

Fauquier Times

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TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

Myison Ellis is escorted to the Fauquier County Circuit Courthouse Monday, March 2.

Jury find Ellis guilty of murder; calls for 51 years

By James Ivancic

SPECIAL TO THE FAUQUIER TIMES

The 12-member Fauquier County Circuit Court jury that found Myison I. Ellis guilty on Thursday, March 5, in the shooting death last August of Lincoln Williams Jr., recommended a prison term of 38 years for first-degree murder, three years for use of a firearm in committing a felony and 10 years for conspiracy to commit robbery.

Judge Herman A. Whisenant Jr. will make the final determination on sentencing following completion of a pre-sentence report. The sentence will be announced on May 7 at 9 a.m.



LINCOLN WILLIAMS JR.

Memory care facility prepares for potential coronavirus threat

By Robin Earl

TIMES STAFF WRITER

Administrators at Poet's Walk assisted living and memory care center in Warrenton say they are keeping close track of coronavirus recommendations from the Centers for Disease Control and the Virginia Health Department, but those they care for are unaware of the nationwide pandemic. It's one reason elderly people with dementia are considered one of the most vulnerable populations for the disease.

About 52 patients live at Poet's Walk, a 60-room facility designed for patients with dementia. Most are in their 70s or 80s, said Iro Egharevba, director of resident care, in an interview March 6. Egharevba said that the administrators focus on being proactive. "We make the staff aware of symptoms to watch for. It's important they know the signs of illness. And they receive training on how to properly wear PPE (personal protective equipment)."

She adds that wiping down surfaces is a priority as well. "While the residents are at lunch, the housekeeping staff is mopping floors and wiping down handrails. We tell our staff, 'Everybody is a housekeeper right now.' It's an important way we can be proactive."



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Poet's Walk Executive Director Terra Brown helps a resident wipe her hands clean after a meal.

Egharevba said that those with dementia like to wander. Poet's Walk residents frequently may be found walking the facility's four contiguous hallways, so handrails in particular are cleaned several times a day.

She said that the staff is told to stay home if they have symptoms, and families are asked to refrain from visiting if they had traveled recently to countries where coronavirus has been reported.

Normally, residents take trips to go out to eat, to enjoy some ice cream, to the library or other special activities. "We are postponing those trips right now," said Egharevba. "If we want to have a pizza party, we are bringing the pizza in. We want to make sure they are safe."

Egharevba said that services are provided in Poet's Walk so residents

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Memory care facility prepares for coronavirus threat

CORONAVIRUS, from page 1

don't have to go out. A physician, podiatrist, audiologist and dentist all come to the facility. There is a salon onsite.

She said that if a resident were to display symptoms of coronavirus, he or she would be isolated in their room immediately. "We'd call the health department and get them tested. Specific staff would be designated to care for that patient, and that staff would be dressed in PPE.

"It's especially important in this community, where there is cognitive impairment ... residents can't understand what's going on ... that we make sure they are safe."

Egharevba was called away during Friday's interview to speak to a family member who wanted to see a resident but had been traveling.

Social worker Carol Rose talked

about how the memory-impaired can be particularly vulnerable in a pandemic. "And it's not just this virus, she pointed out. Flu season can be deadly. It can progress to serious illness, requiring a hospital stay, which can progress dementia greatly."

Rose said Poet's Walk has not been hit hard by flu this year. "We've been lucky."

She believes that good communication among staff and with families has been important. "I tell them, 'We know you want to see your family, but we have to keep them safe. If you are sick, stay away.' Last week, I made 173 phone calls to families, keeping them informed."

She also helps arrange video chats between residents and family and uses technology to share photos.

Rose said that her first move if someone at Poet's Walk showed signs of illness would be to call the family.

The staff would also be notified.

She added, though, that working with residents who have dementia is a challenge under these circumstances. Although the residents may be confined to their room, they may not remember that and wander out into the hallways or common spaces. They have trouble, Rose added, with hygiene in general. "They don't remember to wash their hands, and some can't clean themselves properly after using the bathroom."

Rose said that those with dementia often have very short-term memory loss. Residents may be told to go wash their hands before a meal, but by the time they get to their rooms, they have forgotten why they are there. "Their attention span is short," said Rose.

Terra Brown, executive director at

Poet's Walk, said that the staff helps residents wash their hands with wipes before and after meals and after they use the bathroom. Sanitary stations are set up with wipe warmers so that washing hands is seen as a pleasant, comforting experience for residents and visitors.

She said that normal dietary practices are designed to kill germs. "Our regular practices will kill the virus. The key is following the process."

She said that if one person were to contract coronavirus, the building would be under quarantine; staff members and doctors would be the only people allowed to come and go.

Brown acknowledged, "This is serious. Their immune systems can't handle what you and I could handle. Because they are older, more fragile, they are the most vulnerable."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@faquier.com



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A LETTER FROM THE EDITOR:

Support local journalism

You may have noticed a lot of activity on the Fauquier.com site the last couple of weeks. We've been busy trying to cover the upheaval caused by the coronavirus. There are a thousand considerations – county offices, the courts, the schools, our local businesses, health care facilities, sports, children's activities, nursing homes and assisted

'Many... are going to be food insecure'

Food banks cope with increased need coupled with reduced supply



Carol Schumacher, executive director of Fauquier FISH, said that she "definitely" expects an uptick in demand for food aid, but she is confident that the organization will be able to do its part to meet that need.

By Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Directors of local food banks are expecting a surge in demand for nutrition assistance due to the outbreak of coronavirus 2019 and the subsequent closing of schools and businesses.

Their efforts to alleviate the expected increase in need have been hampered by the reduced supply from local grocery stores; stocks of basic items have been depleted by those rushing to fill their own pantries.

Fauquier Community Food Bank

Sharon Ames, director of Fauquier Community Food Bank and Thrift

See **FOOD BANK**, page 6

Food banks cope with increased need coupled with reduced supply

FOOD BANK, from page 1

Store, said that donations from grocery stores were down by 70% on the morning of March 16, forcing the food bank to limit the distribution of some staples like bread, bottled water and frozen protein items. Shelves that are normally filled with bread loaves – an especially scarce item at grocery stores currently - have been mostly stocked with other items.

Some good news came on Tuesday afternoon; an anonymous donor gave \$700 to Great Harvest Bread Company in Warrenton to bake loaves specifically for Fauquier Community Food Bank. That donation was quickly followed by another, \$100 from real estate agent Tom Campbell of Fathom Realty.

Great Harvest owner Pablo Teodoro said that the bakery would make an additional 20% more loaves than the money would normally buy – which also applies to future donations -- meaning the donations from Tuesday would cover 40 loaves per day for the next 3 ½ days. He added that the food bank will be able to order specific breads and that the loaves would arrive at the food bank “very fresh.”

Ames said she expects a surge in demand for nutrition assistance in the near future. “The phone has not stopped ringing,” she said, adding that people most frequently call to ask if the food bank is still open. Others have called to say they don’t have enough food in their homes to make it through another week. “That’s terrifying,” Ames said. She added that older people are the “most panicked,” but she is also concerned about families with children who are impacted by school closings and job losses.

“I will stay open as long as I possibly can stay open,” she said. The food bank has taken extra precautions to this end: only one family member at a time is allowed to shop, and children have been asked to stay outside while their parents pick out food.

Ames said that she is concerned that the economic impact of the coro-

How to help

Fauquier Community Food Bank

249 E. Shirley Ave., Warrenton

fauquierfoodbank.org

540-359-6053

Pantry Hours: Monday to Friday, Noon to 4 p.m.

To receive aid, must be a resident of Fauquier County and meet certain income requirements.

Donation hours: Monday through Friday, Noon to 4 p.m.

Food donations are the priority, especially bread, bottled water, canned protein and canned pasta.

Financial donations are accepted on the website.

Fauquier FISH

24 Pelham St., Warrenton

fauquierfish.org

540-347-3474

Pantry hours: Tuesday, 9:30 a.m. to noon; Thursday, 6:30 to 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, 9:30 a.m. to noon

To receive aid, the only requirement is to be a resident of Fauquier County.

navirus outbreak will severely increase the number of people who need nutrition assistance, some of whom might not have experienced that need before. “Many households are going to be food insecure,” she said.

Ames said that the best way to help is to donate food. “If you’ve got it, we can use it,” she said.

Fauquier FISH

Carol Schumacher, executive director of Fauquier FISH, said that she “definitely” expects an uptick in demand for food aid, but she is confident that the organization will be able to do its part to meet that need. “It’s stressful times that bring out the best in people,” she said. “Most of the calls coming in have said: ‘What can I do to help?’”

Schumacher said that FISH has altered its food pantry procedures – like limiting the number of people inside at any given time – to better comply with

Financial donations, volunteers and food donations are all appreciated.

There are food donation drop boxes at: Fauquier FISH Food Pantry, 24 Pelham St., Warrenton and Marshall United Methodist Church, 8405 W. Main St., Marshall.

Food donation priorities: Cereal, oatmeal, macaroni and cheese, canned chicken, canned tuna, spaghetti, spaghetti sauce, cream of mushroom soup

Visit the website or Facebook page for more information on financial donations and volunteering.

Community Touch

10499 Jericho Road, Bealeton

communitytouchinc.org

540-439-9300

Food pantry hours: Saturday, 10 a.m. to noon

Food/supply donations accepted (call ahead). Priorities are canned goods, meats, starches, cleaning supplies and hand sanitizer

Financial donations are also needed; donations are accepted on the website.

guidelines from public health officials. “We are going to try to stay open if we can,” she said, adding that the pantry may be open an extra day per week to meet demand.

“The hard part,” said Schumacher, “has been ordering food from grocery stores” due to the stores’ own struggles to keep some basic staples in stock. “Most of the stuff we put out [on the food pantry shelves], we buy,” she added.

In addition to the food pantry, FISH runs a program called Weekend Power Pack. Students in Fauquier County who are considered at-risk of hunger receive a backpack full of food each Friday at school. The closure of schools through at least March 27 adds an extra – but not insurmountable – hurdle, said Schumacher.

She emphasized that FISH already has programs in place to distribute food to students during spring break and summer vacation, so she is confi-

dent that the Power Pack program will continue to be effective during the current school closures. “We do this every summer,” she said of the Power Pack program operating when school is out. “It’s not a new thing to do this, just kind of an awkward time.”

She added that students in the Power Pack program were able to pick up backpacks on Monday morning, and that they would have enough food to get them through this week. She said that FISH is coordinating with the school division to ensure the Power Pack program could continue while schools are closed. FISH is also considering adding more distribution points for the program. “The kids are going to be fed during this time,” she emphasized.

Schumacher said that financial donations are the most helpful contribution right now. Volunteers and donations of food are also helpful. She encouraged the public to follow the organization’s Facebook page for updates.

Community Touch

“This is affecting everything,” said Tyrone Champion, executive director of Community Touch, of the outbreak of the novel coronavirus. His organization operates a food pantry, a transitional housing facility, a thrift store and a daycare.

Champion said that he “definitely” expects an increased demand for food from the pantry. “We’re getting emergency phone calls during the week asking if they can come by and pick up food,” he said, adding that the food pantry works to accommodate these requests.

Beyond that, he said that he is concerned with keeping the day care open for the clients in transitional housing who rely on that day care to be able to work and keep on a path towards self-sufficiency. As of Monday, the day care remained open.

Champion said that food pantry’s services will be especially needed in the coming weeks, and added that donations of food, supplies and funds are needed and appreciated. “We appreciate the community support. We’re all in this together, combatting the same thing,” he said.

Stories from the trenches

Residents share their coronavirus stories

By Daniel Berti
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Tasha Nelson's 8-year-old son Jack has cystic fibrosis, a chronic lung disease that puts him at high-risk for COVID-19.

Nelson said the family has been isolated in their Manassas home for more than 10 days and are taking extraordinary precautions at the recommendation of her son's specialist. "Covid could kill him," Nelson said.

When Nelson ventured out of the house to buy groceries last Friday wearing a protective mask and gloves, she said she was mocked by people in the grocery store.

"People were rolling their eyes. Someone outright laughed at me," Nelson said. "Another man said as I walked by, 'Why are people overreacting?'"

Nelson said she was taken aback that people in her community were not taking the threat of COVID-19 seriously.

"The only way my son will survive this situation will be if our neighbors and the rest of the community take this seriously," Nelson said.

"This is my neighborhood that's being affected, and people are still

not social distancing. It's heart-breaking," Nelson said. "People are still going to restaurants and bars."

Nelson said she hopes her story will help people take the situation more seriously.

Charity Furness, director of Experience Old Town Warrenton, shared this story Friday:

"Thursday evening, eight hours before we were scheduled to leave for our two-week vacation, [my husband] Steve received a phone call that a colleague in his office had tested positive for coronavirus. At the time, this person was one of 17 people in Virginia that had tested positive. We made the difficult decision to cancel our vacation and self-quarantine.

"The past 24 hours have been nuts. Our suitcases still sit packed by the door. The kids are out of school for the next two weeks. Steve and I are scheduled to be off and we now just wait. Perfectly healthy, with our bags packed, we sit at home socially distancing ourselves and wait. It's hard.

"We are in the midst of a worldwide pandemic. As humans it is our social nature to come together in times of uncertainty. It's called community. We live in a strong community where we come together to celebrate and support each other. Social distancing is not our nature. It's hard.

"The community wants to come together to ensure no one will go hungry during this pandemic. We

want to personally interact with our neighbors and let them know we care and support them. The love and support looks so much different when you its recommended not to physically gather. It's hard.

"As the days get longer and the air is warmer, we want to be outside playing. We've had to postpone the soccer season to help flatten the curve. As a coach and a parent, it's my instinct to say let's just get everyone together for a fun team bonding party while the kids play. It goes against my natural instincts to socially distance myself. It's hard.

"My job with EOTW is to literally bring people together; to create community. The elderly are listed as the most vulnerable during this pandemic but I would argue that small business ranks right up there as well. The economy has taken a huge hit. We are told to stay home. As much as our community has rallied around other important causes, we need to rally around our small businesses. Order takeout. Try out Old Town's curbside pickup. Don't let social distancing kill your favorite downtown business. It's hard.

"The waiting game is difficult. What are we waiting for? This is something we've never experienced before. It is an invisible threat spread from person to person. It is not defined. It is not controlled. How will we know it is over? When can life go back to normal? When do I unpack my suitcases? It's hard.

"Social distancing is hard, but it's important."

Fauquier Times reader Christina Fox had her own story to tell: "I went to Harris Teeter yesterday to do my weekly shopping. The meat department was sparse and I had a quick moment of panic because of the way people are responding to this situation. I'm more concerned about the reaction to the virus than I am of the virus.

"I felt the need to hoard the rest of the meat based on the limited amount that was left. However, common sense prevailed. While I went ahead and got a couple of extra, I stopped myself from buying a ridiculous amount.

"... I asked the butcher about the next shipment. He profusely apologized about the situation and said the store employees were doing the best they could under the circumstances. I don't feel store employees are getting enough credit. On a side note, a very kind woman offered me a pack of her toilet paper (she had four packs of four). I told her no thank you since a friend of ours brought us a couple of packs the day before from another county three hours away."

Fox worries that hoarding is going to leave the community's most vulnerable at risk. "What about our senior citizens and other individuals on a fixed income? They can't afford to buy mass quantities of food and paper products and can only afford to shop week to week."

"The past 24 hours have been nuts."
CHARITY FURNESS

Warrenton volunteers provide Mutual Aid during COVID-19 crisis

Weekly boxes of food to be delivered to homebound residents

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Their restaurant is closed, but Kelly and Al Hoffman still want to feed people.

The owners of Fat Tuesdays in Warrenton have teamed up with town officials to cook and deliver meals to at-risk residents who don't want to leave their homes because of the risk of being exposed to the novel coronavirus.

A life-long, serial volunteer, Kelly Hoffman reached out to Town Councilman Sean Polster (at large) about a week ago to ask what they could do to help during the crisis. "We asked if we could help with school lunches, but that was already being taken care of. He suggested we try to help older people who might be at risk."

Polster said the Warrenton Senior Center has shut down because of COVID-19 and those residents are receiving box lunches. But he felt that there were other residents in need.

He said that senior citizens or those who may be immunocompromised or otherwise at risk are good candidates for the free service. "I think we can probably handle delivery to about 100



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL
Brett York, a Fat Tuesday's manager, in the Fat Tuesday's kitchen helps prepare meals for local senior citizens.

people," he said. About half that number are signed up now.

The nonprofit entity being created specifically for the project is called Mutual Aid. Polster said, "In the emergency response system, mutual aid is an agreement among emergency responders to lend assistance across jurisdictional boundaries when a response exceeds local resources. Our nonprofit was founded

See **FOOD BOXES**, page 12

Weekly boxes of food to be delivered to residents

FOOD BOXES, from page 7

by career and volunteer emergency responders to extend this concept to our communities in time of need, such as we are experiencing with COVID-19.”

Weekly boxes of food

Hoffman said she, her husband Al and four or five volunteers will cook and pack boxes of food for the first time on Tuesday, March 31; then they’ll be delivered later that day. Matt Mize, executive chef at A la Carte Catering and Event Design in Vint Hill will also be helping out.

Hoffman said that boxes will include some packaged food for breakfast – fruit, yogurt, meal bars, for instance. Each box will also have a bag of salad recipients can eat for the week, some bread, a soup choice and one hot meal for each day. Once we get the system streamlined, she said, “we will be able to scale up easily.”

She said it will depend on what vendors have in stock each week, but she envisions cooking and packaging meals like lasagna or spaghetti that people can heat up in the oven or the microwave. Polster said that local vendors will be used as much as possible. Ground beef will be from Locust Hill Farms and Great Harvest in Warrenton will be baking the bread.

The second week and beyond, meals will be prepared and delivered on Mondays.

Polster has provided the seed money for the program upfront – which so far amounts to several thousand dollars. He said he would like the program to grow organically; he expects the deliveries to continue for a couple of months.

He said he’s reached out to the heads of HOAs and leaders in the faith community, to find people who might need food assistance but who are reluctant to leave their homes.



TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/COY FERRELL

Fat Tuesday’s owners Kelly and Al Hoffman pose with containers of food bound for Mutual Aid boxes on the bar at Fat Tuesday’s.

“We’re going to try not to say no to anyone who needs help.”

Polster said that residents who know of someone who would appreciate a box from Mutual Aid box can contact him at sean@seanpolsterva.com with the recipient’s name, address and contact information.

He added that, unfortunately, only Town of Warrenton residents are eligible. “That’s all we’ll be able to handle,” he said.

Home delivery

Town Councilman Alec Burnett (Ward 2) is handling the logistics of delivery. Town Councilman Jerry Wood (Ward 1) and his wife, Town Councilman Kevin Carter (Ward 5) and town council candidate Heather Sutphin are

among those who have volunteered to help deliver the boxes, which will be left at front doors to minimize contact with the at-risk recipients.

After the first week, residents may post a note on their front door with other requests. Polster said, “Maybe they need toothpaste, toilet paper. Maybe they need someone to pick up a prescription. We’ll do the shopping for them and leave it in the next week’s box.”

Polster said, “I think we are blessed to live in a community that takes care of each other whether it’s the federal government shutdown or the coronavirus ... You know. This is Warrenton. We take care of each other.”

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

Amy Jenkins (left), of Front Diner, and Tina Fanning, a Fat Tuesday’s manager, prepare containers of food bound for Mutual Aid boxes on the Fat Tuesday’s bar.



Home buying and selling is pinched -- but not stifled -- by the pandemic

By Chris Connell

PIEDMONT JOURNALISM FOUNDATION

Air conditioning installer Josh Sienkiewicz has been living in the basement apartment of his parents' home in Bealeton for the past year, saving money to buy his first home and keeping a close eye on the market. When the pandemic shut things down this spring, he looked even harder, getting pre-approved for a rock-bottom 3% mortgage and scouting 20 homes by himself and with his real estate agent.

"I was a little leery, but it didn't hold me back. I need a house and I still have steady work," said the 30-year-old former motocross trainer. Mostly he's driven by houses by himself, but agent Becky Miller took him inside the two he liked most.

He didn't get them.

"Unfortunately, right now, with any really good house that's on the market in my price range, it basically seems somebody's on it that minute," said Sienkiewicz.

That's the story of the real estate market in Fauquier County. Realtors report fewer homes are up for sale, but the buyers and sellers still out there are serious.

Real estate, like home building, is deemed an essential service under both Virginia Gov. Ralph Northam's stay at home order and guidance from the U.S. Department of Homeland Security.

Jay Keyser of Warrenton, who works in the financial business, put a vacant rental house he owns in Marshall up for sale because he felt "the tight supply is a positive thing for the seller, even at this time. It might work for us. Only time will tell."

And Erwin Opitz of Woodville, who owns Opitz Construction Consulting in Flint Hill, which builds and renovates home, is looking for an old house to buy, fix up and flip. "We've tried to buy a couple of properties unsuccessfully and I don't know exactly why," we didn't get them, he said. Both Keyser and Opitz are working with realtor Emily Henry of Long and Foster.

For agents, business is not conducted like it was. Those offices brimming with house photos in the front window are closed to the public. Agents can escort clients into sellers' homes, but they can't put out an "Open House" sign and welcome all comers to troop through.

They can post sumptuous photos online and offer "virtual" video tours, "but I've not had a single buyer willing to put an offer in sight unseen," said Miller, owner of Piedmont Fine Properties in Warrenton. "You have to make the homes available. You may get lucky, but we've got to get people in the houses as safely as possible."

Long and Foster's Henry concurred. "You need to show properties and get into properties when people are making a big investment, sometimes the biggest investment of their lives."

In Fauquier County and nationwide, the business of buying and selling homes is down, but deeds are still being notarized in courthouses and deals closing.

Sales were barreling ahead in the first two months of 2020, with the winter mild and economy strong. "I thought 2020 was going to be one of the best years I ever had in 18 years in real estate," said Miller.



Tray Allen of Allen Real Estate

"It was just off-the-charts good. We were storming the beaches," said Herb Lisjak, principal broker for Century 21 New Millennium in Gainesville, who oversees 850 agents in Virginia, Maryland and the District of Columbia.

Debbie Werling, CEO of Greater Piedmont Realtors, said 118 homes in Fauquier County were sold in March, up from 93 in March 2019. Median sales prices rose, too, from \$400,000 to \$425,000, but active listings plunged 37 percent from 422 to 265.

Inventory was already tight "and now we have even less," said Miller.

Tray Allen, whose father opened Allen Real Estate in Old Town Warrenton in 1990, said, "This is normally the time when we would have been rocking and rolling and replenishing our inventory. That's not happening.

"But one thing this has done is whittle away everybody to the most serious buyers and sellers still out there. Regardless of the circumstances, some people need to sell and some people need to buy if they can find the right house," said Allen.

Some sellers took homes off the market because they don't want to let strangers in their houses, even with the steps agents are taking to keep visits short and safe.

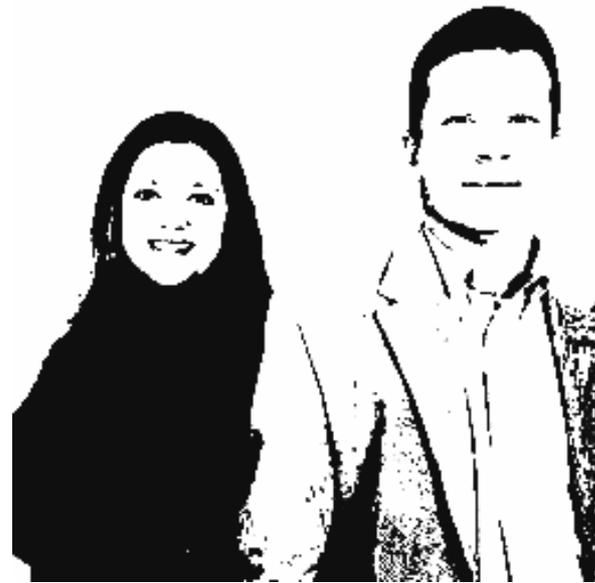
"I'm wearing a mask and booties and gloves and going through a lot of Clorox," said Miller. "I'm also trying to protect my sellers. If you're not a fully approved, ready-to-purchase buyer, I don't think you need to be in and out of these properties. We don't need any lookie-loos right now."

Her business is off 25 to 30%, but "I'm still getting calls and showings. Everybody's home and they are looking on a multitude of websites."

Miller had a buyer from California who had a contract to purchase a home.

The sellers "had to sign several COVID-19 addendums saying the buyer could walk away at any point before settlement if he lost employment," she said. That purchaser did pull out.

Agents no longer drive clients to see homes. They arrive separately, don the masks, gloves and booties and make liberal use of sanitizer. The occupants are advised to go for a drive or take



Becky and Chip Miller of Piedmont Fine Properties

a walk, and the agent and prospective buyers keep their distance from one another.

Lisjak said his agents go in beforehand and open every door and cabinet so the clients "don't touch a thing."

Chad Pangle went full-time into land sales in January after operating his own successful concrete construction business in Strasburg for 14 years. Now he's the first agent in Virginia for Illinois-based Whitetail Properties, selling land for farming, pasture, hunting and timber.

"I've always had a passion for real estate and the outdoors," he said. "I've been extremely busy. My phone is ringing off the hook."

"I've closed one property thus far" — an 18-acre tract in Front Royal backing up to the Smithsonian Conservation Biology Institute — "and I've acquired 16 listings with four to six others in the making," he said. The listings range from 6 and a half to 260 acres.

There was initially a significant drop in inquiries, "but this week things have really picked back up," he said. "With the stock market and the

economy taking a downturn, I think investors realize that land is a great investment. It's not going to disappear overnight like your mutual fund might."

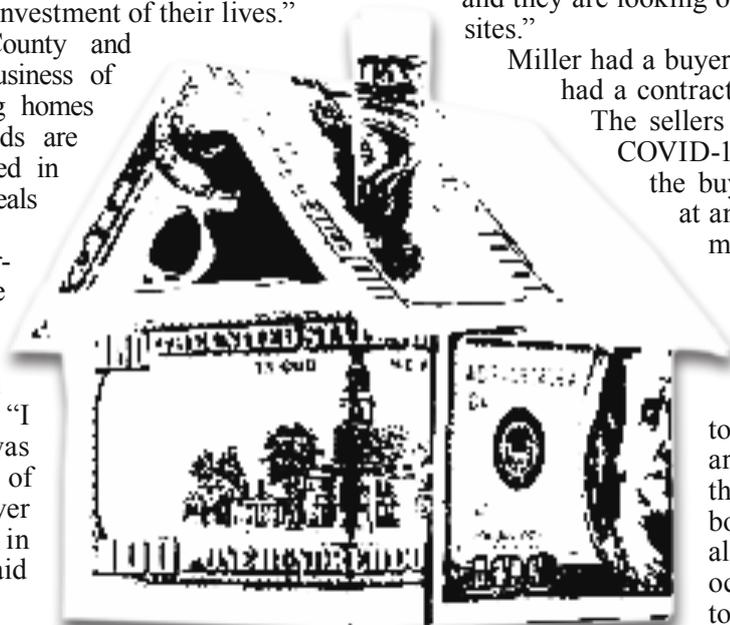
Pangle adheres strictly to social distancing guidelines. "Fortunately for me we're not working inside homes. For us to keep our 6-foot separation is pretty easy. We're not shaking hands. We're not riding in cars or UTVs with each other," he said. "It's a challenging time, no doubt about it, but I think we'll get through it."

"I'm a Christian man and I knew beyond the shadow of a doubt based on the Lord's leading that this was not only the industry I was supposed to be in but very specifically this company," said Pangle. "I didn't see the virus hitting at two months into it, but faith carries me through these times."

Chris Connell is a journalist working with the Piedmont Journalism Foundation.



Emily Henry of Long and Foster



Chad Pangle of Whitetail Properties



TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/COY FERRELL

Masks are available to anyone who needs them; so long there is no rain, Beauchamp sets up the clotheslines every day at the end of her driveway on Kelly Road. LEFT: Naomi Gale, of Warrenton, picks out a mask from the clotheslines set out by Erin Beauchamp on Kelly Road. Gale had heard about the free masks from a Facebook post created by Beauchamp in a local community group.

'I have the skills and I have the time'

Former professional seamstress produces masks for local community

By Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITER

"Half of Fauquier County is wearing my masks," joked Erin Beauchamp of New Baltimore, as she sat at her sewing machine in the basement of her home.

Since April 3, when the Centers for Disease Control began recommending the use of non-medical-grade masks in public to prevent the spread of the novel coronavirus, Beauchamp has been producing masks for anyone who needs them.

She had made 1,787 by noon on

Monday. "Today I'll break 1,800 for sure," she said, adding she can make about 100 in a day.

Some masks go to specific organizations – she was planning to take 350 to Fauquier Hospital on April 27 – and some are picked up by friends, neighbors and passersby at the end of her driveway, where Beauchamp hangs masks on clotheslines each day, so long as it's not raining.

Beauchamp, a former professional seamstress, runs a day care and teaches sewing out of her home. Her day care business has struggled recently. "I've lost most of my income due to the pandemic," she said.

When the CDC began recommending everyone wear a mask in public, "I said, 'All right, I can sew, I have some fabric,'" she said, later summing up her situation with a smile: "I have the skills and I have the time."

Her new sewing operation is set up in what is usually a classroom for her day care. "My play dough should be right here!" she laughed, pointing to the table now used for her sewing machine.

Beauchamp said she has paid for some of the material herself, but most of her efforts are made possible by donations of fabric or funds to purchase fabric. Quilting fabric that is 100% cotton is the best material for masks, she said.

The designs on the donated fabric sometimes make her smile – she was sewing cloth imprinted with a Christmas-themed pattern on Monday. "Sometimes it's a really fun surprise to see what's going to be out on the line." In an April 24 Facebook post she referenced a picture of one of her masks emblazoned with graphics from the Doctor Strange comic. "I really hope a doctor with a sense of humor gets the Doctor Strange mask," adding a tongue-sticking-out-face emoji.

Donations for the purchase of material can be made via PayPal to cheerdance02@hotmail.com or at the mask pickup site, at the 6700 block of Kelly Road, Warrenton.

Reach Coy Ferrell at cferrell@fauquier.com



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Erin Beauchamp works at the sewing station in her basement she set up to produce masks.

School social workers check in with teens while they are home from school

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

At 4 p.m. on Wednesday, April 20, Deborah Panagos had just gotten off the phone with a student who was worried about their school schedule for next year. A social worker who splits her time between Cedar Lee Middle School and Liberty High School, Panagos said it's a conversation she has often. "Their main concerns are about their schedules. Kids are worried about continuity of learning. I tell them to relax, it's going to be all right. We'll figure it out together."

Panagos wants students and parents to know that if they are feeling sad or alone, or just want someone to talk to, someone is there, ready to help.

Liberty and Cedar Lee have included a form on their webpages that offers a way for students to check in. The Google doc – under the counseling tab -- asks a few questions about how they are doing. Do they need to talk to someone? Would they like to talk about academics or personal worries? Who would they like to talk to?

"Some kids return the form to say they are doing all right, but others request a call from a teacher or social worker," said Panagos. Social workers, psychologists and school counselors at each school receive the forms and follow up to make sure someone has gotten back to the student.

"Some kids ask to speak with me because we already have a relationship, others have a question for a teacher or someone else," said Panagos. "They have stressors at home, with relationships, they're worried about not being able to keep up with their schoolwork, or sometimes they just want to talk."

When school is in session, Panagos has an individual caseload and also runs nine different groups, five at Cedar Lee and four at Liberty. At the middle school, she works with students on social skills, emotional regulation, anger management and behaviors. At Liberty, the groups work on future goals, empathy and moral reasoning as well as working with a team.

"I can see more kids when we work in groups," she said.

Of course, group counseling isn't happening now, so Panagos communicates with students as much as possible over the phone.

"I love my job," she said. "Everyone at both of my schools is very kid-focused."

She is looking forward to getting back to school. "I miss the kids," she said.

John Flemming

John Flemming is a school social worker who works with students at Fauquier High School and Auburn Middle School. While schools have been closed, he said, he's been calling students or connecting over Zoom. "I've been in touch with certain students that I've been concerned about, and I've had some people ask me to reach out to others."

Flemming said that the break in routine, the lack of daily structure and the extra strain placed on everyone because of the forced confinement has been difficult for some students.

"We work on ways to relieve that stress ... The most important thing is that kids have to have a sense of purpose. They need to have goals. Whatever they are trying to accomplish, whether it's schoolwork, housework or working in the yard, every student should have something they can look back on at the end of the day and feel good about."

He encourages students to manage their time as if they were in school. Routine is important.

Flemming has his five children at home, so understands that stressors exist now that didn't a month ago. His oldest, 28, worked in the theater, so is out of work. Flemming also has a 21-year-old at Mary Washington trying to manage online learning. Some of those classes are in acting, "so

that's different," he said.

His other three children are in high school; one is set to graduate this year. "They are worried about having what they need, not being able to see friends, not having a graduation ..."

And of course, there are the practical concerns. "The toilet paper shortage provided some anxious moments for our family of seven, but we're OK now," he said.

Flemming said he has been pleased to see how teachers are stepping up to be creative. "One gentleman has been doing science experiments online with the kids. It brings everyone together." Despite teachers' best efforts, though, he believes that the student engagement in online learning is minimal. "Some teachers say only 10% of students are participating."

The social worker suggested a few signs parents can look for if they suspect their child is having a hard time with social isolation. "Parents should watch their children's sleep patterns, how they're eating; has their mood changed, has there been unexplained weight loss? Parents can look at their children's arms and legs to be sure they are not cutting themselves." And Flemming encouraged parents to keep an eye on what their children are looking at on social media.

"Kids are worried about their schoolwork," said Flemming. "They are stressed about the time they are missing ... and some kids are worried about the disease and how it might affect them and their families." He said that the situation puts extra pressure on relationships as well.

"Stay positive," he said. "It's a gift to be together as a family. Keep moving forward."

The Mental Health Association of Fauquier County

Sallie Morgan, executive director of the Mental Health Association of Fauquier County, said that – with or without the coronavirus -- anxiety among adolescents is on the rise. Mental Health America's national screening center has seen a more than 130% increase in anxiety screenings, and 74% of those have been individuals under 25 years of age. The severity of the symptoms



John Flemming is a social worker at Fauquier High School and Auburn Middle School.



Deborah Panagos is a social worker at Liberty High School and Cedar Lee Middle School.

described by those being screened has also increased, she said. She said that nine out of 10 of those under age 25 who have been screened have moderate to severe symptoms.

Morgan said that her organization can help families find counseling resources if needed. She said on April 24, "I just got off of a Zoom check-in with Frank Finn [Associate Superintendent for Student Services and Special Education] from the Fauquier Schools about what they are hearing from students/families and how their social workers and counselors are responding to concerns as they arise."

She said that the Mental Health Association is keeping in close touch with providers in the community to find out who is able to take new clients, who is willing to relax fees so they are able to see those with limited incomes, and how they are connecting, which is mostly by phone or online.

"We have offered to support the school counselors in finding therapeutic resources for children and adolescents and are also offering that same service to the community at large," she said. She suggested that parents call Brittany Dwyer at MHAFC at 540-341-8732.

She added, "We also have a number of resources on our website, including tips for coping with COVID-related anxiety, access to both anxiety and depression screening tools, and a comprehensive database of local providers."

Class of 2020 graduation plans announced

Graduating seniors at Fauquier High School, Kettle Run High School, Liberty High School and Southeastern Alternative School will be able to participate in a graduation ceremony, even in the midst of the COVID-19 pandemic.

School officials announced Tuesday morning that individual graduation ceremonies will be held on each high school's stadium athletic field throughout the week of May 18 to 22. Southeastern's graduation celebration will be held May 27 at the school.

Each graduate will be given a personal time to walk across the stage and receive their diploma as their name is announced. Parents and/or guardians may accompany the graduate onto the field. Photographers will be present to capture the experience, the announcement said.

All schools will adhere to social distancing guidelines throughout the events.

Traditionally, each school creates a gradua-

tion video available to students and families at the conclusion of the commencement exercises. A letter to graduates from the four high school principals stated, "This year, the videos will include a compilation of the graduation ceremonies, speeches, and Superintendent of Schools David Jeck's message to confer diplomas, proclaiming the Class of 2020 as official graduates."

More information will be mailed to graduates later this week.

The letter concluded, "While the circumstances we face mean that our Class of 2020 FCPS graduations will not resemble ceremonies of the past, these same circumstances provide us the chance to create a legacy unique to this year's graduating class. We are excited about that opportunity!"

The letter was signed by all the Fauquier County high school principals: Meaghan Brill (Kettle Run) Sam Cox (Liberty), Kraig Kelican (Fauquier) and Shelly Neibauer (Southeastern).

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Peter Brewington
FAUQUIER TIMES
SPORTS EDITOR



Virginia Gold Cup scheduled for June 27. But you're not invited.

Fauquier's signature sporting event to run without an audience

By Betsy Burke Parker
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

Fauquier's biggest sporting event may happen next month.

You can't go.

That's the way it's going to work at Gold Cup according to Gov. Ralph Northam and race co-chair Al Griffin. The 95th Virginia Gold Cup may run June 27 – rescheduled from May 2 -- and the 100th Middleburg Spring Races on June 13, Griffin said, but it won't be like anything anyone has ever seen.

Virginia guidelines do not currently allow spectators at sporting events. This year won't be the traditional, al fresco tailgate party for 50,000 spectators that Gold Cup has become, Griffin said. Instead, it will be strictly about supporting horse



PHOTO BY BETSY BURKE PARKER

Though up to 50,000 spectators attend the Virginia Gold Cup races annually since it first ran in 1922, the rescheduled version this year will be conducted in an empty house.

sports at the grassroots – participant – level.

“Everyone in the (steeplechase) game has been so positive” about retaining this small portion of the

schedule, Griffin said. Five Virginia point-to-points were canceled altogether due to the COVID-19 crisis,

See **GOLD CUP**, page 5

Local business owners cautious about reopening

By Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Gov. Ralph Northam announced Monday that some restrictions on restaurants, retail, fitness, personal care, grooming and entertainment businesses will “likely” end on Friday, May 15, a week later than originally mandated (see page 3). The date is contingent on several public health indicators, the governor said.

Although many restaurants and other food service businesses have been able to conduct some sales by offering takeout and delivery, dining rooms have been closed throughout the state since March 24; hair salons have been forced to close altogether.

Neal Wavra, owner of Field & Main Restaurant in Marshall, said he is taking a cautious approach to returning to pre-pandemic operations. As far as immediate plans for the restaurant, the governor's order “doesn't change anything at the moment. We're going to maintain

No spectators at Virginia Gold Cup

GOLD CUP, from page 1

along with a dozen National Steeplechase Association spring meets. “(This) is about doing everything we can to support those horsemen who have still gotten up every morning to train and prepare their horses for racing. This gives them the hope of getting to run.”

As new NSA president, Griffin inherited a complicated task to helm American jump racing. “There’s a spirit among horsemen that quitting just isn’t an option.

“That’s why we’re doing this.”

After Northam’s Monday news conference, Griffin submitted a letter to Northam and Virginia agriculture secretary Bettina Ring, outlining how the region’s two biggest sporting events can work – no spectators, with traceable monitoring of competitors and support staff.

In lieu of an on-site audience, both meets will be livestreamed online. There will be no pari-mutuel wagering at Gold Cup.

“Al is doing a helluva job making this work,” said Middleburg Spring Races president Doug Fout. Virginia’s oldest steeplechase meet, the Middleburg Spring Races was established in 1921. The 100th running is especially meaningful, Fout said, and “we’re doing everything we can, every day, to make it go.

“We’re taking a huge (financial) hit, so there will be a reduction in purses. But we (want) to accommodate horsemen.”

The Glenwood Park racecourse is in great shape, Fout added. “The grass is like a carpet.” Turf growth has been amazing this year, he said, from spring rains and cooler-than-normal temperatures.

The rest of the 2020 race schedule is expected to continue as planned, with Colonial Downs near Richmond hosting a summer turf festival meet July 23 to Aug. 29, likely with normal spectator attendance by then, officials say.

Shenandoah Downs’ harness meet is Sept. 2 to Oct. 17.

The rescheduled Old Dominion Hounds Point-to-Point kicks off the fall steeplechase season Sept. 12, with Blue Ridge Sept. 19. The Foxfield Fall Races are Oct. 5, Virginia Fall Oct. 10 and International Gold Cup Oct. 24. The Montpelier Hunt Races run Nov. 7.

Quick facts

- The American steeplechase industry employs more than 1,000 people, from the executive level to hands-on grooms, exercise riders and van drivers. Nearly half of them work in Virginia.
- The 2020 spring steeplechase season featured 18 races with more than \$4 million in purses, plus eight pre-season point-to-points in Virginia and another eight in Maryland and Pennsylvania.
- Allowances are being made for social distancing for race officials, trainers, grooms, jockeys and staff at Gold Cup and Middleburg Spring, including wider distribution of racing officials, extra jockeys’ quarters, widely spaced owners’ parking, enlarged overnight stabling for horses and more.
- A final decision on whether the two Virginia steeplechase meets will be held is expected by May 15.

“We have to rethink this game from a race meet director’s standpoint,” Griffin said. “We can’t do away with the social aspect of it completely, but there need to be two or three tiers in place – minimal attendees, business as usual and something in between.”

Faux shows, not no-shows

Redefining the term horse “show,” some area events have gone digital to support the sport horse industry. Competitors post videos of themselves jumping a course at a prescribed height, or working an individual pattern or test, explained Kathy Locke at Locke Meadows. Recognized judges score and place “classes,” all in good fun, said Locke. It’s a way to retain interest until sports events can reopen.

“We’re taking it one day at a time,” echoed Georgiana Price-Spencer of Spencer Sport Horse. The Hume facility canceled March, April and May shows, though they hope to return to a normal schedule soon, Spencer said.

Trainer and sales agent Kristy Willwerth said her Picturesque Farm near Opal was briefly “at a standstill” in March, but the last few weeks have seen a return to near-normal. “A lot of people are still purchasing off videos or off my word over the phone, but now (more) are coming to try horses in

person. We ... meet clients in the ring and hand off the horse to them to try.

“We follow CDC guidelines with few people in the barn, wiping the bars, stall doors, bathrooms, all surfaces down with bleach and disinfectant twice a day, as well as offering hand sanitizer and soap.

“Horses and farm life in general lead well to social distancing as it is. You’re outside in the fresh air. It is a bit of an individual sport. I think if you were downtown D.C., you have a very different view. Someone living in a row of townhouses is not going to feel the same as someone on a 230-acre farm.

“I feel that for many people this mental toll would be too much without their animals. If gyms and salons are allowed to open May 8, there [is] no question the horse business will start opening as well.”

COVID-19 affects

other horse events, businesses

Great Meadow Twilight Polo season has been tentatively scheduled to kick off June 13, said director of communications Kira Topeka. The plan is to extend the season into October, she added, to make up for games and tournaments lost in May. Willow Run Polo owner-trainer German Noguera said another complicating factor is the current travel restrictions on players and support staff. “As soon as we are allowed to play and offer polo school, we will be ready to go,” Noguera said.

Local tack repair shops report an uptick in business. “People have got time on their hands to dig around and find stuff to get repaired,” explained owner Skeeter Hembry. “I haven’t seen any decrease (in work) at all.”

Skeeters Tack celebrated 51 years in business last week; he opened May 2, 1969, in Fairfax Circle, moving to Clifton and, most recently, to New Baltimore.

Meetze Station Park is expanding, too, with a new show arena and trails open to RideFauquier club members. Club president Jinx Fox said in light of current health restrictions, they won’t hold a grand opening ceremony until later this summer.

“We realize local equestrians need a place to ride, especially in light of the current restrictions,” Fox said. Trails and arena use are limited to members, though membership to RideFauquier is open to all. A fundraising drive is underway to help underwrite the arena, she added, since the club’s benefit events in March, April and May were canceled.

The Aug. 20 to 23 Great Meadow International expanded the FEI level horse trials to include a preliminary division.

Town Council postpones some business taxes

TOWN COUNCIL, from page 4

nesses as well. What other opportunities are there to push value to food and beverage businesses? Businesses cannot save their way to success. They need to drive revenue.”

Mayor Carter Nevill said, “Passing this would not preclude us doing something more. That’s an entirely different discussion. Let’s pass this resolution and discuss other resolutions that are incentives for the economy at a later time.”

In the end, council members voted to approve the ordinance, but agreed to discuss other ways to help businesses – like a reduction in utility bills, for instance -- at a later time.

Nevill admitted, “We are flying blind. We don’t yet know what businesses’ concerns are.” He asked Warrenton business owners who may have been listening to the Zoom call to, “Please let us know. Stimulus checks help with this month, but not the next four. It’s customers we need more than anything. And whatever help we provide, it must be equitable.”

Brett Hamby (Ward 3) added, “We need to be prepared for long haul. We need to give as much relief as we can.”

Carter agreed, “We are going to continue to make new discoveries, to find new solutions for the next 18 months.”

Nevill pointed out that a new town council would be taking over in July. “If we find that the suffering is greater than anticipated, the new council can reassess.”

At least two of the town’s wards will have new councilmen; Jerry Wood (Ward 1) and Robert Kravetz (Ward 4) are retiring. Contested seats in Ward 2 and 5 will be decided in a May 19 election. Hamby is running unopposed.

Councilman Sean Polster (at large) said, “COVID relief needs to be broader than just waiving taxes.” He suggested that the council continue discussions as they consider the FY2021 budget in the weeks ahead.

Schaeffer explained that because the town’s tax structure is dependent on businesses, the town could forfeit up to 40% of revenue in certain categories of taxes that are reliant on a good economy.

Nevill admitted that uncertainty is going to complicate the budget process. “We are going to have to approve a budget with a lot of assumptions. It will be imperfect.”

Northam says phase one of reopening will most likely begin on May 15

REOPEN, from page 3

had effectively “flattened the curve” of COVID-19 and that hospitals had not been overwhelmed by sick patients. The state has also made progress in securing more personal protective equipment and expanded its testing capabilities, Northam said.

Additionally, Virginia Health Commissioner Dr. Norm Oliver said the Virginia Department of Health plans to ramp up the state’s contact tracing “over the next week or two,” by deploying around 1,000 people to work as contact tracers in the Commonwealth, a key component of the state’s strategy to reopen.

But even as the state has seen progress in its COVID-19 response, Northam continued to urge caution.

“I want to make it very clear. This virus is still here. It has not gone away, and it will not go away until we have a vaccination. That may be hopefully at the end of this year or another year or two,” Northam said.

Even as the state moves toward easing some restrictions, Northam said, “we must continue to behave more cautiously than before. We must not relax.”

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Coy Ferrell
FAUQUIER TIMES
STAFF WRITER



Students lament graduation without pomp, because of circumstance

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Fauquier County school division announced last week that the three county high schools and Southeastern Alternative School will hold in-person graduation ceremonies between May 18 and 22. Each senior – one at a time -- will receive their diploma at their school in the company of their parents and/or guardians.

Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, it will be a commencement with no friends, no speeches, no crowds.

Some students have expressed regret that in addition to losing half of their senior year, they are also being denied a traditional graduation ceremony.

Will Hunter, a senior at Kettle Run High School, wrote in a letter to the *Fauquier Times*, “While we, as a class, recognize the exceedingly difficult situation that the administration is in due to the virus, the present plan feels more like a photo-op than a graduation ceremony.

“The current arrangement would have individual, isolated appointments take place over a four-day period from May 18 to 22, on each school’s campus. This decision was made without consulting the graduating students [at Kettle Run], as neither the senior class president, nor the student body president were aware of plans being made.”

Students at Kettle Run created a petition entitled, Push Back FCPS1 Graduations. As of Monday night, the document had 1,056 signatures.

The petition says, “We have waited four years to experience pivotal moments such as our senior

See **GRADUATION**, page 4

A school year abruptly interrupted, and slowly salvaged

By Christopher Connell
PIEDMONT JOURNALISM FOUNDATION

It was Friday afternoon March 13, the end of the third quarter for Fauquier County schools, and a half day for students. M.M. Pierce Elementary School kindergarten teacher Lauren Brill was still there working mid-afternoon when the principal made the announcement: Gov. Ralph Northam has just closed schools for two weeks because of the novel coronavirus.

“I started bawling my eyes out. I was beside myself,” said Brill, who had realized this was a possibility as the pandemic spread across the country, but didn’t anticipate the suddenness. “You won’t get to experience anything more with your kids for who knows how long.”

Jerry Hull, a veteran fifth-grade science and social studies teacher at Brumfield Elementary, said, “That Friday we didn’t realize that was go-

ing to be the last day we ever taught those kids.” Ten days later, the governor closed schools for the rest of the academic year, setting off a statewide scramble to figure out how to make the best of a bad situation and help children and teens keep learning while stuck at home.

Now, in week eight of the closure, teachers, parents and students are becoming accustomed to, if not entirely comfortable with, the world of education at a distance, where almost nothing is graded, no new material is introduced and teachers check in on students by email, phone or over the website Blackboard, and hold virtual class meetings and “office hours” once or twice a week. Parents, involuntary home-schoolers, do their best to keep children on school tasks an hour or two a day, often while juggling full-time, remote jobs of their own.

“There is no perfect answer to all of

See **SCHOOL**, page 2



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL
Carly Hammond, 14, an eighth-grader at Warrenton Middle School, practices ballet at her home in Warrenton; her father, Mike, built the barre (left) from scraps stored in the garage after business and school closures began in mid-March. Carly has regular ballet lessons over Zoom through the Lasley Centre.

Some COVID-19 restrictions will lift Friday

By Daniel Berti and Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Phase one of Gov. Ralph Northam’s statewide plan to lift emergency restrictions put in place during the pandemic is set to begin Friday, May 15 – in parts of the state including Fauquier County -- but the restrictions will remain in place in some Northern Virginia localities after elected officials requested the governor take a regional approach to lifting COVID-19 restrictions.

On Saturday, local officials from the counties of Arlington, Fairfax, Loudoun, and Prince William, and the cities of Alexandria, Fairfax, Falls Church, Manassas, Manassas Park, as well as the towns of Dumfries, Herndon, Leesburg, and Vienna formally requested that Executive Order 55 be amended to remain in effect in those jurisdictions longer than in the rest of the state.

See **REOPEN**, page 5



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL
More than 100 people attended a “Reopen Fauquier County Rally” on Saturday. See page 5.

TOWN ELECTIONS MAY 19. SEE Q&A WITH WARRENTON CANDIDATES, PAGE 8.

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Students lament graduation without pomp, because of circumstance

GRADUATION, from page 1

prom, final senior sports seasons, a fun senior prank and other trips and experiences which arrive with the end of our 13 years of public education. All of these many things have been taken away from us ...

“... we, the class of 2020 from Fauquier, Kettle Run, Liberty, and Southeastern would much rather wait until we are able to hold traditional graduation than have an individual celebration. We would adhere to social distancing guidelines in July/August if it meant we could celebrate together.”

In response to a question about the school division’s decision, Tara Helkowski, FCPS spokeswoman said, “We realize that not everyone is happy with the plans, but we are confident that this is our best option given the circumstances. Our top priority is to keep our students, staff and families safe. We are also committed to providing an in-person celebration to commemorate this important milestone in our students’ lives. If we chose to wait, there would be no guarantee that a traditional ceremony could take place, and if it did, the timing would exclude some of our students who may no longer be in the area.”

Hunter said in an interview last week, “I know how difficult this time has been for the administration and I give my full support to the administration through this ... They are stepping on shattered glass trying to navigate the governor’s orders and the seniors who are leaving early. I know they can’t please everyone.

“If this is the only way to have a graduation, that would be disappointing but understandable. But students needed to give their input and that wasn’t done. If we had been a part of the process, we’d have less problem with it. This is the last chance we have to do something as a student body.”

Liberty Principal Sam Cox said that leadership at Liberty met with senior class officers via Google the last week of April to get their input.

Kettle Run senior Gabriella Biasillo was also disappointed in the decision for a pared-down graduation. She rushed to explain though, “In no way do my opinions reflect any disappointment from any of the teachers that have educated me at my time at Kettle Run High School. Each of them has helped me grow as both a student and a person.”

But she added, “Prince William and Loudoun county schools have each pushed their graduation dates until the first week of August. They are planning to adhere to social dis-

tancing by utilizing limited tickets for graduation. The state of Virginia is reopening starting as early as May 15, so I don’t believe there is any reason that we cannot push back graduation until a later date to give the opportunity of having a commencement with individuals we have grown up with and family members outside of our parent/legal guardian.”

Hunter and Biasillo pointed out that some of the graduation times were at the same time as Advanced Placement tests, but Helkowski said, “School administrators will certainly work around AP testing. Schools mailed appointment times and graduation details to seniors and their families last week. If a graduate could not make their scheduled time, schools worked with families to make other arrangements.”

Olivia Loudon, a senior at Fauquier High School, agreed with the Kettle Run contingent, “I want to thank all of FCPS for doing the best they can. I just don’t see how this individual graduation is going to be special when our grandparents can’t even come to watch us graduate.”

Helkowsi said not all seniors are disappointed with the plans. She said, “For example, Liberty High School’s senior class officers were happy to hear a ceremony would take place because they initially thought they would be receiving their diplomas by mail.”

She continued, “We are proud of our school administrators and staff who are working tirelessly to make this event as special as possible for our seniors. We also want to thank the PATH Foundation for graciously arranging photography at each of our locations.”

Louden, Biasillo and Hunter all said they felt that they would have liked to have had a place at the table when options were being discussed. Biasillo said that she contacted the administration over the weekend and shared the petition. She suggested a Zoom call could be arranged to discuss the issue, but the administration declined, she said.

She added, “I personally am proud of my efforts and will know in my heart that I have absolutely zero regrets because I tried. I fought for what I believed and was persistent and passionate.”

Biasillo, who will be majoring in biology with a pre-med track at James Madison University next year, said that the pandemic “has made me learn not to take anything for granted because it all could be gone in an instant. No one knew March 13 would be our last day as a student in our high school in Fauquier County.”



TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/COY FERRELL

South Wales Golf Course staff members stand outside the clubhouse entrance.

South Wales Golf Course works to maintain safe venue during health crisis

By John Hagarty
TIMES CONTRIBUTING WRITER

Jimmy Mauro, the general manager of the South Wales Golf Course in Jeffersonston, has no experience as a hospital administrator. But after the rigors of trying to maintain a safe and “squeaky-clean” clubhouse and golf course during the COVID-19 crisis, he might have some relevant qualifications.

From early morning until the gates close at sunset, Mauro and his staff are cleaning, disinfecting and making sure his customers practice social distancing. Mauro is doing repeat duty at South Wales. He was the head pro back in the 1990s and a former member of the PGA. He is also a retired federal police officer.

“We are seeing a lot of players from around the region playing here since many courses are closed. I’m getting players from Northern Virginia, Maryland, and, of course, our loyal tri-county golfers,” said Mauro. “It’s gratifying.”

The governor has allowed Virginia golf courses to remain open. A typical course is up to 200 acres and groups of four or fewer are generally 150 yards or more away from each other.

Tommy Thompson owns the golf course. A third-generation home builder, his grandfather was a carpenter, and his father Ken was a professional builder as well.

Upon graduating high school, Thompson picked up a hammer and never looked back. Today, he owns Benchmark Homes, headquartered in Richmond. When asked how he is keeping the course operating, he said, “If it wasn’t for my staff, we wouldn’t be there. They are a very dedicated crew committed to serving the public.

“I do everything from afar since I live in Richmond. I talk to Jimmy two and three times a day to assess the situation. It’s not only Jimmy and the clubhouse employees, but our course superintendent, Johnny Smith, and his guys who are keeping the course looking great. It’s a total team effort,” Thompson said.

Protocols

What’s different today from six weeks ago? Almost everything except the players’ handicaps. The changes start as you walk up the steps to the clubhouse.

A table outside the clubhouse displays the COVID-19-inspired course rules. “We permit only one golfer at a time inside the clubhouse and in the restrooms. But that’s only the beginning of our COVID protocols. We sanitize each credit card and pen every time they are touched,” said Mauro.

The club serves no hot food. Only packaged candy, crackers, chips, soft drinks and beer are available.

“All range balls are disinfected with Clorox and Dawn detergent after use,” Mauro said. “There are no water coolers on the course because we do not want players touching them. Ball washers have also been removed. I even sanitize the handrails as you walk up the steps to the pro shop,” he added.

One change most players readily embrace is 6-inch sections of swimmer’s noodles that are placed in every hole on the greens. The blue foam inserts block putts from dropping into

the hole, so if the ball just grazes the foam, it’s in. The flag pin is never touched.

When carts are returned after a round, everything a player touches is sanitized, including the floorboards.

Mauro said, “We intend to do everything we need to do to stay open. We are adhering to all state and federal guidelines for golf courses. All of these actions are for the health and safety of our guests. I also need to protect my employees too.”

When carts are available, it’s one player per cart. But due to the high volume of players, all the carts may be in play by mid-day, especially on weekends. In those situations, a player can walk or elect to ride with another player. “I had 118 players last Sunday and only 34 carts, so it’s obvious, on occasion, we can’t always assign a cart to a single player,” Mauro said.

“The public is suffering from cabin fever. Almost everyone coming here thanks us for keeping the course open. Over 300 players a week are enjoying golfing in some of the nicest spring weather in years.”

Mauro said his rates are as competitive as most courses in the region. Weekday rates with a cart are \$39; \$44 on weekends. Seniors, law enforcement personal, veterans, first responders, women and juniors pay \$35 and \$40.

The players

Mauro said that compliments on the course conditions have been numerous. “It’s the best shape it’s been in in years,” he said.

Indeed, it’s not hard to find players eager to share their take on the course and its conditions.

Ron Philips, a retired U.S. Army command sergeant major, lives in Haymarket. “I golfed the last three weeks here and have found everyone well-trained in the disinfection process. Jimmy is down-to-earth and takes care of your needs. The course is in good shape. It’s the only one I’m going to play until this thing clears up,” he said.

Ron Rosson lives in Richardsville, Virginia, and is an off-from-work machinist. He said, “The course has come back from a few years ago. It’s very playable today. The more you play it, the easier it becomes. The course staff is doing an excellent job.”

Jason Kidwell is the owner of Explore Kitchens and lives in Mclean. “My good friend went to Langley High School with me and now lives in Sperryville, so this is his home course. I’m out here because they have closed most of the Fairfax County park golf courses. Once a week, I come out here to play with my buddy. South Wales is absolutely fantastic and has fast greens. It has one of the nicest staff I’ve encountered at any of the courses I’ve played,” he said.

South Wales’ general manager sums up his goal in staying open, “We want golfers to come out and get away from this terrible virus. We want them to relax for four or five hours and have a good time.”



Renee Davis, of South Wales Golf Course, hoses down a golf cart after it was used by a client out on the course. During the pandemic, carts are soaked with a bleach mixture, sprayed and wiped down after each use.

Fauquier businesses take individual approaches to Forward Virginia Phase 1

By Aimée O’Grady
SPECIAL TO THE FAUQUIER TIMES

On Friday, May 15, Executive Order 61 went into effect, signaling the beginning of the first phase of the Forward Virginia plan for much of the state. Phase 1 aims to gradually ease public health restrictions while containing the spread of COVID-19; it remains in effect until midnight on June 10, unless amended or rescinded by further executive order.

Some Fauquier businesses were eager to reopen their doors Friday, but others chose to maintain the business practices they adopted in March; they are not quite ready to embrace the challenges that Phase 1 offers.

In Old Town Warrenton, Cammie Fuller, owner of The Open Book (104 Main St., 540-878-5358), stated in a blog post dated May 14 that her store would not be among the businesses reopening. Some safety items have not yet been received for use in the store -- a plexiglass divider for the checkout counter, hand sanitizing items and single-use gloves.

On the morning of May 15, Fuller said she walked to work and “sent good vibes to everyone opening. We have all been through so much. I have received warm responses from customers and fellow business owners that we need to do what we feel is right.” She continued, “I have worked harder in the past two months than I have since opening the store. It would be easier to just reopen, but we just aren’t there yet. I don’t have what we need.”

Her neighbors Jeanne-Marie and Maximilian Tufts at The Town Duck (100 Main St.; 540-347-723) took ownership of the business from long-time owner Annette Johnson on March 7, fewer than 10 days before at-home orders went into effect. “We rely on foot traffic,” said Jeanne-Marie Tufts. “We have no ecommerce system and no plans to implement one.”

She admitted that the cancellation or postponement of all gatherings greater than 10 people has impacted the gift side of the shop. “We have a lot of gifts for weddings, graduations and can add to any tailgate party,” she said.

She has relied on FaceTime and texting to communicate with her customers. Considered an essential business because the shop sells food and wine, the store did not see any changes with Phase 1 in place.

With Phase 2, she hopes business will continue to improve. “Our customers have all been patient with the changes and the town has been responsive to our questions,” she said. “This isn’t how you want to kick off a new business or entrepreneurial adventure. Everyone is mindfully approaching the gradual reopening. We hope for big changes in the next

few weeks,” she said about the anticipated return of foot traffic.

Twelve miles north, in Marshall, The Whole Ox (8357 W. Main St.; 540-724-1650) has been closed to customers since March. But owner Amanda Luhowiak has added curbside pickup and delivery, both of which have been well received. She did not anticipate any changes with Phase 1; customers are still not permitted in the shop.

“We have welcomed new customers who are unable to find what they need at the grocery store,” said Luhowiak. “Other new customers have begun to purchase meat from us instead of the grocery store as an added safety measure.”

Luhowiak and her husband Derek decided to move their holiday giving program from the end of the year to now. “Each year we invite customers to donate to the purchase of beef for Fauquier FISH and we match donations. The response from the community to this call was overwhelming,” she said. To date, The Whole Ox has received \$4,000 in donations.

“The relationship with FISH has strengthened during the pandemic,” said Luhowiak. The food pantry and butcher have negotiated a deal for other meat items beyond the donations.

Juan Villasenor, one of the owners of El Agave in Marshall (7391 John Marshall Highway; 540-253-5084) said his restaurant is weathering the storm. Without an outdoor patio at the northern Fauquier location, owners have no choice but to limit services to curbside pickup. While El Agave offers the same menu as it did prior to the pandemic, business has declined over the past two months. Owners hope that the eased restrictions of Phase 2, tentatively scheduled for mid-June, will allow them to welcome back customers.

Happy Creek Coffee & Tea, located in The Plains (6485 Main St.; 866-447-9275), has also experienced a decline in business. Manager Mary Breeden said, “We had a lot of customers who stopped by on their way to work in the mornings and we lost that business.”

In response to the pandemic, the coffee shop increased its offerings of bulk and frozen items that customers can take home and bake. “We now carry baking mixes and continue to sell bulk coffee bags,” Breeden said. She is grateful for all her loyal customers who have been keeping the coffee shop afloat.

Meanwhile, Haymarket Bicycles Studio, which is collocated with the coffee shop, has had an increase in customers because of the at-home orders and renewed interest in fresh air and exercise, Breeden observed from her vantage point at the coffee counter.

Across the street from Happy



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

Michaela Bamstark, a barista at Happy Creek Coffee & Tea in The Plains, prepares a drink for a customer on Tuesday morning.

Creek Coffee and Haymarket Bicycles sits Crest Hill Antiques and Tea Room (6488 Main St.; 540-253-5790). Owner Sally DeLuca closed the tearoom to table service when at-home orders were implemented. Foot traffic that would browse the shop’s line of vintage jewelry and other items has decreased as a result.

“Mother’s Day is the Superbowl Sunday of tearooms,” said DeLuca, “And we needed to make sure we

were able to accommodate our customers this year. To continue offering a Mother’s Day treat, DeLuca created a special Mother’s Day Tea to Go that is available through May 31. This, combined with the take-home menu of items that would travel well, is helping the tearoom make ends meet, despite a 75% decrease in April sales from the same month last year.

See PHASE 1, page 6



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Forward Virginia

PHASE 1, from page 3

“We are nowhere near the business we had before [the pandemic] but we are doing well.” With Phase 2, she can open the retail store; she has already been selling items online. “We also have an Etsy store, which carries all of our vintage items. We are just going to ride it out,” DeLuca said.

Ivan Melson, general manager of Grioli’s Italian Bistro and Pizzeria in Bealeton (11085 Marsh Road; 540-439-3332) expressed his gratitude for the restaurant’s loyal customers, “We can’t thank people enough for supporting all the changes that have been implemented. We are busier than normal, and people are being extremely patient waiting for items from the parking lot in their cars.”

He added, “We have gotten really good at curbside and delivery and have no intentions of doing away with these services,” even when the restaurant can welcome customers inside.

Melson said, “We have a strong presence in the community. The owner never says no to a fundraiser. All that community support has come back to us in full. You reap what you sow.”

Alexandria Scadden, general manager of Morais Vineyards in Bealeton (11409 Marsh Road; 540-729-4823), is taking a slower approach to allowing customers back to the winery.

“After we closed our doors, we were only able to offer curbside pickup and delivery. The hardest part is that the vines keep growing. The farm work doesn’t stop,” Scadden said. “We have also had to deal with the late frost and drastic temperature changes.”

With Phase 1 in effect, the winery can open outdoor seating at 50% occupancy while maintaining social distancing, but the winery decided to wait one additional week before opening up its outdoor seating. “We know ev-

eryone is eager to get out and we want to welcome our customers back, but we want to be as safe as possible. This [past] weekend, we decided to wait and see how it went at other vineyards. It seems to have gone well and we are optimistic that our reopening this weekend will also go well,” she said.

The wedding component of the business has been rescheduling events. “Our bridal couples have all been great and most are rescheduling their weddings,” Scadden said. The vineyard has been able to keep all their employees during the pandemic. Morais will be open to club members by reservation for the last two weekends in May, from noon until 6 p.m. -- lawn seating only.

Brian Roeder, owner of Barrel Oak Winery & Farm Taphouse in Delaplane, said that the winery was open to the public in limited ways this weekend, which also marked the 12th anniversary of the winery’s opening. This anniversary weekend, he said, “was vastly different than any that has come before.”

Roeder explained that, in addition to the curbside pickup program already in place, the general public were offered limited access to the outdoor spaces at the winery, although this was not widely advertised. “We did not want to risk being overrun,” he said.

New systems have been put in place to manage guests, Roeder added, and customers were pleased.

Additionally, a new package available at the winery allows customers to purchase four hours in a outside reserved private space for up to 10 people. The package includes wine and beer, which can be taken home. Roeder said that the winery has already received 23 bookings.

On the weekend before Memorial Day and on the holiday itself the winery will be open from 11 a.m. to 5 p.m. for the general public – this service is dubbed “Barrel Oak Chill” – as well as for curbside pickups.

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Congratulations to the Fauquier High School Class of 2020!

Pages 11-14 ▶



Bill Semple

Bill Semple wins Ward 2 seat

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Bill Semple defeated incumbent Alec Burnett for the Warrenton Ward 2 town council seat during municipal elections held Tuesday, according to unofficial election results from the Virginia Department of Elections.

Semple earned 146 votes to Burnett's 91. Burnett is currently serving his first term on the council.

Phase 1 of reopening plan begins in Warrenton

By Coy Ferrell and Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Phase 1 of Gov. Ralph Northam's plan to lift restrictions placed on businesses and public gatherings in response to the coronavirus began May 15. After two months, restaurants were once again permitted to offer table service on site, as long as those tables were outside. Hair salons were also able to reopen, having been closed entirely by the governor in March.

Throughout the afternoon a steady stream of people took advantage of the limited reopening of table service on Main Street in Warrenton. The town closed off some parking spaces between along the street to give restaurants more room for outdoor seating.

The weather helped too, with a high temperature of almost 90 de-



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

Patrons of Molly's Irish Pub in Warrenton dine outside along Main Street on Friday afternoon.

grees and sunny skies all day. Most people were in shorts; some wore sandals.

"I wish it would stay like this forever," said Patti Knott, of Warrenton,

about the new outdoor seating arrangements. Knott was enjoying a late lunch from Black Bear Bistro with her teenage daughter, MacKenzie.

See **REOPENING**, page 2

Phase 1 of reopening plan begins in Warrenton

REOPENING, from page 1

"I'm working from home right now," Knott said, "I had everyone stop working at 2:30 p.m. and I said, 'I'm going out. Warrenton opened. See you!'"

John Tiller, of Warrenton, was joined by his girlfriend, Jolie Atkins, of Stafford, for a meal from Molly's Irish Pub. "We just drove through town and said, 'Look, Molly's is open. Park!'" he said.

"Everybody is smiling," noted Atkins.

"Even if it's limited, it's a lot of stress to be released just by getting out," added Tiller.

Bree and Phil, a couple from Long Island who declined to give their surnames, were visiting Bree's brother, who lives in Warrenton. They were also eating outside of Molly's.

"I agree with what Virginia is doing," regarding reopening, Bree said. "This is what people need to do, to get back to normalcy." She said she thinks that governors of states whose restrictions remain in place should follow Virginia's lead in lifting those restrictions.

She added that she and her partner both kept their jobs during the pandemic and wanted to support small businesses as much as they could. "Help our small businesses –



Warrenton Mayor Carter Nevill gets a haircut at Lee's Barbershop in Old Town Warrenton on Friday afternoon.

TIMES STAFF PHOTO/
ROBIN EARL

they need to be helped, they need to be opened," she said.

Bill and Nan Sterling, a retired couple from Amisville, sat under a large tent in the North Rock Shopping Center parking lot at midday on Friday.

"It's wonderful to be outside," Bill Sterling said. He has only left the house four times since February and he had to go to the hospital later that day for an appointment. "But first, I needed some pizza," he said with a smile.

The Sterlings were enjoying lunch from Ledo Pizza, across the street from the tent. Another three or four tables were occupied. The restaurant's owner had arranged for the tent to be set up so that the customers could dine on site while adhering to state guidelines, said Megan Massie, the assistant manager.

The restaurant's owner has a friend who runs an events business who provided the tent for free in

exchange for the exposure to their business. "So, it helps them, and it helps us," Massie explained.

Grace Timmerman, another Ledo employee, said the response from customers had been very positive so far. "People have driven by and they are so excited!" she said.

Another Ledo customer, Pam Ryon, of Vint Hill, was having lunch with a friend, something they did often before the pandemic began. "I have to give Ledo's credit for doing this," she said. The fact that it was one of the warmest days of the year so far helped too. "The weather is definitely a mood lifter."

Warrenton Mayor Carter Nevill and his 13-year-old son, Hugh, got their hair cut at Lee's Barbershop in Old Town Warrenton Friday afternoon. "I was thinking about letting it go long, like back in my hippie days, but when I found I had an appointment at Lee's

at 4:30, I said, 'I'm there,'" he said.

Nevill expressed optimism that the town was on the right track to reopen successfully. "I'm glad to see everyone outside on Main Street enjoying our restaurants, he said, later adding, "If we can all be patient, and give businesses the space they need to be compliant, we can move through Phase 1 and then to Phase 2," he said.

He reminded everyone: "Tip your servers twice the normal amount. They have two months of catching up to do."

Nevill credited the town's staff for working to make the first day of Phase 1 run smoothly, mentioning Town Manager Brandie Schaeffer, Director of Community Development Frank Cassidy specifically, along with Experience Old Town Warrenton Executive Director Charity Furness.

"They've been working non-stop. And we have the farmers market tomorrow too. The amount of dedication they have to this town is just amazing," he said of the trio.

Schaeffer said of the reopening initiative, "I'm excited to see how well this is working. The businesses were innovative in creating safe spaces for outdoor dining from Main Street to the bypass."

She concluded, "Partnering with our businesses on creative solutions is something I always strive to do, and I'm glad we are making it happen through this challenge."



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Congratulations to the Liberty High School Class of 2020!

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During the pandemic, the emergency never ends for Fauquier Hospital employees



COURTESY PHOTO

Glen Cordell passed away May 10 at the age of 79.

Saying goodbye

Beloved coach and father of three succumbs to COVID-19

By Robin Earl

TIMES STAFF WRITER

Only 17 people were at Moser Funeral home in Warrenton on May 15 to attend the funeral of Milford "Glen" Cordell of Casanova. If it wasn't for COVID-19, his wife Carol believes there would have been more than 200 attending. Cordell coached youth sports in Vienna for more than 40 years and was inducted into the Vienna Baseball Hall of Fame and the Washington Home Plate Club for his contributions to the game.

Cordell had been a resident of the memory care unit at The Wellington at Lake Manassas in Gainesville for the last year, after suffering two strokes. He first showed symptoms of COVID-19 on May 3 and died exactly one week later.

Carol Cordell said, "On Sunday [May 3], he had a slight fever and his oxygen levels were dropping, but he was eating and doing well, they told me. After a day or two, his fever went up to 104 and his oxygen levels kept dropping. They took him to Heathcote [Haymarket Medical Center], but ... they transferred him to Prince William [Novant Health UVA Prince William Medical Center]. He died on May 10."

See CORDELL, page 4

By Christopher Connell
PIEDMONT JOURNALISM FOUNDATION

Hospitals practice regularly for disasters or disease outbreaks that bring a flood of patients to their doors. But those drills are predicated on the assumption that it's temporary – that the dire event will soon pass and operations return to normal.

The coronavirus pandemic is not like that.

"The only thing we didn't practice for is that this isn't going away anytime soon," said Fauquier Health CEO Chad Melton. "Everyone fully expects that 12 to 18 months from now, we're still going to be dealing with COVID-19."

That will mean the extra precautions and screening of those who come to Fauquier Hospital and the adjacent long-term care facility, Fauquier Health Rehabilitation & Nursing Center, will be the new normal.

To date, Fauquier Health has identified seven employees who have tested positive for COVID-19. In early April,



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

From the Fauquier Health Catheterization Lab: Darryn Neujahr, Cardiac Cath Lab tech, Shannon Vooyo, RN, Erin Steele, RN, Staff Development and Bridget Loeb, RN, Radiology Special Procedures.

three employees were identified; Fauquier Health worked with the Virginia Department of Health to notify and test all exposed staff members who came into contact with these individuals and they self-isolated while waiting for test results. At that time, all tested negative for COVID-19.

Four more employees have tested positive since then, and the same procedures were followed. Sarah Cabbage, Fauquier Health spokeswoman said that if testing is indicated, it is done in accordance with VDH and CDC guidelines.

See HOSPITAL, page 8



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Kathleen Caron was one of 70 volunteers who placed flags by the graves of fallen soldiers at the Warrenton Cemetery May 16th.

Volunteers honor fallen veterans with flags - See Page 2

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Saying goodbye

CORDELL, from page 1

Cordell hadn't seen her husband -- except through a window of his room at The Wellington -- for two months. "I would go to see him every day, but when I went there on March 5, the door was locked. They had everything locked down. Only staff members were allowed in. They wouldn't even let deliveries in."

She said she visited her husband once a week after that and was able to see him through a window. "They would open the window a couple of inches so I could talk to him," she said.

Cordell said that she understands that her husband caught the virus from a woman in the memory care unit who had symptoms of COVID-19. "She and Glen died the same day," said Cordell.

Beth Kolnok, corporate director of communications and public relations for The Wellington, on Tuesday provided an update on the current situation in the memory unit: "Our memory care unit currently has 10 residents. All were tested on or before May 14 and we are currently caring for three residents who have tested positive for the virus. They are asymptomatic and we hope to clear them soon."

Cordell said she has not been able to reach anyone at Wellington to arrange to pick up her husband's belongings. "They could just put everything outside and I'd pick it up," she offered.

The Cordells moved to Casanova four years ago from Vienna. "I love it here. My daughter said that Glen told her he was glad we moved out here. He said when he was gone, I would be safe among the kind people in Casanova. He always said he wanted to go before me."

Although the two strokes had left her husband with significant brain damage, Cordell remembered, "Every time I'd visit, he'd tell me he loved me. The last time I was there he said, 'Little Carol, I loved her so much.'"

Carol Cordell said she is feeling "OK." She may drive down to a beach house in Myrtle Beach, but says she is very careful about avoiding exposure to COVID-19. "I haven't been in a grocery store for two months. My kids shop for me." Cordell has a daughter, Kimberly Ashley, who lives in Fairfax, a son Gary, in Purcellville and another son, Gregory, in Haymarket. She also has six grandchildren. "They all help," she said.

Although Carol Cordell was not able to see her husband before he passed away, her son Greg and his wife Michelle were able to be with him before he died. "They felt that the risk would be too high for me to see him, but Greg and Michelle got all suited up and were able to say goodbye," said Carol Cordell.

Greg Cordell is a deputy sheriff in Fairfax and his wife Michelle works for Giant. He explained, "We are both out and exposed every day, but Mom was too high-risk."

Michelle Cordell got the call May 9 from Prince William Hospital asking if there was someone who wanted to come. Greg Cordell said, "She called me and said, 'Meet me at the hospital right away so we can say goodbye to your dad.'"

He remembered, "They met us in the lobby and gave us plastic gowns, N95 masks, a face shield and gloves. They told us there was nothing more they could do for my dad and they were going to lose him."

Greg Cordell said he is grateful he was able to see his father again. "It really helped me, but I felt guilty that my mom and brother and sister didn't have the opportunity. ... We hadn't seen him for three months. I was afraid he was confused. My mom had never left his side for 50 years. I didn't want him to think we'd abandoned him."

He said that his father wasn't on a ventilator. "He looked comfortable, peaceful." Greg Cordell said his father was asleep, but he told him his family hadn't abandoned him, that they loved him.

Greg Corbell said his dad had suffered from diabetes and leukemia. "He hadn't been himself for a year, since he had the two strokes."

"I told him it was OK to rest and we knew he'd be in a better place."

Glen Cordell died the next day at the age of 79. He was an outdoorsman who loved boating, fishing and gardening, and is remembered fondly by those who knew him, said his wife.

Greg Cordell said his father's father was an alcoholic. "But I never saw my dad take a drink. He worked three jobs so that we would have everything we needed. He broke that chain.

"When we were younger, all the kids wanted to be on his baseball and football teams. He had an amazing work ethic. I don't know how he found time to work three jobs, and coach all those teams. And he loved his 1/4 acre garden."

Grandson Darien Ashley wrote, "My grandfather was a timeless soul. The type of man that communities have depended upon since time immemorial. His archetype is that of the unconditionally affectionate patriarch who extends his nurturing tenderness to all who surround him.

"... As a youth, nothing injected the world with mystery like wondering the narrow rows of my grandfather's garden. ... A man is made in his actions, what he continually does, he becomes. It is through this imitation of my grandfather's character that his presence will continue to persist in this realm as his spirit moves to the next."

Glen Cordell was buried at Brightview Cemetery May 15, after an hour-long viewing at Moser. His wife is glad they were able to hold a funeral. "I was glad to be able to see him one last time. He looked so peaceful and seemed 30 years younger. It was good for me to be able to get closure."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

Nursing home staff goes extra mile to keep residents safe and engaged

By Robin Earl

TIMES STAFF WRITER

On bingo days at the Fauquier Health Rehabilitation & Nursing Center in Warrenton, nursing home residents sit in the doorways of their rooms facing into the hallway, four to a group, while a staff member calls out the numbers. “That way they can interact with other residents and still stay safe,” said Katy Reeves, FHRNC administrator. The residents use disposable paper bingo cards. “Bingo is very popular,” even while social distancing, said Reeves.

Residents used to have group activities and eat meals together, but since the COVID-19 pandemic hit, staff members take activities to them. In Virginia, 190 outbreaks have occurred in long-term care facilities, resulting in 4,451 cases and 691 deaths.

FHRNC is licensed for 113 beds, but currently has 80 residents – eight are temporary rehabilitation patients and 72 are permanent residents.

Reeves said, “It’s definitely not business as usual, but residents are not isolated in their rooms. When they do come out into the hallway, they must wear cloth masks ... It can be a challenge,” admitted Reeves. “They don’t like wearing the masks, but staff are great about reminding them to put them back on.”

Meals are brought by staff members to each resident’s room. “It takes more time, but staff want to make sure everyone is eating and drinking and doing OK.”

Between 2 and 3 p.m. every day, residents have the option to “drive-thru” the dining room and pick up a snack – a meat roll up, some fruit or ice cream. “Residents know that they can come to the dining room, but for those who don’t want to, our staff will take them something. One resident loves Nutter Butter cookies. We make sure she gets them,” Reeves said.

The administrator is very much aware that her residents are vulnerable to the coronavirus. The average age of FHRNC residents is 89, and one resident is 102. Their health is compromised; many suffer from comorbidities like chronic obstructive

pulmonary disease or diabetes. They are frailer and generally, more at risk.

“We took COVID very seriously from the beginning,” Reeves said. During the first week in March, visitors were limited to immediate family only, but that only lasted a couple of days before all visitors were banned. Since April 6, staff members have been wearing surgical masks when they are in the building.

It is common for caregivers to work at more than one facility, but Reeves said that staff members work only at FHRNC. “We asked everybody, until this is over, where do you want to work?”

On April 6, Hospice began using telehealth to check on their patients.

Volunteers – including pet therapy volunteers -- have been barred from FHRNC for two months now. Deliveries are left at the back door and wiped down before they are allowed into the building.

Families used to have the option of doing laundry for their loved ones, but employees are now taking care of washing residents’ clothing, as well as their masks.

FHRNC has its own portable X-ray machine, so if there is a need, a medical imaging specialist can come down from the hospital, so the patient does not have to leave the building.

Reeves said she has not had staffers out sick, and no one – staff or resident – has tested positive for COVID-19. “We are fortunate that we have such a committed staff. No one has said they are scared to come in. They come in and work, then go home to their families.”

Reeves said that the staff as a whole has not been tested, but no



COURTESY PHOTOS

FHRNC staff members are required to wear a mask whenever they are in the nursing home.

one has displayed symptoms. When residents meet certain criteria, they have been tested for the disease. Temperatures are taken, oxygen levels and heart rates are checked regularly, and lungs are screened for signs of illness.

New residents are being accepted still, but not if they have tested positive or are awaiting results.

In addition to caring for her residents’ physical needs, Reeves and her staff recognize that the no-visitor policy and the curtailing of group activities can be difficult on residents – and on their families. “We make sure they stay engaged, upbeat and don’t feel isolated or depressed. Going forward, keeping that level of engagement is going to be critical.”

FHRNC used to have gatherings to share the news of the day. Now, the Daily Chronicle is printed and passed out to every resident in their room. “A staff member brings it to each resident and reads it to them if they need help. It’s very popular,” Reeves said.

Every resident has a “buddy,” a staff member who makes sure to stop in and check on them several times a week. “Since they can’t have visits from family members, we make sure they have someone to talk to,” said Reeves.

FHRNC has several tablets set

up with Skype, Google Duo and FaceTime, so families can keep in touch with their loved ones. “We set up times every week when families can reserve time for a video chat.” On Mother’s Day, for instance, staff was busy assisting with video calls. Between 60 and 65% of residents at FHRNC are women.

Reeves said, “We had one resident who celebrated her 100th birthday with us. She FaceTimed with her family and they sang ‘Happy Birthday.’ When she looked at the tablet and saw her daughter and granddaughter, her face just lit up.”

One service the residents miss, said Reeves, is the beautician coming in once a week. She said, “Several of our staff members got together ... and once a week offer shampoos and styling. We don’t color or perm, but there’s nothing like a spa day to make you feel better!”

Reeves has no plans to lift restrictions any time soon. “We’ve received great messages back from families. It’s hard on them, but they understand.”

Reeves said, “Every Friday I communicate with families. I keep them abreast of what’s happening with COVID infections and Centers for Disease Control regulations. I explain what we’re doing. I include pictures of their loved ones and share milestones. This is stressful on everyone. Keeping the lines of communication open helps.”

She continued, “Our families have been unbelievably supportive, sending sandwiches and pizza or cookies. They’ve sent cards, emails and letters. They appreciate what we’re doing and want to say thank you.”

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com



FHRNC resident Anna Walrad celebrated her 100th birthday with her family – via FaceTime.

Seniors in long-term care facilities receive donated face masks

Thanks to donations from community members, homemade cloth face masks have been provided for the residents of the Villa at Suffield Meadows assisted living facility and the Fauquier Health Rehabilitation & Nursing Center.

Fauquier Health has been accepting donations of unused and handmade medical and protective supplies and equipment since late March, in recognition of the increased need for personal protective equipment due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

Katy Reeves, administrator of FHRNC on Hospital Hill in Warrenton, requested some of the masks for the senior residents of the nursing home. The Centers for Disease

Control recommends that residents of long-term care facilities wear cloth face coverings when they are outside of their rooms or when they are around others. Reeves said, “FHRNC has been very proactive about initiating strategies to keep our residents as protected as possible. Being able to access supplies that had been donated and vetted as meeting standards was great!”

A supply of hand-sewn masks was also sent to the Villa at Suffield Meadows. The masks have a variety of patterns and are wildly popular with the residents, according to Sarah Pearson, administrator of the Villa. She said, “The residents at the Villa at Suffield Meadows have worn their

masks proudly throughout the community and want to do their part to stop the spread of the virus. The residents enjoyed being able to choose from a variety of fun patterns and types of masks. There has been such an outpouring from the community and that makes us feel supported.”

The health system has received PPE donations from Greenville Elementary School, the Fauquier County School Board, Fauquier County Parks and Recreation, Habitat for Humanity, Fauquier Masks, Spring Garden Foundation, Wolfrom & Co., Virginia Systems & Technology, Aerotog, Kenmore Envelope Company, Masks4Humanity and local churches.



COURTESY PHOTO

Residents of FHRNC wear masks whenever they leave their rooms.

Local postal carriers deliver extra care during pandemic

Parcel volume is up 60% to 80%

By Anna Hovey

SPECIAL TO THE FAUQUIER TIMES

As streets emptied at the onset of the pandemic, inside the elegant brick post office in Warrenton, head clerk Joe North said it looked “like Christmas time.” Workers there have been processing an unprecedented volume of packages since the COVID-19 restrictions began.

In The Plains, Postmaster Todd Glascock said the number of parcels has increased by more than 100% since the pandemic began in March.

And in Marshall, Postmaster Stephanie Lane said that even today, nearly five months later and in the dead of summer, it feels like the peak holiday season. Usually at this time of the year, Marshall handles 450 to 700 packages a day, but it processed a record 1,385 parcels in one day recently, she said.

Lane said that Marshall – like other post offices around the county -- has installed protective barriers between patrons and employees as well as tape on the floor to encourage social distancing. Patrons also are required to wear masks.

She said some customers have donated masks, hand sanitizer and gloves, as well as doughnuts and cakes to show their appreciation. “Now we see across the board how effective taking these measures [are], and the loyalty and appreciation of our customers is incomparable,” Lane said. “It’s definitely brought the community together.”

Nationally, the volume of parcels the U.S. Postal Service says it handles is 60 to 80% higher than last

year.

Local postmasters said that at the beginning of the pandemic, they didn’t know what to expect.

“We had definitely more foot traffic. We expected the opposite,” Lane said. “We have seen more of our customers come out to mail essential items to family and friends who need them but are unable to get them where they reside.”

From distributing necessary items to being a comforting, familiar face to locals, mail carriers and postal clerks like those in Fauquier are essential to life and commerce in small rural communities. During the pandemic, they have become more necessary than ever, agreed residents and postmasters.

Postal carriers are helping out more vulnerable, house-bound customers with post office boxes by giving mail carriers their packages to bring to their homes. North, in Warrenton, has also been sending parcels with friends and family.

“As long as people are continuing to use their local post office, that’s supporting a local business.”

Karen Bowles

“It’s just a handful of people, but everybody tries to help one another

out, whether it’s picking up mail or going to the grocery store or just lending some sort of support,” said Karen Bowles, a clerk at the tiny Hume post office.

Glascock said some residents in The Plains whose parents are unwell or elderly ask postal clerks to come outside to load packages into their cars. Older customers with postal boxes can also request home deliveries. Though this isn’t a service the post office typically provides, Glascock said they’re willing to do it during the pandemic.



PHOTO BY ANNA HOVEY

Head clerk Joe North surveys the Warrenton Post Office lobby from behind the counter’s protective barrier.

President Donald Trump wants to privatize the postal service, which he asserts is not as efficient as a private company would be. For now, he has told the agency it must quadruple the price for mailing packages and has threatened to hold up a \$10 billion Treasury Department loan meant to help it survive temporarily.

Recent cost-cutting measures have led to delays in delivery time, postal officials and postal unions have said. Trump has also asserted without evidence that the expected surge in mail-in ballots this presidential election will result in widespread fraud. Most state and local election registers disagree, saying they are confident that mail-in ballots are secure. Some cities have set up mailboxes designated for ballots-only and will employ monitors to oversee the collection process.

The increase in online shopping has given a financial boost to the agency, which has been plagued for more than a decade by large employee health care costs, according to Congressional investigators.

But there’s also been a significant decrease in first class and advertising mail, said John McHugh, chairman of the Package Coalition, an industry group of online retailers.

“The COVID-19 pandemic has taken a big bite out of the Postal Service,” McHugh said in an interview.

The more than 600,000, mostly unionized postal workers deliver the

mail to 160 million residences six days a week.

In Hume, clerk Bowles said people seem to be going out of their way to give their shipping business to the local post offices instead of to a commercial carrier.

“As long as people are continuing to use their local post office, that’s supporting a local business,” she said.

Customers also are buying more stamps to send and receive letters to those they can’t see in person while stay-at-home orders are in place, she said.

Simon Shrock, 83, frequently sends out books and cards from the Catlett post office. But when the virus hit, his family became concerned about his trips there. Catlett

Postmaster Allay Whitter agreed to serve Shrock outside from his car, so he doesn’t have to go inside and risk exposure to the virus, Shrock said.

In a letter to the editor of the *Fauquier Times*, Shrock called Whitter’s kindness “a touch of God’s grace.”

The appreciation goes both ways. “Current financial issues notwithstanding,” said Bowles in Hume, “there’s a good connection with our community.”

Anna Hovey is a summer intern from the University of Maryland’s journalism school. Her internship was made possible by the Piedmont Journalism Foundation and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation.



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Postmaster Stephanie Lane stands outside of the Marshall Post Office where she works.

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**A BIG BASS IN A
SMALL POND:
ANGLER TESTS FAUQUIER
COUNTY WATERS.
SPORTS, PAGE 13**



Young athletes return to the field after spring competitions canceled

By Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Even in the middle of a pandemic, sometimes baseball games are still canceled for old-fashioned reasons.

Dark clouds loomed on the horizon as a Little League scrimmage between the “Nationals” and the “Orioles” commenced Thursday evening in Vint Hill. The uniforms were mismatched and unofficial, and the kids were 10 to 12 years old. About an hour into the game the thunder started, followed shortly by rain, ending the game after only a few innings.

The scrimmage was part of a free, informal summer league organized by Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League after its spring season – usually the highlight of the baseball cal-



Channing Gonzalez, 10, waits on deck during a Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League scrimmage in Vint Hill on Thursday.

endar - was canceled entirely as the novel coronavirus pandemic spread to Virginia in March.

Canceling the spring season was “heartbreaking,” said league president Bryan Kniceley, and the sum-

mer “sandlot” league was a way to get kids back out on the field, even if it wasn’t baseball as usual.

Families didn’t have to pay any registration fees for the summer league, which began in late June and will end this weekend. If the games had umpires, they were volunteers. Technically, no one kept score. (In reality, of course, almost every player and coach knows the score at any given moment.) No new uniforms were distributed to players.

“Everybody has been very supportive [of the summer league]. We got a lot of positive feedback,” Kniceley said.

The local Little League is one of several youth sports organizations cautiously resuming practices and

See **YOUNG ATHLETES**, page 4

Young athletes return to the field after spring competitions canceled

YOUNG ATHLETES, from page 1

competitions as the fall season – usually a busy time for youth sports – approaches. To use fields owned by the Fauquier County Department of Parks and Recreation, like the one in Vint Hill, each league or team – some travel organizations applied individually – had to submit a return-to-play plan to the department.

“Groups were asked to consider social distancing in dugouts and team benches, group size restrictions, no shared equipment, and the need for an additional waiver related to COVID,” explained Thomas Schoenauer, the parks department’s superintendent. “The department also asked each group to identify a designated COVID-19 league representative who would be the point of contact for questions and enforcement.”

As of Friday, the parks department had approved return-to-play plans from four leagues: Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League, Warrenton Youth Sports Club, Fauquier County Soccer Club and Fauquier Youth Football. Each league has a plan for fall competitions beginning in August or September. Six travel baseball organizations (who compete in several leagues) also have approved plans in place to use county fields, along with one travel lacrosse organization.



A bottle of hand sanitizer sits in the dugout along with other equipment during a Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League scrimmage in Vint Hill on Thursday.

TIMES STAFF
PHOTO/COY
FERRELL

“Not all sports have plans to return, so our fields are at about 75% capacity heading into the fall,” he explained.

“At this time, we haven’t had any major issues with approved groups not following their plans,” Schoenauer said. “It has more been groups walking on to the fields not being aware of our protocols, who we educate and ask to follow all necessary items to properly schedule field use.”

The 16-point Little League plan, for instance, forbids the sharing of equipment among players and asks players, coaches and spectators to maintain 10 feet of separation whenever possible. Enclosed dugouts are off-limits entirely. For fields with fenced dugouts, like the one in Vint Hill, players are encouraged not to congregate, instead spreading out nearby or sitting with their families between innings. The frequent use

of hand sanitizer is encouraged.

Even with the restrictions, Thursday’s scrimmage mostly looked like a normal evening at the ballfield. The effects of the pandemic were only noticeable upon close inspection: a bottle of hand sanitizer on the dugout bench, the lack of the usual congratulatory high-fives between innings. Kids and parents alike were just happy there was something fun to anticipate after schools and other activities had been shuttered for so long.

“As soon as they said they were doing [a summer league], we signed up,” said Kiley Gonzalez, of Bealeton, as her son Channing, 10, was at bat during Thursday’s scrimmage. “A lot of the kids really missed this.”

One of Channing’s coaches, Mike See **YOUNG ATHLETES**, page 5

Fauquier Central Sports Complex to open Aug. 15

The long-awaited Fauquier County Central Sports Complex will open for practices and games Aug. 15, according to Thomas Schoenauer, the parks and recreation superintendent. The complex is located at the intersection of Meetze and Old Auburn Roads outside Warrenton, adjacent to the Fauquier County Fairgrounds.

Currently, only Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League has confirmed its field-use schedule for the fall, but other leagues may finalize their schedules soon, Schoenauer added.

The 72-acre complex consists of one full-size artificial turf field, five baseball-softball fields, five Bermuda grass rectangular fields and a walking and equestrian trail. Permanent restrooms, irrigation systems and field lighting are planned to be added in the next phases of construction.

To date, the \$13.2 million project has been funded by \$8.8 million in debt issued by the county; the remainder has been paid for by direct county funding and by grants from the Land and Water Conservation Fund and Virginia Department of Transportation.

YOUNG ATHLETES, from page 4

King, of New Baltimore, said, "I think it makes the world feel a little bit back to normal. I think people are looking at this as salvation, honestly, from a discombobulated world." He added that, since the spring season was canceled, "I think that there will be a little bit more emphasis put on the fall."

King's 10-year-old son, Dawson, lit up when considering how the summer league affected his life after so many other activities were canceled. "It really helped with my boredom," he said.

"There was so much boredom." He will attend Highland School in the fall; he is most looking forward to seeing his friends again.

Going into the fall season, which will have the same COVID restrictions in place but follow a more traditional structure - with paid umpires, uniforms and scorebooks - Knicely said that registration numbers are down compared to last year. "I'm sure most parents have their focus on what they are doing for school," he said. But, he added, "We hope that people look to us, kind of see us as kind of an outlet for their child."

Recreation league registration information

Greater Fauquier Baseball Little League fall season registration is currently open and ends Aug. 17. Children ages 4 to 16 can participate. The season will begin Aug. 24. More information is available at gfbll.com.

Warrenton Youth Sports Club, which sponsors leagues for several sports, will hold activities outdoors this fall. Registration for fall recreational volleyball is currently open for ages 6 to 18; practices and games will be held at the outdoor courts at Athey Sports Complex. Recreational soccer and basketball teams are limited to practices currently. WYSC

travel teams are not necessarily under the same restrictions. More information is available at wysc.org.

Fauquier County Soccer Club recreational league registration is currently open and ends Aug. 24. Children ages 2 to 18 can participate. Games begin Sept. 8. Registration for the organization's travel teams is handled separately. More information is available at fcsc.org.

Fauquier Youth Football has postponed its tackle football season until spring and is instead hosting a seven-on-seven non-contact football league this fall. Children ages 6 to 18 can participate. Cheerleading for ages 6 to 13 will also be offered this fall. More information is available at fauqueryouthfootball.com.

Warrenton throws Rev. Winter a birthday parade



PHOTO BY CARSON MCRAE/MCRAE VISUAL MEDIA

Steve Ross and Roy Crane of the Warrenton Fire Department stopped by to visit with their friend the Rev. Dick Winter, with whom they served “back in the day.”

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Rev. Dick Winter was lauded by friends and family on Thursday, Aug. 21, as he celebrated his 98th birthday. The pandemic prevented a traditional party, but that didn't stop his admirers from rolling past his house, honking and cheering all the way.

Bright and shiny trucks from the Warrenton Fire Department were there, as were numerous police vehicles and dozens of friends who wanted to make sure his birthday was happy.

Winter served as pastor of the Warrenton Presbyterian Church from 1951 until 1987. He became active in the community early on, serving as a volunteer fireman and as chaplain of the Warrenton Volunteer

See **WINTERS**, page 11

45 ‘active’ cases of COVID-19 at Warrenton nursing home

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Forty-five people who live or work at Warrenton's Brookside Nursing and Rehab Center are actively positive for COVID-19 as of Tuesday morning – 35 current residents and 10 employees, according to Beverly Greene, administrator of the facility. The Virginia Department of Health was reporting Tuesday that a total of 48 cases have been associated with the outbreak.

Greene said that three people have been hospitalized; one has returned to Brookside and two are

See **NURSING HOME**, page 2

Warrenton throws Rev. Winter a birthday parade

WINTERS, from page 1

Fire Department. The reverend's son, Tom Winter, said that his father was an active volunteer firefighter for decades and was frequently the first to respond, since his church was right next to the firehouse on Main Street.

Winter has been a Rotarian for 65 years, according to fellow Rotarian Amelia Stansell.

At Fauquier Hospital, Winter participated in the dedication of the hospital in 1954 and at the groundbreaking for the hospital expansion in 1976. Tom Winter said he remembered many evenings that his father "had to 'run up to the hospital,' and it was not always for one of his church members." For his years of service, he was hon-



The Rev. Dick Winter and Lytisha Mann wave to the socially distanced crowds of well-wishers.

ored as the Top of the Tree honoree at Fauquier Hospital in 2011.

Tom Winter said, "I always saw him as giving of himself in service to others, which I think is reflected from his time in the Marines, as a pastor, Rotarian, fireman, community participant and spouse and parent. His parents were missionaries in the 1920s and I think that laid the groundwork."

Winter was married to Mary Ruth Winter for 31 years; she died in 1976. He then married Helen Hoffman; they were also married for 31 years until she passed away in 2012. The reverend has five children, 24 grandchildren and many great-grandchildren.

Tom Winter explained, "Upon retirement, after a period of laying low, he was named pastor emeritus and continued to officiate at weddings, baptisms and funerals for families that had a long connection with him, as long as it wasn't interfering with the new pastor at the church."

Tom Winter and his siblings threw their dad a birthday party at Fauquier Hospital's Bistro on the Hill last year, but really wanted to do something special for his 98th.

He said, "I had several people that said they missed seeing my dad ... When I looked at the photo of my dad with all five children at last year's gathering and I knew that the others would not be able to be here, I started developing the plan. I reached out to the church, the Rotary Club and the fire company to see if they would be interested.



PHOTOS BY CARSON MCRAE/MCRAE VISUAL MEDIA
Fire trucks, police vehicles and about 50 cars rolled by Aug. 20 to wish the Rev. Dick Winter a happy birthday.

They were all very enthusiastic and immediately started spreading the word."

Tom Winter said that the parade was a "partial" surprise. "In order to get him to agree to come out and have a seat, we told him that the fire company wanted to drive by in 'his' truck, like a parade. He did not know that we had reached out to the other groups, nor did we know that the fire company would bring five units. They had also reached out on my behalf to get the police and sheriff included. He loved it!"

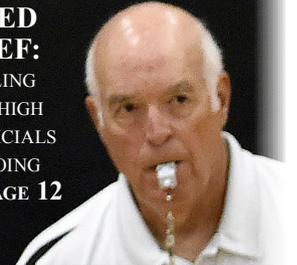
Winter's son assured that his father "is in amazing health for a 98-year-old that played hard -- particularly in tennis (though his past included football and pole-vaulting in college) ... And he has a pacemaker, so his body has been through a lot. So, each birthday we get to celebrate with him is a blessing for us."

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WE NEED YOU, REF:
A DWINDLING SUPPLY OF HIGH SCHOOL OFFICIALS IS AN ONGOING CONCERN. **PAGE 12**



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

A double burger with an order of cheese curds.

Graze to Griddle brings grass-fed burgers to Warrenton

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Fauquier has already had a taste of Graze to Griddle hamburgers, and Culpeper food truck owner Corey Ritchie is betting that residents want more.

Beginning Sept. 15, Ritchie and his crew will be selling burgers from 156 Alexandria Pike – from a trailer in the parking lot of Power Trucks USA, across from Eva Walker Park in Warrenton. Although the trailer will be at that location for lunch Monday through Saturday (11 a.m. to 2 p.m.), it may be elsewhere for dinner (4 to 8 p.m.). It's a mobile enterprise, so it has the flexibility to go where the customers are. "It's a trailer on wheels. I'll tow it in every day."

See **BURGERS**, page 4

Behind the scenes, Mike Potter helps guide Warrenton government through pandemic

By Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Mike Potter was working as much as 70 hours a week for a beer distribution company when he and his wife welcomed a baby to the family. Their child was born prematurely, and though he had a good job – he had started as a driver with the company and worked his way up to a managerial position – his time in the neonatal intensive care unit with his wife and newborn spurred him to explore a more stable career path.

"Once we got out of the hospital, I really just started jumping headfirst into it, furthering my education," the soft-spoken 37-year-old said.

He had never really considered going to college, he said, but the Fauquier County native had always had an interest in emergency management – the behind-the-scenes logistics that make or break a government's response to a crisis. Several years on from that decision, he now leads the town of Warrenton's response to a global pandemic.

In addition to his day job, Potter is continuing his two decades of service as a volunteer firefighter in Remington. He is a junior at Liberty University, where he is pursuing a degree in fire management, and one class away from completing the Federal Emergency Management Agency's National Emergency Management Basic Academy. (His final class this spring was, ironically, postponed due to the pandemic.)

In his capacity as interim emergency services coordinator with the town, Potter has since March been responsible for maintaining the town's stock of personal protective equipment and cleaning



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

Mike Potter is the interim emergency services coordinator for the town of Warrenton.

supplies, creating processes for sanitizing town-owned buildings, training staff members on new procedures and standards and generally ensuring the town can continue to deliver services during a once-in-a-lifetime situation.

See **POTTER**, page 7

Work behind the scenes guides Warrenton government

POTTER, from page 1

Potter has worked for the town since 2018 in the public utilities department; he was a maintenance technician before the pandemic. “Then the whole COVID thing started, and I said, ‘Hey, if you need any help, let me know,’” he recollected. “And that’s pretty much how I got to where I am today.”

Warrenton Town Manager Brandie Schaeffer wrote to town council members about Potter last week. “I can’t tell you enough how great of a job he is doing for our town. As you know, he stepped in during COVID-19 in March just offering to help; he has gone above and beyond each step of the way. I could not have gotten through this time without him. He is an integral part of our team here at town hall and is even stepping in to help with CARES Act ... He is also helping in overall risk management with Virginia Occupational Safety and Health laws coming at us from Richmond.”

“My big thing is efficiency,” Potter said. “How can we do processes as efficiently and effectively as possible?” His work usually goes unnoticed, and that’s how he knows things are going smoothly. “It’s the kind of thing where, if it doesn’t work, then you’re in deep water,” he said of his efforts to help coordinate a Virginia Department of Health free testing event in June.

The testing day involved lots of moving parts – from recruiting and

training volunteers to making adjustments when a big crowd showed up, to working with representatives from the health department to make sure all the I’s were dotted and the T’s crossed.

When the Warrenton Aquatic and Recreation Facility reopened, Potter devised a simple system for indicating what gym equipment needs to be sanitized – a green sticker means the equipment has been cleaned and a red sticker means it has not been cleaned.

This was just one of the many considerations for reopening the recreation center in a responsible manner, Potter said. He and other members of staff rearranged the interior spaces to create physical distance among guests and ensured the building was equipped with enough cleaning supplies. The weight of the responsibility is not lost on Potter. “The last thing you want to do is open and then be responsible for an outbreak,” he said.

Especially early in the pandemic, maintaining the town’s stock of personal protective equipment and cleaning supplies proved difficult, as the global demand for that equipment outpaced the supply chain.

With some ingenuity, Potter and other members of town staff were able to overcome the supply chain issues. “One thing we learned is that suppliers often updated their website at night,” he said. “So, through a lot of time during the night at home, we were able to get our orders in before

they ran out of stock the next day.”

The supply chain issues have been mostly resolved, he said. When the novel coronavirus outbreak at Brookside Rehab and Nursing Center began, he coordinated with the county government at the health department to provide the facility with isolation gowns until they could get their supply chain established.

It’s not all order forms and procedure manuals, though – much of Potter’s role is to interact with employees to make sure they are properly trained, and their needs are met. When the state implemented new safety standards for employers in July, for instance, Potter was responsible for scheduling and training the town’s workers. He got feedback from employees that some of the cleaning products the town was using had a strong fragrance that was

causing a reaction in some people; he found an alternative.

When the town first started requiring town employees to wear masks this summer, he said, some employees were reluctant. He reached out to staff members to listen to their concerns. “You’re not wearing it for your ideology,” he said, “You’re wearing it for everyone else. Everything seems to be going back to normal, but you have to be in the mindset that everyone is a potential carrier [of the virus].”

When the WARF was set to reopen, some employees were concerned about the health risk to themselves. “So, I reached out to them and asked, ‘What would make you feel safe?’” he said, “Which is something I’ve done through almost every department.”

Reach Coy Ferrell at cferrell@fauquier.com

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Thoughts on World War II and COVID-19

“Keep calm and carry on.”

WINSTON S. CHURCHILL

By Nancy Burch

SPECIAL TO THE FAUQUIER TIMES

Recently I was invited to reflect on some of my World War II experiences in London, because it was thought that those experiences might be helpful for us during this present COVID-19 crisis. We Brits are known for our “stiff upper lip” and our incredible ability to cope calmly even when our backs are against the wall.

Just a little of my background -- I was in my seventh year when war was declared in 1939 and our family lived about 17 miles from the center of London, in the county of Kent, one of the hardest hit regions by the blitz and buzz-bombs (V-1 rockets). Biggin Hill, home of the Royal Air Force Spitfires flown in the Battle of Britain, was just about 10 miles from our home -- so we were in the thick of it.

Schooling was constantly interrupted during the daylight bombing, and when the siren sounded, we would walk, in an orderly fashion, to the above-ground air raid shelter, made of reinforced concrete, to continue our lessons. Sometimes there was no electricity, and those shelters were scary places!

My sister and I were not evacuated until the end of August 1944, shortly after Hitler unleashed his V-2 rockets, at which time our parents decided we should go, with our maternal grandparents, to stay with our great aunts in Scotland. We returned from Scotland the following April, having completed a full term of education in Scotland.

Many of you will be totally unaware of the fact that food and other rationing in the UK did not officially end until 1952 -- in other words, we were

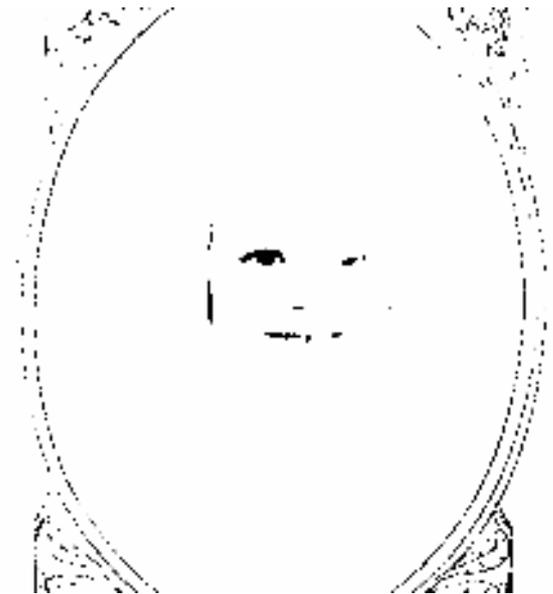


PHOTO BY ROBIN EARL

Nancy Burch at her home in Warrenton, with her best friend.

subject to rationing for 13 years -- those were my real formative years. It was a learning experience which has stood me in good stead throughout my life. I think I learned how to economize and make do. Another of the WWII slogans was “Make do -- and mend,” which is exactly what we did -- we mended our clothes and shoes, we repaired all sorts of household items -- it was definitely not a “throw away” society.

Sometimes we went barefoot, but there did come a time when we were introduced to Lancashire



COURTESY PHOTO

Nancy Burch, as a schoolgirl in England.

clogs -- thick, wooden-soled shoes; something like a metal horseshoe was attached to the soles. They were traditionally worn by factory workers in the north of England. They never wore out!

Food was severely rationed -- we had about 8 ounces of meat per week, for four people. We had a slightly smaller ration amount of butter, margarine and cheese. Eggs, milk, fish and all other grocery items, as well as vegetables and fruit were also severely rationed, or non-existent. Not one scrap of butter or margarine was left on the paper wrappers -- which were assiduously scraped to be sure every piece was garnered. (To this day, I still scrape my butter paper wrappings!)

See **BURCH**, page 10

Thoughts on World War II and COVID-19

BURCH, from page 9

Drippings from the small piece of meat, which was generally roasted on Sunday, were carefully collected because, when cooled, they could be spread on bread to make "bread and dripping sandwiches" later in the week. Our meat was supplemented by "offal" -- that is, sheep, pig or beef hearts, kidneys, liver and other internal organs. Tripe -- the lining of an animal's stomach -- when cooked with onions, was a great favorite with many people -- but not me!

The Ministry of Food also tried to get us to eat "whale meat steaks" but they didn't have much success with that scheme. The meat was much too oily and definitely an acquired taste -- unless you're an Eskimo!

We also ate rabbit -- but when buying rabbit, you had to be sure that it still had its head on; otherwise you might be purchasing a cat. Stripped of their fur, cats and rabbits are not unlike, and black marketeers were up to all sorts of tricks! Yes, as in any crisis, there was a black market, and I am sure this COVID-19 crisis will be no exception. It is important that we not feed into that market by purchasing items from unscrupulous opportunists.

Of course toiletries were almost non-existent and from time to time somebody from either the Ministry of Food or the Ministry of Health would come to the house and scrape around the drains for any pieces of fat or grease which may have accumulated -- this was then used in the production of lipstick, hand and face cream and other toiletries. It was a long time before I ever used lipstick -- and not just because my dad didn't approve! Instead of toothpaste, we used salt.

Water was another scarcity -- due to the amount of water needed to put out the fires caused by Hitler's incendiary bombs. Water was rationed and we were permitted to take one bath per week per family. We rotated how we used the bath water so that every fourth week I got the clean water! I think it may have been this experience of water rationing that led to the expression "we Brits take a bath once a week -- whether we need it or not."



COURTESY PHOTOS

Nancy Burch, (second from left) age 4, with her family in front of the pub in where she was born. In the photo are her uncle, her paternal grandmother her sister, 6 years old, her father, mother, a pub customer and her maternal grandfather.

Toilet paper -- what's that? During WWII, all paper was extremely scarce, sometimes non-existent, so we used whatever was available -- generally newspaper!

Of course, it didn't get flushed down the toilet -- it was deposited in the dustbin (garbage bin).

I was born and raised in a pub. During the war my dad, a cabinet maker and draughtsman by profession, was employed as a draughtsman [British spelling of draftsman], working on sensitive documents to assist the war effort, by Vickers-Armstrong (the biggest

aircraft developer and munitions company in the UK at that time).

However, he still worked in the pub in the evenings and on weekends. Obviously we had to provide paper for the toilet facilities so dad used to take the large phone books, and on his electric bench saw cut them into four, drilled a hole at one corner of each of the four pieces, and threaded a string through so that the bundle could be hung on the toilet roll holder. These became the non-flushable toilet rolls of the day. "Necessity is the mother of invention!"

My sister and I recently commented that we are so glad we had the hardships of WWII because we are able to cope with the present situation relatively calmly.

We didn't starve during the war, although sometimes we felt hungry -- I had to be given an additional ration of milk at school because I was so skinny. At the end of the war, some of our customers said, "she looks like something out of Belsen," (an area of Auschwitz), but I was healthy and that was the main thing.

It really wasn't all doom and gloom! There was a great sense of community. I suppose in some small way our pub, named "The Volunteer," which (like "The Windmill" theater in London), never ever closed during the six years of the war, provided a gathering place for the local community and off-duty military personnel.

My sister and I used to make models

of the V-1 rockets (doodle-bugs as we called them) and these were on display in the bar. I recall on one occasion an American GI asked if he could buy one of them, but we just gave it to him. To this day, I wonder what ever happened to him and the model doodle-bug!

Immediately following an air raid and after the "all clear" was sounded, the local community rallied around to assist with clearing away the bomb-damaged homes and with other rescue operations. It was just what people did. I don't think we ever thought about it -- there was a need and we all pitched in.

In this present crisis, if we fear running out of food, we could make our supplies go further by reducing the amount we consume. For instance, I usually have 1 cup of cereal and a banana for breakfast; right now I'm using 2/3 of a cup and a banana and a little less milk. I normally use two slices of bread for a sandwich; now I'm using only one slice, I know I won't starve and, for those of us who struggle to control our weight, there could be a definite benefit!

There was another popular slogan, the first part of which could be helpful as we cope with the present crisis -- "Coughs and sneezes spread diseases -- trap the germs in your handkerchief." Invariably some wit always changed the posters by adding two letters (A and N) and deleting the last three words. Something for you to puzzle out.

I don't know whether these thoughts will be helpful to you, although I think the bottom line is to be mindful of others, don't become hoarders, stay at home, and remember that this, too, will pass.

So - KEEP CALM AND CARRY ON!



Nancy Burch's grandfather, whom she never met, stands outside the family pub.

The Plains Community League offers internet café, tutoring

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The Plains Community League's John Page Turner house is a welcoming two-story farmhouse on Main Street in The Plains. Program Director Beth Lucas -- with the help of volunteers -- has set up five rooms with space for 15 children in grades three to 12 to learn remotely. The internet is humming and snacks are prepared. Tutors are waiting to assist. There is even room for adults who need to work remotely while their children complete lessons.

But on the morning of Wednesday, Nov. 18, there were no children.

Lucas said she has about four children who come regularly, but word hasn't gotten out yet about the free internet café and virtual tutoring. "We have 10 volunteer tutors who are eager to help. Nine are doing virtual tutoring and one is providing in-person help." Currently, tutors are working with about six students during after-school hours.

Lucas said that one of her tutors is a Ph.D. in mathematics and has been helping one student with trigonometry. "None of us here knows trig," she laughed.

At least one of the tutors speaks Spanish as well as English.

Children are invited to come by Monday, Tuesday, Thursday or Friday, for one of two sessions each day



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Beth Lucas, program director for The Plains Community League, is eager for the John Page Turner house to fill up with children.

(or both) -- 8 to 11 a.m. or noon to 3 p.m. Lucas said they use the hour in between to clean. If children are staying for both sessions, they can eat lunches they bring with them on the porch until the second session starts.

Lucas thinks that transportation may be one reason the internet café hasn't filled up yet, but she is hoping as word gets out, some families may be able to carpool to the John Page Turner house.

Children don't have to be from The Plains in order to use the internet café or tutoring services. One of the tutors lives in Virginia Beach and one of the children lives in

Prince William County, Lucas said.

A floor monitor supervises occupied rooms and can help with some technology issues. Children must stay in their own space and bring a computer and

power cord in order to work.

Lucas said that as long as the children use headphones to listen to their teachers, there can be several students in one room. "It's not a problem. They don't have any trouble hearing."

One room is set up for a family, with three children's desks and a table for a parent in the middle. "The parent can work while the kids do schoolwork," Lucas said.

When children are done for the day, they leave with a snack provided by Grace Episcopal Church's Peas and Grace program.

Lucas said she ran an after-school program for children in Loudoun County for 19 years; after she retired, she found her experience came in handy for running programs for The Plains Community League.

Now she's got just one problem: "We've got to fill this house!"

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

Planning commission to consider allowing transitional housing at some churches

HOUSING, from page 1

according to the staff report.

Phil Mast, the lead pastor at Day-spring Mennonite Church, elaborated Friday that the transitional housing facility would be built in conjunction

acres, up to 20 rooms and up to 40 residents would be permitted.

Although no one spoke at the public hearing before the vote Thursday, one public comment submitted by Warrenton resident Kathy Schulin by email expressed concern that the

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HOLIDAY SEASON
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This Christmas, Santa Claus is coming to Zoom

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Note: It is the policy of the Fauquier Times not to reveal the identity of any Santa Claus we may interview.

The COVID-19 pandemic has put a crimp in Santa Claus' style. He can't touch the children or welcome kids onto his lap. "I can't go from one house to another," he said, "there might be germs in my beard!"

But the big guy is nothing if not adaptable. Santa follows the CDC recommendations of wearing a mask and washing hands and he has instructed the elves to sing the ABC song twice while washing their hands.

A grant of \$4,000 from the county's CARES Act funding for businesses is helping Santa to pay for some of the revamping he's needed

to do because of the pandemic.

Warrenton Santa, as he is known, will not be able to visit children at homes or businesses this year, but he'll offer video chats over Zoom, phone calls and letters and/or "nice" certificates from Santa.

Special events will be held as well. For instance, from 5:30 to 7 p.m. on Dec. 5, Santa will appear at "Christmas Through the Ages," sponsored by New Life Christian Church. It is a free drive-thru event featuring Christmas light displays and treats for the children. And of course, Santa. It will be held in the parking lot of Piney Branch Elementary School in Bristow.

Details for Warrenton Santa's special events may be found at warrentonsanta.com. (Yes, of

See **SANTA**, page 6



PHOTO COURTESY OF REFORMED PHOTOGRAPHY
Santa puts the finishing touches on a Christmas toy.

Santa Claus is coming to Zoom

SANTA, from page 1

course Santa has a website.)

Santa can also write a special message to children or send a photo of himself pictured in front of a family's own Christmas tree.

Warrenton Santa provided his bona fides: "I have worn the red suit for a number of years and have attended the International University of Santa Claus, the Santa Conservatory, along with being a member of the Red Suit Society and have prescribed to the Santa Oath. I carry insurance and have yearly criminal background checks."

Warrenton Santa said he started appearing at church Christmas parties in 2014, and people kept asking him to visit their children and grandchildren, so he founded Warrenton Santa LLC.

He said one of his favorite tasks is to welcome dads back from overseas. "I'll meet a dad nearby, at gas station for instance. We drive to his house, I go in and visit with kids, then go back to my sleigh and bring dad in."

Santa understands that special moment. He spent 20 years on active duty and is a retired disabled veteran.



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Santa made a stop at the depot along the Greenway recently.

Santa does lots of photo shoots beginning each spring. He said that quite a few families do Christmas in July. "They bring me a list, so Santa has plenty of time to build toys."

Understanding that kids may need a little extra holiday cheer in 2020, Santa is reading stories over Facebook Live (<https://www.facebook.com/Warrentonsanta>) every afternoon from Nov. 27 until Dec. 24, at 4 p.m. He'll read a mix of classical Christmas stories and religious tales in an attempt to brighten days dampened by the pandemic. "If I can't visit children, I wanted to bring Christmas to them," he said.

Ms. Claus is a schoolteacher, he explained. "She suggested I read to children since I can't visit them." The books and schedule are posted on his Facebook page.

Santa said he's converted a bedroom in his Warrenton home into a

teleconferencing center, complete with books from "olden times," period furniture and all the trappings of an old-fashioned Christmas. "Kids are video savvy," he said, "so it's got to be authentic."

Speaking of authentic, Santa's son has created reindeer cards featuring the winter athletes who pull Santa's sleigh. "Piedmont Press & Graphics in Warrenton did a great job printing them," said Santa. Packs of cards may be found at the warrentonsanta.com website.

Santa said, "I enjoy being with the kids, sharing their excitement,

sharing the spirit of Christmas. One time I talked about the theology of Christmas with a 14-year-old. He was astonished that I would sit there and discuss it with him."

He said, "In past years, when I was invited to a home, I sometimes paused before knocking and I just listened at the door. There is excitement growing and there's almost always a magical wonder in the air! We need this even more this year."

He added, "When I come back on Christmas Eve, I love to see your lights, hear the cheer, and feel the happiness. Neighbors and family gathering, gifts being exchanged, amazing foods and even some old-fashioned Christmas caroling. Trust me, it's the best feeling ever! That is Christmas spirit! It's magical!" Santa has a suggestion for adults: "Would it really hurt to decorate early this year? Decorate and get that Christmas spirit earlier this year. (I'm talking after the pumpkins and skeletons get stored away in the basement again.)"

And Santa has a very important message for every child this year: "Santa will be at your house on Christmas Eve. Don't worry about his not showing up. He'll be there."

Oh yeah. He also says to "be nice."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

Bealeton, Middleburg Christmas parades have been canceled

Warrenton, Marshall parades revised for COVID safety

Helen Wyckoff of CK Home & Hardware reported Wednesday, Nov.

"Without a dramatic change in our virus-impaired condition, we will not