

# Fauquier Times

August 26, 2020

Our 203rd year | Vol. 203, No. 35 | [www.Fauquier.com](http://www.Fauquier.com) | \$1.50

**ELLEN ALLEN  
RETIRES:**  
COUNTY COACHING  
LEGEND LED TEAMS AT  
KETTLE RUN, LIBERTY  
AND FAUQUIER.  
SPORTS, PAGE 13



## Teachers: We are ready to rock 100% virtual school year

By Robin Earl  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Parents who discovered on Aug. 10 that school instruction would be delivered 100% virtually because of the COVID-19 pandemic may have found their lives upended – again. The county’s teachers, too, were forced to quickly rethink how to deliver lessons to their students. Fauquier County abandoned its original plan to enlist a hybrid model (some remote and some in-person classes) when it became apparent that the division did not have the workforce to make that happen in 2020.

Students will get some live instruction from their teachers (synchronistic learning); some days they will be given assignments to complete independently (asynchronistic learning).

Classes started Monday, but teachers are easing students into digital learning slowly. Serious instruction is not expected to start until at least next week.

Nicole Goepper, who teaches French at Fauquier High School, said during the school division’s podcast “Now We’re Talking” on Friday that



COURTESY PHOTO

Brittany Hundley teaches third grade at Greenville Elementary.

the last month or so has been an extreme emotional roller coaster. “Last Monday,” she said, “I sensed around here that everybody was a little bit crumbling under the stress. It got really real. I found myself in a low, anxious place.”

She said that she stood up in a leadership meeting and talked of positivity, optimism and enthusiasm for the task in front of them.

“As the words came out of my mouth, I felt my whole mindset flip; I felt a cloud being lifted off Fauquier

### Teachers’ children eligible for day care in school buildings

Free child care is available to Fauquier County Public School staff for their children aged 4 to 11 who attend Fauquier County public schools. The child care is being provided by FCPS staff or staff members of Fauquier Community Child Care.

As of Aug. 21, about 96 children were expected to participate, but school spokeswoman Tara Helkowski said the number will probably fluctuate.

Activities during child care will include completion of school assignments and recreational opportunities.

High School. And that’s when ideas began to flow.”

Soon after that experience, she said, she was presented with an opportunity to hold a virtual exchange program with students in France.

It’s one example of how teachers are adapting to the new circumstances. They are relying on training they’ve participated in over the

See REMOTE, page 6

## 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

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# 2 more Fauquier deputies test positive for COVID-19

Staff Report

The Fauquier County Sheriff's Office has had three deputies test positive for COVID-19 since the beginning of the pandemic. The first positive case was revealed on July 23. The two most recent positive tests were announced Aug. 21 by FCSO spokesman Sgt. Steven Lewis.

It is not known how, when or where the deputies were exposed, said Lewis. Contact tracing is being conducted internally and externally; individuals with whom the deputies had close contact are being notified.

Lewis said that since the positive tested results were received, the deputies have not been in contact with the public. Neither has been hospitalized.

Lewis said that "the Fauquier Sheriff's Office is following all the proper protocol and procedures to ensure this exposure has not affected any other personnel, families or the general public."

# 45 'active' cases of COVID-19 at Warrenton nursing home

NURSING HOME, from page 1

still in the hospital.

In addition, Greene said, "One resident who tested positive has passed away. We are currently ascertaining the exact cause of death."

She said that four of the people who have tested positive for COVID-19 are younger than 65, the rest are 65 or older.

The administrator said that 123 residents live at Brookside. She added, "We have short-term and long-term residents .... We also have a secure unit for residents who have dementia."

All COVID-19 positive residents are located on one separated unit at the facility, Greene said, and are quarantined on a separate section of the unit using canvas zippered temporary doors. Any resident who has tested negative but is suspected of being COVID-19 positive is quarantined in a different section of the unit, again using temporary zippered canvas doors, she said.

Speaking to precautions that Brookside has implemented to prevent the spread of the virus, Greene said that in "March we implemented and continue all Centers for Disease Control/VDH guidelines for virus prevention

at the facility." She said all staff members use one entrance, are screened and their temperatures are taken. "If any staff member exhibits any symptoms, he or she is immediately sent to their physician/urgent care for a rapid test and must have medical clearance before returning to work."

It is common for long term care staff to work at more than one facility, but Greene said that since March, staff members are required to work exclusively at Brookside to prevent transferring the virus from one facility to another.

Discussing testing procedures, Greene said that The National Guard tested all residents and employees on June 23 and again on July 20. "Those results were 100% negative. ... On Aug. 13, we received word that a family member of one of our staff had tested positive for COVID-19. As is our policy, we immediately sent that staff member for a rapid test, which, unfortunately, came back positive. We then immediately implemented our procedures and policies we had prepared if such a situation occurred, including immediately conducting another round of testing, which resulted in the pos-

itive results."

Greene said that Brookside will continue to test according to CDC guidelines going forward.

She said that families are contacted frequently to update them on their loved ones.

## Outbreaks

The outbreak at Brookside is the first outbreak in a long-term care setting in Fauquier County, the sixth in the Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District. According to the VDH site, there is also an "outbreak in progress," with eight cases at the Countryside Assisted Living facility in Madison County. The data from VDH indicates that there has been at least one death (and fewer than five) from the Madison County outbreak. An outbreak at Culpeper Health and Rehab is reporting 27 cases.

The RRHD reported its first outbreak of COVID-19 in an educational setting on Aug. 6. The outbreak designation came as a result of three confirmed cases of COVID-19 at Bradley Elementary School in Warrenton.

In the health district, there have also been five outbreaks in congregate care settings and one in a health care setting since the beginning of the pandemic. In total, 228 COVID-19 cases have been attributed to the 13 outbreaks in the RRHD.

State-wide, as of Tuesday morning, there have been 370 outbreaks in long term care settings (resulting in 9,111 cases and 1,330 deaths), 270 outbreaks in congregate care settings, 57 in correctional facilities, 57 in health care settings and 45 in educational settings.

## COVID-19 snapshot

Tuesday, Aug. 25

### New cases of coronavirus

Virginia: 1,005 Tuesday; 114,625 to date

Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District: 2,191 cases to date

Fauquier: 3 Tuesday; 723 cases to date

**Perspective:** New cases have topped 1,000 eight times since Aug. 1. In Fauquier, in the month of July, 147 new cases were added, as compared to June, when the county added a total of 114 new cases. So far in August, Fauquier has logged 152 new cases.

### Seven-day positivity average (total tests vs. positive tests)

Virginia: 6.4%

RRHD: 7.7%

**Perspective:** In Virginia on June 28, the rate was 5.8%; in the RRHD, the positivity rate was 1.7% on July 1.

## Hospitalizations

Virginia: 9,269

RRHD: 144 (five more than last week)

Fauquier: 35 (no change from last week)

**Perspective:** Younger adults are becoming ill enough to require acute care. In the health district, 34 people from 50 to 59 have been hospitalized, the largest age group. Twenty-four residents between 40 and 49 were hospitalized, as well as 23 people from the 60- to 69-year-old group. Nineteen who are aged 30 to 39 were hospitalized. Nineteen residents older than 80 years old have been hospitalized.

In the state, 1,855 COVID-19 positive residents in the 60 to 69 age group were hospitalized and 1,716 of those aged 50 to 59 were hospitalized. Those were the two age groups with the most hospitalizations.

## Deaths

Virginia: 2,494

RRHD: 29 (two more than last week)

Fauquier: 9 (no change from last week)

**Perspective:** In the state, the majority of people who have died have been older than 80 (1,213), compared to 1,279 for all residents 79 and younger. Eighteen people older than 70 have died in the health district, while 11 under 70 have died.

## Outbreaks

Virginia: 799 total (370 outbreaks in long term care settings -- resulting in 9,111 cases and 1,330 deaths-- 270 outbreaks in congregate care settings, 57 in correctional facilities, 57 in health care settings and 45 in educational settings.

RRHD: 13 total (6 in long term care settings, 1 in educational setting, 5 in congregate settings and 1 in a health care setting)

Fauquier: At least 1 in a long-term care setting (48 cases) and at least 1 in an educational setting

## Town trash schedule for Labor Day

Due to the Labor Day holiday, trash pickup in the town of Warrenton will be altered.

**Monday, Sept. 7:** No trash pickup because of the Labor Day holiday.

**Tuesday, Sept. 8:** Mondays and Tuesdays refuse collection

**Wednesday, Sept. 9 :** Recycling collection (cardboard, newspaper and blue bags)

**Thursday, Sept. 10:** Regular refuse collection

**Friday, Sept. 11:** Regular refuse collection

# LEGAL NOTICES

## NOTICE OF INTENT TO APPOINT MEMBER TO THE BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS OF THE TOWN OF WARRENTON

The Council of the Town of Warrenton will consider appointments to fill vacancies to the Board of Zoning Appeals of the Town of Warrenton.

Any qualified residents of the Town who wish to be considered for appointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals can contact Elizabeth Gillie, Town Clerk at **540-347-4505** or by email at **egillie@warrentonva.gov**

The Town of Warrenton does not discriminate on the basis of handicapped status in admission or access to its programs and activities. Town Hall meeting facilities are fully accessible. Any special accommodations can be made upon request 48 hours prior to the meeting.

**Elizabeth A. Gillie**

Town Clerk

## Fauquier Times

ISSN 1050-7655, USPS 188280  
Published every Wednesday by Piedmont Media LLC

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Subscription: \$69.68 per year within the United States.

**POSTMASTER:** Send address changes to: Fauquier Times, 41 Culpeper St., Warrenton, VA 20186.

Periodicals postage paid at Warrenton, Va. and at additional mailing offices

# Fauquier Times

August 5, 2020

Our 203rd year | Vol. 203, No. 32 | [www.Fauquier.com](http://www.Fauquier.com) | \$1.50

**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-



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

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

## Remington votes for inclusivity

By Angela Roberts  
SPECIAL TO THE FAUQUIER TIMES

A little less than one month after Mississippi’s governor signed off on a bill removing the Confederate battle emblem from the state’s flag, the Remington Town Council did the same — voting unanimously on July 20 to change the town seal, which for decades featured a small depiction of a confederate flag.

Since 1985, the seal could be seen on signs

See **REMINGTON**, page 4



Signs with the Remington town seal were recently changed to feature a Virginia state flag instead of a Confederate flag.

## Test-based return to work strategy is flawed, say health experts

### CDC recommends time-based clearance for employees

By Robin Earl  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Some employers in the county are wrestling with when they should welcome employees back to work after a COVID-19 exposure or illness, according to Rob Marino, executive director of the Fauquier Free Clinic and experts from the Rappahannock-Rapidan Health District at the Virginia Department of Health.

“We have had some of our clients saying they need a coronavirus test because their employers tell them they must have a negative test before they return to work,” Marino said.

He explained that this creates difficulties because if



A thermal scanner reads the body temperature of Dustin Dawson, a Town of Warrenton building inspector, at town hall.

TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

they get a standard PCR test, it can take more than a week to get the results back. And, he added, the rapid test that is available comes with a \$75 out-of-pocket

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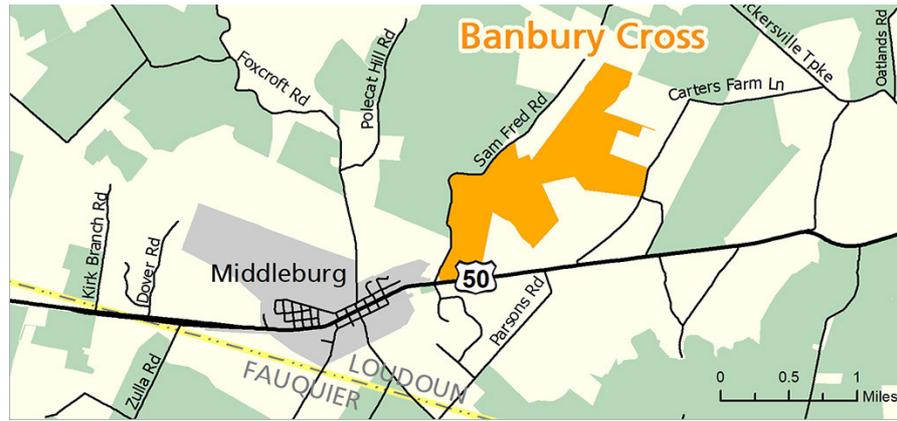
# Proposed 38-home development near Middleburg prompts vigorous opposition

By Coy Ferrell  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

A proposed 38-home development on 571 acres just outside Middleburg has prompted an uproar from neighboring landowners and opposition from several advocacy groups, including the Piedmont Environmental Council. More than 1,100 people have signed a petition opposing the development, but it remains unclear how much legal authority county or town officials have to stop the plan moving forward.

The land proposed for the development, dubbed Banbury Cross Reserve, is in Loudoun County just east of Middleburg's town limits. Because a portion of the property lies within the town's "Subdivision Control Area," the town planning commission must approve the application before the project can move forward.

After a four-hour meeting on July 27, planning commissioners voted to delay making a decision on the preliminary plat application – the first of three stages in the approval process – until Aug. 10, saying they needed more time to speak with



A map created by the Piedmont Environmental Council shows the area proposed for the Banbury Cross Reserve development just outside Middleburg town limits.

town staff and the applicant about concerns with the development.

The vast majority of the 76 speakers at a public hearing on the matter urged commissioners to deny the application. In addition, the Piedmont Environmental Council, the Goose Creek Association, the Mosby Heritage Area Association and the Loudoun County Preservation and Conservation Coalition all oppose the project. Concerns about the effects of the development on the water supply are cited by most opponents, but other worries about impacts on

traffic, tourism, archeology and the character of Middleburg itself were also mentioned.

However, proposed development Loudoun County zoning ordinances cannot be denied except on the basis of specific technical deficiencies. That is, the planning commission has no discretionary jurisdiction and commissioners cannot deny the by-right application based on personal opinion; the denial must be rooted in established zoning law.

Even if commissioners do vote to deny the application in its current

form, by law the applicant is entitled to address the technical deficiencies cited by commissioners and resubmit the application for approval. Town officials have repeatedly warned that denying the application on subjective, non-technical grounds could lead to litigation against the town. A representative of the developer alluded to this possibility during the July 27 meeting.

In September 2019, the town's planning commissioners, citing "certain deficiencies" in the original application, denied the first proposal and required the developer to address the issues with the county before submitting another application.

In June, county officials indicated they were prepared to approve a revised application from the development company – Middleburg Development 1, owned by Andrew Hertneky of Marshall – and its Annapolis-based civil engineering firm, Urban.

The land proposed for the development is zoned "Agricultural Rural - 2: Rural business and residential uses," which allows for housing and business density of up to one unit per 20 acres if some structures are clustered together.

"Technically, the entire project is by-right as it employs existing zoning and does not require a special

See **BANBURY**, page 9

## CDC recommends time-based clearance for employees exposed to coronavirus

WORK, from page 1

cost, which may be too much of a burden for free clinic clients; employers are not offering to pay for the test.

Many free clinic patients are essential workers with service jobs. "They can't work from home. If you work in a fast-food place, you can't Zoom in," Marino said.

Sometimes the employer is not the hold up. "If someone is working at a client's house, the boss may allow them to work but the client says no," he said.

If someone has COVID-19, Marino said, they can be sick for a couple of days, but be out of work for weeks if their return to work is based on a negative test. Those who have had COVID-19 can test positive for a while after recovering, even they are not contagious. "Plus," said Marino, "it's a waste of a test."

Marino said that when a client is having trouble getting the OK to return to work, he or someone in his office will sometimes contact the employer and explain that testing may not be the best assurance that the person is no longer contagious. "I wish I could say that I have been able to convince them, but so far, I have not had any success stories."

He said that most employers don't return his phone calls. "They don't want to hear from us."

Marino said that he has called on April Achter, epidemiologist with the VDH, for help in working with employers. "April has been fantastic," he said, "instantly responsive

and always helpful."

Achter said that when she gets a call asking for this kind of help, "I'll first call the client and ask permission to speak with their employer. If they say yes, I'll call the employer and educate them" about Centers for Disease Control protocols.

The CDC, she said, is not recommending a test-based approach for giving the all-clear to return to work. If it has been 10 days since the onset of symptoms, if symptoms are not getting worse and if they have not had a fever for 24 hours, then they are safe to return to work.

Achter pointed out that the 24-hours-without-a-fever (assuming no medication is being taken to reduce the fever) recommendation is new. The advice until recently was 72 hours without a fever.

She added that if a person is quarantining because of an exposure to someone with COVID-19, he or she needs to stay isolated for the full 14 days. "A negative test on day four just means they don't have it on day four."

The epidemiologist said that she has had limited success in educating employers. "Some have agreed to our suggestions, but some have held the line. They want the reassurance of a negative test. But in our view, it doesn't give them what they think it does. ... And waiting for the test results can put some employees in a bind."

Marino agreed, "employers have a fear of the illness and a fear of the liability" they could face if one of their employees is believed to have spread the disease.

Wade Kartchner, M.D., health director of the Rappahannock/Rapidan Health District confirmed that the CDC has weighed in on the two types of strategies necessary to be able to come off of isolation: test-based and time-based. "The CDC is strongly discouraging the test-based strategy, using PCR testing, to discontinue isolation in almost every case. The main exception would be someone who is severely immunocompromised," he said.

He echoed Achter's explanation, "For most persons with COVID-19 illness, isolation and precautions can generally be discontinued 10 days after symptom onset and resolution of fever for at least 24 hours, without the use of fever-reducing medications and with improvement of other symptoms."

He added, "By following these recommendations, people have a reasonable expectation as to when they can come out of isolation... we know that available data show that people are no longer infectious 10 days after symptom onset. PCR tests, on the other hand, may still be positive for weeks after illness. This doesn't represent ongoing infectious disease, just that RNA particles are still detected in the sample."

### Virginia's emergency temporary standard

One factor that could be causing confusion is the emergency temporary standard adopted by the Virginia Safety and Health Codes Board on July 15 (16VAC25-220). Private employers, along with state and local governments are required to abide by the standard.

The standards list the 72-hour benchmark for being without a fever and recommend the test-based return to work as well as the time-based; the standards' test-base requirements demand two consecutive negative tests, taken 24 or more hours apart.

Some employers feel they must follow the temporary standards, but Jennifer Rose, cooperative program director for the Virginia Department of Labor and Industry explained Monday that employers are allowed to follow current CDC guidelines, "as long as the employer has the ability to provide the specific guidance they are following should they be asked for it by Virginia Occupational Safety and Health."

Noting the possible confusion, she said, "We are in the process of developing a FAQ list to answer this and many other questions we have received regarding the standard. This will be posted on the DOLI webpage at: <https://www.doli.virginia.gov/covid-19-outreach-education-and-training/>.

### Getting back to work

Marino said his office takes calls all day. "If someone wants to get tested, we do a pre-screening. Some of them don't even meet the criteria for getting a test if they have no symptoms.

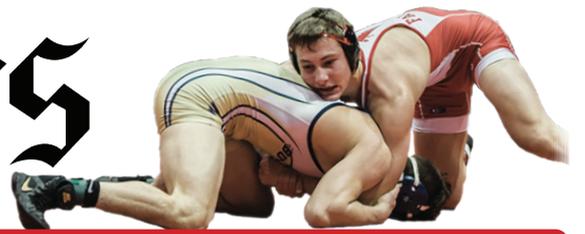
"I'll call our patient coordinator will call, trying to get it worked out."

Is calling employers to get clients back to work in his job description? Marino replied, "Nothing that has happened in the last five months is in my job description."

# Fauquier Times

February 19, 2020

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TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL Boh and Jessica Brown with K-9 Caring Angels were at Mary Walter to provide support for families and staff.

## 'Wyatt was a sweet boy, with a sweet disposition'

Mary Walter school family comes together to grieve first-grader and his mother

By Robin Earl  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

About 80 people, a mix of parents, children and school staff, gathered at Mary Walter Elementary School Monday morning while schools were closed for the Presidents Day holiday to mourn the death of 6-year-old Wyatt Norwood,

See MARY WALTER, page 5

## Fauquier teen Levi Norwood charged in shooting deaths of mother, brother

17-year-old could be returned to Fauquier in a few days after waiving extradition

By Robin Earl  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

When police arrived at a Durham, North Carolina, Target store the afternoon of Feb. 15 to apprehend a suspected shop-lifter, they found 17-year-old Levi Norwood of Midland, who is accused of killing his mother, Jennifer Norwood, and 6-year-old brother, Wyatt Norwood, at their home on Friday, Feb. 14.



LEVI NORWOOD

Norwood was carrying some



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Commonwealth's Attorney Scott Hook speaks at a press conference Sunday.

store merchandise when he was interviewed by police: hair dye, some clothing and a backpack, said Sgt. James Hartman of the Fauquier

County Sheriff's Office at a 1 p.m. press conference on Sunday, Feb. 16.

See NORWOOD, page 4

## First robot-assisted surgeries scheduled at Fauquier Hospital



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Dr. Benjamin Wampler gets in position to start up the da Vinci Xi.

By Robin Earl  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Fauquier Hospital surgeons are excited about a new tool that will help them with abdominal surgeries. The \$1.8 million surgical robot – the Intuitive da Vinci Xi – is designed to assist surgeons with hernia, colon, kidney, prostate, gall-bladder and bariatric procedures.

The first surgeries using the robot will be performed Thursday, Feb. 20. Dr. Benjamin Wampler and Dr. Andrew Gordon will each perform hernia operations; Dr. Elizabeth Alexandra Zubowicz will perform a sleeve surgery. (The bariatric procedure removes about 80 percent of the stomach, leaving a sleeve-shaped organ.) All three surgeons are with Northern Virginia Surgical Specialists.

They agree that the robot offers surgeons better control, which can result in less disruption of surrounding tissue and, in many cases, less post-operative pain for the patient than with traditional laparoscopic surgeries.

The surgery using the robot is still laparoscopic, in that instruments and a camera enter the body through small incisions. The difference, said the surgeons, is in the level of precision they can achieve with the new technology.

General surgeon Wampler explained that the four sterile "arms" of the robot are completely controlled by the surgeon at all times. One arm has a camera, managed by a foot pedal the surgeon controls; two arms use tiny instruments ca-

See ROBOT, page 2

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# Board of Supervisors considers broadband and skydiving

By Coy Ferrell  
TIMES STAFF WRITER

At the Feb. 13 Board of Supervisors meeting:

- Board members unanimously adopted a resolution to suspend indefinitely fiber-optic cable expansion in the county in favor of pursuing the wireless broadband initiative “more rigorously.”
- Supervisors also unanimously adopted an amendment to change the minimum district size in a business park zoning district from 5 acres to 3. The amendment will affect zoning districts in New Baltimore, Catlett and Midland.
- John King, a longtime organizer of the Fauquier Flying Circus, spoke at a public hearing on whether to grant a lease at the Warrenton-Fauquier Airport to DC Skydiving Center. King said that he was concerned that the planes operated by the skydiving operation would damage the experience of the Flying Circus and disrupt local churches and Midland Christian Academy. County attorney Kevin Burke said the skydiving firm has agreed to accommodate church services and funerals, and that the only matter being considered was whether to grant a lease for office and storage space. The FAA requires the airport to allow the skydiving firm to land at the airport. Supervisors Rick Gerhardt (Cedar Run) and Chris Granger (Center) both said they understood King’s concerns but that granting the lease was in the best interests of the county. The measure passed unanimously.

The fiscal year 2021 budget process will begin

at the next board of supervisors meeting on March 12. “The budget is the most important thing we do,” said Mary Leigh McDaniel (Marshall).

## The Sanctuary at Barrel Oak

One item not up for vote during Thursday’s meeting was the question of the proposed Sanctuary at Barrel Oak in Delaplane, which would include a 42-room resort, dining facilities and allow for up to 78 events per year; the resort would need four special exemptions from the county. The proposal has met with fierce opposition from residents and local preservation groups, among them Piedmont Environmental Council and Mosby Heritage Area Association, who say the proposal would threaten the rural character of the county.

Brian Roeder, who owns Barrel Oak Winery and proposed the resort, postponed his request for special exemptions before Thursday’s board of supervisors meeting, explaining that he did not think the proposal had enough votes to pass. (Last October, the planning commission voted 3-2 not to recommend the proposal to supervisors.)

Roeder told the Fauquier Times that he believes there is “zero question” that the majority of Fauquier residents support his proposal, adding that more letters were sent to the board supporting the proposal than opposing it, and that comments online were mostly supportive. He maintained his argument that “smart growth initiatives” like his are essential for making agriculture viable in the county and minimizing the loss of farmland.

He said that when agriculture is no longer profitable for a landowner, they often sell the land to a housing developer. The resort, he said, would create a viable alternative to “rural sprawl” by “enhancing” agriculture and encouraging visitors to spend more time and money in the county, increasing the tax base and giving small farmers a local market for their goods. “That’s where you save the land,” he said. He added that “his is part of a bigger process” to avert the loss of farmland.

He acknowledged that opposition to his proposal is well-organized, but maintained it represents a minority of the community at large. He said he does not know what the future holds for the proposal, but he hopes “thoughtful, reasoned analysis” will prevail.

Speaking during citizen’s time, Roeder thanked county staff for their “very high level of professionalism” throughout the application process, and said that despite opposition to his proposal, he still believes that his plan and others like it are the best way to preserve the agricultural character of the county. “Napa Valley is an example of what Fauquier could be,” he told the supervisors.

Pushback against any future reintroduction of the plan promises to be intense. Jennifer Moore, speaking on Thursday to the supervisors on behalf of Mosby Heritage Area Association, said that “there will be a strong opposition” to the plan if it is revived.

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## Robot-assisted surgeries coming to Fauquier

ROBOT, from page 1

pable of cutting, suturing and cauterizing; the fourth arm, which can be locked in place, can hold surrounding tissue. “Because we can be more precise, there is less disruption to surrounding tissue,” Wampler said.

He said that the incisions through which the instruments move inside the body are smaller, and the camera provides better visualization.

Zubowicz added that the arms on the instruments are longer, so they can move further into the body if necessary.

She explained that the instruments on the arms have intricate gears that allow the surgeon to move the instruments more naturally. “The instruments are very flexible. They mimic everything you are doing.” With regular laparoscopic surgery, she said, the instruments just open and close; “with the robot, we can suture and cut the sutures ... We

used to have to tack things in place.” She said sutures cause less damage.

Gordon said that electricity can be sent to a specific part of the instruments, so an area can be cauterized while it’s being cut. The energy can even be dispersed to just the tip of the instrument for pinpoint cauterization.

Zubowicz pointed out that the robot provides a big advantage in hernia surgery. Instead of just positioning a mesh patch over the hole in the tissue caused by the hernia, surgeons can pull the two sides of the rift together, suture them together and then add a mesh over that for security.

She said that studies have shown that this method results in better function of the muscles after surgery.

Gordon agreed, “We used to do what’s called ‘bridge repair,’” referring to the way the mesh “bridges” the two sides of the tissue. “The function of the abdominal was not as ideal” with that method. With the ro-



TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/ROBIN EARL

General surgeon Dr. Benjamin Wampler looks at the screen while working the controls of Fauquier Hospital’s new da Vinci Xi surgical robot while and Dr. Elizabeth Alexandra Zubowicz manipulates the robot’s “arms.” Below, an example of an instrument used in robotic surgery.

bot, he said, “We can do much more precise, durable repairs.”

He said, “The robot allows you to simulate the natural movements of the surgeon’s fingers, hand, wrist and elbows. You have all the range of motion.”

Zubowicz said that since she specializes in bariatric surgery, she often has to confront the problem of cutting through a very large abdominal wall. “That makes traditional laparoscopic surgery difficult. But since the robot does the hard work, I don’t have to use physical strength to do that.”

She sees another plus: “Surgeons often suffer from carpal tunnel, neck, back and wrist problems because of the work they do. With the robot, that completely goes away. I think it will extend the careers of surgeons.”

The physicians point out that not every patient is a candidate for robotic surgery. Wampler said, “Someone with a lot of scar tissue, from a lot of previous surgeries, for instance,” would not



be a good candidate.

Gordon is the only one of the surgeons who received da Vinci training as part of his medical education. “It was built into my training,” he said.

Zubowicz completed robotics training during her residency; she had further training more recently through Intuitive.

Wampler accomplished all his robotics training post-residency, within the last few years.

Zubowicz said that OB-GYN and urological specialists will be able to utilize the robots as well, after they become certified.

## Fauquier Times

ISSN 1050-7655, USPS 188280  
Published every Wednesday  
by Piedmont Media LLC

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Subscription: \$69.68 per year  
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