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C H E S T E R F I E L D

Observer

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ELECTION 2019

★ **What's at stake on Nov. 5?** ★

With all county seats up for grabs, just about everything.



**As we near the end of this campaign season we would like
to thank everyone for their encouragement and support.**

— *Carrie Coyner & Karl Leonard*

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State to schools: Expect \$4M less

Cuts come as schools face more challenges, poverty

BY JIM McCONNELL SENIOR WRITER

Chesterfield County Public Schools' student population has never been larger or more diverse. Now its slice of the state funding pie is getting smaller.

The Virginia Department of Education recently informed the local school system that its allocation from the state will be reduced by \$4 million in fiscal year 2021 as a result of changes to a funding formula known as the local composite index.

See **SCHOOL FUNDING** on page 7

From pupil to colleague

Teacher and student reunite 30 years later on School Board

BY JIM McCONNELL SENIOR WRITER



Debbie Bailey (left) and Ann Coker

ASH DANIEL

Debbie Bailey and Ann Coker were among 75 women invited to a November 2018 brainstorming session that served as the unofficial launch of Carrie Coyner's campaign for the 62nd District seat in the Virginia House of Delegates.

Even though their paths hadn't crossed in

See **SCHOOL BOARD** on page 6



ASH DANIEL

FIRED UP

Gun rights advocates rally, pressure localities to become 'Second Amendment sanctuaries.' Chesterfield, so far, isn't biting

BY JIM McCONNELL SENIOR WRITER

More than 200 gun rights advocates descended on the state capitol Monday afternoon to protest new gun control legislation proposed for the 2020 General Assembly session.

In anticipation of new gun control legislation in the General Assembly early next year, more than 40 Virginia localities have already declared themselves to be "Second Amendment sanctuaries." Chesterfield County's governing body, however, is resisting pressure from constituents to follow suit.

Board of Supervisors Chairwoman Leslie Haley acknowledged last week that she and her four colleagues have been contacted by "tons of people" who want them to pass a resolution that declares Chesterfield is opposed to (and refuses to enforce) any new gun laws passed next year.

But Haley insisted the board had no plans to introduce such a resolution at its Dec. 11 meeting – the last before its term expires at the end of 2019.

"I know people are upset, but we don't feel this is within the purview of the board," she said. "We operate under the rule of law. There's a way to

change laws and we don't have any authority to do that. People need to take this energy downtown where it has meaning and can be heard."

Social media was abuzz last week after Democratic lawmakers submitted several gun-related bills prior to the Dec. 5 filing deadline; each is among the most widely read pieces of proposed legislation on the General Assembly website.

None has generated more heat than Senate Bill 16, sponsored by soon-to-be Senate Majority Leader Richard Saslaw, D-Fairfax, which expands the definition of "assault firearm" and prohibits any person from possessing, importing, selling, transferring, manufacturing, purchasing or transporting such a weapon.

There's no language in Saslaw's bill that would grandfather in guns already in circulation, leaving Virginians who own the AR-15 semiautomatic

See **GUNS** on page 4



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Curbside recycling likely to continue

BY JIM McCONNELL SENIOR WRITER

Despite a sharp increase in the cost of recycling, Chesterfield County appears likely to extend funding for curbside pickup through the end of June 2020, giving local officials time to analyze the recommendations of a consultant hired by the Central Virginia Waste Management Authority and determine how the recycling program will be operated going forward.

In the wake of shifting economics – a year ago, the largest importer of recyclables in the world, China, upended the global market by implementing new, far stricter quality standards – the demand for recyclables has shrunk considerably. In 2018, Chesterfield spent \$231,000 to subsidize its recycling program, which currently costs households in the county \$25 a year. By next year, the cost of the program is expected to more than triple.

The county's fiscal year 2020 budget, which took effect July 1, subsidizes curbside recycling in its present form only until Dec. 31.

County leaders haven't formally announced plans to fund the initiative for another six months, but they've effectively committed to do

so. CVWMA's consultant isn't expected to present its report to the Board of Supervisors until its Dec. 11 meeting; based on that timetable, it would be all but impossible for county staff to incorporate the



LARISSA TYLER

See **RECYCLING** on page 6



ASH DANIEL

Chesterfield's Steam Bell Beer Works tries something a little different: craft soda

BY RICH GRISET STAFF WRITER

If there's one throughline of Brad Cooper's entrepreneurial success, it's riffing on a concept that's already popular.

In 2016, when it seemed like every other new brewery was opening in Richmond's Scott's Addition neighborhood, Cooper launched Steam Bell Beer Works off Genito Road, figuring that Chesterfield's residents might appreciate a brewery closer to home. His intuition proved correct: not only is Steam Bell a perennial favorite for those in search of a good brew, but it's become a destination of sorts – food trucks, bands and customers regularly flock to the brewery on weekends – and Cooper says he has trouble keeping up with his keg and canned beer orders.

Last year, Cooper opened Canon & Draw

Brewing Company, the lone brewery in Richmond's Fan District, and he's currently in the midst of helping partners Butch and Kim Taylor open their first brewery, Hidden Wit Brewing Co., in Chesterfield's rural Skinquarter area.

Now, the 32-year-old hopes to capitalize on the growing craft soda trend, launching distribution of his own line – Trussings Craft Fizz – this fall. Cooper says the craft soda idea came to him shortly after opening the tasting room at Steam Bell. Looking to offer beverages to people who visit Steam Bell but don't drink, Cooper and his brewers began experimenting with sodas and selling them in-house in 2017.

A chilled glass of Berry Honey Vanilla craft soda from Steam Bell Beer Works. This fall, the brewery plans to begin selling Trussings Craft Fizz soda off premises in cans and kegs.

See **STEAM BELL** on page 4



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