

Fluvanna

— REVIEW



Eleven Year Old Making a 'Swift' Rise in Music

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Homeowners Shocked by High Real Estate Assessments

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Wild Winter Weather Strikes Fluvanna
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On the cover: Leah Kagarise. Submitted photo. Cover design by Amelia McConnell.

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The *Fluvanna Review* is the paper of record for Fluvanna County. Call Rae Alberts at 434-207-0223 to place a legal ad.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Letters to the editor should be a maximum of 350 words and include the name, phone number and address of the author. The phone number and street address are for the paper's records only. We reserve the right to edit letters to the editor. Submit to editor@fluvannareview.com

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Community calendar items must be about community events, under 50 words, and will run only once a month.



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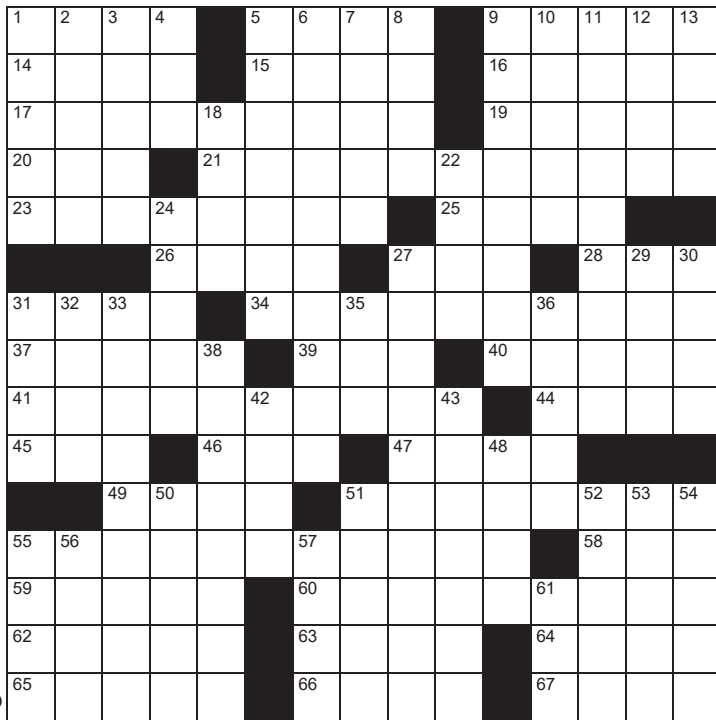
HOURS: MON to FRI-6:30 am 'til 4:30 pm and SAT-6:30 am 'til NOON

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Aberdeen native
- 5 Sickly-looking
- 9 Tanker mishap
- 14 Hardly racy
- 15 In ___ of (rather than)
- 16 "My Three Sons" son
- 17 Remove from a computer
- 19 Cruise flick, "All the Right ___"
- 20 "Fat chance!"
- 21 Disposition
- 23 Points, for example
- 25 Poetic adverb
- 26 Wallet fillers
- 27 In great shape
- 28 Schedule abbr.
- 31 Time gone by
- 34 Wrecking ball job
- 37 Winning
- 39 One for the road
- 40 Sing like Bing
- 41 Fertilized, in a way
- 44 Play opener
- 45 Sailor's affirmative
- 46 November honoree
- 47 Like some mattresses
- 49 Cornfield invader
- 51 Rift-causing
- 55 Put on a show
- 58 Hollywood's Knotts
- 59 Make like
- 60 Set apart
- 62 Ludicrous
- 63 Mellows, maybe
- 64 "Excuse me..."
- 65 Uptight
- 66 Read (over)
- 67 Small boat



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- 3 Fails to mention
- 4 Royal flush card
- 5 Did a tailor's job
- 6 Blue-eyed feline
- 7 Lends a hand
- 8 Festive time
- 9 Of word meanings
- 10 Trailer
- 11 Whitney's cotton gin, e.g.
- 12 Property claim
- 13 "___ we forget ..."
- 18 Leave slack-jawed
- 22 Staircase part
- 24 Wreck but good
- 27 Thumb's neighbor
- 29 Give the heave-ho
- 30 Poet Sexton
- 31 Family man
- 32 Yawl call
- 33 Town officer, in New England
- 35 Yoga need
- 36 Airport shuttles
- 38 Person no longer hitched
- 42 Pond swimmer
- 43 Widely varied
- 48 Tease
- 50 Checks
- 51 San ___, Calif.
- 52 Coeur d'Alene locale
- 53 Ballot caster
- 54 2001 film, "___ at the Gates"
- 55 Put forth
- 56 Supreme Court count
- 57 Rush order?
- 61 Roam (about)

Answers to Previous Crossword:

A	L	S	O		B	L	U	S	H		M	A	R	K			
B	O	O	N		Y	E	N	T	A		E	L	A	N			
B	L	U	E	P	E	N	C	I	L		R	I	D	E			
A	L	T	H	O		I	L	L	O	G	I	C	A	L			
					H	O	T	S	E	A	T		I	N	E	R	T
E	V	E	R		U	N	D	E	R	G	O						
P	E	A	S	A	N	T		D	I	G		R	O	B			
I	N	S	E	R	T			O	L	D	A	G	E				
C	D	T		T	A	R		S	T	E	E	P	L	E			
					D	I	N	E	T	T	E		F	I	E	F	
T	A	C	O	S		B	E	A	R	D	E	D					
H	E	A	R	T	B	E	A	T		N	A	F	T	A			
I	R	I	S		O	C	C	U	P	A	T	I	O	N			
N	I	N	A		A	C	U	T	E		E	R	G	O			
K	E	E	L		T	A	P	E	R		D	E	A	N			

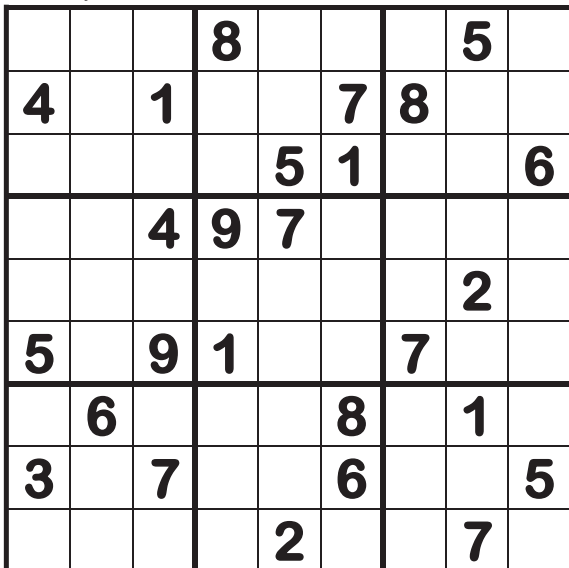
DOWN

- 1 Hoodwinked
- 2 Rapids transit

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

Difficulty: Medium



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HOW TO SOLVE:

Each row must contain the numbers 1 to 9; each column must contain the numbers 1 to 9; and each set of 3 by 3 boxes must contain the numbers 1 to 9.

Answer to Previous Sudoku:

5	9	4	2	7	1	6	3	8
8	3	2	6	4	9	5	7	1
1	7	6	5	3	8	2	4	9
4	5	1	9	2	3	7	8	6
6	2	7	8	1	5	4	9	3
3	8	9	4	6	7	1	5	2
7	6	3	1	9	4	8	2	5
9	1	8	7	5	2	3	6	4
2	4	5	3	8	6	9	1	7

Obituary

Jean Lois Wood Sclater



Jean Lois Wood Sclater, 94, died peacefully at her Lake Monticello home in Palmyra, Virginia on Thursday, February 13, 2025.

She was born August 24, 1930 in Richmond, Virginia to the late Irvin Stonewall Wood and Pearl Snoddy Wood. She spent her early youth with her immediate family and three first cousins in Columbia, Virginia. Ms. Sclater was preceded in death by her husband of 69 years, William Eugene Sclater (Billy); two brothers, Hugh N. Wood and Irvin S. Wood; and one sister, Dorothy W. Yeaman (Dot).

Survivors include four children, William E. Sclater, Jr (Butch) and his wife, Karin, of Palmyra, Daniel W. Sclater and his wife, Kay, of Prince William, Patricia S. Trader and her husband, Gary, of Palmyra, Gregory W. Sclater and his wife, Pamela, of Palmyra; seven grandchildren; and 12 great-grandchildren.

Ms. Sclater graduated from James Madison College with a degree in education and put those skills to use teaching at the Fork Union Military

Academy, worked as the librarian at Palmyra Elementary School, and served as the secretary at Fluvanna High School. If asked, Ms. Sclater would say her greatest joy and accomplishment was being a devoted wife and mother focused on supporting those she loved enabling them to tackle their dreams.

She strongly believed in serving God, her family, and those in her community. She was a long-time member of Bethel Baptist Church where she attended faithfully with Billy and children. After relocating to the Lake Monticello area, Ms. Sclater attended Effort Baptist Church and Calvary Chapel. For years she played an active role in both the Fluvanna County Historical Society and the Fluvanna County Arts Council. She volunteered as a greeter at Martha Jefferson Hospital in Charlottesville, Virginia and worked with Meals on Wheels to provide nutritious meals to seniors and other citizens of Fluvanna County.

A visitation where family and friends can gather to enjoy a light lunch, share memories and celebrate Ms. Sclater's life will be held at Calvary Chapel in Palmyra on Saturday, February 22, 2025, 1:00 p.m. A funeral service will commence at 3:00 p.m. at Calvary Chapel. Interment will follow at the Bethel Baptist Church Cemetery. Funeral arrangements are being handled by The Sheridan Funeral Home of Kents Store.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests memorial contributions be made to Bright Focus Foundation (brightfocus.org/alz) to further their research in curing Alzheimer's and macular degeneration or Lake Monticello Rescue Squad.

COMMUNITY CALENDAR

Veterans breakfast

Central Virginia Veterans will be holding its monthly 'G.I. style' breakfast on **Feb. 22** at 8:15 a.m. at Wahoo BBQ & Grill, Slice Road Gate, Lake Monticello. Cost is \$12 per person (cash only). Veterans and spouses/friends are welcome. Questions? Contact Paul Bethke (703) 965-8363.



QR Code provided by the Fluvanna Leadership Development Program

Food Pantry

FLRD Community Food Pantry, located at 4321 James Madison Hwy, Fork Union, is accepting cash and food donations. The pantry is open on **Tuesdays and Thursdays** from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and Saturdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Food Bank

Fluvanna MACAA Food Bank is located in the old Carysbrook High School. To get food from the food pantry bring a photo ID as proof of Fluvanna residency. Open: **Monday through Friday**, 8:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. To donate directly to the food bank call 434-842-2521 to find out which foods are most needed. Cash and food donations gratefully accepted.

Obituary

Virginia Mary Whigham



Virginia Mary Whigham passed away January 13, 2025, peacefully at the University of Virginia Hospital surrounded by her family. Born in Brooklyn, New York on August 19th, 1947, to James and Sophie Crosby, she drew inspiration from her family. It was mainly her grandfather who taught her unconditional love, which she in turn shared with all of us. Her strong Catholic upbringing made a lifelong impact upon her. She was always looking for the best it could be in any situation and believed that the heart is the vehicle for the dream. She believed in Angels and miracles; her love was a beacon guiding us through life's challenges, always knowing we had a safe harbor in her heart.

Ever true to her nature, she spent her life in service to others; working in the restaurant management business, doing construction work for the Albermarle Housing Improvement Project, and becoming certified by the State of California as a respite caregiver for special needs children. She was a baker and a member of the AFC-CIO bakers union as well as working for the Mendicino Botanical Gardens in Fort Bragg, California. She achieved all of this in addition to being a devoted wife and mother to her children.

Her family was always of paramount importance, and after leaving the workforce, she dedicated herself body and soul to helping her children and grandchildren. She took immense pleasure in cooking for her family and some of the best times were spent with her in the kitchen or at her table, eating her fantastic food. Her joy in nature could be seen in the gardens she so tirelessly maintained. Her enormous capacity for grace and compassion was evident in every conversation you had with her. She believed in miracles, never realizing she was a miracle to us all.

She is preceded in death by her adored mother, Sophie Crosby;

her brothers Salvatore and Joseph Crosby; grandson Ryan Yancey, and beloved granddaughter Brianna Rose Cavello.

She is survived by her husband of 45 years, John Whigham; her sister and brother-in-law James and Charlotte Benzinger; sister and brother-in-law Deborah and Gary. She is also survived by her children; son John Cavello; daughter and son-in-law Phyllis and Tom Yancey; son and daughter-in-law James and Linda Cavello; son and daughter-in-law Brian and Donna Cavello, and son John P. Whigham as well as her grandchildren Zoe, Morgan, Jamie, Phillip Cavello, Nathan Cavello, Hannah and Hayden Cavello, Robert and Christopher Barclay and Dustin Yancey. She is also survived by her cherished great-grandchildren Cache and Knox Cavello, Olivia and Abigail Yancey, Aubrey Barclay, Laya, Neo, and Zephyr Malakai Cavello.

Virginia also leaves behind nieces and nephews; Robert Mosher, Louis Passantino and Sophia Garceau, as well as grand niece and nephew, Sarah and Christopher Passantino, Charlotte Mosher and Jude and Isabella Passantino.

A funeral Mass will be held on Monday, February 24th, 2025, at 11:00 in the morning at St. Thomas Aquinas Church, located at 401 Alderman Drive, Charlottesville, VA, 22903. The church's phone number is 434-293-8081. There will be a reception following Mass at the church.

Should you choose to send flowers, The Dogwood Tree florist works with the church. They are located at 2171 Ivy Rd. #8, Charlottesville, VA 22903 and their phone number is 434-365-9200. Should you prefer, donations can be made to either the Make A Wish Foundation or St. Jude Children's Hospital.

A photo memorial is available for viewing at www.SheridanFuneral-HomeVA.com

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BY RUDY GARCIA, OWNER, RIVANNA WOODS FINANCIAL / TAX SERVICES

Tax Return Filing Tips for Your Business



Consider these suggestions for helping to make tax season smooth sailing this year for your small business:

- **Make sure your bookkeeping is up to date.** Preparing an accurate tax return starts with accurate books. Reconciling your bank accounts is the first step in this process. Consider it the cornerstone on which you build your financials and your tax return. Up-to-date cash accounts will also give you confidence that you're not over-reporting (or under-reporting!) income on your tax return.
- **File employee-related tax forms.** File all necessary W-2 and W-3 forms, along with the applicable federal and state payroll returns (Forms 940 and 941). Do this as soon as possible in January to allow time to identify any potential problems. The deadline is January 31 for both paper and e-filing of W-2s and W-3s.
- **Get your information reporting in order.** Identify anyone you paid during the year that will need a 1099. Look for vendors that are not incorporated like consultants or those in the gig economy. And don't forget your attorneys. You will need names, addresses, identification numbers (like Social Security numbers) and amounts billed. Send out W-9s as soon as possible to request missing information. The 1099-NEC filing deadline is January 31 for both paper and e-filing with the IRS, while the 1099-MISC deadline is February 28 if paper filing and March 31 if e-filing.

• **Reconcile accounts payable.** To help get your 1099 information in order, reconcile your accounts payable and cash disbursements so you have an accurate picture of which vendors you paid in 2024.

• **Organize credit card statements.** If you use credit cards for your business, develop an expense report for each statement. The report should recap the credit card bill and place the transactions in the correct expense accounts. Attach actual copies of the expenses with the credit card statement. You will need this to support audits for both income tax and sales tax. Use this exercise to show you are only including business-related expenses by reimbursing your business for any personal use of the card.

• **Compile a list of major purchases.** Prepare a list of any major purchases you made during 2024. Once the list is created, find detailed invoices that support the purchase and create a fixed asset file. This spending documentation will be needed to determine if you wish to depreciate the purchase over time, take advantage of bonus depreciation, or immediately expense the purchase using code Section 179. Your choices create a great tax planning tool.

Should you need help, please reach out for assistance. Just call us at 434-442-4044 or email us at info@rwftaxservices.com to make your appointment!

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Eleven year old making a "Swift" rise in music

CONTRIBUTED BY SCOTT MURDOCH

Eleven-year-old Leah Kagarise brought Lake Monticello's Bunker Bistro Open Mic audience to its feet Nov. 13 as she delivered three of her own original songs: "Dream World," "Kid Again," and "Not Today."

Leah, who will return to the Bistro Feb. 26, she sat for an interview about her music.

How old were you when you started playing and writing? And was there any song or artist that inspired you to play and sing?

I started playing guitar at 7 years old. My first year and a half of lessons were over Zoom because it was during Covid. I was able to practice a lot at the beginning because I was home so much. I started writing songs before I started taking lessons, not really knowing how to play guitar, but it was fun for me. Then, I started writing better songs as I learned how to play guitar and learning about the structure of songs.

Taylor Swift has always inspired me because I listen to her a lot and her first instrument that she learned was also guitar. And she's a really nice person.

Who are some of your favorite singer/songwriters?

Besides Taylor Swift I also like Andy

Grammer and Gracie Abrams.

Can you describe what you are feeling when you play in front of an audience? And what are some of the venues where you have played? Do you have a favorite?

I feel really happy when I am playing in front of an audience. I don't really feel nervous. I just feel the emotions of the songs. I also feel happy because I know people are listening to it.

I have done another open mic at The Southern and they also invited me to play at a Singer/Songwriters Showcase. That was really cool because there was a huge audience, and I got to play five songs, and I got paid for it. I also got to write my name on the wall there.

Do you play any instruments besides guitar? If not, do you have an interest in any?

I don't play piano, but I have interest in learning piano because I will sometimes look up songs and learn how to play them.

Do your songs come to you naturally, or do you sit down and say "I'm going to write a song today about XYZ"?

The best songs are the ones that come to me. I never just say I need to go write a song. Sometimes, I'll be just walking in my room and write a song. And normally songs just start with me playing around. Then, if I like one, I keep going, and it turns into a song.

Do you see yourself continuing your music as a hobby or something more?

Right now, it's just a hobby, but whenever opportunities come, I want to try them. We are going to a studio to record some of my songs soon. It could be really cool to have a job but release music and songs.

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Nine year old golfer going to nationals

CONTRIBUTED BY TERRY HEYER, YOUTH GOLF FOUNDATION

This time of year is tough on golfers. Snow, wind, and cold certainly take their toll on golf courses, and they take a similar toll on those who want to get out and play. Watching a tournament in Hawaii brings temporary relief, but it's just not the same.

Well, here's something to look forward to and lift our spirits. It involves a 9-year old boy who has honed his golf skills on the Lake Monticello golf course. Lucas Dunaway has qualified to appear in the Drive, Chip, and Putt competition held on the Sunday before the Masters Tournament at Augusta National Golf Club in Georgia. He is the first youth golfer from our area who has ever made it to the finals.

How did he do it? The Drive, Chip, and Putt competition begins with approximately 50,000 kids competing at over 350 courses across the country. There are four age categories for both boys and girls: 7-9, 10-11, 12-13, and 14-15. Three rounds determine who will advance: local, sub-regional, and regional. Lucas finished first in each of these! This qualified him to play in the National Finals at Augusta, where a total of 80 young golfers will vie for the championship.

In each of the above rounds, winners are not determined by scores on a

course. Instead, points are awarded on length of drive; how close chip shots are to the hole; and how close putts are to the hole. That will also be the routine at the National Finals.

Lucas, a fourth grader, has been sharpening his skills at the Lake Monticello course for some time. He has participated in various instruction groups and played in the PGA Junior League, two groups supported by the Youth Golf Foundation. And he has taken lessons from club pro Mark Marshall. Of course, he has received considerable support from his family. Driving to the various sessions, paying fees, completing forms—all require a willingness to adjust schedules and be present.

One might think all this success would be a lot to handle for this young man. But he takes it in stride because he regards his time on the golf course as fun—a lesson many of us might take to heart.

Be sure to tune in to the Golf Channel on April 6 from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. to view the National Finals.

If you are interested in having your child learn the basics of golf, contact the Lake Monticello Pro Shop for schedules. The Youth Golf Foundation financially supports these programs.

Virginia's fire season is here

Statewide 4 p.m. burning law in effect Feb. 15 through April 30

DOF PRESS RELEASE

The Virginia Department of Forestry (DOF) joins fire departments across Virginia to announce the start of spring fire season. Virginia's statewide burning law – which prohibits outdoor burning between midnight and 4 p.m. – is in effect from Feb. 15 through April 30.

Violation of the burning law is a Class-3 misdemeanor and is punishable with a fine of up to \$500. Those who allow a fire to escape may be liable for suppression costs and any resulting property damage.

The law applies to outdoor burning within 300 feet of the woods or dry grass. This includes debris burning, campfires and open-air charcoal grills like those found in park settings. This law does not apply to charcoal or gas-fired barbecue grills. Some exceptions to the law are made for campfires at Virginia State Parks. To learn more about Virginia's 4 p.m. burning law and fire prevention, visit DOF's website <https://dof.virginia.gov/wildland-prescribed-fire/fire-laws/4-pm-burning-law/>.

Virginia has approximately 700 wildfires per year, with the majority occurring in spring. Warmer weather, dry and windy conditions, and abundant "fuels" – such as frost-killed vegetation and dead leaves – increase the potential for wildfires and make them harder to extinguish.

To advertise call: (434) 207-0223

"Even with the recent winter weather across much of the state, current forecasts predict higher-than-normal temperatures through April with normal to below-normal precipitation," said State Forester Rob Farrell. "Already this year, wildfires have burned more than 500 acres across Virginia. While we hope for the best, we prepare for the worst. DOF is equipped to initiate our spring fire season readiness plan and we have taken several steps to prepare during the offseason."

DOF's Headquarters Incident Management Team completed a training exercise in January that simulated a mock deployment and the management of a large wildfire scenario. Following the recent STARs radio system upgrade, testing was completed to ensure functionality and compatibility with the agency's contract Single-Engine Air Tanker (SEAT).

"Virginia's wildfire activity is beginning earlier and lasting longer," said DOF Chief of Fire and Emergency Response John Miller. "The number one cause of wildfires is escaped fire from debris burning. Do your part to keep your home and community safe. Smart, simple safety measures are easy to follow and significantly reduce the likelihood of a destructive – and possibly deadly – mistake."

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RAIN DATE* Sunday, February 23, at 1:00 p.m.

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Wear: Field clothes – sturdy pants, field boots, dress for the weather!

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Natural history is history, too! The Fluvanna Historical Society is happy to collaborate with the Piedmont Discovery Center in our second public walk featuring the remarkable narrative preserved in our wild native spaces.

This is a fantastic opportunity to join one of Virginia's top botanists in the field! Join the Piedmont Discovery Center's Drew Chaney, a leading expert in the flora and fauna of the Virginia Piedmont, in an exploration of natural history in the winter landscape. Participants will learn how field technicians use bark, buds, seed plumes, thatch, basal rosettes and other clues to identify grasses, wildflowers, shrubs and trees in winter. We will also explore the ecological importance of the imperiled ecosystems in which they occur. No question will go unanswered!

The Cold Hollow Piedmont Savanna remnant is a high-quality example of a pre-colonial time capsule – one of the best examples among the more than 800 old growth remnant grassland patches found during research conducted by the Piedmont Discovery Center in 2020-2022 in a 17-county area.



Please RSVP or learn more by visiting the PDC website at PiedmontDiscoveryCenter.org
Or email: centerforurbanhabitats@gmail.com
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Content: LMOA
Photo: Dvonn Production



LMOA Staff Works Hard Through Snowstorm

LMOA would like to express its gratitude to our Police Officers, Allied Security Partners, and Facilities & Operations Department staff for their dedicated hard work during the recent snowstorm. The Facilities & Operations team worked tirelessly throughout the evening, and their round-the-clock efforts deserve recognition. Thank you to everyone who worked to clear the roads, provide safety services, and ensure proper ingress and egress capabilities. Your commitment is greatly appreciated!

LMOA Members Invited to Run for the Board!

Members in good standing should consider how they can make a meaningful impact by running for the LMOA Board of Directors. If you're interested in being part of this important process, we encourage you to obtain your Candidate Petition Packet as soon as possible. You will need to gather 150 signatures from Members in Good Standing by the deadline of 5 PM on March 31, 2025. For your convenience, we now offer

the option of either electronic or traditional paper packets, making it easier than ever to participate. Inside the packet, you will find vital information about running for the board, along with a questionnaire that allows you to share your story and vision. The Election Committee will verify the signatures in April, and we'll announce the qualifying candidates at the Special Open Session Meeting on April 10. To request a packet, please call or visit the Member Services desk at the Ashlawn Clubhouse, located at 41 Ashlawn Blvd. By running for the board, you have a wonderful opportunity to help shape the future of Lake Monticello!

Great Job Openings at Lake Monticello

LMOA's Facilities & Operations Department is interviewing for a full-time Maintenance Technician and a Custodian. The Department of Public Safety is still seeking a certified Police Officer. If you are interested, please find more information and apply at CAREERS at lmoa.org. Bunker Bistro is also looking for friendly servers to join its team, whether you're

interested in full-time or part-time work. They have a variety of shifts available starting at 7 AM for its new breakfast menu. Experience is great, but they are happy to train the right people! If you're interested, just email your resume to 51bunkerbistro@gmail.com.

St. Patrick's Day Fun Raises Funds for Fire Department

Tickets go fast, so get in touch with the Lake Monticello Volunteer Fire Department today and buy a ticket for the Annual St. Patrick's Day Party Fundraiser. They cost \$25 each and can be purchased by calling Tim Hodge at 434-234-7287. This year, it will take place on March 15 at 6 PM in the firehouse on 10 Slice Road with dinner, music, door prizes, and more!

VA Boating Safety Course

If you live at Lake Monticello, come join instructors Diane and Gibb Kerr at the Ashlawn Clubhouse on April 12 from 8:30 AM to 4:30 PM for the Virginia Boating Safety Course! This fun and informative course is required for anyone operating personal watercraft (PWC) or motorboats with engines of 10

horsepower or more in Virginia, no matter how old you are. They would love to have you, so be sure to register early on the Department of Wildlife Resources website. It's open to everyone. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to reach out at LMOAWaterSafety@gmail.com.

Mindful Movement for Joint Health and Wellbeing

Join Joan Clark, PT (physical therapist), for an informative discussion on the importance of mindful movement for joint health and overall well-being. The event will take place on February 22, from 3:00 to 4:15 PM at the Ashlawn Clubhouse, in Terrace Room B (downstairs). Experience gentle range-of-motion exercises that incorporate breathing techniques and hydration to enhance your energy levels. Please confirm your attendance or reach out with any questions at cynhygeia145@gmail.com.

Photo Credit: Thank you Dvonn Production for sharing your beautiful winter wonderland photography with the community!

**Historian and author
Leepson speaks next
month at FOL**

BY PAGE H. GIFFORD
CORRESPONDENT



Journalist, author, and historian Marc Leepson will speak on March 5 at 10 a.m. to the Friends of the Library about his latest book, *The Unlikely War Hero: A Vietnam War POW's Story of Courage and Resistance in the Hanoi Hilton*.

Leepson is the author of numerous books on topics ranging from the Civil War to biographies on Francis Scott Key and the Marquis de La Fayette.

After graduating with a degree in

Leepson continues on page 10.

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This project was supported, in part, by the Virginia Commission for the Arts, which receives support from the Virginia General Assembly and the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency.

THIS WEEK'S PET: Buffy The Tortie

Meet Buffy! Buffy is a sweet, trusting, chatty, adorable young tortie girl who starts purring the moment that humans walk into a room, and she's ready to curl up on your lap and cuddle her way into your heart. She was initially nervous with unfamiliar noises, but in just a few short weeks, she has started to get accustomed to the sights and sounds of normal home life. Her foster family thinks that she might have grown up around dogs because she has "guard cat" mannerisms-if there is a sound behind a door that she doesn't recognize, she perks up and growls at the door. Once she can see the source of the sound, however, it's no longer bothers her. During her slow introduction to her foster family's feline and canine residents, Buffy has been totally unconcerned with them and has simply continued about her business. Even when face to face with a curious 60-pound hound dog, Buffy simply checked her out and then went back to eating her dinner without so much as a hiss. She remains separated because her foster family's resident cats are less accepting of her than she is of them, but we believe that Buffy would be fine in a home with more friendly cats and respectful dogs given a proper adjustment period. The most important part of the equation will be a human who wants to shower her with the constant love and affection that she so desperately craves. **Update on Buffy from her foster:** She loves to jump and climb to the highest places that she can get to, so don't be surprised to see her scaling your fridge or cabinets. She will thrive in an environment with tall cat trees and/or wall furniture designed for her to climb. Foster mom states she will thrive in a home with cats. She seeks their attention and likes to spend time with other felines.



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Leepson *continued from page 9.*

history from George Washington, Leepson spent two years in Vietnam from 1967-69. He said he majored in history at George Washington only because you had to choose a major. He returned to start his graduate studies after he left the Army; went into an Masters of Arts program to study 17th-century English history and planned to get his Ph.D. and teach. He added that didn't happen because of finances and a tight job market in the early '70s.

He got his first job in journalism as a proofreader at Congressional Quarterly in Washington, D.C., and worked there for 11 1/2 years, the last nine as a staff writer. He has freelanced since 1986 and has written nine books as well as articles for magazine and newspapers.

"Aside from the mid-twentieth century Vietnam War period, I've been most intrigued by the Early Republic, between the Revolutionary War and the Civil War. I served in the Vietnam War and that was the catalyst for my interest, although it didn't come until a decade after I came home from the war," he said. "As for the Early Republic, I learned a lot about it doing the research for my books *Flag: An American Biography and What So Proudly We Healed*, my biography of Francis Scott Key. I found it fascinating to see how much the issue of slavery affected American life and politics during those years, and that, in retrospect, it led to the outbreak of the Civil War."

Recently his focus has been on Vietnam. In his current book, he tells the incredible story of U.S. Navy Seaman Apprentice Doug Hegdahl, who survived as a POW by fooling the Vietnamese with the best performance of his life. In vivid and riveting detail based on his interviews, archival research, and his experiences in the Vietnam War, Leepson, has written a story about the youngest and lowest-ranking American POW captured in North Vietnam.

"Doug Hegdahl has never been properly recognized for his extraordinary efforts, and his story has never been fully told."

Wild winter weather strikes Fluvanna

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

Wild winter weather hit Fluvanna last week, bringing rounds of snow, heavy rain, and damaging winds from the start of the week all the way into Sunday night.

Tuesday (Feb. 11) brought about six inches of wet, heavy snow, along with some sleet and freezing rain.

"Our citizens did a great job heeding the warnings that were sent out ahead of this storm," said Fluvanna County Sheriff's Office Major Aaron Hurd.

There were, however, still a number of minor crashes and disabled vehicles to keep first responders busy.

"When I arrived in-country as a 22-year-old U.S. Army draftee in December 1967, I could barely find that country on a map. Nor did I know much about the war, other than that we were told we were fighting to stop the spread of worldwide communism," he said. "It didn't take very long for me to realize that the U.S. was doing the bulk of the fighting, that the South Vietnamese by and large were pleased to let us do it, and the authoritarian South Vietnamese government was not exactly beloved by the people, and something was very wrong with that picture. I later learned that Vietnam, a long-time French colony, had been fighting for its independence since the end of World War II, and many Vietnamese saw the Americans as another Western nation threatening its independence." Leepson's book comes at a time when we are reminded of the post-World War II era in history and politics when Communism was a threat.

"I also learned that Vietnam and China had been enemies for thousands of years and fought a border war in 1978, three years after the end of the American War. So much for an international Communist conspiracy," he said. "Virtually everything I've read since then about Vietnam, the country, its history, and the war, has buttressed that perspective."

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"The deputies did outstanding work in rough conditions to make sure calls were answered promptly and the roads stayed open," said Hurd.

County 911 services were disrupted Wednesday from around 9 am to 4 pm, forcing Emergency Services to use alternate lines for calls throughout the day.

Hurd said it was not clear if the outage was storm-related but said that the provider, Brightspeed, was having issues across several counties.

Heavy rains moved in on Saturday afternoon and continued into Sunday morning. A rain gauge near Lake Mon-

Wild Winter *continues on page 12.*



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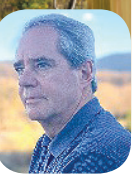


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Wild Winter continued from page 10.

ticello recorded 1.66 inches of precipitation in that 24-hour period.

Rain and melting snow pushed up river levels on both the Rivanna and James rivers, sparking area flood warnings.

"All of the usual roads around Kents Store that flood are flooded right now and signage is going up," the Kents Store Volunteer Fire Department warned on Sunday afternoon.

At Scottsville, the James was expected to crest at about a foot above flood stage late Sunday night.

As soon as the rain moved out, the high winds moved in.

Sustained winds of over 20 mph along with gusts of 30-40 mph lasted for several hours.

By around 3 pm on Sunday, residents were reporting trees down across most of the major roads around Lake Monticello. Rt. 53 between the Lake and Charlottesville was impassible for a period of time until it could be cleared.

"I suggest we all stay in unless it's an emergency," Supervisor Chris Fairchild posted on Facebook.

Both Dominion and CVEC saw thousands of outages, with CVEC reporting on Sunday afternoon that four of their substations had lost connection with the main transmission lines.

As the wind died down late Sunday, the number of outages began to fall, but CVEC warned that the 7,000 customers still without power would likely be in the dark until sometime on Monday.

"We know there is severe damage to

the system," the company said on Facebook around 8 p.m., "but we won't know the full extent until daylight when our teams can scout and clear the trees and destruction to make way for power restoration."

Homeowners shocked by high real estate assessments

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

Fluvanna County homeowners received their real estate reassessments over the past week.

They have questions.

By law, Virginia localities must conduct reassessments every two to six years to ensure real estate taxes are set based on relatively current fair market values. Fluvanna holds reassessment every two years.

This time around, appraisals were up an average of 25 percent county-wide – but many residents saw their valuations skyrocket by 40-60 percent.

Fred Pearson of Pearson Appraisal Service told the Board of Supervisors in January that many residents would see this type of spike in property values, saying that market forces drove the steep increases and were being seen in other parts of Virginia.

After the reassessment letters started arriving in mailboxes, local social media channels filled up with

residents surprised, angered, and concerned by the high valuations.

Included in the letter was a chart showing the past two tax years, plus a line for 2025 showing the percentage change from the previous year and a "tax amount" based on the current real estate tax rate of \$0.844 per \$1,000 of assessed value.

Supervisor Mike Goad (Fork Union) explained on his Facebook page that "state code mandates that an amount be listed in the 'Tax Amount' column, regardless of whether or not a locality has adopted a tax rate in the current year's budget cycle."

However, the Board of Supervisors is likely to lower the tax rate to a level that would generate the same amount of revenue based on these new valuations, a process known as equalization. This process will blunt the sharp increase indicated on the reassessment letters.

Deputy County Administrator Kelly

Tax assessments continues on page 14.

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EVENTS

COMMUNITY CHILI COOK OFF: Saturday, February 22, 2025 at 2 pm. Interested participants be there at 11:30 for entry. Sponsors: St. James Baptist Church, 17227 James Madison Hwy, Palmyra 22963. For Info> contact Connie Henson 434-960-7773, Genevieve Washington 434-589-3216, Willie Hill 434-981-4060, or Joyce Bishop 434-589-8940. Prizes for the best Chilis!

VETERANS BREAKFAST: Saturday, February 22, 2025. Time is 8:15 a.m. at Wahoo BBQ & Grill, Slice Road Gate, Lake Monticello. Cost is \$12 per person. Cash only please. Veterans & Spouses/friends are welcome Questions? Contact Paul Bethke (703) 965-8363.

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SPECIAL NOTICES

VIRGINIA DEPT. OF VETERANS SERVICES: Need Help? Attention Veterans and Dependents! Visit us at the Fluvanna Community Center, 5725 James Madison Highway > by appointment only. Call Jeannette Flint at (434) 529-6431 to schedule your appointment. www.dvs.virginia.gov

WANTED

2025 FSPCA SPONSORS NEEDED: Our local animal shelter sends us photos of pets every week that are waiting for adoption. The PET photo speaks volumes! Your sponsorship can help to find forever homes for a furry four-legged friend. Place your business name, phone number or special message/memorial under the photo. Let animal lovers know you care. Call Edee @ (434) 207-0221 or email: edee@fluvannareview.com with questions/requests. Thank you.

PUBLIC NOTICES

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT OF FLUVANNA COUNTY

ALICIA B. MARTINEZ SUAREZ

Plaintiff

v

KENNETH ART SEARS, SR.,

Defendant

Case No.: CL24000941-00

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

THE OBJECT of the above-styled case is to obtain a divorce a vinculo matrimonii by Alicia B. Martinez Suarez against Kenneth Art Sears, SR., IT APPEARING TO THE COURT, by Affidavit filed according to law, that Kenneth Art Sears, Sr., is not a resident of the Commonwealth of Virginia; and that his last known address is 764 Jefferson Drive, Palmyra, Virginia 22963 it is therefore

ORDERED that the said Kenneth Art Sears, Sr., appear on or before the 13th day of March, 2025 at 9:30 AM in the Clerk's Office of this Court and do what is necessary to protect his interests; and it is further

ORDERED that the foregoing portion of this Order be published once a week for four (4) consecutive weeks in the *Fluvanna Review*, a newspaper of general circulation in the County of Fluvanna, Virginia, and shall be posted on the front of the courthouse within 20 days after entry of this Order of Publication.

DATE: 1-15-2025

ENTER: Judge David M. Barredo

I ask for this:

Elizabeth C. Southall, Esq. (VSB#86390)
Flora Pettit PC
530 East Main Street
Charlottesville, VA 22902-2057
Tel: (434) 979-1400
Fax: (434) 977-5109
Email: ecs@fplegal.com
Counsel for Plaintiff

Belanger Harris said the county had received many calls about assessments, and they have now set up a Frequently Asked Questions (FAQ) page on the county website to answer the most common concerns.

The page can be found at <https://www.fluvannacounty.org/bos/page/re-assessment-notice-and-faq>

Residents can appeal their reassessments directly to Pearson Appraisal Services any time before February 24. Information on the appeal process is included in the letter, and residents can call Pearson at 1-800-767-0856 on weekdays between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Appeals can also be made to the

county's Board of Equalization after Feb. 24.

The Board of Supervisors will set a maximum advertised tax rate on Feb. 26, and this will give residents a clearer picture of how high their tax bill will go.

Supervisors will set the tax rates at or below that maximum advertised rate when they adopt the FY26 budget in mid-April. That final tax rate will be used to calculate the bills that go out to residents in May.

School Board approves FY26 budget of \$24 million as insurance costs rise and salaries stagnate

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

At the heart of Wednesday night's (Feb. 12) School Board budget planning session was a somewhat philosophical question: is it better to ask for what you need or only for what you think you might be able to get?

As Superintendent Peter Gretz outlined in his budget presentation, the needs of Fluvanna County Public Schools for Fiscal Year 2026 are substantial.

He noted that while the schools have added 31 new programs in the past 15 years, staffing is still at the same level as in 2009. The student population has dropped slightly, but they have picked up an additional 100 special education students in the past five years, and the number of students learning English as a second language has doubled to 128.

Despite efforts over the past several years to increase salary rates to make FCPS competitive with other districts, pay remains lower than in some surrounding counties. Bringing everyone to competitive rates would require a 14 percent across-the-board increase.

Health-care costs are expected to go up by 10 percent, and if that has to be passed on to staff, the cost increase could exceed salary increases.

With the upcoming retirement of long-time Executive Director of Finance and Instruction Brenda Grasser, Gretz would like to reorganize the senior staff and add a director of human resources and a communication director. He also advocated for the addition of a behavioral specialist.

Gretz noted that there were many things they would like to have to bring the schools up to optimal staffing and instructional level but declined to add to the budget this cycle. These include an additional nurse for Central Elementary and close to a dozen math and reading specialists and interventionists.

Nine instructional aides previously funded by a COVID-era grant program called ESSER that has ended will be funded for FY26 through money already in the budget. They will need to either be fully funded or eliminated starting in FY27.

In all, Gretz presented a budget of \$24,455,332. He sought a minimum three percent raise for teachers and staff and to absorb the increase in health care costs, along with the three new staff positions.

This would increase the local funding request by approximately 9.8 percent, or \$2,185,994 over the previous fiscal year.

From the start of the discussion, it was clear there were not enough votes to approve the entire package as presented.

Danny Reed (Fork Union) commended Gretz for laying out "what's going to make our schools run optimally" but did not believe the Board of Supervisors would approve that type of increase in local funding. "I just don't think our county has \$2.1 million."

He wanted to see something closer to \$1.5 million, a decrease of close to 30 percent from Gretz's proposal.

James Kelley (Palmyra) said he was

"prepared to make a motion for this budget as it stands, with Dr. Gretz's endorsement, and to advocate, fight – but in a constructive way – with the county."

At the other end of the spectrum was Andrew Pullen (Columbia), who said the figure he had in mind was \$512,013, less than 25 percent of Gretz's proposal.

Closing the gap with such wide divergence among the members was complicated by the meeting format.

Due to illness, Dr. Gretz could not present the budget on Feb. 5 as initially planned and had it moved forward to Feb. 12. But with the roads still treacherous from Tuesday's snowstorm, board members had decided to hold the meeting via Zoom.

Charles Rittenhouse (Cunningham) was not able to connect via Zoom and was only able to listen in by phone and could neither participate in the discussion or vote on the final package.

This meant they would have to find a number at least three members who would vote to approve whatever they came up with.

"Why are we working backwards?" Kelley asked at one point. "We should start by asking for what we need and then go from there. The School Board does not set the tax rate. It's our job to communicate the district's needs."

Reed argued that they needed to cultivate their relationship with the Board of Supervisors. "I just personally think the relationship piece with the boards is better off with a little bit lower number, and we still communicate, and just because we don't ask for it doesn't mean this is not important to the long-term plan of FCPS."

They began shifting line items up and down the budget spreadsheet, chipping away at the totals. Some were relatively easy cuts. The district can, for example, live another year without a communications officer.

Others were much harder, particularly when it came to health insurance.

For the last several years, the budget has been structured to absorb health insurance increases, but Reed questioned how long they could continue to do so.

"We're going to have trouble building out staffing needs to get this school district staffed to an optimal position if we continue to eat big-time dollars every single year, especially in insurance," he said.

Andre Key (Rivanna) countered, "If we pass on the health insurance, any portion, our lowest paid employees...that three percent raise won't be a raise."

In the end, the budget came out looking much the same as when they went in. The final number was \$1,896,979, around \$289,000 less than Gretz's proposal. The budget passed on a vote of 3-1, with Rittenhouse absent and Pullen voting no.

Next, the budget goes to the Board of Supervisors, who will make their own decision on what and how much of the proposal to keep or cut. This final figure will be included in the final vote on the county budget in mid-April.

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PUBLIC NOTICES



PUBLIC HEARING
Fluvanna County Planning Commission
Tuesday, March 11, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Virginia Code Sections 15.2-1427 and 15.2-2204, a Public Hearing will be held in the Morris Room in the County Administration Building at 132 Main Street, Palmyra, Virginia 22963 for citizens of the County to have the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Planning Commission for the following items:

AFD 24:01: Withdrawal from the North 640 Agricultural and Forestal District - A request to withdraw a parcel from the North 640 Agricultural and Forestal District in accordance with County Code Section 3.1-13. This parcel located on 6.78 acres and known as Tax Map 30 Section 12 Parcel 3A. The Parcel is located on James Madison Hwy (US15) in the area of Haden Martin Rd (SR 640) and is located in the Rural Residential Planning Areas and the Fork Union Election District.

ZTA 24:11: Ordinance to amend the "Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia," by amending § 22-22-1 to clarify that no more than five lots may be created from the parent tract using the minor subdivision approval process, regardless of whether the lots are created at one time or over an extended period of time, and to make other conforming changes.

ZTA 25:01: Ordinance to amend the "Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia," by amending §§ 22-4-2.1 and 22-22-1 to define "agritourism activity" and to authorize such activity by-right in the A-1 zoning district.

ZTA 25:02: Ordinance to amend the "Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia," by amending §§ 22-22-1 to remove the word "municipal" from the definitions of "Solid Waste Material Recovery Facility" and "Solid Waste Collection Facility."

ZTA 25:03: Ordinance to amend the "Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia," by amending § 22-25-4 to make a clerical correction removing an obsolete reference for outdoor light controls.

A copy of the complete text of the above ordinances is available for public review at <https://www.fluvannacounty.org/> and at the Office of the Fluvanna County Administrator during normal business hours. Questions may be directed to the Planning and Zoning Department, at (434) 591-1910. All interested persons wishing to be heard are invited to attend the public hearing.

VIRGINIA: IN THE CIRCUIT COURT FOR THE COUNTY OF FLUVANNA
MOZELL BOOKER,

Plaintiff

Civil Case #25CL102

v.

PARTIES UNKNOWN, CLAIMING ANY INTEREST IN THE PROPERTY REFERENCED HEREIN,

Defendant

ORDER OF PUBLICATION

The object of the above-styled suit involves the Plaintiffs interest in a parcel of property known as Tax Map/Parcel Number 50-A-46 in Fluvanna County, Virginia. The legal description of this property is:

All that certain tract or parcel of land lying and being situate in Fork Union Magisterial District of Fluvanna County, Virginia, containing ten acres, more or less, and adjoining the lands now or formerly owned by Horatio Seay, et.al, and known as part of the Duncan tract; being in all respects the same tract or parcel of land conveyed to Fannie A. Scott from J.N. Wilkerson and wife, by deed dated November 1, 1898, and of record in the Clerk's Office of the Circuit Court of Fluvanna County, Virginia in Deed Book 29 (o.s.) at Page 41. The said Fannie A. Scott died intestate on September 8, 1939, and left as her sole heirs at law and successors in title her three grandchildren, namely: Helen W. Anderson, Frances W. Easter and James E. Wilson.

An Affidavit having been filed, whereby Plaintiff, by counsel, did affirm that due diligence has been used by the Plaintiff to ascertain the identity and whereabouts of the possible defendants, without success.

Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 8.01-316 A .1. b., it is hereby **ORDERED** that all interested parties appear on or before April 11, 2025 at 9:00 am in Clerk's Office of this Court and do what is necessary to protect his interest.

ENTER: Judge David M. Barredo

DATE: 2-7-2025

I ask for this:

Mary Ann Barnes 29779
 Tucker Griffin Barnes
 307 West Rio Road Charlottesville, Virginia 22901
 (434)973-7474 • (434) 951-0870
 mbarnes@tgblaw.com
 Counsel for Plaintiff

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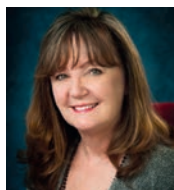
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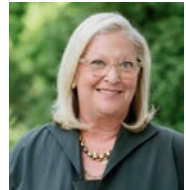
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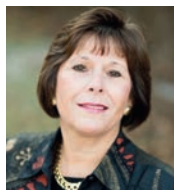
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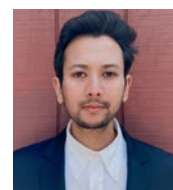
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