, that *humanity* that caused God to smite the city of Moore, Oklahoma.

People sometimes complain that sports is sports and should be kept separate from the rest of the stuff going on in the world, that this is no place for talk of God and homosexuals and tragedy and thinking.

Those people are wrong.

What there's no place for is hate and ignorance and stupidity and the kind of madness that enabled tragedies like slavery and the Holocaust, and continues to enable people like the Phelps.

I'm not a believer, but if I were I'd like to think God would be far happier to see its followers offering aid and succor than fear and loathing.

And rather than delighting in the death and devastation brought upon us by yet another national tragedy, instead took the opportunity to help and give and serve.

Life is too short, and nothing is promised any of us.

For the record, after this story was originally written, Kevin Durant contributed $1 million of his own money to help with Moore's recovery efforts. His team, the Oklahoma City Thunder, immediately followed suit.

No word from Westboro Baptist what wrath and retribution this act of compassion will bring.

Alex can be reached at cuda24@yahoo.com

Improve your golf drive

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It is that time of year again when the greens beckon us to come out and play. The days get warmer and longer and the golf courses get busier with new as well as seasoned golfers. We all are looking for that technique or equipment that will help us drive that ball just a little farther. Golf magazines have ads for the latest and greatest clubs. Power and control over that little ball is what we want when we play so we are willing to buy anything that will help us reach the goal. But do we need better equipment or better body mechanics? Equipment has come a long way, but if you are suffering from tight hips, your game will surely not be what you would like it to be.

Tight hips can ruin a person's golf game. No matter what equipment they buy, it will not help them reach their full potential as a golfer if they suffer from tight hips. Watch the pros and you will see they have proper rotation of the hips and shift of the weight between one side of the body and the other. In other words they are able to move their hips freely without restriction. In turn this will help them add yards to their drive.

Stretching tight hip flexors as well as lower back muscles is crucial to getting your hips to be flexible. Also, stretching hamstrings, quadriceps, adductors and abductors as well as the gluteal muscles will help to alleviate tight hips. If this all sounds a little daunting, seek a personal trainer that plays golf and understands the mechanics of a proper golf swing. Let them watch your golf swing so they can put together a stretching program that will help gain flexibility in your hips. While there is much more to the proper body mechanics of the golf swing, starting with loosening up the hips is a sure way to drive the ball farther and enjoy the game more. After all a few more yards can even make a seasoned golfer smile!

So enjoy the next nine or eighteen with a more flexible body. No question, your game will improve. If your course allows walkers, then take the opportunity to walk nine or eighteen holes and enjoy the benefits of a light cardio workout as well.

For more information about health and wellness, please contact Kay Cogan at Middleburg Pilates and Personal Training, 14 S. Madison Street, Middleburg, Virginia, 540-687-6995.

Semper ubi, sub ubi

Sincerely, Me

Brandy Greenwell

Semper ubi, sub ubi. Didn't your mother always tell you to wear clean undies in case you ended up in the hospital? I have a vivid childhood memory of being in an Aspen emergency room beaming with pride that my pale pink poonies matched my bibs and entire snow bunny ensemble. That lesson as well as the one from my 8th grade Latin class apparently stuck.

The modern evolution of women's foundation wear has gone from lace up corsets, garter belts (the ones that you couldn't find in Hollywood nor were they worn exclusively by Angels), and braziers creating a Dutch clog silhouette to control top pantyhose, Wonderbras, thongs, Spanx and non-peep-show pasties. Let's take a moment to embrace uncovering your undergarments.

Bra fitting 101:

Unless you have been professionally fitted, I would wager heavily that you are not wearing the correct sized bra. If your clasp is up between your shoulder blades, or your shoulder straps are all the way at the end, you are absolutely wearing the wrong size and doing a serious disservice to your entire physique and appearance. How many times have you complained that your bust isn't where it used to be? Well, do your girls a favor and put them where they belong in the first place and maybe they would stay put.

Novelty bras:

Unless you are under the age of 22, surgically enhanced or a step above a mosquito bite, cups that stick, nipple covers and bandeaus should be considered illegal and a warrant will be out for your arrest if you use them inappropriately. Also, I realize that all the 90's video vixens made it acceptable to wear underwear as outerwear, but in reality no one wants to see your bra straps, even if they are a pop of color or patterned to coordinate.

Knickers:

We all know that whale's tales and panty peaks are completely unacceptable. And we know thongs are best for curing VPL's, (visible panty line for those who aren't Cosmo-girls). For non-flossers, there are many types to keep you in the wedgie free zone, so find what's right for you. What I want to comment on is the absolute importance of flesh colored panties. Really, there isn't a reason to buy any other color unless there is a bottle of champagne and bowl of strawberries involved, wink, wink. White panties, or striped or dotted or leopard printed, you sassy girl, can often be seen under your clothes even if you assume the material is opaque. Knowing is half the battle.

Hosiery:

We all love our control tops, just make sure you cannot see the dividing line on your thigh. I would take a rogue bra strap over a control top chaos any day. And gents, you should be on a witch-hunt for whoever invented the control top with the lace on the bottom that appears as a sexy thigh high and put them in solitary confinement with the dude that invented the Wonderbra.



And one last lesson... A slip, full or half, is your friend. Think about it. We all love our gauzy summer dresses, but day or night there is always a spotlight that will follow you if you can see through your dress.

I am sincerely humbled by the overwhelming response from April's article. If your monthly dose isn't enough, go to my Facebook page Brandy Greenwell: Sincerely, Me to see what I come up with daily. I will be posting surveys there so you can tell me what you want me to talk about in June.

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Pastimes

Just back from..... Salisbury, Connecticut

Exquisite Travels With Matt Hannan



Matt Hannan

Landscape design, my other profession, can meet or even exceed expectations, but it cannot perform miracles. That was the challenge I confronted when asked to design and install a garden worthy of a stately home constructed in the style of a French manor house in 1927.

Located near the historic town of Salisbury in northwestern Connecticut, this splendid estate, with its unobstructed views of the Berkshires, belonged to a prominent family whose wealth went back to the 18th century.

Strong supporters of culture and the arts, the ancestors had built and endowed the local library and restored a Portugese villa in their possession, and a living member of the family had made a mark for herself as a sculptor. In a distinctly modern idiom, her sculptures enlivened the garden, which otherwise consisted of a series of formally defined architectural terraces and plantings.

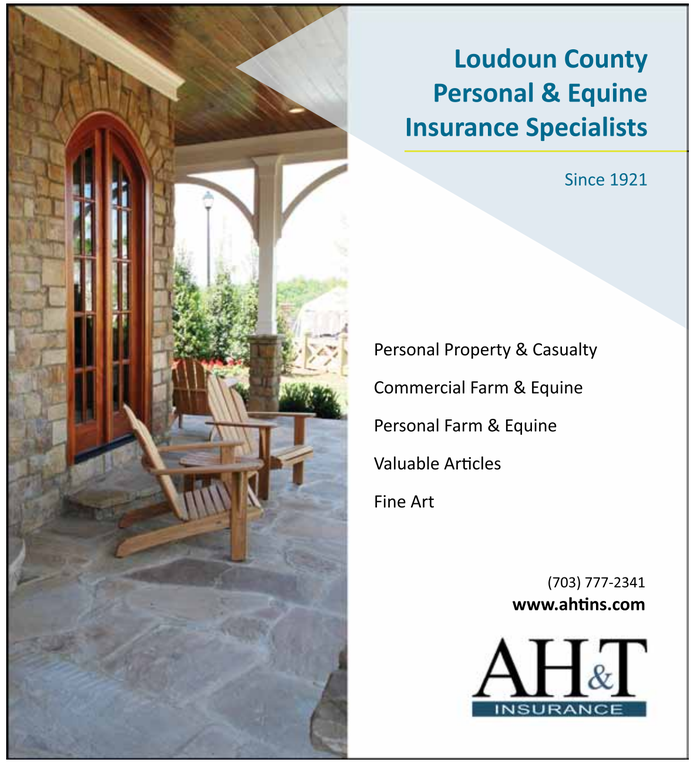
The new garden and terraces, however, would mark an important occasion in the lives of the family - the marriage of a daughter, herself a noted artist. The bride-to-be took inspiration for the wedding from the work and world of the great American painter John Singer Sargent - an ambition that could be realized in the bridal gown, the floral arrangements and decorations. But how to create a garden evocative of a flower-filled canvas like Sargent's famous 'Carnation, Lily, Lily, Rose,' during the early New England spring?

In May roses bloom in Virginia but not in Connecticut.

The only solution, I knew, was to carefully select from Virginia nurseries, plants in various states of bud, that would bloom on cue. The wedding, set for May 18, was preceded by a stretch of cold weather that could have spoiled the effect, at least as far as the garden was concerned. However confident of my selection, I recognized that one can never be sure about the weather.

So, just back from Salisbury, I am pleased to report that fortune smiled on buds and guests alike and that the newly enhanced garden contributed its part to what many of those present said was the most beautiful wedding they had ever seen.

I like to think that even Sargent would have approved.



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The EPA: Friend or Foe?

Waterworld

Richard A. Engberg



When the first European settlers came to what is now the United States, they discovered a treasure trove of untapped natural resources. While the Native Americans lived in harmony with these resources, as soon as they climbed off the boat, the Europeans began exploiting them. Water and forest resources were first exploited. Later, untold riches in the form of minerals and oil were discovered underground and these have been and still are being exploited. It can be said with a great deal of truth, these abundant resources are responsible for making this country great.

It wasn't until the middle of the 20th Century, some 350 years after the first Europeans landed when water and air pollution became so totally obvious, that some individuals began to think perhaps these resources, some of which were irreplaceable, might need some degree of protection.

In 1968, Richard Nixon became President. I'll bet that very few of us think of him as an environmentalist, but it was in 1970 that he signed an executive order creating the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). Less than a year earlier, he had signed the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA), the first of several major environmental laws enacted during his administration. EPA has been controversial since its creation.

EPA wasn't the first federal environmental organization. The short-lived Federal Water Pollution Control Administration (FWPCA) began operation in 1965. Other Federal agencies had some responsibilities for environmental protection. When EPA was created, these responsibilities including FWPCA were folded into EPA. Thus, federal responsibilities for environmental protection were concentrated into one agency.

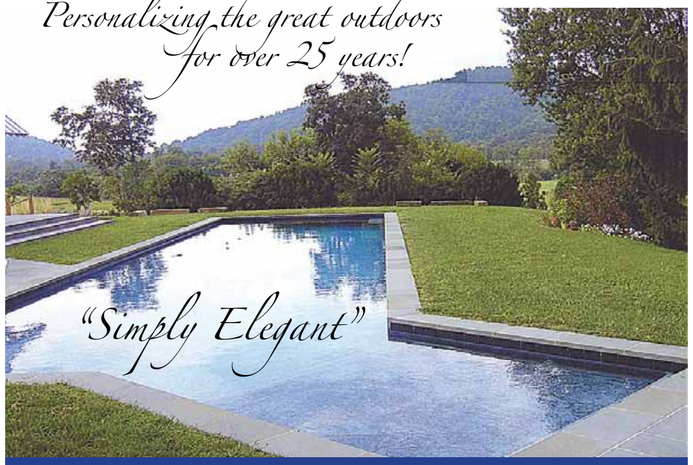
EPA has grown into an organization of over 17,000 employees with an annual budget of over $8 billion. Besides its Washington headquarters, it has 10 regions and 27 laboratories. Cooperating with state, local and tribal governments, it enforces national standards for air and water. It has monitoring and enforcement responsibilities. It conducts environmental assessments, education and research.

Most people agree that the environment is better off now that it was in 1970. The number of massive die-offs of fish and waterfowl have declined in recent years. The Cuyahuga River in Cleveland hasn't caught fire like it did in 1969. Superfund sites are slowly, gradually being cleaned up. Air pollution if not better, has not gotten measurably worse. The establishment of Total Maximum Daily Loads (TMDLs) is gradually leading to the revitalization of some stream reaches as fishable and swimmable. So why is our environment better? It is better, at least in part, because educational programs such as recycling sponsored by EPA, and other federal, state, local and tribal organizations have convinced a large part of the population of the importance of environmental protection.

Still, there are too many among us, who resent the EPA, who resent environmental protection, who have no sense of conservation, who feel that it is their right to exploit our natural resources. Wetlands exist to be drained. Mountains exist to be damaged or destroyed to secure the mineral resources they contain. Yes, they are a small minority, but they have vocal supporters in Congress who would be happy if they could make the EPA go away.

In my humble opinion, the EPA exists to make the country a better place for us to live and prosper by protecting our environment. To answer the title question, EPA is our friend. It is working for all of us and it deserves our support.

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Beignet is an Airedale X Hound born 9/12. She is a sweet girl who learns quickly & loves meeting new people...a social butterfly. Beignet has a lot of energy & would make a great jogging partner. She needs a home with a fenced in yard and/or active family.



Clover is a beautiful 1+ year old Redbone Coonhound. She has excellent house manners, walks beautifully on a halti, is very clean, & affectionate. She would do best as an only pet with a secure fenced yard.



Dancer is a 9 mo. old, special needs kitty, who could be the love of your life! She has a neurological condition which requires no treatment, she will always be wobbly & needs an indoor only home. We also have her super special brother Duran & are hoping to place them together.



Buster lived his life on a chain. He was brought to MHF & released to us for emergency medical care. We just love this little dog! He is fun loving, gentle, kind & absolutely loves his new life. Please adopt this senior & give him a second chance at a happy & healthy life.





Fran & Eden are 2 adorable full grown bunnies available for adoption. These dwarf mixes are only about 3# & were born Sept. 2012. Both are extremely friendly, healthy, & spayed.



Alpine is a handsome, healthy, adult kitty. Bring some love into your home - adopt Alpine. He is EXTREMELY affectionate and interactive. He would do best as an only cat, but doesn't mind couch potato dog friends.



Nola is a charming Terrier X that is about 7 years old. She is incredibly sweet, smart as a whip but a little shy with new people. Nola is a couch potato who would prefer a quiet home with lots of love.



Cody is a 12 yr old Shetland Mini cross gelding. He is very shy but sweet. He would make a wonderful babysitter or adorable lawn ornament.



Pip is an adorable Pug/Lab? born January 2013. He has been around other dogs & would benefit from a confident calm dog companion that can show him the ropes. Pip would do best around older children & has been around cats.



Dexter is the best puppy ever! He is highly intelligent, learns very quickly & has very good social skills. We have raised him with cats, dogs & children. He is absolutely adorable & is looking for his forever home.

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Albert's Corner

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

Albert P. Clark

For many years, an amazing black Lab named Sajen has been a fixture in Middleburg (an article about Sajen appeared in the February 2013 issue of this newspaper). He is a service dog who has spent his life by the side of an inspirational young woman. He even walked in the inaugural parade this year, representing Canine Companions for Independence. Dogs have heroes too, and Sajen is one of mine.

There is a difference in the terms therapy, service, or companion dog, but regardless of the type of certification, all of these animals make a better life possible for people every day. I'm devoting this column to them as my way of saying thank you. There are so many incredible souls who deserve this appreciation. Some of them, like Sajen, forever change the quality of life for one family. Others make a difference in unusual ways that are equally important.

Take, for example, the numerous veterans' groups around the country who train dogs to be companions to wounded soldiers. The trainers of these dogs are sometimes civilians, but often they are veterans themselves. Moreover, many are veterans who, while not having a physical disability, are impaired by a mental struggle with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome (PTSD). It turns out that when a soldier suffering from PTSD trains a dog to help a physically wounded warrior, everyone gets life-altering benefits. Visit the websites of Warrior Canine Connection or Paws for Purple Hearts to learn more.

There are also dogs who travel to the sites of tragedies to help survivors and their families. K-9 Comfort Dogs, for instance, has 50 dogs who are available at a moment's notice. In recent months, these loving animals have been by the sides of traumatized people in the aftermath of Hurricane Sandy, the Sandy Hook Elementary School shooting, and the Boston bombing.

Sometimes canine heroes turn up in very unlikely places. Prisons across the country adopt animals from shelters and allow inmates to train them for eventual placement in a permanent home. The programs are enormously successful because the dogs have an overwhelmingly positive impact on their incarcerated trainers, giving them a newfound purpose and a greater chance at rebuilding their lives.

Libraries and schools are embracing the power of pets too. Paws-to-Read is a program that pairs children with four-legged friends in an effort to encourage reading. The most reluctant readers are eager to dive into a book when the audience is a safe, non-judgmental, and loving pup.

And of course it's well known that therapy dogs are a bright spot in nursing homes, physical rehabilitation facilities, and hospitals. Scientific studies show that interaction with animals can significantly reduce anxiety, relieve loneliness, stave off depression, and encourage social interaction. Just by petting a dog, people can decrease levels of stress hormones, regulate breathing, and lower blood pressure. Petting also releases oxytocin, a hormone associated with affection and bonding.

I should mention that there are lots of therapy cats too. They provide many of the same health and morale benefits to people that dogs do. In recent years, the number of therapy cats has been on the rise.

I salute all of the furry heroes who make a difference each and every day. It just goes to show that we have limitless love and power to heal … especially when people help us to unleash it!

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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Editor's Desk

Memorial Day

Forget the calendar. Forget astronomy. Forget Winter and Spring. Summer begins on Memorial Day. Parades. Pools. The Brickyard. Good things on grills. White shoes. Proms. Parties. Summer dresses.

But it was not always so.

Many of our grandparents, whose parents remembered the Civil War, still called it "decoration day" from a time when the word meant ribbons in more than one sense of the word.

Many of our fathers taught us, without thinking about it the meaning of "on parade."

"Real men," be they six or seventy, doffed their hats or covered their hearts, or did both when the colors passed, whether carried by cub scouts or the last of the veterans of the great wars, doing their best to stay in step, matching the pace of vet most senior.

Some still remember.

In Middleburg veterans and the sons and daughters of veterans still mark the graves of every member of the armed forces whose grave can still be found, from the Revolution to Iraq and Pakistan, and beyond.

If one watches carefully one still sees, here and there in the now much smaller crowds along the parade routes, bent old men and distracted young boys with their hats in their hands from time to time.

Memorial Day is arguably one of the most distinctly American of holidays, different in the most fundamental and most American of ways from even the 4th of July or Thanksgiving.

It is a day we remember things those we honor would all too often rather forget.

It is a day of profound sorrow turned into a day of total joy and celebration.

Americans do that.

It would please those we honor.

It is, somehow, in the words of the most American of presidents, "altogether fitting and proper that we should do so."

What difference does it make?"

Red

James Morgan

Denial, as the saying goes, is a river in Egypt. But it seems to have spilled over into neighboring Libya in the aftermath of the terrorist attack in Benghazi which killed four Americans and for which President Obama and former Secretary of State Hillary Clinton should be held directly accountable. Testifying before Congress not long ago, Mrs. Clinton petulantly asked, "what difference does it make?" Perhaps she should just have quoted her husband and said the whole thing depends on the meaning of "is."

The administration clearly lied in and about the Benghazi talking points. Other than the increasingly ridiculous White House press spokesman, Jay Carney, hardly anyone denies that anymore. Mr. Obama and Mrs. Clinton blame the CIA and have denied making any but minor changes in the originals though Jonathan Karl of ABC News (now there's a surprise!) has laid out book, chapter, and verse about how those talking points were thoroughly white-washed in a way that could not have been done without the direct knowledge of both Obama and Clinton. And screaming "witch hunt!" or "partisan politics!" will no longer serve to bludgeon the critics into silence. Fewer and fewer people, even in the usually compliant and complicit media, are falling for that.

Yes, even among Obama's own media flacks, the grumbling has become audible. Liberal stalwarts Bob Beckel and Maureen Dowd have admitted they were wrong in their earlier support for the administration on this. Liberal website "Politico" has pointedly noted the discrepancies between Obama's story and, well, the truth. Comedian Jon Stewart has started making fun of him. And CNN (once known as the Clinton News Network) has reported that the Benghazi attack indicates an increasing level of cooperation among various Middle Eastern Islamist groups; a direct refutation of Obama's absurd assertions that, with the death of Osama bin Ladin, the war on terror has been won.

That, Mrs. Clinton, in case you're still wondering, is what difference it makes! And if the generally left-wing media is finally beginning to report the story, even if it had to be dragged kicking and screaming into doing so, how much more is going to come out and how much harder will it be for Obama to hide?

It is clear that the administration badly bungled the security prior to the terrorist attack, twice ordered a possible rescue force to stand down (an order that could only have been given by the president), and then began a deliberate and ongoing campaign of deceit to cover up the bungling and lies. But, hey, they did manage to arrest the producer of an obscure anti-Muslim video and blame the whole thing on him.

Let us also remember that 24 hours after hearing about the attack, our esteemed leader flew to Las Vegas for a celebrity-studded fund raiser. Nice to know where his priorities were. Imagine if President Bush had done that 24 hours after the original 9/11. Of course, the Benghazi attack happened shortly before the 2012 election and could not be allowed to interfere with something as important as fund raising.

At best, what Obama and Clinton did in the weeks following this deliberate and planned terrorist attack constituted negligence of a very high order. Watergate was small potatoes compared to Benghazi. Nobody died at Watergate. And comparing Obama to Richard Nixon, as some now are doing, is an insult to Nixon.

Add in the revelations of IRS and EPA harassment of conservative groups and the "Justice" Department's seizure of Associated Press records (which even liberal Piers Morgan has called "bordering on tyrannical behavior"), and this administration's corruption and ineptitude become crystal clear. Its hypocrisy, moreover, is reminiscent of Captain Renault: "Rick, I'm shocked -- shocked! -- to find that gambling is going on in there." Alas, only the willfully blind could still be shocked by anything this administration does.

Apoplexy Now. The GOP and Benghazi.

Blue

Daniel Morrow

To paraphrase Howard Baker of Tennessee, one of the best the old school Republicans, there's nothing quite like knowing what they knew and when they knew it.

Since the release of the email train that put the CIA at ground zero of bad intelligence poorly communicated, even Mitch ("our first priority is to make Obama a one-term president") McConnell has backed off his silly notion that the handling of talking points about the tragedy was the moral equivalent of Watergate or Iran-Contra or Pearl Harbor or the Holocaust.

Benghazi was a tragedy.

A diplomat risked his life to do what he saw as his duty, on a day and in a place he and his staff knew were deadly.

Diplomats do that.

Brave diplomats, and those who protect and serve with them, do that and all too often, and all too often pay a terrible price.

The best of them, and the best of those who send them into harm's way (or allow them to put themselves there) do precisely what the President, the Secretary of State, and all those responsible for watching over those they loved and lost have done so far.

They bear the burdens of the consequences of their actions and do their best to make sure that what happened will never happen again.

No one tried to "deceive the American people" about Benghazi.

No one deliberately sent one of our best into a hornet's nest unguarded.

No one went there on their own who was unaware of the danger.

No one died who didn't know death was a possibility.

No one responsible for them doesn't feel awful, and responsible, for what happened.

But Watergate, it wasn't.

Nor was it Iran-Contra.

Or Pearl Harbor.

Or the Holocaust.

It was a tragedy.

And exploiting it is a travesty.

Even Mitch McConnell knows that.

Hypocrisy

Tom Pratt

If the current President of the U.S were a conservative Republican, the progressives in this country would be up in arms and calling for impeachment.

So many campaign promises broken.

On the domestic front, the one that irks me most is his reversal on Single Payer Health Care. His excuse is that it never would have gotten through the House and Senate. He never gave it a chance, not one proponent of Single Payer was invited to any of the meetings on health care including his personal physician of many years.

The Office of Management and Budget and a majority of doctors feel the best way to have universal health care at the lowest cost is Single Payer or an extension of Medicare for all. Why are we smarter than England, France, Canada, Germany, Iran, Bolivia, Venezuela and many more who offer free medical care to their citizens. The administrative cost in our system of health care is around 38% using private health care providers. Medicare's costs are less than 8%.

Why? Because there is neither profit, nor huge salaries for executives. There should not be profit in health care. It is a right of all.

But I digress.

According to James Goodale , the general counsel to the N.Y. Times during the Pentagon Papers crackdown, Obama is almost worse than Nixon and, if successful in prosecuting Wikileaks founder Julian Assange, he will surpass Nixon and succeed in quashing the First Amendment where Nixon failed.

Mr. Goodale is a leading expert on the First Amendment and has just published a book entitled "Fighting for the Press: The Inside Story of the Pentagon Papers and Other Battles"

By spying on the AP, which Obama has just done, he is attempting to limit a reporter's ability to keep sources confidential which will have vast and very disturbing consequences. If people in government cannot safely report wrongdoings by the government, we become very close to an authoritarian regime. Do you want to live in a country where the government, especially the Executive branch, can be autonomous and not responsible to any other body.

During the Pentagon Papers era, Henry Kissinger called the leaker, Daniel Ellsberg, the "most dangerous man in America," for stopping a disastrous war. Obama's Ellsbergs are Bradley Manning and Julian Assange.

The same rhetoric is being used now concerning Manning as was used against Ellsberg,. . . concern about national security, stealing classified documents, etc.etc.

The truth is that no classified document were stolen by Manning and released to Assange and no one, even by the Pentagon's own admission, has been harmed by the releases.

Reporting a war crime is not a crime!

The Obama administration has invoked the Espionage Act three times more that all past administrations combined. The far-reaching effects of the Espionage Act are extremely dangerous. The administration's interpretation would mean the end of the way national security journalism is reported in the United States.

The Pentagon, Department of Justice and the administration are saying that if any document the government claims to be classified is given to a journalist who then makes any part public, that person has committed espionage and the person who gave it to him or her is guilty of espionage as well.

Even Nixon was not smart enough to think of that angle, but the Obama administration has and that is why it is imperative that we be aware of the dangers that lurk from this administration.

This is clearly an attempt to stifle whistleblowers and prevent good citizens from revealing criminal acts perpetrated by those in power. How many more would have died in Viet Nam if Daniel Ellsberg had been treated the way Bradley Manning has been treated, locked up in solitary for over a year and a half and denied legal counsel.

And now, the prosecution is trying to conduct the trial in secret with no reporters, all the name of "National Security."

Scary to think what the United States has become with Obama at the helm.

Why I Changed Horses II

Anthony (Tony) Wells

As a Republican, two totally personal experiences contributed to my change of heart, and horses, when it came to both my party and President Obama.

At a large Republican gathering in Washington where Newt Gingrich was the keynote speaker, I was at a table with a more moderate Republican delegation from Maryland.

Gingrich played demagogue to the hilt, delivering nothing less than a rabble-rousing tirade, denigrating Nancy Pelosi in the most vitriolic terms, in a speech short on any substance and long on venomous personal attacks.

As a Republican, I left the building in disgust, feeling that I had experienced something akin to an extreme right wing rally. It truly reminded me of nothing so much as a Nuremberg rally.

The second event might well be considered a corollary . During George W. Bush Administration, I had been nominated by the Chairman of the House Armed Services Committee to become Assistant Secretary of the US Navy for Research, Development, and Acquisition.

After a long series of interviews and background checks the White House called me to tell me that President Bush had selected me from a long list of contenders.

My elation, however, was short lived.

Shortly afterwards I was sitting alone with Paul Wolfowitz (Deputy Secretary of Defense) in his Pentagon Office.

He wanted to discuss how I was going to handle Navy acquisitions – ships, submarines, carriers – the whole works.

During our chat he was totally diverted by his TV

His boss, Donald Rumsfeld, was on C-Span, in the midst of a grilling by the Senate about the Abu Ghraib torture scandal.

I have never ever condoned or supported the use of torture with prisoners, whatever their complexion.

Torture is not only illegal, it is immoral, unethical, and totally ineffective.

As a fully trained experienced interrogator I know that there are ways of making prisoners or foreign agents compliant without lifting a finger to harm them.

I realized as I left Wolfowitz's office and walked the hallowed corridors of the E-Ring that I could never work for him or Rumsfeld.

I had also decided that the Chief of Naval Operations and I would never see eye to eye about the administrations ship building plans, reducing as they did, our nuclear Submarine force to about 34 hulls – a disastrous strategic decision in my opinion.

The White House and I parted company, much to the chagrin of many of my supporters for the position, as well as many in the defense industrial base community.

The Republicans who had nominated me were old school – gracious people who conducted House and Senate business with a sense of civility and mutual respect – debated with vigor and conviction on the floor of the House or Senate but afterwards were still friends with their political opponents.

They were Republicans who would never permit the Party to degenerate to the level of Gingrich invective that ensued during the period of the Clinton impeachment, managed by a Speaker who was a master of hypocrisy, seeking to destroy a President for sexual dalliances while having a secret affair in Washington.

Gingrich set the stage for the rise of the extreme right wing and the tea party that could destroy the Republican Party if they are not careful. Today hard faced Speaker Boehner shows zero respect even at an event like the State of the Union Address – poker faced and lacking in even the basic civilities.

So, finally, what about Mitt Romney and his running mate, Paul Ryan? Why did I not give them a chance? Was there redemption in my mind for the past follies and misdemeanors of their predecessors?

I found not on close examination.

I found Romney to be a fraud – a man who represented himself as an industrialist, a job creator par excellence, when in fact he was a Mergers and Acquisition person who had made a pile buying and selling companies, often putting many employees on the street in the name of rationalization in order to roll over a company at a profit.

I have zero problems with making a buck – I am a total capitalist and free market supporter, BUT I do not like misrepresentation and political chicanery

Romney lacked substance.

His international experience and exposure were appalling.

In the UK he showed during the Olympics that he was an arch blunderer, the tabloids characterizing him as "Twit Romney", a totally irreverent comment for a Presidential candidate but the underlying truth was there – he committed one faux pas after another.

Romney's belief in the "truths" of the Book of Mormon also gave me pause.

Paul Ryan frightened me, and still does.

He serves as Chairman of the House Finance Committee and believes that he is a financial expert , even though his experience and credentials are virtually non existent.

He advocates what I term "right-wing finance" at the expense of the only group in the United States that really matters in economic terms – the massive middle class on which the total economic edifice of our country rests.

Recovery depends on middle class purchasing power. Increase it and boost jobs, profits and investment for the next round of innovations. Ryan simply does not understand this.

Obama

Has Barack Obama completely fulfilled my expectations? Absolutely not.

He is a wonderful speaker, but short on action and follow-through: witness his great speech in Cairo early on, and recently in Israel. Soaring rhetoric, but to date, little progress.

His energy programs, or lack thereof, have been disappointing.

That said, I still believe in his commitment, his compassion, his fine intellect, his energy and, most of all – his integrity.

He can become a great American President over the next three years and nine months if he has the courage of his convictions, and does not worry about political bogeymen like AIPAC and the like.

His passion in response to the gun control issue is symptomatic of his ability to garner enormous support.

He is a natural leader.

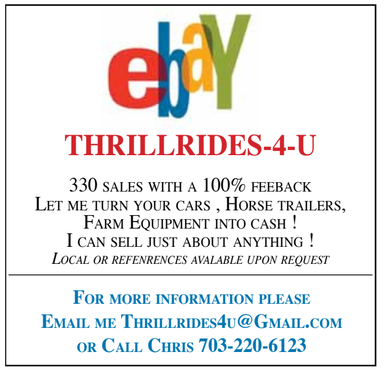
Pray let him not be limited by political expediency.

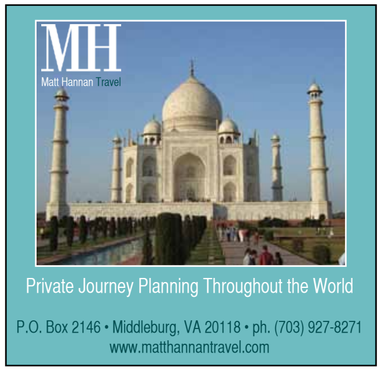
Better to have tried and failed than never tried at all.









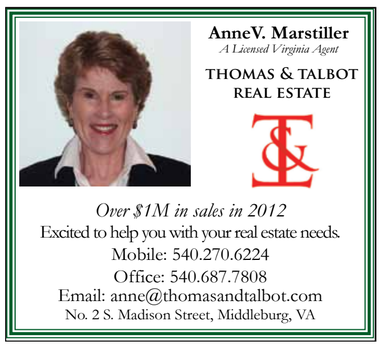
















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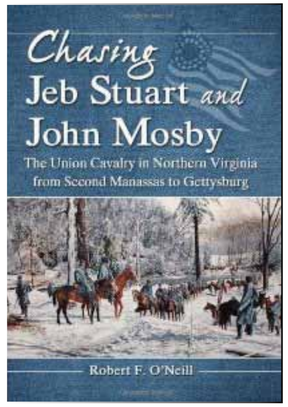
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Mosby Heritage Area Association
Hosting Author and Historian Robert O'Neill
Friday, June 7th



To kick off the bi-annual Mosby Ranger Descendant Reunion weekend, on Friday, June 7 at 7:00PM, author and historian Robert O'Neill will be speaking on Col. John Singleton Mosby and General J.E.B. Stuart at the Middleburg Baptist Church, 209 E. Federal Street, Middleburg, Virginia 20117. Entrance is $25 for MHAA members and $30 for non-members.

Robert O'Neill is the leading authority on cavalry operations in the American Civil War. He is the author of The Cavalry Battles of Aldie, Middleburg, and Upperville. He has written articles for "Blue and Gray" and for "Gettysburg Magazine."

Mr. O'Neill's book, Chasing Jeb Stuart and John Mosby will be available for purchase and for signing by the author.

The Mosby Heritage Area Association will be hosting the bi-annual Mosby Ranger Descendant Reunion June 7-8th, 2013 in Middleburg, Virginia. All events are open to the public; attendants need not be descendants of Rangers to participate. On June 8 at 10:00AM, the Mosby Ranger Descendant Reunion Gathering will be held at the Middleburg Community Center, 300 W. Washington Street, Middleburg, Virginia 20117. During the afternoon, free tours of local cemeteries are offered, as well as an Open House at the Rector House, 1461 Atoka Road, Marshall, Virginia 20115, which is home to the Mosby Heritage Area Association and the site of the formal creation of Mosby's Rangers as Company A of the 43rd Battalion Virginia Cavalry in 1863.

540-687-6681 or info@mosbyheritagearea.org
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