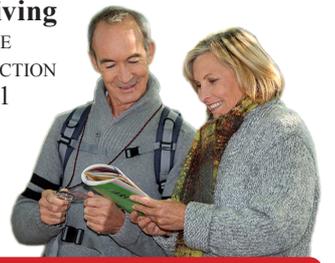


Fauquier Times

July 8, 2020

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Senior Living
SEE THE
SPECIAL SECTION
PAGE 11



Warrenton celebrates socially distanced July 4th

By Robin Earl and Coy Ferrell
TIMES STAFF WRITERS

Josh Riel of Innovative Pyrotechnic Concepts loves everything about fireworks. He said that his favorite moment of any show is the cheer that greets him after each finale. The cheer was there again this year, though more muted than usual.

Riel, a seven-year veteran of fireworks shows, discussed the various trends in his industry. He explained that most shows feature a lot of “crackle” fireworks; as the fireworks break, there is a loud crackling sound, like the sound a log fire makes – only much louder.

Riel said he thinks the crackle is overdone. “We don’t use a lot of them. We use higher-quality fireworks that break nice and round. They are more symmetrical and pleasing.”

He spoke of horsetails and willows, which are “quieter on break. They kind of flow gently instead of with a loud boom.”



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

Hunter Hersey, 3, of Warrenton, waves at a ladder truck from the Warrenton Volunteer Fire Company with Justin Ennis, 4, of Washington, Virginia, Harper Hersey, 5, of Warrenton, and Marissa Ennis, 5, of Washington, Virginia.

But, he said, there would be plenty of boom, “especially in the finale. It will end with a bang.”

And there was. Warrenton’s 2020

Fourth of July displays ended after about 10 minutes with an array of red, white and blue explosions in the sky followed by a series of bright

flashes that put an exclamation mark on the day’s events.

Two shows instead of one

The crowds at this year’s Fourth of July fireworks shows were smaller and more spread out than in previous years, as people adhered to the governor’s restrictions on gatherings in place because of the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic.

Instead of the Warrenton Town Limits celebration that has drawn thousands to the fields behind the WARF the last few years, the Warrenton town government arranged for two separate-but-coordinated fireworks shows to be launched Saturday night, July 4. One show was launched from a hill behind the WARF and the other from a field near Home Depot. Residents from Warrenton and elsewhere gathered to watch the show from the beds of pickup trucks and from lawn chairs in nearby parking lots and along

See JULY 4th, page 4

Warrenton police chief’s listening tour opens discussion on racism

Focus groups held weekly at Warrenton locations

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The questions asked of Warrenton Police Chief Mike Kochis at his June 24 community focus group on Haiti Street were more pointed than during a similar July 2 event at Rady Park.

The 20-or-so attendees at the June 24 gathering had George Floyd and Breonna Taylor on their minds. One attendee said that some residents of Haiti Street would not come to the meeting because they do not trust the police. Several shared personal stories of police profiling.

One woman told a story about when she was pulled over, her passenger, who was Black, was also asked to show his ID and answer questions. “He wasn’t driving. Why should he have to show his ID?” she asked.

Marie Nichols told a similar story;

“My officers know that the expectation is to treat everyone fairly, not to profile. I recognize how hurtful it is to be treated differently because of the color of your skin.”

MIKE KOCHIS
Warrenton Police Chief

all four people in her car, who were Black, were asked to show their IDs, even though she was the one driving. In Nichols’ case, she had not even been pulled over. She was just picking up a family member who had been stopped by police and was not permitted to drive home.

See POLICE CHIEF, page 6

Amish country arrives in Old Town

This n’ That Amish Outlet offers handcrafted furniture

By John Hagarty
SPECIAL TO THE TIMES

On June 16, a local businessman opened his fifth regional Amish store at 10 S. Fifth St. in Warrenton. If the past is prologue, quality workmanship will soon be gracing even more Fauquier County homes.

Steve Payne is the force behind the venture. And the word force is not used lightly. Payne is a serial entrepreneur, having built four successful businesses over the past 31 years, including parking lot striping and signage companies, a construction safety supply firm, a consulting traffic safety business, and his Amish empire, with multiple locations throughout Northern Virginia: two in Leesburg, two in Warrenton and one in Winchester.

This n’ That Amish Outlet began



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL

This n’ That on Main Street is a showroom for high-quality indoor furnishings.

with a love for all things Pennsylvania Dutch. After multiple trips to Amish Country, buying goods, and seeing the pride and quality in the products, Payne and his wife Michelle thought the local community would also appreciate the Amish artistry as much as they did.

The company opened in 2012, featuring outdoor buildings. It began with stock structures like sheds, garages, chicken coops, and barns. Today, it offers an array of

See OUTLET, page 8

INSIDE

Classified.....	24
Opinion.....	9
Obituaries.....	22
Puzzles.....	14
Sports.....	15



Warrenton Police chief's listening tour opens discussion on racism

POLICE CHIEF, from page 1

Kochis assured residents that when an officer asks for the ID of a person that is not driving, the passenger does not have to comply, but those in attendance were skeptical. What might happen if they did not comply, they wondered aloud.

He acknowledged their concern and said that when a resident experiences profiling, they have the right to file a complaint afterward.

"What happens to the complaint?" asked an attendee.

Kochis explained the internal affairs investigation process that would determine whether police department policy was followed or not.

"Would the complainant be informed of the outcome?"

"Yes," said Kochis, "not the disciplinary action taken, if any, but the result of the investigation."

A culture change

The chief said he wants to change the culture of policing but acknowledged doing so is difficult and takes a long time. "I hope I have the chance to change the culture. It will happen, but I don't know if I'll see it."

"My officers know that the expectation is to treat everyone fairly, not to profile. I recognize how hurtful it is to be treated differently because of the color of your skin," he said.

"Where does the Warrenton Police Department stand on Black Lives Matter?" a Haiti Street resident wanted to know.

Kochis answered, "I think they are doing tremendous work. They have created a moment that could start real change."

The chief pointed to the well-attended, peaceful rallies held in Warrenton over the past several weeks as a way to start the conversation about race and policing. He credited the faith community for leading the way and keeping the focus on meaningful reforms.

He said he has had meetings with his officers about the issues brought up by Black Lives Matter advocates. "We had a great dialogue. I'm getting buy in; I'm not getting push back."

Kochis explained that his department is already in compliance with the "Eight that can't wait," principles for fair policing. They are:

- Ban chokeholds and strangleholds.
- Require de-escalation.
- Require warning before shooting.
- Exhaust all other means before shooting.
- Duty to intervene.
- Ban shooting at moving vehicles.
- Require use of force continuum.
- Require comprehensive reporting.

Kochis pointed out that in this time of upheaval, he worries about his officers, too. He said that officers receive implicit bias training, "which is intense," and learn de-escalation techniques. "When an officer takes a life, that's never a good experience for the officer."

'We are invisible'

The June 24 conversation wandered well beyond policing. Nichols explained how she believes many in Warrenton's Black community feel about their town. "Black folks don't feel included. We can't see our culture here. We can't feel it."

She pointed out that the only basketball courts in town are in Eva Walker Park [adjacent to Haiti Street], what she called the "Black part of town."

When someone suggested that the courts at



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL
Warrenton Police Chief Mike Kochis is holding focus groups throughout the town to get citizen feedback.

Eva Walker could be refurbished, Nichols said, "It's still segregation. Why aren't there basketball courts at the WARF? Because Black men are stereotyped. They don't want them there."

She went on to point out she can't see Black culture in the festivals in town, at First Fridays or at the county fair. "When I walk in [to the county fair], the first vendor there is a Confederate booth."

Nichols gave another example: the "fake slave auction block" in front of the Old Jail Museum. She said the stone was placed in the 1970s and labeled as a slave auction block. The marker was removed in 2017 "because there was no evidence that's what it was for." She said it was actually a mounting block for horseback riders. "So, this stone actually has no significance. So why is it there? The problem is Black people remember it as a slave auction block – right on Main Street. So, we have to walk by that every day."

Rady Park focus group

A week later, on July 2, the tone of the focus group at Rady Park was different. The eight residents attending were supportive of their town and its law enforcement and had come to learn how they could help. Several members of the group said they were retired, had more time on their hands, and wanted to give back to their community.

Kochis said that Chai Fuller, public information and community outreach officer for the town police, is working on a volunteer program for the department. Fuller asked the audience to stay tuned for more information.

Katy Barber said, "I think of Warrenton like Mayberry. All of my interactions with police have been positive. When you come to a four-way stop, everybody waves you on. It's not like that in Northern Virginia."

She said she's been a part of the Black Lives Matter vigils that have been taking place Saturdays on Main Street and has been encouraged by the enthusiastic but peaceful participation.

Alexander Dial, who operates a cafe on Main Street called Ellie's Place, said he hasn't had any negative interaction with town police, but that he noticed a Warrenton officer questioning a Black man sitting at a table in front of the restaurant. "He was just sitting there, working. Leave him alone."

Dial said that at his previous restaurant in South Carolina, "I knew every police officer. They would come in to check in or just to talk. I would like to see more officers interacting with the community, talking to people."

Stacey and Darrell Burrell were able to offer

Community Policing Act

Virginia's Community Policing Act, otherwise known as Virginia House Bill 1250, went into effect July 1. The law is designed to discourage law enforcement from engaging in racial profiling.

It requires local law enforcement agencies to collect and report certain data about drivers they interact with during traffic stops. Police officers must document the following demographic information:

- The race, ethnicity, age and gender of the person stopped.
- The reason for the stop.
- The location of the stop.
- Whether a warning, written citation or summons was issued or whether anyone was arrested.
- If a warning, written citation or summons was issued or an arrest was made, those details must be documented.
- Whether the vehicle or any individual was searched.

The data will be reviewed the Virginia State Police.

Warrenton Police Chief Mike Kochis said he is in support of the new legislation but acknowledges that there may be unintended consequences. People may be put off by officers' questions if they don't know about the new requirements, for instance.

He also said that the new mandate does not come with any funding, "and we don't have the software" that would make the documentation easy to implement.

Kochis said that jurisdictions will have to keep an eye out for any indication that officers are trying to artificially "even out" the numbers when it comes to the race or ethnicity of the people that are stopped.

Fauquier County Sheriff Robert Mosier said, "We have always operated under the premise of fair and impartial law enforcement. This new requirement will not change our community policing and enforcement efforts."

"... I would like to see more officers interacting with the community, talking to people."

ALEXANDER DIAL

some examples of police profiling. Stacey Burrell began by asking Kochis what his relationship is with the Virginia State Police. She said she has not had any issues with town police, but her husband has been followed by state police, "when he's just trying to get home."

Darrell Burrell, who is a business professor, said that he has been pulled over frequently by law enforcement since he was a teenager. "When I am pulled over, I stop and hold my registration and license out the window. It's what my dad taught me to do."

"If my friends and I were going somewhere, he'd make us take two cars. He'd say, 'You can't have four Black kids in a car. You'll get pulled over.'"

He said that he remembered a time in 2018, in Charles Town, West Virginia, when he drove a short distance after he saw police lights behind him. The police officer asked why he pulled over to a lighted area instead of stopping right away. "Are you concerned with the Black Lives Matter?" the officer asked.

Burrell answered that he felt it was a safer place to pull over, for him and for the officers. One officer said to the other, "Let's let him go," and the other countered, "No, let's ask him some questions."

Burrell said the officers pulled him over for a See **POLICE CHIEF**, page 7

POLICE CHIEF, from page 6

broken taillight, but wanted to know, “Where are you going? Who are you going to meet? What are their names?”

Burrell said, “I was wearing a bowtie, so they wanted to know why I was dressed up.”

The professor said that the officers let him go with a warning but kept him there for 10 or 15 minutes answering questions.

The same night, he was pulled over twice more – once for the broken taillight for which he had just received a warning, and once for having his high beams on, which he did to try to avoid getting stopped again for the taillight.

Burrell related another time he was followed after leaving a bar. He was asked if he’d been drinking, what he drank and to take a breathalyzer test. “It kept coming up at .02. They asked me to take it again and again, and I said, ‘I’ve already blown it five times. I’m not doing it again.’” He said they seemed frustrated that it was below the limit.

Stacey Burrell said she worries about their children. “I have an African American son who will be going to graduate school. And our daughter will be driving soon.”

Darrell Burrell said, “I tell them, ‘Just comply. Don’t get upset. Even if it’s not right, even if it’s not fair.’” Burrell sighed, “It’s a common occurrence, and it creates a level of anxiety.”

Darrell Burrell explained what he wants everyone to understand: “It’s not Black people against white people, it’s Black people against racism. It’s not Black people against the police, it’s Black people against racist behavior.”

Another attendee said she read about someone getting pulled over for a broken taillight in England. “They gave them a coupon to a local shop to get it fixed!”

At the suggestion, Fuller lit up and immediately wrote down the win-win solution.

Kochis laughed, “That’s a great idea,” and expanded, “Our job is to solve problems. Whether it’s to find someone a ride home if it’s better that they don’t drive or take them to jail for their own safety. If we arrive at a domestic and there has been no assault but we know we can’t leave these two alone or there might be, we try to find a solution. We ask if there is someone they can stay with, can we give them a ride? Officers deal with these decisions every day.”

Kochis said that the focus groups have been enlightening. “When you hear stories about racial profiling from a person, face-to-face, it sticks with you. Let’s acknowledge that it happens, and ask ourselves, ‘How can we do better?’”

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com



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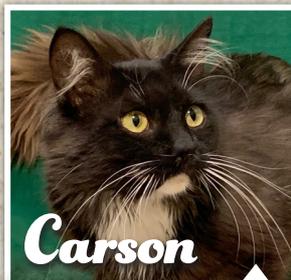
Tommy

I'm a loving, sweet, one-year old, male, purring machine. I adore people and enjoy playing and cuddling. They tell me I'm a volunteer favorite at the adoption center. I was abandoned and showed up at a home begging for food and care. Thankfully they brought me to RappCats. I'm neutered and have all of my shots. Could you please make room for me in your loving home?



Francie

A sweet, barely one-year old, female kitty, I have a large vocabulary and pretty tabico markings. Mostly I talk about food, but I also meow to ask if you will let me get up on your shoulders where I like to ride. I love to cuddle and play. I'm spayed and up to date on all of my shots. Please come meet me.



Carson

I'm a male kitty about three- or four-years old. I'm neutered and have all of my shots. I'm named after the venerable butler in Downton Abbey because of my impeccable manners. I love to play with a ball or laser. I enjoy being brushed and snuggled. Do you have room in your family for me?



Edith

A wonderful, female kitty, I'm between one- and two-years old. I'm spayed and up to date on all of my shots. I'm extremely sweet but since I had to protect my food so I didn't starve before I came to RappCats—I growl and snarl when I eat. I'm named for the woman who kindly rescued me. I hope to find a loving home very soon.



Butch

I'm a sweet, confident, playful, outgoing, one-year old, male kitty. Neutered with all of my shots, I'm a special-needs fellow. My front paw has nerve damage and I'm unable to use it. RappCats is pursuing surgical options that will provide some use of my paw. I have no pain and can play and jump. I am fearful of other animals due to my disability so I need to be an only pet. A foster-to-adopt arrangement is possible until treatment for my paw is completed. Please come meet me.



Spots

I am a small, quiet, spayed, two-year old, female kitty. A little shy, I warm up more and more as I get to know you. I rub against my caretakers and like to be petted. I would like to meet you and become your beloved companion.



Lorrie

I'm a dainty, extremely sweet, one-year old, female kitty. I am spayed and have all of my shots. Female ginger kitties are unusual. When people approach me I purr loudly and bow and stretch to greet them. I look forward to meeting you.

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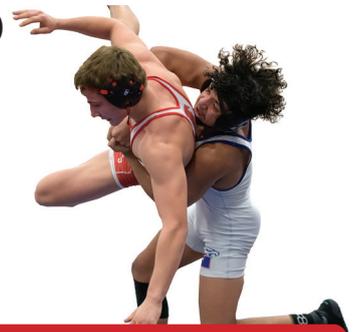


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Firm: Pipeline would 'kill' planned wetland bank

By Daniel Berti
TIMES STAFF WRITER

A Fauquier-based environmental consulting firm is asking state and federal officials to suspend a key permit for a new natural gas pipeline slated for Prince William and Fauquier counties because it will run afoul of a client's conservation easement and a pending wetland mitigation bank in Catlett.

The consulting firm, Virginia Waters and Wetlands, says the Transcontinental Gas Pipeline expansion will directly impact a wetland mit-



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/COY FERRELL
Pipeline materials are being stacked at 796 Gaskins Lane in Catlett, near the site of a proposed wetland mitigation bank.

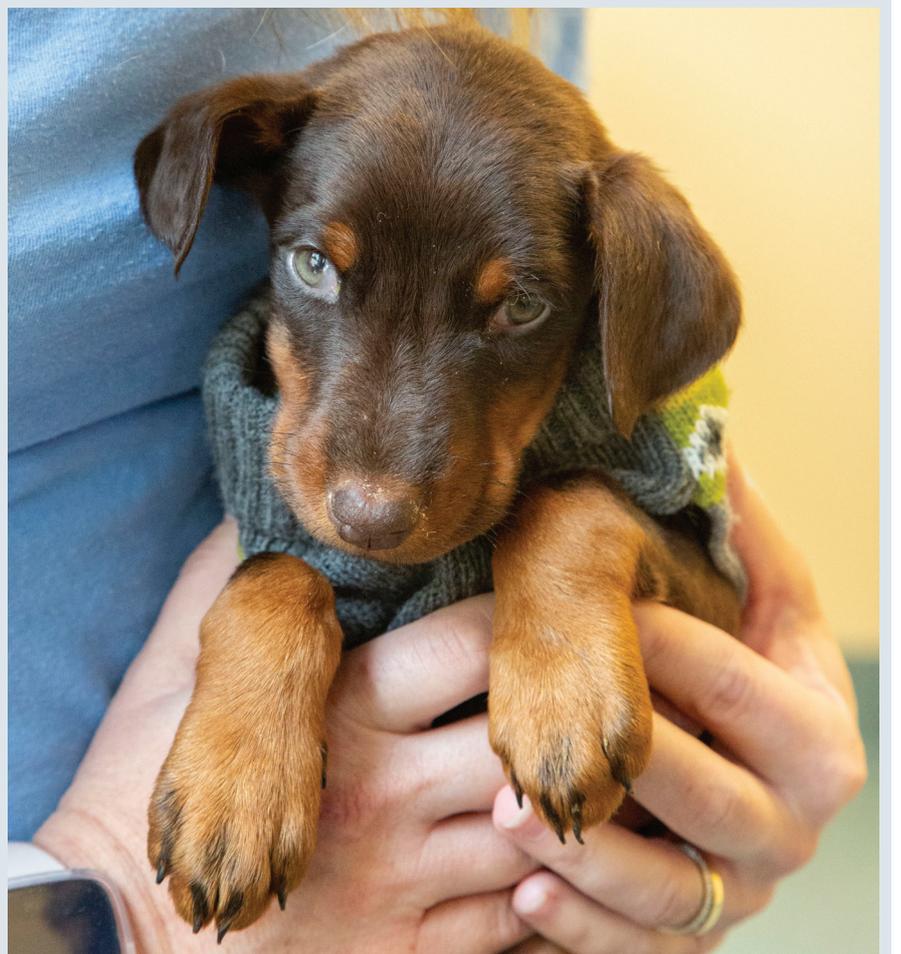
igation bank in Catlett called Miller Stream Bank Phase II that is pending approval from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers and the Virginia Department of Environmental Quality.

A conservation easement and restrictive deed on the property, located at 2652 Catlett Road, were recorded with Fauquier County in June 2018.

Virginia Waters and Wetlands staff claim the pipeline, under its current design, will directly violate the conservation easement and prevent construction of the wetland mitigation bank altogether. The firm is asking the Federal Energy Regulatory Council, DEQ and USACE suspend Transco's USACE-issued Nationwide Permit 12, which applies to utilities that require stream and wetland crossings.

"From the meeting that was conducted with DEQ and the USACE to discuss this impact of the pipeline, basically, it would kill the bank. The bank would not be able to be built at all and no repair of the stream or neighboring streams on this property would be done," said Allison Austin,

See PIPELINE, page 9



TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

Little Red Bella, a Doberman pinscher puppy who is about 6 weeks old, is making slow progress.

Police complaint: Two suspects in homicide knew the victim Three suspects still awaiting extradition

By Robin Earl
TIME STAFF WRITER

New charges could be filed in the Jan. 8 shooting death of Fabian Jorge Sosa, once all of the suspects are extradited to Virginia, Warrenton Police Chief Michael Kochis said.

Two suspects, Antonio Nehemiah Ogburn and Alexander Golden, have been extradited to Warrenton from Detroit, Michigan, Kochis said, and two suspects — Jaden Lawrence Staples of Detroit, Michigan and Terrell

See HOMICIDE, page 8

Fauquier SPCA caring for animals seized from Canis Maximus kennel

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The thunderous barking of 10 or so adult Doberman pinschers greeted anyone who walked past the outdoor kennels around the back side of the Fauquier SPCA Friday morning. Some of the dogs have the flagpole-straight cropped ears one is used to seeing in the breed. Oth-

ers have ears that are at half-mast, making them look comical – cute rather than intimidating.

Dr. Elaine Lutz of Piedmont Pets Veterinary Care moved from one kennel to another, checking on the dogs.

Inside the Casanova shelter, row after row of kennels are filled with
See SPCA, page 2



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INSIDE

Business	13
Classified	35
Communities	30
Health and Wellness.....	21

Horse Sports.....	19
Opinion.....	10
Obituaries.....	33
Sports.....	15



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Fauquier SPCA caring for animals seized from Canis Maximus kennel

See SPCA, page 2

Dobermans of every age, French bulldogs -- both mature dogs and puppies -- a dachshund and a Cavalier King Charles spaniel.

The SPCA was closed to the public until Monday, Feb. 3, as it focused on caring for the urgent needs of the 78 dogs that were seized from the Canis Maximus kennel in Broad Run by Fauquier County sheriff's deputies. Also taken from Canis Maximus were 57 chickens, three turtles, two guinea pigs and a parakeet. Four veterinarians and the staff of 28 at the SPCA have been working non-stop to evaluate and treat the animals.

Irina Barrett, 41, owner of the Canis Maximus kennel on Beverleys Mill Road, was arrested Tuesday, Jan. 28, on one felony charge of cruelty to animals resulting in death and one charge of misdemeanor neglect of companion animals, said Sgt. James Hartman of the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office.

Hartman said, "The dogs were found to be in inadequate conditions and suffering from neglect, without access to food and water. The dogs were seized and taken to the Fauquier SPCA for care and shelter. In addition, several deceased animals, both dogs and poultry, were located on the property."

Barrett was released after paying a \$2,500 secured bond. Future charges are anticipated as the investigation continues, according to Hartman.

Healing hands

Devon Settle, executive director of the SPCA, sat with Little Red Bella on her lap. Bella is a Doberman puppy, about 6 weeks old. The puppy appears lethargic and disinterested in anything but snuggling head-first into Settle's lap. Settle stroked the tiny head. "I would have sworn this one wasn't going to make it," she said. "But she ate breakfast this morning. I cried."

Settle is keeping the recovering puppy in her office, where she can get the rest and individual attention she needs right now. "She's doing much better today," Settle said with obvious relief.

Little Red Bella has a way to go to catch up to her two litter-mates,



TIMES STAFF PHOTOS/ROBIN EARL

The condition of the adult Dobermans being held at the Fauquier SPCA varies. Some have severe illnesses and injuries; others are better off.

who are in an open pen in one of the rooms at the shelter. They are active and eager for attention.

The litter represents the various stages of health the dogs are in. Settle explained, "Some need medical care, but some just need a clean place to sleep, food and water. And love."

Dr. Elizabeth Krause is the vet in charge at the SPCA. She and three other vets have examined every dog. "We've seen a range of serious illnesses and injuries -- upper respiratory infections, lots of parasites. Some have minor old injuries; other injuries are newer and more severe."

Krause said that the injuries and illnesses are consistent with animals who have not had adequate space and shelter.

Krause said that she looked at the chickens when they arrived but admitted she's not an expert. The SPCA called in a vet who was more familiar with poultry. Some of the chickens -- the ones who are healthiest -- were settling into a coop on the SPCA property; others were being housed in another room at the facility. Settle said she was working to make the space as chicken-friendly as possible. "Unfortunately," Settle said, "we don't have a 50-chicken coop."

All in all, Settle said, the staff is managing. "We are all sleep-deprived, overwhelmed, but I have

See page 3 for story on arrest of Canis Maximus kennel owner.

heard no complaints. Lots of tears, but no complaints. I can't get the staff to go home. When they do go home, they want to take the dogs with them, but they can't. The staff is so glad to have these animals, to be working to help them heal. That's what we are here for."

Settle is pleased that many of the Dobermans are already looking healthier. "When they first came in, the puppies weren't playing. Most of the dogs look better now, more relaxed." She added that the French bulldogs were, in general, less ill than the Dobermans. "They were not as malnourished," she said.

How to help

Settle said she has received an outpouring of concern from the community, dozens of phone calls a day offering assistance. Some residents have been dropping off lunches for the overworked staff.

Settle said that the shelter still has some dog food left over from residents' generous contributions during another recent influx of dogs. Cleaning supplies are needed, though. She posted on the SPCA website, "So many have asked what we need to help care for all these animals. The shelter needs: newspaper, bath tow-



The Fauquier SPCA is currently caring for more than 50 chickens that were seized from the Canis Maximus kennel.

els, liquid detergent, powdered detergent and bleach. Both Walmart and Visa-type gift cards. All donations are greatly appreciated and of course tax deductible. Monetary donations can also be made below or on our website: www.fauquier.sPCA.com/how-to-help/donate-2."

Settle said, "It's not all about money, but monetary donations could be used to pay for the veterinary services."

The community wants so much to help, Settle said. She admitted that she is almost afraid to ask for what she needs. "If I say I need chicken feed, I'm afraid I'll get 900 pounds of chicken feed that I won't be able to use. If I say I need someone to take loads of laundry to the laundromat, I'll get 100 people the next day who want to do our laundry."

She is also getting calls from residents who want to adopt the dogs, but adoptions are not possible now. The animals are owned by Canis Maximus. The SPCA is only their caretaker at this point.

Even if a court hearing eventually results in ownership of the animals being transferred to the county, most are not healthy enough to leave the care of the shelter. For now, the animals will remain where they are.

In a pen in one room of the shelter was a mother French bulldog and her four tiny puppies; three are brown and one brindle colored. The mother dog was jumping up, eager for attention, but the puppies were sleeping, oblivious to any activity, piled contentedly on top of one another. "Don't take a picture of the babies," pleaded Settle. "Everyone will want one."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com

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How to reach us
ADDRESS: 41 Culpeper Street
Warrenton, Virginia 20186
PHONE: 540-347-4222
FAX: 540-349-8676
HOURS: 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.
weekdays, 24-hour
answering service
Publisher: Catherine M. Nelson,
540-347-4222
cnelson@fauquier.com
NEWSROOM
Managing Editor, Fauquier
Robin Earl, 540-347-4222
rearl@fauquier.com
Managing Editor,
Prince William
Jill Palermo, 540-351-0431

jpalermo@fauquier.com
Web/Copy Editor
Amanda Heincer, 540-878-2418
aheincer@fauquier.com
Community Editor
Anita Sherman, 540-351-1635
asherman@fauquier.com
Associate Editor
John Toler, 540-351-0487
jtoler@fauquier.com
Reporter
Coy Ferrell, 540-878-2414
cferrell@fauquier.com
Sports Editor
Peter Brewington, 540-351-1169
pbrewington@fauquier.com
Sports Staff Writer
Jeff Malmgren, 540-874-2250
jmalmgren@fauquier.com
Chairman Emeritus
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ADVERTISING
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Kennel owner arrested on animal cruelty charges

More than 120 animals removed from Canis Maximus in Broad Run

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

Fauquier County Sheriff's Office deputies seized more than 70 dogs on Tuesday, Jan. 28 -- mostly Doberman pinchers and French bulldogs -- from the Canis Maximus kennel, 6205 Beverleys Mill Road in Broad Run. More than 50 poultry and other companion animals were also removed.

Sgt. James Hartman of the FCSO said, "The dogs were found to be in inadequate conditions and suffering from neglect, without access to food and water. The dogs were seized and taken to the Fauquier SPCA for care and shelter. In addition, several deceased animals, both dogs and poultry, were located on the property."

Irina Barrett, 41, owner of the Canis Maximus kennel in Broad Run was arrested Tuesday, Jan. 28 on one felony charge of cruelty to animals resulting in death and one charge of misdemeanor neglect of companion animals, Hartman said.

Barrett was released after paying a \$2,500 secured bond. Future charges are anticipated as the investigation

continues, according to Hartman.

The police investigation began earlier in January, according to the search warrant, when a female Doberman pincher puppy named Yeva was left unclaimed at the Main Street Veterinary Hospital in Reisterstown, Maryland, and died there.

The Baltimore County Police Department conducted an investigation and determined that the dog exhibited signs of prolonged neglect. It was reported in the search warrant that the puppy was owned by Barrett.

The search warrant reveals that a Fauquier County deputy reported, "I have also viewed Yeva ... which ... appears emaciated and neglected ..."

Hartman said that the deceased dog "was transferred to the Fauquier Health Department Agriculture Laboratory for necropsy. Animal Control



IRINA BARRETT

deputies sought a search warrant for evidence of long-term cruelty and neglect possibly contributing to death. Preliminary results determined the dog did not receive adequate care and endured extreme suffering."

The kennel has been accused of animal neglect before. In a Jan. 22 *Fauquier Times* article, Fauquier County humane investigator Hilary Bogley said that she was the court-appointed humane investigator in January 2013 during a contentious case of allegations of abuse and neglect at Canis Maximus, which at the time was requesting a special use permit by the Fauquier County Board of Zoning Appeals.

In the report filed by Bogley, she described the kennel as a puppy mill -- defined by the Humane Society of the United States as an inhumane, commercial dog-breeding facility in which the health of the dogs is disregarded in order to maintain a low overhead and maximize profits.

Bogley's report said, in part, "We ... walked around the house to a room to the right of the garage where there were two 6-foot by 6-foot kennels. There was no ventilation in this room and again a strong stench of urine and feces filled the air. The walls were streaked in mud and feces. Both pens had urine-soaked newspapers with a good amount of

urine and feces. The dogs were unable to get out of their own waste.

"In the first pen there were four teenage Doberman puppies all that had dirty bandages on their ears from a current ear cropping surgery. In the second pen there were eight teenage Great Dane puppies. Several of the Dane puppies looked underweight, acted fearful/unsocialized, and several had severe to moderate hair loss/lesions that appeared to be generalized demodectic mange."

The report stated, "none of the dogs had food or water bowls or access to water and she [Barrett] explained that they make too big of a mess when they are permitted to have water so she only allows them to drink three or four times a day when she offers water."

Bogley reported at the time that there were approximately 50 dogs housed at Barrett's home.

Bogley recommended that the Board of Zoning Appeals allow Barrett to house no more than 12 dogs. The kennel owner sued Bogley and the foundation for \$1.35 million for defamation in response to the report. Bogley said that the kennel owner ultimately surrendered 12 of her dogs to the Middleburg Humane Foundation for adoption. Her request for rezoning was denied 5-0. The lawsuit against Bogley and MHF was ultimately dismissed.

School board weighs middle school options

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

School board members and school division staff once again discussed the problem of what to do about the county's middle schools at the board's work session Monday night.

Monday evening started with four options on the table but ended with only two.

Cedar Lee Middle School in Bealeton is being renovated and expanded by 258 seats, to make room for students who live close to Cedar Lee but currently attend Taylor Middle School in Warrenton. The school board has purchased land next to the school to make room for expansion and is planning to make a final decision on a contractor on Feb. 6, according to board member Donna Grove (Cedar Run District). "We're very close," she said.

The Cedar Lee project is slated to cost about \$17.5 million.

The school board agreed Monday to pursue the two options that would include expansion at Auburn Middle School -- of up to 300 seats -- to move students who live nearer to Auburn than their current Warrenton schools. Since Auburn was originally built with expansion in mind, school board members said this would be a relatively inexpensive way to add seats to the eastern end of the county and reduce the Center District middle school population. The Auburn project could run concurrently with the Cedar Lee construction; its estimated cost would be about \$10 million.

"Looking at the cost per seat, adding seats at Auburn really makes sense," said Superintendent of Schools David Jeck.

School board members said that expansions at Cedar Lee and Auburn would allow the school division to reduce the number of middle-schoolers in Warrenton, which is currently about 900. Once this is accomplished, the Warrenton students could be consolidated into either Warrenton Middle (option 3) or Taylor Middle (option 4). The resulting unoccupied building would be renovated and possibly expanded.

According to documents referenced at the work session, the price tag for renovating Warrenton Middle School is slightly lower, at \$25.6 million; that cost estimate does not include new road infrastructure that would be necessary if seats were added to the school. That price tag was estimated at \$600,000 to \$800,000, but could end up higher.

Taylor's cost estimate is \$27.6 million for renovation.

Susan Pauling (Center District) said that dropping off or picking up students at Warrenton Middle School on Waterloo Road is "a nightmare," and that fixing the problem could be difficult and costly.

She and Stephanie Litter-Reber (Lee District) also wanted to board to consider the community's interest in maintaining Taylor Middle School as a school. Taylor Middle has historical significance as the former William C. Taylor High School, the county's first black high school.

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TIMES STAFF PHOTO/ROBIN EARL

After being destroyed about six times since Labor Day, the sign erected by a Warrenton couple remained intact in November. "I think word got around about the cameras," one of the victims said.

Prosecutions of politically motivated vandalism linger after contentious presidential election

By Robin Earl
TIMES STAFF WRITER

The grainy, black and white video shows a camouflage-shaded jeep without doors or windows ramming a political sign. The driver, a young man, backs up out of the frame and then returns to drive his vehicle into the sign again. After several violent crashes, the sign falls and the driver disappears.

Information captured with the video said that the incident occurred at 1:30 a.m. on Sept. 6.

The sign was on the side of a road in Warrenton. It entreated passersby to vote for Democrats Joe Biden and Kamala Harris; it also said "Black Lives Matter" and "Stop killing Black people." The couple who put up the sign positioned a trail camera near the sign to record any potential vandalism. [The Fauquier Times does not typically identify victims of a crime.]

The couple said that vandals several times stole or defaced the Black Lives Matter part of the sign in particular. When a nighttime visitor cut the word "Black" out of the "Black Lives Matter" part of the sign, the couple nicknamed it the "box cutter incident."

The owners of the sign said that their sign was damaged about six times between Labor Day and Election Day. Each time the sign was defaced or destroyed, the owners let it stay that way for a few days before repairing it. "We wanted to let the neighbors see it smashed. There is symbolism there," one of the victims said.

Each time the sign was repaired, the cost was about \$700 in materi-

Damage to political signage 'about evenly split' between parties

Fauquier County Sheriff Robert Mosier said that there were 51 incidents reported to the FCSO this election season related to political signs -- 30 for thefts and 21 for property damage.

Nineteen of the incidents occurred in Scott District, 11 in Cedar Run, and seven each in Center, Lee and Marshall districts. He said he believes that the reported damage was split about evenly between supporters of Republican and Democratic candidates.

Mosier said that the 2020 presidential election may have spurred more of these incidents than usual. "There has been more activity this year. During my campaign (fall 2019), we had signs stolen, but I don't remember it being like this."

He said that he encourages citizens to make a report. "I think that in 2016 and again this year, there was underreporting."

He added, "If a citizen calls, we are going to take a report. We deliver fair and impartial law enforcement. People need to know that if they make a report, the person responsible will be held accountable."

As far as when residents must remove political signs, Cpl. A.T. Vescovi of the FCSO said that according to the Fauquier County zoning regulations, "Signs are allowed if erected no more than 90 days before nomination/election and removed within 15 days of announced results."

Fauquier SPCA

The Fauquier SPCA is a private, non-profit organization dedicated to providing a temporary refuge for stray, homeless and abandoned animals, and to placing such animals in a caring, appropriate home whenever possible.

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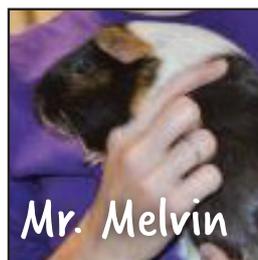
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is a male, Mini Rex, young rabbit.



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Claire's offers tent dining

Claire's at the Depot in Warrenton now has tent dining available. "Well ventilated and heated, with socially distanced tables, the translucent top allows sunlight to brighten the tent during the day and our bistro-style string lighting keeps the tent well-lit at night," the restaurant said in a post on Facebook. Customers can ask about tent seating when reserving a table by calling 540-351-1616.

PHOTO BY CHEF ANNA CROSSMAN, CLAIRE'S AT THE DEPOT

Prosecutions of politically motivated vandalism linger after contentious presidential election

SIGNS, from page 5

als. "Once we would fix the sign, it would happen again," said one of the victims. "We thought, 'Wow, this is a problem ...' When people see something they don't like, they feel free to trample on our rights."

She said, "We believe that there is ignorance in our community when it comes to race. ... It's time to reckon with our past and accept accountability for the way our country is."

In one incident, the couple's footage showed a man in a striped shirt pulling the sign down; then a person who looked like the same man came back two hours later to look around the area more closely. The victims thought he seemed to be looking for a camera.

On Oct. 4, video showed three young men – one without a shirt or shoes – pulled down the sign again. One of the victims said that he saw a phone fall out of one of the men's pockets during the incident. He found it in the mud the next day, in front of the destroyed sign. The screen was broken, the victim said, but he took a guess at the passcode and the phone opened to reveal its alleged owner.

After reinforcing the sign to withstand more abuse and installing better quality cameras, the victims' video captured six teenagers in two cars again attempting to destroy the sign on Oct. 11. The video shows what appears to be one participant recording the incident with a phone camera.

One of the victims heard noise out by the sign that night and thought, "Oh, we got hit again."

"That sign is like a lightning rod. It brings hate right here," said one of the victims. He asked, "How do we know that that video isn't being used to radicalize people? ... We think the Black Lives Matter on the sign sets them off."

In court

Connor Martin Rowe appeared in court Oct. 19 and was told by General District Court Judge Greg Ashwell to return Nov. 2 for an adjudicatory hearing regarding the Sept. 6 incident. After the Oct. 19 hearing, Rowe ap-

proached the couple whose property he allegedly destroyed to ask them if something could be worked out and the case could be dropped. He expressed remorse and said he would pay for the damages. He added that the incident happened in the early morning hours on Labor Day weekend and that he had been intoxicated.

The victims were open to a discussion and contacted the commonwealth's attorney about it, but did not receive a response before the Nov. 2 hearing. They were more interested in education than punishment, they said.

But Rowe did not show up for his Nov. 2 hearing and a warrant was issued for his arrest. He turned himself in on Nov. 4. He was held on a \$1,000 bond and has since been released, said Chad Brubaker of the Fauquier County Sheriff's Office on Thursday, Nov. 12. Rowe is scheduled to appear in court again on Dec. 12.

Two 19-year-olds have been charged with destruction of property for the Oct. 4 crime; the third has not been identified. One of the three, Wiley Steven Seville, has an adjudication hearing on the matter scheduled for Nov. 23 in General District Court.

Perspective

The couple said that their experiences have led them to research Fauquier's past; they are learning about the lives of Black people here and how inequality has manifested itself. "Did you know that at one point, 40% of Fauquier's population were slaves?" she asked.

The couple said that the experience hasn't been all negative. They said that after one incident, people driving by stopped to drag the heavy sign out of the road and prop it up against the hill.

Another time, a neighbor told one of the victims, "I want to let you know, I'm conservative, but I think I'll vote for Biden. This is wrong."

The victim shook his head and said, "People who are rational see how crazy this is."

Reach Robin Earl at rearl@fauquier.com