

Fluvanna

REVIEW

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VIOLENCE



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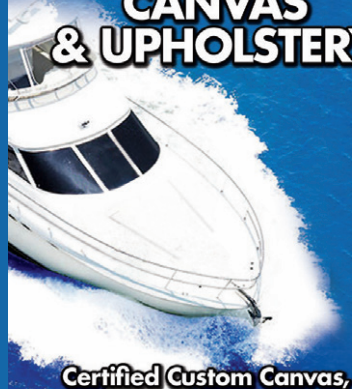
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GENERAL

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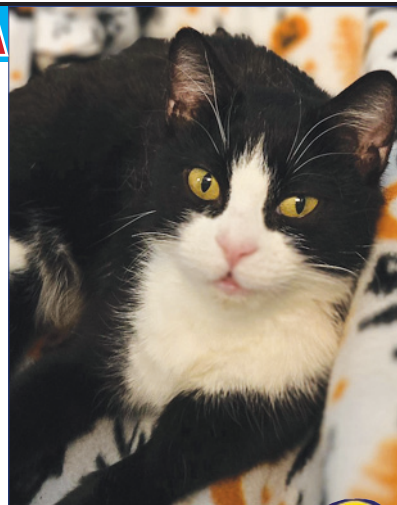
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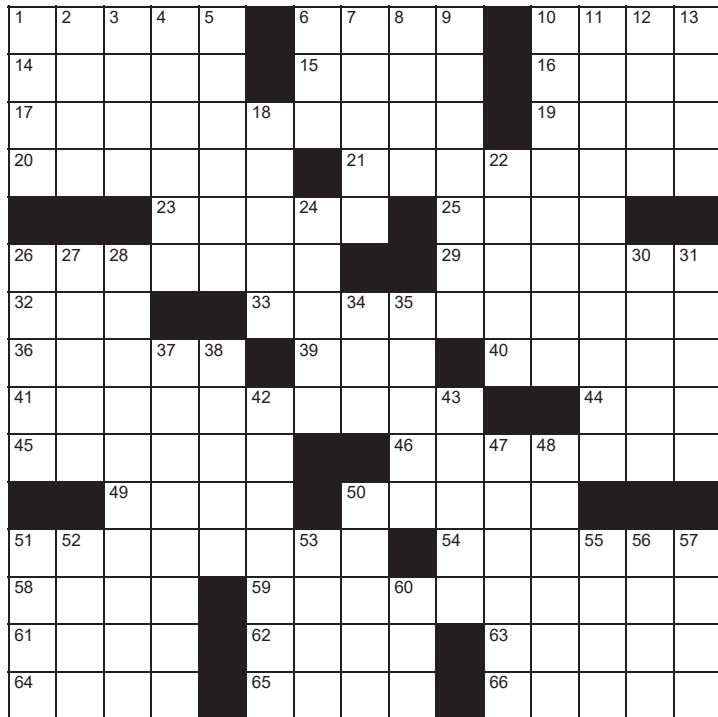
HOURS: MON to FRI-6:30 am 'til 4:30 pm and SAT-6:30 am 'til NOON

The Weekly Crossword

by Margie E. Burke

ACROSS

- 1 Angry bull's sound
- 6 Pronto
- 10 ___ of Wight
- 14 Kitchen gadget
- 15 Indian royalty
- 16 Oracle
- 17 Like Nebraska's legislature
- 19 Complication
- 20 Lifelong local
- 21 Religious chants
- 23 Fluff up, as hair
- 25 Like some drinks
- 26 Golden girl Getty
- 29 Kind of oil
- 32 Pasture sound
- 33 Coolness, in the 'hood
- 36 Caribbean cruise stop
- 39 Sticky stuff
- 40 Fictional Swiss miss



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- 41 Like some fears
- 44 Have ___ at
- 45 Lady Bird's spouse
- 46 Store freebies
- 49 Charitable gifts
- 50 Bocelli, for one
- 51 Enhance, as a recording
- 54 Phonograph inventor
- 58 Kiln
- 59 While away
- 61 Make whole
- 62 Nero's 57
- 63 Resell illegally, as tickets
- 64 Hill dwellers
- 65 Actress Redgrave
- 66 Short and sweet

- 4 Perform, as a poem
- 5 See the world
- 6 "Who ___ we kidding?"
- 7 Beetle Bailey's boss
- 8 Not fully closed
- 9 Jack of "City Slickers"
- 10 Release
- 11 Like some races or candidates
- 12 Sharon of "Dreamgirls"
- 13 Work units
- 18 Part of room and board
- 22 Life partner?
- 24 Free-for-all
- 26 Text alternative
- 27 Word of regret
- 28 March Madness, e.g.
- 30 Pigeon's perch
- 31 Parting word

- 34 Took off
- 35 Obliterate
- 37 South Dakota region
- 38 Molecule
- 42 Impart, as values
- 43 Strike zones?
- 47 Not apt to crow
- 48 "Let's Go Crazy" singer
- 50 Get into shape
- 51 Tomato type
- 52 Roulette bet
- 53 A deadly sin
- 55 Commendation
- 56 Museum pieces
- 57 Neck part
- 60 Storage cubby

Answers to Previous Crossword:



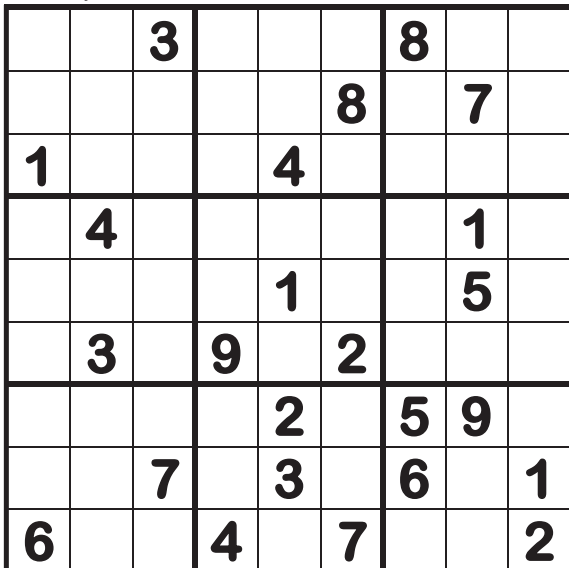
DOWN

- 1 Surprise greatly
- 2 Spanish girl
- 3 Skip past

SUDOKU

Edited by Margie E. Burke

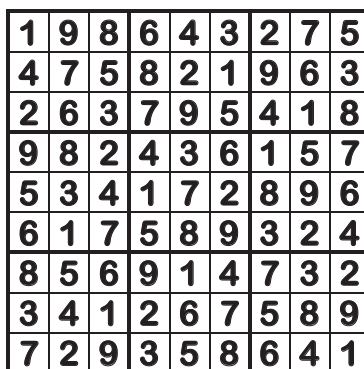
Difficulty: Medium



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:



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Letter to the Editor

To John McGuire (R-5th District)

Dear Representative McGuire, I hope you appreciate the respectful treatment you received at the Town Hall, Wednesday night. (Feb. 26). I listened in and was impressed with the civility on both sides. And I hope you act upon the Christian sentiment you continually expressed, i.e., that you truly love us whether we voted for you or not. You seem like a sincere guy who really believes in Donald Trump and the Re-publican party. You're also a very good salesman but when we asked you to give us a reason to trust (Elon) Musk when he's already made so many bad decisions, we don't need to hear how you grew up poor on a farm or how wonderful you think Donald Trump is. On your survey the question was: Do you think the government should get rid of waste, fraud, and abuse...but the only choice of a response was yes, no, or not sure. My only conclusion is that you're not interested in the real answer to that question which is: Yes, but not with an unelected billionaire taking a chain saw to departments he knows nothing about. You seem so nice that I'm choosing to believe you're just a simple, trusting sort whose blind devotion to the Republican party has led you to fall for the biggest scam ever played on any nation in known history...a known felon passing himself off as the new savior. But you're in good company, a lot of very sincere,

good hearted people have fallen for it, too. I mean, when has half the population voted an enemy asset into the highest seat of power, not only in the country, but the world? It's truly breathtaking and I can only wonder... are you a real Christian or just another charlatan who doesn't care about the plight of us little people. The herd is alarmed and for a very good reason, Mr. Maguire, but I will end this letter with a measure of restraint in hopes you will truly follow Christ's teachings not just with words but actions and treat us as we have treated you.

-Beth Sherk, Fork Union

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Help Fluvanna County Shape its Long-Term Vision as it prepares to update the Fluvanna County Comprehensive Plan!

A series of community meetings will be held to inform citizens about the update of the County's Comprehensive Plan, and to give citizens an opportunity to provide input into the long-term vision for the County's future.

LOCATION	DATE/TIME
Fork Union Community Center 5725 James Madison Highway, Fork Union	Tuesday, February 25, 6:00 p.m.
Lake Monticello Fire House, Maple Room 10 Slice Road, Palmyra	Thursday, February 27, 6:00 p.m.
Antioch Baptist Church 4422 Antioch Road, Scottsville	Tuesday, March 4, 7:00 p.m.
Columbia Baptist Church 116 Rivanna Street, Columbia	Saturday, March 8, 1:00 p.m.

The Comprehensive Plan is a guide for a locality's future development. The Plan lays out the locality's vision for the future and outlines goals to achieve that vision, outlines ways to manage growth and protect what citizens think is special, and assists local officials with decision making. Public input is a crucial part of this process.

Staff from Fluvanna County will make a brief presentation on the process and then breakout attendees into groups for hands-on exercises to give input relative to the future development within the County.

Everyone is encouraged to attend and have their voices heard.



Don't miss this opportunity to help shape the future!

Anyone who would like more Information is encouraged to contact the Fluvanna County Planning and Zoning Office at (434) 591-1910.

Clark talks about movement and pain

BY PAGE H. GIFFORD
CORRESPONDENT



Joan Clark. Photo by Cynthia Moore

Lake Resident and Physical Therapist Joan Clark spoke at the monthly Hygeia wellness program at Lake Monticello on Saturday (Feb. 22). Her discussion focused on feeling better and decreasing joint pain with natural remedies, including hydration, supplements, and movement.

As a physical therapist for 37 years, Clark has worked with a variety of patients, including those with orthopedic issues, and with amputees, and the

elderly. She began by explaining how things are connected and work and how, over time, they can break down.

"Hydration is important for our bodies and mostly the muscles to keep them lubricated," she said. The core of her message was to keep everything strengthened and flowing, such as synovial fluid around the joints and keeping muscles strong to protect the joints. Cartilage also plays an important role and when there is no cartilage, stenosis occurs.

"Staying hydrated is important, but how do we know if we are hydrated?" She demonstrated the pinch test, by pinching the skin and if it bounces right back to its normal form, one is hydrated. If it doesn't then one could be dehydrated. "Urine color is a good indicator of dehydration, dizziness, joint pain, being tired and cranky are also indicators," she added.

Breathing coupled with hydration helps body fluids move and protect joints. Breathing is essential in all movements from aerobics, and Pilates, to yoga. The audience learned proper breathing techniques not only to help

them to relax the body but to give it the appropriate amount of oxygen.

Movement is key. She discussed tai chi, an ancient 3,000-year-old Chinese martial art that involves gentle movements, meditation, and breathing. It's often practiced as an exercise to improve health and well-being.

"The benefits of tai chi can help improve balance, strength, flexibility, and coordination. It can also help with arthritis, fibromyalgia, and back pain, and prevent falls in older adults," she said. She added that it can also improve mental health, helping with stress, anxiety, and depression. It can also help with mood, memory, focus, and sleep.

Tai chi is a low-impact exercise practiced through a series of slow, flowing movements, requiring full-body integration of movement while focusing on deep slow breaths.

She demonstrated some Tai Chi moves and breathing techniques for the audience.

Lastly, she discussed supplements and foods that can help decrease inflammation, including bromelain, Sam-E, turmeric, and cinnamon.

For more information about the Hygeia monthly wellness programs, contact Cynthia Moore at cynhygeia145@gmail.com.

Time to dust off the golf clubs

BY DUNCAN NIXON
CORRESPONDENT

Hopefully all the snow and cold are over and March will be mild. Due to snow and cold temperatures, golf at Lake Monticello was not viable for much of January and most of February. The golfing community is understandably antsy.

Annual memberships at the Lake Monticello course run from March 1 each year to the end of February. So, it is time to head to the Pro Shop and renew contracts for the 2025 season, or sign up for the first time. The fairways will not green up for a while, but the course is very playable as of the end of February. There are a number of different greens fee memberships available, and payment can be made in a lump sum or on a monthly arrangement. There are golf cart fees and range ball contracts available. Some players are able to walk the course, but most players use golf carts. Check in at the Pro Shop.

For men in the 50 and over age group, the Lake Monticello Gray Foxes are looking for returning members and new players. There is a modest annual fee of \$65 to join the Foxes. There is an 18-hole group that plays on Thursday mornings and a nine-hole group that plays on Tuesday mornings. Both groups play a variety of different games from week to week. Play will begin in late March and early April. Non-contract holders and non-residents are welcome to join. Check with the Pro Shop if interested in joining, or with

Paul Schmidt (901-395-3221). Women golfers at the Lake play on Friday mornings, with no age limit. Contact the Pro Shop to sign up. There is also a spring Wednesday night league that will run for 10 weeks from April 2 to June 4.

A number of annual events are on the calendar for the 2025 season. The Peggy Kirk Bell tournament for top young female golfers will be held at the Lake Monticello course on March 15-16. This two-day tournament brings top high school age golfers from all over the East coast. These young women are trying to obtain college golf scholarships, and they have amazing games. Anyone interested in golf should check this tournament out.

A popular tournament in April is the Fluvanna County Habitat for Humanity tournament. This is a four-player team, Captain's Choice event that will tee off at 9 a.m. on April 26. In June a major event is the Member-Guest tournament scheduled for June 7-8. Two-man teams compete in a round robin type format, with a shoot-out at the end of the tournament to determine the overall winning twosome. The annual Lake Monticello Fire and Rescue tournament is scheduled for June 14.

The George Bockman High School Invitational is scheduled for Aug. 7, with the women's Monticello Cup competition immediately following on Aug. 9-10. September will be a busy month with the Member-Member on 20-21, Couples Championship on Sept. 27 and the Phil Browning Memorial tournament on the 28th.

RUDY TALKS TAXES

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

Simple Ideas to Help Your Small Business



• **Recommendation:** Develop an inventory system with periodic counts to ensure you do not have shrink or theft issues. These periodic counts can help identify when you need to take action to liquidate old inventory.

• **Know your customers.** Who are your current customers? Are there enough of them? Where can you get more of them? How loyal are they? Are they happy? Several large customers can drive your company's growth or create tremendous risk should they take their business to a competitor.

• **Recommendation:** Know who your target audience is and then cater your business toward them and what they are looking for in your offerings.

• **Know your point of difference.** Once you know who your target customer is, understand why they buy your product or service. What makes you different from other businesses selling a similar item?

• **Recommendation:** If you don't know what makes your business better than others, ask your key customers. They will tell you. Then take advantage of this information to find new customers.

• **Develop a great support team.** Successful small business owners know they cannot do it all themselves. Do you have a good group of support professionals helping you? You need accounting, tax, legal, insurance, and employment help, along with your traditional suppliers.

• **Recommendation:** Conduct an annual review of your resources. Be prepared to review your suppliers and make improvements where necessary.

Sometimes focusing on a few basic ideas can help improve your business's outlook. Please call if you wish to discuss your situation. As always, should you have any questions or concerns regarding your tax situation please feel free to call us at 434-442-4044 or email us at info@rwftaxservices.com to make your appointment!

Here are several ideas to help your business grow and thrive this year.

• **Understand your cash flow.** One of the biggest causes of business failure is lack of understanding cash flow. At the end of the day, you need enough cash to pay your vendors and your employees. If you run a seasonal business you understand this challenge. The high season sales harvest needs to be ample enough to support you during the slow, non-seasonal periods.

• **Recommendation:** Create a 12-month rolling forecast of revenue and expenses to help understand your cash needs.

• **Know your pressure points.** When looking at your business, there are a few big items that drive your business success. Do you know the top four drivers of your financial success or failure? By staying focused on the key drivers of your business, success will be easier to manage.

• **Recommendation:** Look at your most recent tax return and identify the key financial drivers of your business. Do the same thing with your day-to-day operations and staffing.

• **Inventory matters.** If your business sells physical products, you need a good inventory management system. This system doesn't have to be complex, it just needs to help you keep control of your inventory. Cash turned into inventory that becomes stuck as inventory can create a major cash flow problem.

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Two Lake golfers receive scholarships

CONTRIBUTED BY TERRY HEYER,
 YOUTH GOLF FOUNDATION



Mark Marshall, Cameron Marshall, Mason Chiovaro and Carole Lissy.
 Photo courtesy of Terry Heyer

For several years, two young Lake golfers participated in the junior instruction sessions and the PGA Junior League, then went on to play at Fluvanna County High School. Now these two are embarking on another step in their growth. Cameron Marshall will be entering the LPGA training course, and Mason Chiovaro will be starting the PGA training course.

This multi-year effort is designed to lead to a professional status; Lake golf pro Mark Marshall had to complete this same program years ago. It involves projects; seminars; exams; and week-long training sessions, some of which require travel to out-of-state sites. Besides the time involved, this journey also necessitates a financial commitment: fees, travel, meals, and accommodations.

To assist in this effort, Cameron and Mason have been awarded George Lissy Memorial Scholarships. These scholarships were established by George's wife Carole to recognize George's love of the game and to encourage young golfers to learn and play a life-long sport. Both Cameron and Mason currently work part-time at the Lake Golf Pro Shop. They will be assisting in this year's instruction programs for youth golfers.

The scholarships are administered by the Youth Golf Foundation.

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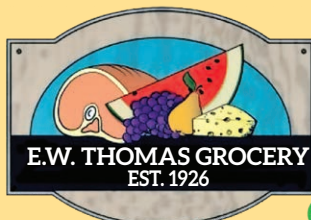
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Cunningham Creek Winery & Brewery wins Virginia Governor's Cup Gold Medals

CONTRIBUTED BY MIKE FEAZEL



Cunningham Creek Winery.

Fluvanna's Cunningham Creek Winery won two gold medals and three silver in the 43th annual Virginia Governor's Cup wine competition, the Governor's Cup announced Monday (Feb. 24).

Cunningham Creek submitted five wines to the competition and it earned gold medals for its 2023 Viognier and 2021 Meritage, plus silver medals for 2021 Cabernet Sauvignon, 2022 Herd Dog Red and 2022 Rivanna Red.

Bruce Deal, Cunningham Creek owner and winemaker, said, "2021 was

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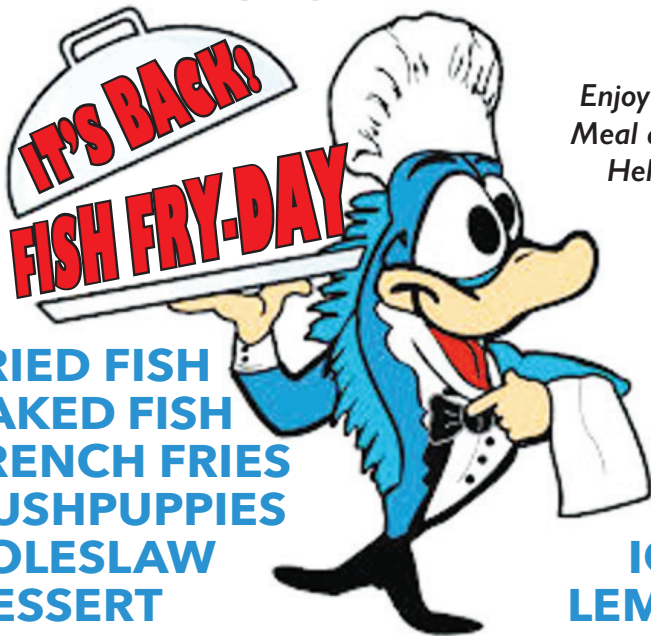
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a very good growing year and is reflected in this Meritage. We used all our red varieties, Cabernet Franc, Cabernet Sauvignon, Merlot and Petit Verdot, in the blend and achieved a remarkable balance. The 2023 Viognier showed the value of small batch processing coupled with excellent grapes.”

This year’s Governor’s Cup received an unprecedented number of entries from across the Commonwealth, organizers said. It’s regarded as one of the nation’s most stringent wine competitions.

The Cunningham Creek winners were among more than 600 entries, and 87 producers were awarded a total of 155 gold medals, underscoring the industry’s continued growth and excellence. To receive a gold medal, a wine must receive an average score of 90 points or higher on a 100-point scale from the competition’s expert panel of world-class judges -- led by the esteemed Frank Morgan. A full list of gold medalists is at www.virginiawine.org/governors-cup/awards.

The 2025 Virginia Governor’s Cup Gala will be March 13 at Main Street Station in Richmond. This celebratory event unveils the competition’s top award, the coveted Governor’s Cup Winner. Attendees will get to taste their way through Virginia’s finest, including the Governor’s Cup Case, featuring the 12 highest-scoring red and white wines, and Cider of the Year.

Hosted by the Virginia Wine Board, the gala brings together winemakers, industry professionals, and wine enthusiasts for an evening of celebration, offering a unique opportunity to taste award-winning wines and enjoy thoughtfully crafted fare by local chefs. For tickets and event details, visit <https://virginiawine.ticketspice.com/2025-virginia-governors-cup-gala>

On March 1, Virginia wine lovers can explore the Gold Medal Wine Trail, a complimentary mobile passport featuring gold medal winners. By checking in at participating venues, users unlock access to exclusive prizes and special offers. To pre-sign up or learn more, visit www.virginiawine.org/pages/taste.

The Virginia Wineries Association’s Governor’s Cup is held in partnership with the Virginia Wine Board and the Virginia Vineyards Association. All entries must be made from 100 percent Virginia-grown fruit to be eligible. Each wine is ranked based on a unified scoring system. For more information about the Virginia Governor’s Cup® Competition and for a full list of winners, visit: www.virginiawine.org/governors-cup.

March 15 orientation for Community Garden Plans

FLUVANNA MASTER GARDENERS PRESS RELEASE



Photo courtesy of E. Dianne Campbell.

Seed catalogues have come in the mail, and tempting packages are stacked in the hardware stores. It’s time to plan that summer garden.

The Community Garden at Pleasant Grove is where many folks with limited space or sunshine enjoy getting back to nature with crops of flowers and vegetables. An orientation program for new and current gardeners is being held Saturday, March 15 from 3:30 to 5:00 p.m. at the Fluvanna County Public Library.

Summertime gardeners will meet with advisors from the Virginia Cooperative Extension program, which is the source of valuable information on successful practices. Members from Fluvanna Ex-

tension Master Gardeners and Fluvanna Parks and Recreation will also be available to discuss plans and guidelines and provide further assistance.

The fully-fenced Community Garden offers ninety-seven 10’ x 15’ plots, plus one handicap accessible raised garden bed. There’s a planning station for notices and gathering, and non-potable water is available for the beds. Plots are available to Fluvanna County residents for \$50 per year. They are reserved on a first-come, first-served basis through the Fluvanna Parks and Recreation website.

Pleasant Grove Community Garden was launched in 2007 through the collaboration of Fluvanna Parks and Recreation, Virginia Cooperative Extension, and the Fluvanna Extension Master Gardeners. The garden promotes productive gardening practices and conservation of resources to enhance the local environment. The garden plots offer physical and social benefits and provide educational opportunities for members.

In addition to personal benefits, Community Gardeners are encouraged to volunteer to “Plant a Row” (PAR) to donate to local food pantries.

Further information and the application for a garden plot are available at the website <https://www.fluvannacounty.org/parksrec/page/community-garden>.

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Golf Front



178 Jefferson Drive – \$329,900

Adorable Golf Front Home, with breathtaking pond views overlooking the 7th fairway. Take it all in, while you sip your morning coffee from the screened porch or the expansive rear deck. On those brisk mornings, you might prefer to fire up the wood-burning fireplace, in the spacious living room, complete with vaulted ceilings and laminate wood flooring. The generously sized dining area will be wonderful for entertaining. Recent improvements include a remodeled primary bath, painting, a new stove, and HVAC replacement in 2017. All this on a nearly level lot, perfectly positioned within walking distance to the Slice Gate, where you’ll find multiple dining options and shopping. Also enjoy the close proximity to both Beach 2 and Beach 3, and the fire and rescue squad a stone’s throw away.

Golf Front



9 Ponderosa Lane – \$529,000

The home enjoys expansive views of the golf course and Fairway clubhouse, while appreciating the sunrise over the Fairway Pond. Inside includes expansive cathedral ceilings throughout the main living area, with large windows, 2 sets of French doors, transoms and an open floor plan that offers large open space for a formal living, dining and eat in kitchen. Kitchen offers tons of cabinetry with 2 pantries, solid surface counter and gas appliances. The split bedroom layout allows for privacy in the large Primary bedroom which features a sizeable walk-in closet, en-suite with soaking tub, separate 4’ shower, dual sinks and water closet. The other 2 bedrooms share a full bath with a vanity that is separated from the tub/shower and toilet. There is a separate laundry/mudroom leading to the garage. The level, low maintenance lot gives you more time to enjoy the amenities. The screened in porch is perfectly situated for morning coffee and sunrises, or listening to the seasonal live music played at the fairway clubhouse.

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\$1,000 Scholarship from Fluvanna Master Gardeners

FLUVANNA MASTER GARDENERS PRESS RELEASE



Master Gardener Claire Waters' magnificent foxglove and heuchera contributed to the FMG Horticulture Scholarship. Submitted photo

A \$1,000 scholarship for horticultural education has been announced by the Fluvanna Master Gardeners.

All Fluvanna Master Gardeners (FMG) activities are directed to education and involvement in the specific ecosystem of our community, with the objective of maintaining a healthy and sustainable environment. Master Gardeners offer many events with close-up hands-on experiences through school events, the Fluvanna County Public Library summer program, and at local fairs and festivals. Homeowners rely on Master Gardener assistance through the information help desk at the library or online. And each winter there is a training program for future Master Gardeners.

The Horticultural Scholarship is just one of the local efforts. Students must reside in the county and be planning to continue their post-secondary education in the 2025-26 school year.

"There is an incredible variety of occupations related to horticulture," said Donna McCarthy, chair of the FMG scholarship committee, "and our \$1,000 scholarship can be applied to post-secondary studies in any one of them. Our goal is to encourage involvement in careers related to this very important aspect of living and working in Fluvanna County."

Applications must be sent to the FMG office at the Virginia Cooperative Extension offices in Fork Union and received by the deadline of April 4. Full information and the application form are available on the Master Gardener website homepage, www.fluvannamg.org.

Funds for the horticulture scholarship come from the Annual Fluvanna Master Gardener Plant Sale which offers a wide variety of native plants, pollinator attractors, perennials, annuals, and vegetables. This year's plant sale is Saturday, May 3, 9:30 a.m. to noon, at the Jefferson Shopping Center Park 'n Ride at Turkeysag Plaza in Palmyra.

The Fluvanna County Arts Council presents **Robert Jospé Quartet**



March 22 at 7pm

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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.



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GM Addresses PPP Loan Questions at Board Meeting

At the LMOA February board meeting, General Manager Tom Schauder answered the community's questions sent to the LMOA Board of Directors. The full Q&A can be found by logging into lmoa.org and going to the Finance tab. To summarize:

- At the start of the COVID-19 pandemic in early 2020, the LMOA Board of Directors faced uncertainty about staff layoffs and whether members could pay their dues. The Board believed that applying for a loan was their fiduciary responsibility to Members.
- On March 27, 2020, Congress passed the CARES Act to support the economy. The initial guidelines were unclear and changed several times, making understanding the process difficult. LMOA BOD thought it qualified based on how it understood the application. It trusted the bank and SBA would vet and approve the LMOA application appropriately and would have let the organization know if it made any mistakes.
- As a precaution, not knowing what the future would look like, LMOA applied for \$646,843 in April 2020 to cover payroll for the maximum permissible time span.
- It's important to note that LMOA revenue comes from dues, fees, and income from amenities, not just dues. As expected, LMOA did not earn the revenue that was planned. The Pool and Food & Beverage services lost a lot of money, and fewer home sales meant LMOA collected less in Property Transfer Fees. Overall, Operations could not generate the income outlined in the budget approved in November 2019.
- LMOA's loan application, forgiveness application confirmation, and forgiveness letter are on file. The forgiveness had significant effects on

financial planning. Once LMOA received notice of the loan forgiveness, it took the repayment obligation off its books and created future budgets and spending plans based on the assumption that the association did not need to repay this money.

- LMOA is confident that it used the funds as the law intended and are asking the SBA for understanding and leniency, believing the SBA might consider being estopped. If this does not happen, LMOA will consider budget cuts, deferring projects, utilizing reserves/investments/operating cash surplus (if lawful), and/or a loan to repay the PPP Loan.

LMOA Board Approves Plan for 2025 Pool Season

The Board approved a proposed plan for the pool season of 2025. During the 52nd Annual Meeting of LMOA Members, the Members supported the Board's proposal to provide LMOA Members in Good Standing with an annual 25-visit pool pass at no cost through 2029. This initiative led to a multi-department task team overseeing the project, which held seven strategic work sessions. This effort has totaled nearly 100 labor hours to date. The team's plan was approved at the February board meeting. Key elements of their proposal included:

- The LMOA Bylaws define a Member as a voting member. The recipients of 25 complimentary visits to the pool will be the primary property owners in good standing, whether an individual, firm, association, corporation, etc. Additionally, the primary property owner, along with their joint owner and/or spouse and their dependents listed in our Club Management System, will be treated as a singular entity, regardless of the number of properties owned.

- Pool Patrons will use their LMOA Member ID to access the pool.
- Virtual ID Cards will be accessible on the LMOA app (an upgrade is still in development).
- A Physical ID card will be available for those who do not use smartphones for an additional charge.
- Every household member of Pool Patrons who are registered in our Club Management System have a Member ID Number and access to a Virtual ID Card if they download the app.
- To prevent any inconveniences, Pool Patrons need to proactively upload their pictures to their accounts from the LMOA website or the app before the pool season begins.
- Credits (whether free or purchased) and Pool Memberships will be uploaded and accessed from LMOA Member Accounts, which are linked to the app.
- Pool Memberships, Daily Pool Trip purchases and/or the 25 Free Trip Credits will be added to member accounts.
- Pool Patrons will scan their Member ID to access the pool, much like entering a gym, using as many credits needed that day to enter for themselves, their guests, and registered household members.
- The person using the credits must have their picture in the LMOA system. Guests do not need photos and can utilize the pool credits when accompanied by the account holder.
- Sharing and transferring will not be permitted. The account holder must accompany their guest to the pool, and credits cannot be transferred to other account holders or tenants.
- Member IDs will have other functionalities, including the ability to make financial charges to your member account, much like a credit card.
- For security reasons, the virtual Member ID QR code refreshes

every 10 seconds to prevent screenshots and sharing.

Facilities & Operations (F&O) Director Updates Community

At the February board meeting, F&O Director Tracy Chandler presented the current status of projects in the community, which included:

- The Ashlawn Clubhouse Solar Panel saved \$19,276 in year one. The estimated return on investment is 9.5 years.
- Outsourcing dredging will start in March, as well as a Road Survey.
- Electrofishing will start in April or May, depending on the water temperature.
- Pool water will be refreshed, and changes will be made to accommodate more traffic.
- Tufton Pond Fishing Pier Repairs, Main Beach Dock Replacement, a Fire Hydrant Inspection, Cosmetic Maintenance, Gate Entries, Clubhouse Grounds, and a renewal of the 6-year Dam Permit are scheduled for later this year.
- F&O would like to accept the Volunteer Water Safety Team's offer to help clean up signage throughout the community.

Gate Maintenance Includes New Intercom at Turkeysag

With 4 million activations each year, LMOA's gates get quite a workout. To ensure they run smoothly, LMOA partnered with a vendor last year to assess and enhance the most frequently used gates: the Tufton (Monish), Fairway (Slice), and Turkeysag entrances. One of the standout upgrades was completed last week with the installation of a modern digital intercom system at the Turkeysag visitor's gate. This new system replaces the old phone, making it more hygienic and ensuring a more reliable connection. The project was led by Chief Wells, who did a great job researching and implementing affordable options that extend the service life of the gates.

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EVENTS

LENTEN SOUP SUPPERS: Grace and Glory Lutheran Church, 683 Thomas Jefferson Pkwy., Palmyra, VA, will host the first Lenten Soup Supper on Wednesday, March 12, at 6:30 p.m. Meals will be simple, various soups served w/bread and beverage followed by a short program discussion. Schedule of the local churches hosting future Lenten Soup Suppers will be published weekly. All are welcome!

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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

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PUBLIC NOTICES



PUBLIC HEARING Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-1427, a Public Hearing will be held in the Fluvanna County Circuit Court, at 72 Main Street, Palmyra, VA 22963 Virginia for citizens of the County to have the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Board of Supervisors for the following item:

Ordinance to Amend "The Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia," by enacting §§ 20-13-1 through 20-13-13 to authorize the Treasurer in accordance with Virginia Code § 58.1-3833 to collect a food and beverage tax of up to six percent with half of the collected taxes to go towards school construction funds.

A copy of the full text of the ordinance is available for review by the public at www.fluvannacounty.org and in the office of the County Administrator during regular office hours. All interested persons wishing to be heard are invited to attend the public hearing.



PUBLIC HEARING Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors Wednesday, March 19, 2025, at 7:00 p.m.

Pursuant to the requirements of 9 VAC 20-130-130 of the Virginia Solid Waste Planning and Recycling Regulations, the Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Planning Unit will hold a public hearing in Fluvanna County to discuss a proposed Solid Waste Plan Major Amendment regarding the addition of Dominion Energy's captive industrial landfill in Breomo Bluff to the Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Management Plan (SWMP).

A "Captive industrial landfill" is an industrial landfill that is located on property owned or controlled by the generator of the waste disposed of in that landfill.

Major amendments to SWMPs are regulated under 9VAC20-130-175. A major amendment is required when there is an addition of any solid waste disposal facility. The major amendment to the SWMP must be submitted to the Department of Environmental Quality for approval, following the public hearing. This amendment includes adding information about the captive industrial landfill to the plan and recording the major amendment process.

The purpose of the public hearing is to allow the public an opportunity to comment on the major amendment. The public hearing will be held on March 19, 2025 during the regularly scheduled Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors Meeting.

The Thomas Jefferson Solid Waste Management Plan can be found at <https://tjpd.org/our-work/solid-waste/>. Information about the project can be found on Dominion's website here: <https://www.dominionenergy.com/BremoCCR>.



PUBLIC HEARING Fluvanna County Board of Supervisor Wednesday, March 19, 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 Fluvanna County Circuit Courthouse, 72 Main Street, Palmyra, Virginia 22963 for citizens of the County to have the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Board of Supervisors for the following items:

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, and to amend §22-25-6 to change the average horizontal illumination level for lighting for all parking, display and loading areas and for gas station/convenience store aprons and canopies.

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.

Residents, directors condemn threat of violence against drag event

BY HEATHER MICHON
CORRESPONDENT

One week after a threat caused the postponement of a drag queen brunch show scheduled for Lake Monticello's Bunker Bistro, residents took to the podium at the monthly meeting of LMOA's Board of Directors to share a single message: Hate has no place at the Lake.

The show was planned as a fundraiser for the JD Dickinson Memorial Foundation, which grants scholarships to Fluvanna students. It sold out shortly after it was announced in early January.

While there was talk of a protest outside the Feb. 22 event, many residents were excited about the event.

That changed on Wednesday, Feb. 19, when a threat of violence caused the Lake Monticello Police Department and Bunker Bistro management to postpone the show for safety reasons and to give law enforcement time for an investigation.

While not an agenda item at Thursday night's (Feb. 27) Board of Directors meeting, it was on the minds of residents who stood up during the public comments.

"If you don't like a planned event at the Bistro, just don't come. It's that simple. If you plan a legal event that I don't want to attend, guess what? I

won't!" said Georgianna Joslin.

"Let us have our joy. None of this is hurting you in any way. Everything about this event is helping this community, from providing local scholarships, income to this very building and its employees, income to the entertainers, and joy and entertainment to everyone who purchased a ticket," she continued. "Hate has no place at the Lake."

Directors Gary Sellick and Jennifer Richardson both took to the podium as residents to share their personal views.

While the identity of the perpetrator remained unknown, "the vitriolic words coming from certain members of the community helped create an atmosphere that allowed this sort of threat to materialize," said Sellick.

He noted that the talk within the many social media groups in and around the Lake often pushed beyond the political and cultural differences of opinion and too often turned into dangerous personal attacks.

"Violence must never become the norm at Lake Monticello," he said.

Richardson said that Lake officials and the event coordinators had worked together and had planned for pushback and protests.

"What I never entertained for a second was a threat of violence, especially at an event where children would be present," she said. "How could

anyone believe that a child coming to physical harm is less awful than being exposed to drag?"

At the end of the meeting, Board president Larry Henson – describing himself as an "old conservative" – repeated his condemnation of the threat.

"Put aside your beliefs. This was just an event for people to come together and have fun. Children were allowed," he said. "Bottom line, if you don't want to come, don't come. But at the same time, don't show hate to those who did come."

LMOA spokesperson Marieke Henry said Lake police were working with local, state, and federal law enforcement to find the perpetrator.

A new date for the event has not been announced.

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Va. lawmakers approve millions in relief for wrongful convictions, sex offender registration

BY STACY WATKINS
VCU CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Virginia lawmakers unanimously approved bills to financially compensate three men wrongfully convicted of crimes, some who spent decades in prison.

Marvin Leon Grimm Jr. was wrongfully convicted in 1976 of first-degree murder, sodomy by force and abduction with intent to defile a 3-year-old boy. The child wandered away from home and was missing four days before he was found in the James River, with alcohol, acetaminophen, and prescription muscle relaxant found in his blood, liver and stomach.

Grimm, who was found innocent last year, spent 45 years imprisoned and then registered with the sex offender registry for an additional four years when released on parole, according to the bill.

Del. Rip Sullivan Jr., D-Fairfax, sponsored House Bill 1776, to compensate Grimm from the state's general fund. The budget sent to the governor for approval lists the relief amount at \$5.83 million.

Sullivan also sponsored HB 1780, to grant relief to Gilbert Merritt III for wrongful incarceration of first-degree murder. The budget includes \$2.63 million for Merritt.

Merritt served over 20 years in prison. His conviction was the work of former Norfolk homicide detective Robert Glenn Ford, who has been found responsible for at least six wrongful convictions, according to the bill. Ford threatened a woman facing drug charges into providing false testimony against Merritt.

Lawmakers also awarded Keshawn Clarence Duffy \$398,655 for wrongful imprisonment and inclusion on the sex offender registry. Michael Haas will receive \$134,045 for wrongful inclusion on the sex offender registry. Haas was awarded over \$1.5 million in 2023 for his wrongful conviction.

Between 4% to 6% of people incarcerated in U.S. prisons are innocent, according to the Georgia Innocence Project.

"These situations of wrongful conviction don't happen often, but they also do happen too often, one is too many," Sullivan said.

It is necessary to help individuals who have been wrongfully convicted, so they begin to support themselves and their families, Sullivan said.

"There's no way we can right these wrongs, there's no way we can go back in time, there's no way we can give these people back the parts of their lives that they've lost," Sullivan said.

Grimm Tells Lawmakers What Justice System Took Away

There is no amount of time to fully share how the wrongful conviction affected Grimm and his family, Grimm

said in video testimony.

Grimm was unable to attend weddings, birthdays, holidays or family funerals. He lost his sister and mother, who was his biggest supporter during incarceration, according to Grimm. His wife severed ties with him, and took their newborn son during his time in solitary confinement. Grimm fears his son grew up thinking his father was a "heinous monster."

Grimm lived in the same apartment complex as the family of the deceased child. Officers with the Richmond Police Department picked Grimm up from his job, where he just finished a nine-hour shift, and took him into questioning for 10 hours to get him to confess, according to Grimm.

"At that point, I'd been almost awake for 24 hours," Grimm said. "That is when they finally read me my rights, and for the first time turned on the tape recorder."

Authorities acquired a false confession from Grimm, who says he was "falling asleep" by the time the lengthy interrogation wrapped up.

"They threatened me with the death penalty, I was terrified," Grimm said. "The thought of dying scared me."

The commonwealth offered a plea agreement that he could avoid the death penalty if he pleaded guilty, according to Grimm.

"I was told the blood testing results were inconclusive," Grimm said. "Even though, as I learned later, they proved that I didn't commit the crime."

Grimm was sent to prison, where he never stopped trying to prove his innocence.

"I even had to fight to get the DNA testing, and I was denied parole 25 times," Grimm said.

Virginia Lab Analyst Questioned

The physical evidence from Grimm's case was sent to the Virginia Department of Forensic Science, where it was analyzed by forensic analyst Mary Jane Burton, according to the University of Michigan Law School. At least 12 men have been exonerated whose Burton's evidence helped to convict.

"If you search the system, you'll find we've passed another bill this year to have the crime commission do a study of [Burton]," Sullivan said.

HB 2730 mandates the Virginia State Crime Commission to designate a panel to review cases where forensic testing was performed by Burton.

Burton, who died in 1999, could potentially indicate a systemic issue within the Department of Forensic Science, due to her extended tenure, according to Sullivan.

VPM created the 12-part podcast series "Admissible," which examined Burton's work and the impact of forensic evidence in wrongful convictions. A

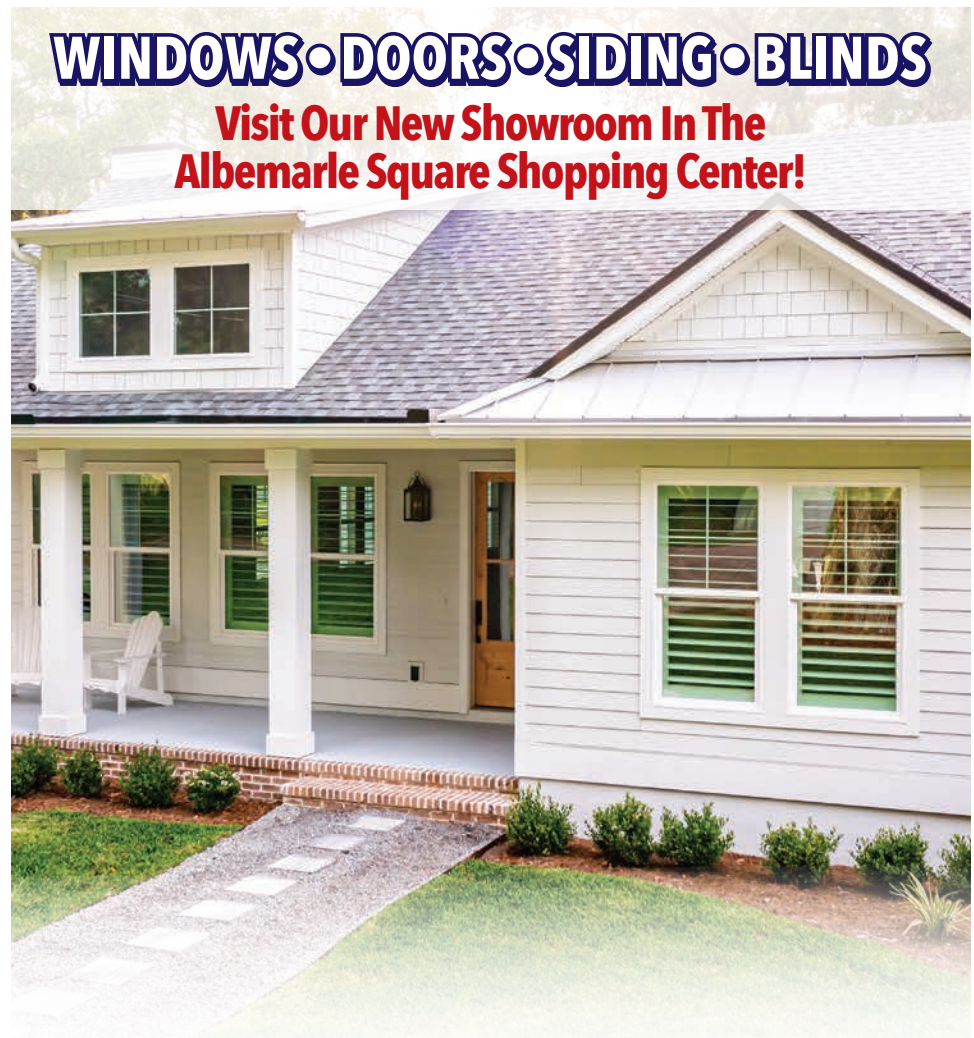
whistleblower said Burton had falsified results, according to the podcast.

Testing by the Department of Forensic Science in 2012 refuted some of Burton's forensic claims about the amount of the deceased child's hair found in Grimm's car. Then the Mitotyping Technologies lab in 2023 found no evidence of Grimm's involvement in the child's murder, according to the Innocence Project.

The Virginia Crime Commission launched a review of about 4,800 of

Burton's cases after the podcast aired, according to the Michigan report.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University's Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.



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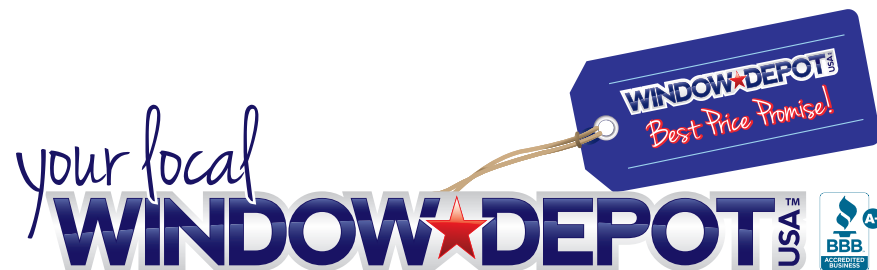
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PUBLIC HEARING
Fluvanna County Board of Zoning Appeals
Tuesday, March 18 2025 at 7:00 pm

Pursuant to Virginia Code Section 15.2-2204, a public hearing will be held in the Morris Room of the Fluvanna County Administration Building, located at 132 Main Street Palmyra, VA 22963 for citizens of the County to have the opportunity to be heard by the Board of Zoning Appeals on the following request:

BZA 25:01 – Alfonso Calderone: A request for a seventy-nine (79) foot Variance to Section 22-4-3 (C) (1) (a) of the Fluvanna County Code to allow for the reduction of the required minimum frontage from five hundred (500) feet to four hundred and twenty-one (421) feet with respect to 11.04 acres of Tax Map 47, Section A, Parcel 42. The subject property is zoned A-1, Agricultural, General, and is located in the Rural Residential Planning Area and in the Cunningham Election District.

The meeting of the Board of Zoning Appeals will be in person and instructions for public participation during the meeting will be made available on the Fluvanna County website: www.fluvannacounty.org Interested persons may submit written comments prior to the scheduled meeting to planning@fluvannacounty.org or call 434.591.1910, between 8:00 am and 5:00 pm Monday – Friday or visit the County Administration Building at 132 Main Street Palmyra, VA 22963.



PUBLIC HEARING
Fluvanna County Board of Supervisors
Wednesday, March 19, 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 Fluvanna County Circuit Court, at 72 Main Street, Palmyra, VA 22963 for citizens of the County to have the opportunity to appear before and be heard by the Board of Supervisors on the following items:

ZTA 24-08: Ordinance to amend the “Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia,” by amending §§22-4-2.1, 22-4-2.2, 22-5-2.2, 22-6-2.2, 22-7-9.2, 22-8-2.2, 22-9-2.1, 22-10-3, and 22-22-1 to lower the threshold number of children served in licensed Family Day Homes from six to five in accordance with Virginia Code requirements, and to clarify related definitions.

ZTA 24-10: Ordinance to amend the “Code of the County of Fluvanna, Virginia,” by amending §22-22-1 to correct the definition of “Front Yard.”

Copies of the complete text of the above ordinances are 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. Interested persons may submit written comments prior to the scheduled public hearing to planning@fluvannacounty.org. 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

Supervisors struggle to set tax rate

BY HEATHER MICHON
 CORRESPONDENT

The Board of Supervisors set a maximum advertised real estate rate of \$0.75 per \$100 at their work session on Wednesday (Feb. 26).

Under state law, supervisors have to publish a maximum tax rate weeks ahead of a public hearing on the budget. Once that maximum rate is set, it becomes a ceiling for how much tax revenue the county will have to fund the FY26 budget.

It is always a tricky calculation, because even at this late stage of the budget planning cycle, supervisors are still waiting on final numbers from local and state sources.

It also strikes at a core philosophical split among the supervisors: do you set the rate high enough to fund everything in the budget with the expectation of setting a lower rate in the final vote, or do you set a lower rate to constrain spending from the start?

This debate played out after more than two hours of presentation that showed critical departments are overworked, understaffed, and underfunded.

“The last thing I want to do is ask for money or positions we don’t need,” said Kim Mabe of the Department of Social Services. “And it has been six years since we have asked for any additional positions in our offices, and some of these I probably should have asked for long before now.”

With one in four Fluvanna residents on some sort of assistance and increased caseloads serving both children and adults in need, Mabe said her staff is struggling to keep up with the workload and meet all the regulatory requirements set by the state and federal government.

She requested three new positions to help with the workload, including an additional benefits coordinator, family services specialist, and human services assistant. The costs would be split between local funding and federal funding.

The sheriff’s office is also dealing with increased call volume and workloads. They have requested six new positions at a total cost of \$740,000, including four new patrol officers, one court position, and an additional investigator.

Major Aaron Hurd said they did not make this request lightly. “Ultimately, it comes down to the ability to provide the services that you ask us to provide and that the voters ask Sheriff Hess to provide.”

Even the Fluvanna SPCA is struggling with significant overcrowding issues impacting the health and well-being of the animals in its care.

A kennel built for 29 dogs now holds 40 at a time. This means dogs eat, sleep, and defecate in small enclosures.

There’s no good way to quarantine sick animals. Cats have limited space. Ventilation in the building is poor, leading to the spread of infections like kennel cough.

Along with funding for increased costs for veterinary care and staff pay, the organization wants to build a new kennel that would help reduce overcrowding in its current building. The cost of the structure would be about \$315,000.

County Administrator Eric Dahl’s proposed budget had funded some, but not all, of the departmental requests at a proposed real estate tax of \$0.72 per \$100 of assessed value.

To fully fund the proposals and the \$1.9 million school request would take a tax rate of around \$0.775.

While supervisors Tony O’Brien (Rivanna) and Mike Sheridan (Columbia) were in favor of setting the maximum advertised rate at \$0.76 just to give them some options as final revenue numbers came, it was clear they were not in the majority.

Setting a high advertised tax rate, even if everyone agrees they would ultimately not set it that high, “sets a bar and guides the discussion going forward,” said Mike Goad (Fork Union).

Chair Chris Fairchild (Cunningham) argued that after all the community concerns about high reassessments and the assurances they had given that tax bills would not skyrocket, setting the advertised rate at \$0.775 would amount to a 12 percent tax hike.

“I would love to fund everything as much as possible,” said Tim Hodge (Palmyra). “But as a supervisor, I’m a supervisor of nearly 29,000 people, and I have to be cognizant that some of those people on the fixed incomes and are elderly. The actions we take that impact their taxes.”

O’Brien initially made a motion for \$0.76, but this failed on a vote of 3-2. Finally, they unanimously agreed to \$0.75.

In the final vote of the evening, they approved the modification of the budget calendar to conform with state laws on the timelines for advertising public hearings. They will now set the final tax rates on April 16 and adopt the budget on April 23.

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Celebrate the impact of farmers during National Ag Week

VIRGINIA FARM BUREAU PRESS RELEASE

Consumers can appreciate the far-reaching impact of those producing the nation's food, fuel and fiber any day of the year.

But during National Ag Week, March 16-22, farmers receive special recognition for their vital role.

According to the Agriculture Council of America, each American farmer feeds more than 165 people—a dramatic increase from 25 people in the 1960s. As the global population climbs, so does demand for food and fiber.

Agriculture impacts all of Virginia, which is home to around 39,000 farms spanning 7.3 million acres, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture.

As the state's largest private industry, agriculture has an economic impact of \$82.3 billion annually and provides more than 381,800 jobs, according to the Virginia Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services.

Agriculture and forestry have a combined economic impact of over \$105 billion, provide more than 490,000 jobs, support 1.6 jobs elsewhere and make up 9.3% of the state's total gross domestic product.

Whether they are supporting beef cattle in Southwest Virginia, wine grapes in Northern Virginia, apples in the Shenandoah Valley or potatoes on the Eastern Shore, the state's varying topography, soil and climate make up one of the most diverse agricultural landscapes in the country.

Many Virginia commodities and products rank in the top 10 among all U.S. states. In 2023, the commonwealth ranked third nationally for the production of tobacco and seafood, sixth for apples and turkey production, and eighth for peanuts and broiler chicken production, according to the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

The impact of Virginia agriculture crosses international borders, with the state's agricultural and forestry exports valued at more than \$3.6 billion in 2023, according to Global Trade Information Services Inc.

Agriculture also provides countless intangible benefits, like supporting recreation, tourism, wildlife habitat, biodiversity, flood mitigation, improved water quality and soil stabilization.

Virginia's wine grape sector alone generated over \$6 billion for the state in 2022 when considering wages, tourism dollars and other indirect impacts, according to an industry impact study.

Leading the way in sustainability, Virginia farmers voluntarily enrolled over 416,000 acres on more than 2,500 farms in conservation easement programs—protecting the land from development, according to the 2022 Census of Agriculture. Many also employ practices like minimal-till and no-till planting, and cover crops to prevent soil displacement and erosion and retain nutrients.

In addition to commemorating National Ag Week, many Farm Bureau volunteers will visit local schools during Virginia's Agriculture Literacy Week, March 17-21. Organized by the Foundation for Virginia Agriculture in the Classroom, volunteers will read Virginia AITC's 2025 Book of the Year, *Outdoor Farm, Indoor Farm* by Lindsay H. Metcalf. The event aims to educate youth about the importance of agriculture, farming and the sources of their food and fiber.

Community Calendar



QR Code provided by the Fluvanna Leadership Development Program

Lenten Soup Suppers

Grace & Glory Lutheran Church in Palmyra is holding the first Lenten Soup Suppers on Wednesday, **March 12**, at 6:30 p.m. The meals will be simple, various soups served with bread and beverages followed by a short program discussion.

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.

Lawmakers tighten school cellphone policy, but teachers question efficacy

BY SARAH HAGEN
VCU CAPITAL NEWS SERVICE

Twin bills seeking to limit the use of cellphones and smart devices in schools cleared the General Assembly, although some teachers wish the bills had more consequences.

Del. Sam Rasoul, D-Roanoke, introduced House Bill 1961 and Sen. Stella Pekarsky, D-Fairfax introduced Senate Bill 738. Both bills cleared the House with clear bipartisan support and passed the Senate along party lines, after amendments.

The bills direct school boards to develop age-appropriate policies for restricting cellphone use and possession in the classroom, passing periods and lunchtime, to the fullest extent possible. All public K-12 schools will be required to implement the policies, with school administrators responsible for enforcement.

The goals of the bills are to reduce distractions, bullying and harassment in the learning environment.

Students cannot be suspended or expelled for solely violating the policy, but they can be removed from the classroom, according to the bills.

Gov. Glenn Youngkin issued an executive order last year directing the Virginia Department of Education to draft guidance for public schools to adopt cellphone-free education. Pekarsky said her bill will expand on work already done, and will codify the restriction to ensure policies are created with community feedback.

“Many of the school jurisdictions had

already implemented policies to do this and the feedback has been extremely positive,” Pekarsky said in a subcommittee meeting.

The bills have explicit protections for students in individualized education programs and with 504 plans, which are plans developed by schools to aid children with significant learning challenges or disabilities. Other exceptions can be made by school boards if deemed necessary, according to the bill.

Teenagers spend almost five hours a day on social media, according to the American Psychology Association. In his book “The Anxious Generation,” psychologist Jonathan Haidt found that since 2010 there has been a 134% and 106% increase in anxiety and depression, respectively.

Lawmakers hope policies to restrict cellphones will help lower these numbers.

Sen. Schuyler VanValkenburg, D-Henrico, is a chief copatron of Pekarsky’s bill. VanValkenburg teaches in Henrico County, which has already successfully implemented a similar policy, according to VanValkenburg.

“Academic performance is up, attention span is up, kids chatting with each other and being social is up,” VanValkenburg said.

Katherine Jones is a mother of three students enrolled at Mary Munford Elementary School. She is the former Richmond Public Schools PTA president.

Phones are “incredibly disruptive” in

schools, according to Jones. She has not given her children cellphones yet, but said smart watches are more common in elementary schools and just as distracting.

“I think it puts a lot of burden on the teachers to try to keep kids engaged during learning time because of all the distractions,” Jones said.

Jones campaigned with the “Wait Until 8th” organization that supports delaying smartphones for children until they have finished middle school.

Mary Munford is currently the only school in Richmond that has taken the organization’s pledge. Once a grade at a school hits 10 or more pledges, then it becomes active and contact information is shared among the parents who signed. The school system itself has limited cellphone use in alignment with the executive order.

Instead of removing children from classes for phone use, Jones suggested taking phones away for the day and requiring the parent to come pick it up.

“If you burden a parent with having to come and get their kid’s cellphone, they might help enforce the policy with their kids,” Jones said.

David Marshall, associate professor of educational research at Auburn University, supports cellphone restriction in schools, but is opposed to the bill in its current state. The bills nullify themselves because they take away any meaningful consequences to using phones in class, he said.

Cellphone bans work best when they are enforced from bell to bell with clear punishments for not following the policy, according to Marshall. New York City high schools that enforced a phone ban found the same problems persisted when phones were allowed in hallways and during lunchtime, but not when they were restricted for the school day.

“When they banned them for the entire day, students hated the policy for about a month, but after that they were more engaged, and the overall climate of the school improved,” Marshall stated in an email.

Marshall and a colleague at Christopher Newport University surveyed a Virginia school division, and found 78 percent of teachers said cellphones were a major distraction in classrooms. Teachers supported Youngkin’s executive order, but wanted cellphone policies to be consistently enforced, have full support from the administration and list clear consequences, according to Marshall.

“Without that, the policy simply adds another burden on the plates of already overburdened teachers,” Marshall stated, adding that many teachers want suspension included as a consequence.

The bills now head to the governor, who has until March 24 to change or veto legislation.

Capital News Service is a program of Virginia Commonwealth University’s Robertson School of Media and Culture. Students in the program provide state government coverage for a variety of media outlets in Virginia.

Fluvanna REVIEW

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