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Planners defer CARS vote pending clarity on conditions

Will consider again at April 1 meeting

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

Last Thursday's Orange County Planning Commission discussion was at times a discussion of semantics, legal opinions, planning law, county-imposed conditions and parliamentary procedure.

After more than an hour discussing the proposed special use permit application for a church-based residential drug and alcohol treatment facility at the Mountain View Community Church Orange campus, the commission again deferred a recommendation as it hoped to clarify conditions it may or may not place on the project.

In February, the commission heard from the applicants from Christ-Centered Addiction Restoration Services (CARS) on their special use permit application to construct and operate a residential drug and alcohol treatment center at the Raccoon Ford Road church campus. The subject property is eight acres and is zoned agricultural.

CARS is a not-for-profit corporation established to help men and women struggling with drug and alcohol abuse. It cites its mission as bringing, "restoration to lives destroyed by addiction," with a vision to "provide a safe environment to redeem and grow men and women in a holistic, Christ-centered

> See COMMISSION, page A8

Returning to his roots



PHOTO BY MORGAN EDWARDS

Farmer Michael Carter Jr. on his family's 150 acre homestead in Orange County. Carter has converted a portion of the land into fields where he specializes in Africulture, an organic agriculture practice based around growing African vegetables and crops, specifically ones found in the nation of Ghana.

Award-winning Carter brings Africulture to Orange County farm

BY MORGAN EDWARDS
Reporter

Michael Carter Jr. has a lot on his mind. He jumps from subject to subject but manages to weave each topic into the narrative of his life and the history of race in Virginia. It's an impressive feat. Peppering his answers with self-deprecation and hu-

mor, it's easy to tell that Carter is a natural storyteller with a mind for the big picture. He doesn't shy away from examining his place among Black farmers in the state and abroad. To him it's a necessary and vital topic of discussion.

Seated at a picnic table on his family's 150-acre plot of land just outside of Unionville, Carter is wearing a face mask

adorned with a farming vista. Next to him is a traditional Nigerian hoe used to till soil for planting crops. It's one of those late winter afternoons where the sun hangs around longer, but the wind stings at your skin like a swarm of bees. The first buds are beginning to appear on trees and the world threatens to burst into bloom at a moment's notice. Planting season is still weeks away, Carter remarks, his eyes twinkling

> See CARTER, page A2

> Little Zion marker dedication

Family and friends of Little Zion Baptist Church gathered Saturday morning for the dedication and unveiling of a new roadside marker honoring the church's 150-year history. Here, those assembled circle the marker as associate minister the Rev. Marvin Trice delivers a closing prayer. For more from Saturday's event, see page A5.



PHOTO BY JEFF POOLE

Orange industry honored

Lohmann at the forefront of COVID testing market

BY MORGAN EDWARDS
Reporter

Lohmann Corporation and Subsidiaries is boosting production at its Orange County manufacturing facility to meet the high demand for COVID-19 testing kits. According to a press release from the adhesive solutions and materials company issued last week,

the Virginia Economic Developers Association (VEDA) recently acknowledged Lohmann's success in its Cardinal Comeback series. The list recognizes companies and small businesses in the commonwealth that are helping to push the state out of the economic recession caused by the pandemic.

VEDA's entry for the company on its website states that Lohmann "has been operating at 100% through the pandemic by hiring new employees and continuing to produce many of the essential ma-

> See LOHMANN, page A8



A2 Obituaries
A4 Opinion
B1 Sports
B2 Church news

B4 Schools
B5 Events
B6 Classifieds

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Clarke case reclassified as murder

Orange Police Chief Jim Fenwick reads an update regarding the Samantha Clarke case in the community meeting room of the Orange Public Works building Friday afternoon. He's joined by Orange County Commonwealth's Attorney Diana O'Connell and Orange Police Investigator Adrienne Powell.

Photo by Morgan Edwards



Orange woman went missing in 2010

Investigators continue to seek information in unsolved disappearance

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

It's been more than 10 years since 19-year-old Samantha Clarke left her home on Lindsay Drive in the Town of Orange with only a house key, never to be heard from again.



Clarke

In a press conference Friday afternoon, Orange Police Chief Jim Fenwick said her missing persons case has been reclassified as an active abduction and murder investigation.

The chief wouldn't elaborate on the details that led to the change, except to cite "new information and advances in investigative and forensic technology."

He would not specify what that new information was, nor whether or not her body had been

found, referencing, "the sanctity and security of the investigation." He only added, "Information has pointed us in that direction."

For the most part, the press conference, attended by a handful of media representatives, town police officers and officials, was an appeal for information from the community that may help investigators close the 10-year-old case. No one from Clarke's family was in attendance.

"Orange is a small, yet close-knit community where what happens to one, happens to all," Chief Fenwick said. "Samantha's family and those in this community who know and cared for her, are hoping for answers about what happened to her. We have investigators working diligently on this case and are following up on every lead and tip we receive."

We continue to use every available investigative method, technology and resource to our unified goal of seeking justice for

Samantha's family."

In the late evening of Sept. 13, 2010, Clarke told her younger brother she was going to meet a friend and would be back the following morning. She was reported missing two days later and the chief said investigators have worked relentlessly and tirelessly on the investigation ever since.

"We believe some people who are familiar with the circumstances surrounding this case remain in our community as well as the communities surrounding us," he said, thanking those who already have been interviewed and signaling they probably will be interviewed again.

"We know there is likely information that has not been shared. Even if you have been interviewed already, or believe the information you have already been provided, we ask you to contact us," Chief Fenwick said, listing the department's phone number (540-672-1491), email (police@townoforangeva.org), and Instagram account (@orangepoliceva).

> See CLARKE, page A7

Schools extend all-virtual learning

OCHS athletics return after two-week break

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

Orange County Schools will extend virtual-only learning at least through the end of this month but returned to athletic practices and competitions Monday after a two-week break.

A post to the school website Thursday read, "Orange County Public Schools will extend virtual learning to Jan. 29, 2021, with ongoing re-evaluation. This learning modality will continue from Tuesday, Jan. 19 through Friday, Jan. 29."

In an update on the Orange County High School website Sunday, activities director Mike Neeley taped a video message announcing the schools'

> See SCHOOLS, page A8

More than 400 cases in January

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

While more than 1,400 vaccinations have been administered to Orange County residents—including 151 who are fully vaccinated—local COVID-19 cases continue to surge with 85 new positive cases reported over the weekend and 407 thus far in January alone.

As of Tuesday morning, Virginia Department of Health (VDH) figures showed 1,351 cases in Orange, with 55 hospitalizations and 16 deaths—one more than a week ago. Among those cases is another single-day high set

> See CASES, page A6

Board remembers Goodwin, solicits interest in open seat

Applications due by Jan. 29

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

The Orange County Board of Supervisors is accepting letters of interest from District 3 residents to fill the vacant seat of former Supervisor S. Teel Goodwin, who died Dec. 30.

At its first meeting since Goodwin's death, the board observed a moment of silence, followed by each board member sharing remarks about what Goodwin meant to them, in-

dividually, and the community as a whole.

District 1 Supervisor Mark Johnson, who served as a pallbearer at Goodwin's Jan. 6 outdoor funeral, offered the most moving remarks at the board's first meeting of 2021.

"Teel Goodwin leaves a really big hole in the middle of this board—literally and figuratively," he said, nodding to the middle of the board's dais in the Gordon Building meeting room.

"He was a quiet man, he didn't say

> See SEAT, page A7

> MLK Day food drives

A total of 4,100 pounds of food was donated to Love Outreach Food Pantry in Orange (1,100 lbs) and Lions Wilderness Food Pantry in Locust Grove (3,000 lbs) during the Martin Luther King, Jr. day of service food drive organized by the Orange County Democratic Committee and the Lake of the Woods Democratic Club. Volunteers included students from The Youth, Orange County's Young Democrats club. Additional donations of \$420 were collected for the Lions Wilderness Food Pantry. Pictured here, left to right at the LOW drive, are: Teri Vickery, Jeanne Allen, Deb Everett, PJ Regan and Elaine Abraham, For more photos, see page A6.



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A2 Obituaries
A4 Opinion

B1 County Living
B2 Church news
B5 Events
B7 Classifieds

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A local stop on The Lafayette Trail



PHOTO BY JEFF POOLE

James Madison's Montpelier, The Lafayette Trail, Inc., and the William G. Pomeroy Foundation held a ceremony last week dedicating the placement of a historic marker commemorating the Marquis de Lafayette's visits to Montpelier in 1824-1825. Pictured, from left, are: Julien Icher, president of The Lafayette Trail; Mr. Madison; Montpelier President and CEO Roy Young.

New marker commemorates Lafayette's visit with Madison

BY JEFF POOLE
Editor

Fifty years after the signing of the Declaration of Independence, American Revolutionary War hero Gilbert du Motier—better known as the Marquis de Lafayette—returned for a celebratory tour of the merging new nation.

Invited by fifth U.S. President James Monroe and the Congress, Lafayette—the last surviving Major General of the Continental

Army—visited the 24-state America from August 16, 1824 to September 7, 1825.

During that time, the French aristocrat and American war hero returned to Orange County to visit former president James Madison at his Montpelier home where the contemporaries discussed slavery and religious liberty.

Last week, James Madison's

> See **MARKER**, page **A8**

New directors will advance goal of structural parity

BY CLINT SCHEMMER
Culpeper Star-Exponent

To more fully represent enslaved people's descendants at the home of the fourth U.S. president, The Montpelier Foundation has added four more members to its board of directors.

The nonprofit foundation announced the change last week. Broadening participation by

> See **BOARD**, page **A8**

Orange votes against proposed Silk Mill paving project

Public-private partnership would have added much-needed parking

BY IKE PARRISH
Reporter

After hearing opposition from town residents, the Orange Town Council voted against spending in town funds to improve a parking lot project on privately owned land.

The Nov. 15 Orange Town Council public hearing featured a packed house as six citizens spoke out against the proposed budget amendment to improve parking at the Silk Mill complex on Madison Road. The proposed 2022 fiscal year budget amendment would split the total project cost with Silk Mill complex owner Kent Higginbotham. Three business owners within the Silk Mill complex, including Higginbotham, declared the need for additional parking and spoke in favor of the amendment.

The proposal in consideration, which has been in discussion for nearly a year, was for the town to pay only for the asphalt and Higginbotham to be responsible for all remaining costs associated with the project.

The proposed lot would have provided an additional 272 parking spaces for the 20 businesses in the Silk

> See **SILK MILL**, page **A8**

It's the holiday season...

Activities, opportunities abound

BY IKE PARRISH
Reporter

It may be one month until Christmas, but Orange County is getting ready for the holidays with a variety of events and activities beginning this weekend.

The festivities begin Sunday, Nov. 28 at 5:45 p.m. when the Town of Gordonsville will hold their annual Memorial Tree Lighting ceremony. Main Street will be closed to make way for a dance performance from the Brushwood's School of Dance and carols from visitors and town residents. Santa Claus will be there to visit with the children after the tree lighting.

The following weekend, LOVEOrangeVirginia will

> See **HOLIDAYS**, page **A2**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Gordonsville Public Works employees string Christmas lights on a tree in front of the town's visitors center. Gordonsville's Memorial Tree Lighting ceremony is scheduled Sunday, Nov. 28, at 5:45 in front of town hall.

Toy Box delivers Merry Christmas to local children

BY IKE PARRISH
Reporter

The holiday season may be right around the corner, but the Orange County Children's Toy Box (OCCTB) has spent nearly a year preparing for its 30th Christmas of providing gifts to the children of Orange.

The volunteers of the OCCTB are working hard to ensure that children in need of Orange County,

> See **TOY BOX**, page **A2**



A2 Obituaries **B6** Schools
A4 Opinion **B7** Events
B1 County Living **B9** Classifieds
B2 Church news

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2021 Orange Christmas Parade Sun., Dec. 5th at 4:30pm

Community Memorial Christmas Tree Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony

Theme: **Christmas in America...** How do you celebrate Christmas in America! Show us your red, white, blue and of course your GREEN!

Following the Christmas Parade at Taylor Park, Town of Orange

The lights on the tree are symbolic, and honor the memory of someone dear to you, someone you especially remember at Christmas time. If you would like to participate complete the coupon and mail back with a check.

Commercial Entry
Car/Truck/Van - Personal or Club Animal
Marching - Youth Group
Marching - Adult Group
Float-Youth
Float-Adult, Civic or Business
Float-Church

CATEGORIES

High School Band: 1st Place - \$100 Fire Unit: 1st Place - \$50
Middle School Band: 1st Place - \$100
Rescue Unit: 1st Place - \$50

I wish to contribute \$ _____ (\$20 or more) to endow a light.

_____ In Memory of _____

_____ This is a contribution only

Printed Name _____

Signed _____

Please mail this card with your check payable to:
Memorial Christmas Tree
Orange Rotary Club
PO Box 187
Orange, VA 22960
www.orangerotaryva.org



For Questions and Registration form visit the Rotary website at www.orangerotaryva.org or call Rita Beaudet at 540-672-0990 or Alina Kessler at 540-672-0153. Or email: orangerotaryva@gmail.com. All proceeds support Rotary's community service projects.

Rotary Club of Orange, VA