

CONNECTION

Reston ♦ Oak Hill Herndon ♦ Chantilly ♦ CENTRE VIEW



Bob Mathews and Colleen Delawder came with just a few decorations years ago until now it's grown to mega-Halloween at their Herndon Halloween House on Spring Street.

COVID Can't Stop the Spirit

NEWS, PAGE 8

'No Way to Mitigate Roar of Jet Engines Overhead'

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'Matter Closed' on Golf Course Designation

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PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

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BACK THE BLUE

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VOTE REPUBLICAN NOV. 3RD

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Submit civic/community announcements at ConnectionNewspapers.com/Calendar. Photos and artwork welcome. Deadline is Thursday at noon, at least two weeks before the event.

HALLOWEEN SPOOKTACULAR CANCELLED

The Halloween Spooktacular that is usually presented by Celebrate Great Falls at The Village Green is cancelled this year due to Covid-19. After much discussion, the organizers determined that there was just no way to offer the Spooktacular events in a safe and compliant manner.

FRIDAY/OCT. 30

Boy Scout Troop 55 will host The Halloween Haunted Trail on Friday, Oct. 30 from 6-8 p.m. on the Great Falls Village Field (behind the Post Office) by reservation only. All participants will be asked to wear masks that cover both mouth and nose, to arrive no earlier than 10 minutes before your appointed time and depart shortly thereafter. Groups of no more than 10 people will enter the trail every 5 minutes to facilitate social distancing. Everyone entering the Haunted Trail must have a reservation (including any parents and younger siblings who choose to participate). This activity is ideal for ages 5-10 yrs old but all ages are welcome! It will be a similar "level of scary" as the Haunted House under the green and white striped tent in years past. The event is free but donations are welcome to help offset expenses. Email to Erin Lobato at erinlobato@celebrategreatfalls.org

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NEWS

‘Matter Closed’ on Golf Course Designation

Owner ‘respectfully disagrees’ with supervisor’s findings.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D) issued a surprise statement early Friday morning, Oct. 23, ending what he termed “a good deal of uncertainty and even anxiety” among some constituents in the Reston portion of his district. Their concern centered on a plan by Wheelock Communities that purchased the 160-acre Hidden Creek Country Club property in Reston. It sits north of the Dulles Toll Road near Wiehle Avenue. The real estate development company is exploring the creation of a public park and a range of housing options on the property. Changes to the property’s land use would require an amendment to the Reston Master Plan that is part of Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan and a rezoning. Alcorn said, “I do not support changing the Fairfax County Comprehensive Plan’s current designation of this property (Hidden Creek Country Club) as a golf course and consider the matter closed.”

According to the Plan as viewed at FairfaxCounty.gov, the property is termed pri-



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

(From left) Suzanne Zurn - Advocacy Communications Chair, Rescue Reston, Connie Hartke - President, Rescue Reston and Lynne Mulston - North Course Chair, Rescue Reston at Hidden Creek Country Club in Reston the day after Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill District) released a statement on the designation of the Hidden Creek Country Club property in Reston.

vate recreational use, specifically to remain a golf course. Alcorn said he based his decision not to support changing the Fair-

fax County Comprehensive Plan’s current designation of this property based on last week’s review of all direct communications



Fairfax County Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill)

with his office via emails, phone calls and letters about the property. Alcorn said, “There is no support from surrounding communities for changing the comprehensive plan. In fact, it is not even close – there are more than five residents against every supporter,” he said.

THE NEWS sent shock waves to current property owner, Wheelock Communities. Three years earlier on Oct. 23, 2017, the real-estate development company acquired the private country club that included a 36,000 square-foot clubhouse, an 18-hole course, swimming pool, and indoor and outdoor tennis courts.

According to the company’s website, based on several focus group meetings with more than 20 area residents representing diverse interests and dozens of meetings with

SEE GOLF COURSE, PAGE 5

‘No Way to Mitigate Roar of Jet Engines Overhead’

Divided Planning Commissioners OK Stonebrook proposal.

BY BONNIE HOBBS
THE CONNECTION

Imagine living directly beneath an arrivals path at Dulles International Airport, where jumbo jet aircraft zoom just 950 feet above the homes, 24 hours a day. That’s what residents in Stonebrook will face if Fairfax County approves this proposed development.

Yet despite objections from local land-use groups, area residents and the airport, itself, on Oct. 7 the Planning Commission voted yes. And on Nov. 17 – on the recommendation of Supervisor Kathy Smith (D-Sully), who’s supporting developers over residents – the Board of Supervisors is likely to follow suit.

Developer Stanley Martin wants to rezone 12 acres in Chantilly’s Land Unit J to high-density residential – paving the way for construction of 134 homes – 120,



PHOTO COURTESY OF MWAA

Jet aircraft will fly 950 feet above Stonebrook homes proposed for construction under a Dulles Airport flightpath. Blue lines are arriving flights; red lines signify departures.

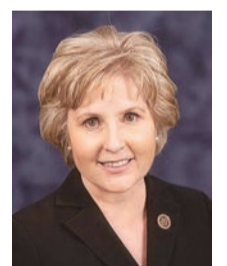
two-over-two, stacked townhouses, plus 14 rear-load townhouses – at the Westfields Boulevard/Newbrook Drive intersection. Rooftop terraces are optional, and 110,000

square feet of open space – where children would experience the full force of the aircraft noise – is also planned.

The FAA says homes should not be built



Mary Cortina



Julie Strandlie

there because that site is inside the 65 DNL noise contour with a day/night average decibel noise level of 65 decibels and above. The developer claims the level is below 60 DNL and says prospective buyers would be told about aircraft overflights and homes wouldn’t exceed interior noise levels of 45 DNL.

But Michael Cooper, MWAA’s manager of state and local government relations, says MWAA’s 2019 noise contours place Stonebrook clearly inside the 65-70 DNL. However, since the county has refused to adopt these contours updated from 1993, it can approve new homes there based on 27-year-old data.

SEE COMMISSIONERS, PAGE 7

Mark and John and Amendment One

BY KENNETH R. "KEN" PLUM
STATE DELEGATE (D-36)

When the then underdog Mark Warner, whose only experience in political life had been to chair the Democratic Party of Virginia and manage the successful campaign of Doug Wilder for governor, had the courage in 1996 to take on senior senator John Warner in his re-election bid, Mark Warner's bumper sticker read, "Mark, not John." While the phrase may have helped voters differentiate the two candidates who are not related, it was not enough to cause voters to change their senator. Republican Senator John Warner went on to serve a total of 30 years in the United States Senate, the second longest of any Virginian. Mark Warner went on to be elected governor of Virginia in 2001 and ran in 2008 to succeed Senator John Warner when he retired.

Too often overlooked in times of political rancor is the admiration and respect that develops among persons of different political parties even though they may differ on policy issues. Such was the case with the two senators Warner. As governor, Mark Warner regularly con-



COMMENTARY

sulted with then Senator John Warner to the advantage of the Virginia economy particularly as it related to the military presence in Virginia. When Democrat Mark Warner had a strong challenge to his Senate seat in 2014, retired Republican Senator John Warner endorsed him for re-election over his challenger who had been chairman of the Republican National Committee.

The two men have tremendous political experience between them and a moderate, pragmatic approach to resolving issues. It is no surprise that both have endorsed passage of Amendment #1 on the ballot this year to end political gerrymandering. Former Senator John Warner said, "the passage of Amendment 1 is essential to achieving this goal and to further strengthen our state's political institutions. This referendum was drafted by a bipartisan group of volunteers from all walks of life and every corner of Virginia in order to give average citizens a stronger voice in the important process of redistricting."

Senator Mark Warner told the Richmond Times Dispatch that he has already voted for

the amendment. He said, "I believe in non-partisan redistricting, and it's an improvement over our current broken redistricting system. Voters should choose their elected leaders, not the other way around." Virginia's other United States Senator, Tim Kaine, who also served as Lieutenant Governor and Governor of Virginia supports Amendment #1 as does Congressman Don Beyer who was also Lieutenant Governor.

While there is opposition to the amendment by those who see a loss of partisan political power if the amendment passes, there is broad support among others including Common Cause, the Brennan Center for Justice, Princeton Gerrymandering Project, Campaign Legal Center, AARP Virginia, ACLU, Northern Virginia Chamber of Commerce, League of Women Voters, Virginia League of Conservation Voters, and political scientists in Virginia's colleges and universities. The editorial boards of the Washington Post and the Richmond Times Dispatch and all major newspapers in Virginia have endorsed it.

While there have been suggestions that a better amendment could be written, no one in the nearly four decades that I have worked on this issue has come forward with specific language that has the broad support of this one. I urge your vote for its passage. Send questions or comments to me at kenplum@aol.com.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Don't Waste Your Vote

To the Editor:

Maybe Joe Biden was not your preferred Democratic candidate and you would rather have supported Warren, Klobuchar, Sanders or Buttigieg. Or maybe you are a Republican who is dissatisfied with Trump's presidency and wish other Republicans would have run in the primary so that you could have had other Republican choices.

But the fact of the matter is that the only two candidates who have a mathematical chance of winning this election are Biden and Trump. Don't waste your vote on a Green Party candidate. Don't waste your vote by writing in a third name in order to "make a statement." Don't stay at home and refuse to vote because you are not 100 percent satisfied with the two choices.

If you want things to change you have to specifically vote for Joe Biden, even if you have to hold your nose while doing it. If you sit out of the election or vote for a write-in candidate, you are voting for four more years of mayhem.

Barbara Glakas
Herndon

Making Herndon Welcoming to All

To the Editor:

A group of concerned citizens in town has come together to do our part to make our community welcoming for everyone. With the ongoing national outcry about disparate policing, we want to start at home and understand how policing impacts different communities here in Herndon. The first step in this direction toward equity is the transparent collection of more granular racial policing data and its public review. Without public access to this information, we can neither rest in comfort knowing our community is free of the scourge of racial police discrimination, nor can we work to improve equity where there are gaps. Herndon has been a local leader on police transparency, instituting body cameras early on. Building on this positive trend and reviewing national and regional best practices, we have tailored a next step for our town. We are proud to report that six candidates for Herndon Town Council, across political and racial lines, have signed on to the Herndon Police Data Transparency Pledge.

The following candidates for Herndon Town Council commit to promoting public trust in our police by supporting public release of data related to police interactions with the community, such as arrests, stops, and use of force:

- ❖ Stevan Porter, Cesar del Aguila, Clark Hedrick, Pradip Dhakal, Sean Regan, Signe Friedrichs and Naila Alam.

Among those running for Council, only Jasbinder Singh chose not to support this particular effort. Mayoral Candidate Roland Taylor is supportive of the measure. Current Vice-Mayor Sheila Olem, also a mayoral candidate, did not feel able to make the pledge due to her present elected role.

Pledge reads:

As a town councilperson committed to improving public trust, I commit to working toward a Herndon Police Department that is transparent and prioritizes the collecting and public reporting of policing data as performance measures of effectiveness. I support the following policing data best practices and annual public reporting on these practices starting in 2022:

- ❖ Collect and report data for four sets of police interactions with the public: mDetentions (including all stops, searches, citations, and use of force incidents), Police- and resident-initiated contacts, mCi-

vilian and internal complaints against the police, mSurveys of police-community relations from residents and law enforcement;

- ❖ Collect and report data on police interactions with the public by race, ethnicity, age, gender, and gender identity;

- ❖ Monitor police interaction data at the Council level on an at least an annual basis to assess equity and effectiveness of police interactions with the public.

Join us in celebrating the fact that our elected leadership has a strong understanding of the necessity of this data transparency. We hope you will be as excited to share this hopeful news with our community as we are!

Rebecca H. Borton
Herndon

Let Us Know Your View

Connection Newspapers welcomes views on any public issue. Letters must be signed. Include home address and home and business numbers; we will only print your name and town name. Letters are routinely edited for length, libel, grammar, good taste, civility and factual errors.

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Vienna, Herndon Mayors, Del. Watts Honored

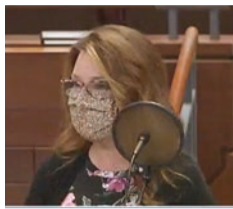
The Fairfax County Board of Supervisors recognized three local honorees. “Certainly, we did not want to wait any longer to recognize the tremendous work that they’ve done on behalf of our community and to publicly thank them,” said Board Chairman Jeffrey McKay.



Del. Vivian Watts (D-39)



Laurie DiRocco, former mayor Town of Vienna



Mayor Lisa Merkel, Town of Herndon

Dean Lynch, Executive Director, Virginia Association of Counties (VACo), presented the Virginia Association of Counties Achievement Award to Vivian Watts, member of the Virginia House of Delegates (D-39). He said Watts helped to get equal taxing authority to Virginia counties. After receiving the award, Watts said, “I had to try to bring members to understand that the situation of 70 percent of the state’s population, after a century almost, to be tied to what is essentially a colonial base of taxation of just real estate... Thank God it’s at least there for us to know that with a breadth of economy that we have got to have a breadth of revenue sources so that when any one portion is hit hard, we still have that breadth. Supervisor John Foust,

(D-Dranesville District), said, “You’ve been an amazing advocate for local government.”

Next, the Board recognized Laurie DiRocco for her 17 years of service to Vienna, as Mayor, Town Councilmember and member of the Planning Commission. According to McKay, Di Rocco did things that were “pretty revolutionary” for Vienna. “I think my favorite one is organizing Friday morning walks... a good reminder of the importance of that small town, community feel,” he said. Supervisor Walter Alcorn (D-Hunter Mill) described DiRocco as an advocate. “The Patrick Henry Library project...the new police station... your advocacy during COVID for all the small businesses in the town, and working with the County on the

RISE program,” he said.

The Board’s next resolution recognized Lisa Merkel, Mayor of Herndon. According to McKay, Merkel was elected Vice Mayor of the Town of Herndon in 2010 and in 2012 became the first woman elected mayor. He said the town thrived under Merkel’s leadership. “The Downtown Redevelopment Master planning, the Herndon (Metrorail) Station... the new fire station... attracting over 100 new businesses to the Town of Herndon... The success that Herndon is having... translates into success for the County.” Supervisor John Foust (D-Dranesville) described Merkel as passionate, approachable and an amazing ambassador. He said, “Your legacy is going to be very, very impressive.”

Golf Course Rescued

FROM PAGE 3

community representatives providing community input, Wheelock had explored repurposing the private golf course and country club to provide the Reston community with the following:

- ❖ “An approximately 100-acre public park complete with miles of connected trails and new recreational facilities
- ❖ Significant environmental benefits (among them, more than a mile and a quarter of degraded stream restored to their pre-golf course condition, establishing healthy wetlands and wildlife habitats)
- ❖ New home-ownership opportunities in Reston.”

Upon learning of Alcorn’s no designation change statement, Dan Green, Principal Wheelock said in a Media Statement: “We were extremely disappointed in Supervisor Walter Alcorn’s statement this morning regarding Hidden Creek and respectfully disagree with his findings that led him to the conclusion to not support a more in-depth County led analysis as of a potential change to the Comprehensive Plan and how that might address Reston and Fairfax County objectives.” Green said Wheelock received support from some adjacent clusters from their community engagement, many of the club’s neighbors and others throughout Reston. “We are encouraged by this show of support and will continue to engage the community about the future of Hidden Creek and what it can mean to Reston,” he said.

Lynne Mulston is the North Course Chairperson at Rescue Reston. It is a grassroots organization of volunteers opposed to redevelopment attempts by owners of Reston’s two golf courses, Hidden Creek Country Club and The Reston National Golf Course. “The Reston community’s voice has been clear and strong on the Hidden Creek issue...We thank Supervisor Alcorn for being responsive to over one thousand constituents who responded to Rescue Reston’s call-to-action and contacted his office. The importance of Reston’s diverse population seen taking part in recreation-al opportunities at Hidden Creek is at the forefront here. Hidden Creek now has reported slightly over 600 members and also serves as a home course for the golf team at McLean High School. South Lakes High School’s home course for their golf team is The Reston National Golf Course. Golf is vibrant in Reston and continues to thrive during the pandemic.”

DESCRIBED as an inclusive, family-friendly, private country club, on its website, the operation of Hidden Creek Country Club is dependent on income from its various membership categories- golf, swim and tennis, swim and social, clubhouse and others. Also, members do not pay assessments. Alcorn said that he recognized that this property’s long-term use as a golf course depended on people willing “to pay to play golf.” He encouraged community members who wished to see the property remain a golf course “to pick up the game and go play.”



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SPECIAL BOARD OF DIRECTORS MEETING

Public Budget Hearing
Nov. 4, 2020, 6:30-8 p.m.

This meeting will be held virtually. Please use the information below to join via Zoom.

Join Zoom Meeting:
<https://bit.ly/34j1vAz>

Meeting ID: 942 3628 0245
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Members may provide comment on Reston Association’s 2021 Capital and Operating budgets at this public hearing.

Three Reston Residents Appointed to Community Center Board

On Tuesday, Oct. 20, 2020, at the request of Hunter Mill Supervisor Walter Alcorn, the Fairfax County Board of Supervisors appointed three Reston residents to the nine-member Reston Community Center Board of Governors: William Keefe, William Penniman and Vicky Wingert.

All three candidates were appointed for three-year terms. They were all incumbents.

The appointments were made based upon the official results of the 2020 RCC Preference Poll. Vote tallies for the five candidates were as follows:

Vicky Wingert 1,623; William Keefe 1,536; William Penniman 1,190; Lorri Zell 1,092 and Niels W. Pemberton 376.

The three-year terms for Keefe, Penniman and Wingert will begin on Nov. 2, 2020.

William Keefe, an RCC Board member from 2007-10 and again since 2014, has been active in the community as a member of Reston Association's Board

of Directors, the Reston Planning and Zoning Committee, Reston Youth Baseball and Reston Youth Basketball. He was named a Best of Reston awardee in 2017.

William Penniman has served on the RCC Board since 2006. He previously served as the Board's secretary and treasurer and is active in the Reston Planning and Zoning Committee, Reston Comprehensive Plan Task Force, former Reston Master Plan Special Study Task Force and the Sierra Club.

Vicky Wingert has been a resident of Reston since 1973 and has served on RCC's Board since 2011. She has served as president of the Reston Historic Trust, founder of Friends of Reston and on the Reston Association Board of Directors. She was named a Best of Reston awardee in 2000 and a Simon Fellow in 2017.

To find the programs or events that are right for you, visit www.restoncommunitycenter.com or call 703-476-4500.

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An expert is someone who knows some of the worst mistakes that can be made in his subject and how to avoid them.
-Werner Heisenberg

Chantilly Man Charged with Killing Father

Believing he stabbed his estranged father to death, Fairfax County police have charged Alexander Bellini, 28, of Chantilly, with murder. The victim was Christopher Bellini, 59, of Falls Church.

The tragedy occurred last Thursday, Oct. 22, inside the father's home in the 2300 block of Watters Glen Court. Officers responded there, shortly before 1 a.m., for a report of a domestic dispute.

Upon arrival, they found the victim suffering from stab wounds. Officers rendered aid to him until rescue personnel arrived, but the elder Bellini was pronounced dead at the scene. Police say his son was found inside the home and was taken into custody.

According to detectives from the Major Crimes Bureau, Alexander Bellini had been prohibited from con-



Bellini

tacting his father due to a recent protective order. Such a document is filed to keep a person safe from someone deemed dangerous to him or her. Furthermore, said police, "A knife believed to have been used by Alexander was recovered from the scene."

The Chantilly man was taken to the Adult Detention Center and charged with second-degree murder and violation of a protective order while armed with a deadly weapon. He is being held without bond. No one else inside the home was harmed. This incident remains an active investigation, and The Office of the Chief Medical Examiner will conduct an autopsy to determine the exact cause and manner of death.

— BONNIE HOBBS

Dog Perishes in Townhouse Fire

An early-evening fire in a Fair Oaks townhouse displaced one person and took the life of a dog. The blaze occurred Oct. 17, around 5:47 p.m., in the 12100 block of Wedgeway Court in the Penderbrook community.

First-arriving firefighters saw smoke coming from the front door of the two-story home and quickly extinguished a fire in the kitchen. Tragically, they also

found the dog deceased. No one else was home at the time; a neighbor discovered the fire and called 911.

Fire investigators determined the fire was accidental and started on the stovetop. They say a burner was left on and ignited a coffee maker on the stove top. Damages were estimated at approximately \$105,000.

— BONNIE HOBBS

CALENDAR

NOW THRU NOV. 5
Haunted Wine Tours. 6:30 p.m.; 7:30 p.m. and 8:30 p.m. At The Winery at Bull Run, 15950 Lee Highway, Centreville. The Haunted Wine Tours are back for the fifth year in a row, in a new condensed version, so you can enjoy real ghost stories and award-winning wine all while staying safe. Due to the restrictive environment

surrounding COVID, there are far less tickets available this year. Therefore priority access to tickets go to wine club members.

NOW THRU DEC. 8
Just Breathe!...We've Got You! Tuesdays 9:45 to 12 p.m. Via Zoom. A Program of the Shepherd's Center serving Oakton-Vienna-Reston-Herndon (SC). Three-part we-

binar series to learn how to get started for your next chapter in life. Each session is hosted by a professional and will allow time for Q & A. Series sponsored by Navy Federal Credit Union; AARP; Kensington Reston Senior Living. Just Breathe! - A breath and meditation break- Katie Courlander, Katie Courlander Yoga. Call 703-281-0601.

Planning Commissioners OK Stonebrook Proposal

FROM PAGE 3

“Interior noise-level reduction will not reduce outdoor noise problems,” said Cooper. “Dulles will grow, residents will hear planes flying overhead in this parcel and will complain to us, the state and the county. And there’s no such thing as a sound wall for overhead noise.”

During the Planning Commission’s Sept. 17 public hearing, Mason District Commissioner Julie Strandlie said she’s been there and couldn’t fathom houses under that flight path. “It’s a lovely development plan,” she said. “I just wish it was in a different location.”

Noting that a Johnson Aviation report counted 200 overhead flights there in 24 hours, Braddock Commissioner Mary Cortina asked if that’s what Stonebrook residents could expect. “Yes,” replied Joe Gorney, with the county’s Planning Department. “And [that number] is expected to go up, in the future.”

Providence Commissioner Phillip Niedzielski-Eichner asked Stanley Martin representative Andrew Painter if the developer will make homebuyers aware of the 2019 contours before they purchase. But, said Painter, “They weren’t adopted by the Board, so we’re sticking with the original ones.”

“But we do have the new contours, so I find this case troubling,” said Cortina. “It’s not information we can ignore.”

AMONG THE SPEAKERS calling in was Chantilly’s Cynthia Shang, saying, “This Board of Supervisors is endangering the citizens that previous Boards were there to serve. Do the right thing by heeding the experts’ advice and vote against this.”

Thomas Michaels spoke on behalf of United Airlines. “This falls squarely between the 65-70 noise contours, so it’s inevitable there’ll be complaints from residents. The airport is a massive generator of jobs, and United Airlines employs thousands of people here.

“We’re still doing 136 takeoffs and arrivals, daily, and were doing 270/day, prior to the pandemic – and that demand will eventually return. We urge you to continue to discourage development in areas that’ll be impacted by intense aircraft noise.”

Speaking in person, Cooper showed slides of the flightpath and a video with the noise of planes flying over the location. “They’re noisy and annoying, and they’re not going away,” he said. “This is a bad place to put residential. Arrivals will occur every 4-6 minutes over that site. Regardless if Fairfax County is ignoring it’s in the 65, it’s in the 65. That’s where planes are descending – and you can’t mitigate it.”

“The county’s Comprehensive Plan says you can consider new information, such as these new contours, if you deem it relevant,” continued Cooper. “[When the Supervisors]

discussed the noise contours, I was in the room with them – and wasn’t allowed to speak.”

Likewise, former Loudoun County Board of Supervisors Chairman Scott York, now executive director of the Committee for Dulles, urged the commissioners not to “jeopardize this important airport hub. Stonebrook residents won’t be able to enjoy their yards, sidewalks, rooftop decks or trails – or sleep at night. Then they’ll want restrictions put on the flights and impact the airport’s ability to grow.”

The commissioners returned Oct. 7 to decide on the project. Sully Commissioner Evelyn Spain touted its nine Affordable Dwelling Units (ADUs) and seven Workforce Dwelling Units (WDUs), available for below market rate, adding that this area could be a “vibrant, economic driver,” rather than a “dying office park.”

Both Dranesville Commissioner John Ulfelder and Niedzielski-Eichner voted yes, saying they had to go with the old noise contours in the Comprehensive Plan and were actually precluded by Virginia Code from overriding it, “no matter what we wish the Comprehensive Plan said.”

At-Large Commissioner Tim Sargent voted yes, too, but was “concerned about the cumulative effect of both the noise from the air and the [nearby] traffic. I’m pleased with the amount of ADUs and WDUs, but they’re all in the multifamily homes. They should be disbursed throughout the development.” He also noted that, “because of the noise contours,” the Planning Commission objected to the May 2019 Comprehensive Plan amendment allowing 4,200 homes in that area, “but the Board approved it anyway.”

VOTING NO, Cortina said, “The concentrated overflight will remain, and attenuation measures won’t make this suitable for residential use. Rooftop decks and outdoor areas will be subject to incessant, low-flying aircraft.” Sadly, she said, “Our pride in the airport’s success seems to have faded as parochial interests have prevailed.”

Also against this project because of its location, Strandlie said, “There’s no way to mitigate the impact of 787s flying directly overhead at less than 1,000 feet. New homeowners will soon discover they cannot open their windows without hearing the roar of jet engines.”

She related that, years ago, she rented a townhouse near Reagan International Airport and the aircraft noise bothered her, even though she didn’t live under a flightpath. “But I could easily move,” said Strandlie. “That won’t be so easy for [Stonebrook] families who discover the impact only after they’ve closed on their dream homes and moved in.”

The Commissioners then approved the proposal, 9-3, with Cortina, Strandlie and Hunter Mill’s John Carter voting no.

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Missive or Dismissive



By KENNETH B. LOURIE

For the last few months, I have been receiving unsolicited emails from Tommy Chug; he being the other half of the 70’s era comedy duo, “Cheech and Chong” with whom I spent countless hours in college laughing at their recorded routines, but beyond that I don’t remember much. There were a few follow up movies - which I never saw, and more recently, I have found somewhat belatedly a early 2000s cop show starring Cheech Marin alongside Don Johnson: “Nash Bridges.” Nothing at all from Tommy Chong until these emails began arriving.

The email is a solicitation followed by content about his life these last years, and the discovery he made after he had served a nine-month prison sentence for selling decorative bong (there’s a bit more to that story, but it’s not particularly pertinent to this column). After being diagnosed with prostate cancer, Tommy sought help trying to mitigate the effects of his chemotherapy treatment and perhaps even improve his quality of life. (he’s 81 now, by the way.) In so pursuing, he met a doctor from Utah while on a plane, and the rest is Tommy’s email.

The content is not exactly personalized but it does resonate. It resonates because it sounds reasonable and plausible and the remedy not too impactful to major organs, specifically liver and kidney, for which I’m very keen and concerned, given my nearly 13-year chemotherapy-plus treatment for cancer. However, the email has struck a nerve. It did so because as a cancer patient, it’s easy to believe (hope certainly), there’s a magic (often non-Western) cure to whatever ails you, especially when cancer is the culprit. I wouldn’t necessarily characterize my feelings/emotions as susceptible but it’s hard not to lean that way when you’ve been given a “terminal” diagnosis by your Western/conventional doctors. To say you have nothing to lose is a bit of a simplification. Still, hearing the words I heard on Feb. 27, 2009 (you bet I remember the date) at the initial Team Lourie meeting with my oncologist, does cause your antennae to go up and out and all-around seeking an answer to what might very well be, the unanswerable.

When an oncologist tells you you’re likely to die within “13 months to two years,” all bets are off and caution no longer becomes an impediment. Standing pat and adhering exclusively to what your doctors are telling you seems like giving up sort of. For me, I didn’t give up. I started trying alternatives, many of which I am continuing a decade-plus later. Now whether these non-conventional/non-Western methods have proven beneficial I certainly can’t confirm, but if living is any indicator, they likely did no harm (the crux of the Hippocratic oath). So yes, on the face of Tommy’s email about improving one’s quality of life, I am open to some other possibilities to prescription medication.

In fact, to this day, I still consume about 60 pills a day and always wash it and most other things down with alkaline water. Moreover, I try to limit my sugar, which is impossible and I remain open to new ideas. Over the years, I have ingested spoonfuls of pureed canned asparagus, drank water with baking soda, drank water with apple cider vinegar, blended fruit and vegetable smoothies (how else does one tolerate kale?) and tried to be mindful of a maintaining an alkaline diet. The goal has been to enhance my immune system while eliminating toxins in order to enable my body to heal itself. Again, it’s difficult to know what alternatives have worked and what hasn’t. Whether it has been real or a type of placebo effect where I thought it was beneficial, I am not prepared to say. However, I am living proof of something.

As concerns what Tommy is selling, the problem is, as it was with all my previous choices, there are no guarantees. Unfortunately, that was a problem at the beginning, and I fear it will be a problem at the end.

Kenny Lourie is an Advertising Representative for The Potomac Almanac & The Connection Newspapers.

Carved Pumpkin Creations for Halloween

Noel Dickover has been designing and carving Halloween pumpkins for 22 years. And each Halloween, more than 1,000 people visit his front yard at 14223 Hartwood Court in Centreville to see the fanciful array of fantasy pumpkins he and his family have created. This year's highlights include Black Panther, The Thing, Paw Patrol, Fox and Falco, a Dune worm, Baby Yoda and a tribute to the late guitar player, Eddie Van Halen.

And this Saturday, Oct. 31, they'll be among the 30 socially distanced pumpkins on display outside Dickover's home. They'll depict everything from cartoon characters for children to scary and intricate scenes from science-fiction novels, movies and video games. Candy will NOT be given out, and visitors must wear masks. For a preview, go to www.fantasypumpkins.com.

— BONNIE HOBBS



Fox and Falco, from an online game



Kiki's Delivery Service



Paw Patrol



Eddie Van Halen tribute



PHOTO BY MERCIA HOBSON/THE CONNECTION

Bob Mathews and Colleen Delawder visit with their new best buddies who occupy the front yard of their home from early September until late fall.

COVID Can't Stop the Spirit

Historic Haunted Herndon House staged for the season.

BY MERCIA HOBSON
THE CONNECTION

Bob Mathews and Colleen Delawder are the perfect couple, at least when it comes to their customized Herndon Halloween House on Spring Street. Mathews admits he is not the creative one; he's the grunt man. "I pull out the decorations and wait for the directions," he said.

Delawder, on the other hand, is the design scene genius. She envisions the vignettes, breaths life in her staged sets and Mathews builds them to suit the personalized annual theme. No year is like the last; each feature different accessories and key figures telling a one of a kind story: 2020 is the year of the pirate skeletons,

According to Mathews, each year, it looks like nothing until it gets toward October, and it all comes together as Delawder provides the magic. "I'm the ultimate 'skeleton fluffer.' I am just as amazed as the people that walk by," Mathews said.

This year visitors have been quite different. Most mention to Mathews that they discovered the house when making deliveries in the surrounding neighborhoods and then decide to bring their children and grandchildren to see it. "Yeah for Amazon and FedEx," said Mathews.

When it comes to taking everything down, though, Delawder is nowhere to be seen. "I find every excuse possible to become unavailable," she said. Mathews said the number one question he receives each year when decorating is where he stores everything. "My answer is it all goes in the attic of the garage, but of course, it takes some creative packing skills to get 45 skeletons and everything else packed and backed into this tight space."

Mathews shared a small unknown fact. He and Delawder installed electrical outlets on the fence and under the porch years ago to limit the extension cords. "This year, 2020, we realized we need more outlets," he said.

New I-66, Routes 28 and 29 Traffic Changes

The ramp from I-66 West to Route 28 North has just been replaced by a new ramp about 150 feet east of (prior to) the old exit ramp as part of the Transform 66 Outside the Beltway Project. Drivers should use caution and pay attention to lane markings and roadway signs when traveling in this area.

There'll also be more changes in the coming weeks, including new ramps from Route 28 South and Braddock Road to I-66 West, removal of the remaining traffic signal at Route 28 South and Braddock Road, and the shifting of the northbound travel lanes of Route 28 to a new alignment using the new Route 28 bridge over I-66.

The new Route 28/I-66 Interchange will im-

prove traffic flow on both highways and provide access to and from the future I-66 Express Lanes, expected to open in December 2022.

In addition, this Friday, Oct. 30, overnight, Route 28 North travel lanes between Route 29 and I-66 will be shifted to their new, permanent alignment. Route 28 North motorists traveling to I-66 East will temporarily access the exit ramp from the left-most lanes. As a result, drivers going from Route 29 South to Route 28 North won't be able to access I-66 East. Instead, they'll be directed farther east to the I-66/Route 29 Centreville Interchange.

— BONNIE HOBBS