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MICHAEL MARSHALL

Charlie Black has restored a 1907 steam tractor with a long history in Crozet.

Ancient Tractor Steams into 21st Century

BY THERESA CURRY
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Steamboats were on the rivers and steam-powered locomotives were chugging across the country, but there were other, less visible uses of the power of steam in its heyday. “Steam engines were used widely for threshing, saw mills and plowing, really more for breaking up sod in the

Midwest and West than here,” said Crozet resident Charlie Black, “mostly because they had fields that were larger and flatter than ours.” Black owns a steam tractor that once belonged to his grandfather (also Charles Black). It’s a 15 horse-power 1907 Case tractor that’s remained in the Crozet area for all of its hundred-plus-year history.

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Virginia DOE Addresses Falling K-12 Performance

BY LISA MARTIN
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The Virginia Department of Education issued a report in May on the current status of its efforts to “restore excellence and close K-12 achievement gaps.” The report presents a series of facts about declines in student achievement levels on state

and national assessment tests in recent years, concluding that “Virginia’s trend lines on key measurements are headed in the wrong direction” due to lowered expectations and a lack of transparency and accountability from school officials.

Though Virginia students have historically scored well on state assess-
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School Board Denies Union, Surveys Employees

BY LISA MARTIN
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On May 12, the Albemarle County School Board voted 4 to 2 against adopting a resolution to recognize and bargain with the Albemarle Education Association (AEA) as a union representing teachers and other licensed professionals in the school division. A dozen or so teachers and parents spoke in favor of collective bargaining during the public comment period, and many more AEA supporters, dressed in “red for ed,” filled the auditorium seats, but the board was unmoved.

Board member Ellen Osborne asked about the costs to set up a collective bargaining system. School Board Attorney Ross Holden estimated that the cost for the division to set up an Office of Labor Relations and pay a director, office assistant, and labor relations negotiator/consultant, and to set aside funds for mediation in the event of impasses and to oversee union elections, could sum to

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MALCOLM ANDREWS

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Kyle Snow, Maya Proulx, Suzanne Youngkin and Governor Glenn Youngkin.

Hope's Legacy Honored with Spirit of Virginia Award

BY MICHAEL MARSHALL
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Virginia Governor Glenn Youngkin and his wife Suzanne Youngkin were in Batesville July 21 to present the third Spirit of Virginia Award to Hope's Legacy Equine Rescue and its founder Maya Proulx.

The Youngkins toured the farm, which lies along Castle Rock Road about 3 miles south of the village, with Proulx and volunteers, and met

horses being cared for before the presentation ceremony.

Kyle Snow, operations manager for the farm, spoke first, addressing a crowd of about 80 guests and farm volunteers.

"Hope's Legacy has, essentially, saved my life," he said. Snow retired from the military after 20 years and felt emotional stress upon leaving. He credited working with traumatized horses as therapy for himself. "I

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Montclair Plan Deferred as Neighbors Intensify Efforts

BY LISA MARTIN
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Residents of Western Ridge and other neighborhoods across Crozet have joined forces to draw Albemarle County officials' attention to a stream running across a parcel on Rt. 240 slated for development. The proposed development, called Montclair, is planned for a site on the south side of Rt. 240 immediately west of Wickham Pond. The project, first brought before the public in January, calls for two parcels totaling 17.5 acres to host a maximum of 157 units, plus 16,500 square feet of commercial space and 3.5 acres of green space.

A group of concerned and persistent Crozet residents have spent the last six months asking for information about the stream from Albemarle County planners and engineers, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers (USACE), and the Environmental Protection Agency, only to be presented with contradictory assertions and incongruous timelines that left

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Hidden in Plain Sight: The Reality of Human Trafficking

BY LISA MARTIN
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Most people think of human trafficking as a faraway problem, a misery confined to big cities or lonely deserts where organized networks of criminals use violence and drugs to collect souls. The residents of quiet communities like Crozet might believe the buying and selling of persons can be

happening only somewhere else, not here, but experts say it happens everywhere because it's carefully hidden, often by the victims themselves.

"I've learned that people tend to believe myths about human trafficking, and so they may miss it when it's happening in front of them," said Annette Cox, long-time Crozet resident and manager of the Victim

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Eli won again! See story page 22.

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Crozet Elementary School celebrated National Walk and Roll to School Day. See story page 15.

Voting in Albemarle

BY LISA MARTIN
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How are votes counted and reported in Albemarle County elections? What protections are in place to prevent fraud or simple mistakes? The optimal voting experience is easy and quick, but behind the scenes, Lauren Eddy and her team work hard to keep many gears turning smoothly.

Eddy is the county's General Registrar and Director of Elections, and she served for 15 years as Deputy Registrar before ascending to her current post in July. She helped implement recent changes in early in-person voting and no-excuse voting by mail, both mandated by new state laws during former Governor Ralph Northam's administration. Her office manages voter registration and all aspects of local and state-wide elections. It's an important job, and a big one.

Registrations

While election events are intermittent surges in the office's activity level, voter registration is a constant. "We have about 83,000 registered voters in" *continued on page 10*

A Tale of Two Cell Towers

BY LISA MARTIN
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Two applications for cell towers in western Albemarle County have been approved by the Board of Supervisors (BOS) recently, neither without controversy. The "Scrubby" tower near the intersection of I-64 and Greenwood Station Road was approved, though Ann Mallek (in whose district the

tower is sited) voted no. The "Batesville" tower, proposed for a site on the southwest border of the Miller School of Albemarle's property, was also approved even as neighbors claimed that proper procedures were not followed.

Scrubby/Greenwood Tower

Nicknamed for Brian Scruby, on" *continued on page 20*

Schools' Transgender Policy Guidance Changes Again

BY LISA MARTIN
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The Virginia Department of Education (DOE) under Governor Glenn Youngkin issued new "model policies" in September to guide local school divisions on matters pertaining to students' gender identities. The policies define a student's gender for purposes of official school records as

their "biological sex," prohibit school staff from concealing student gender information from parents, and require that a student may be referred to by a name and pronouns other than those consistent with their official record only if a parent requests such accommodations in writing.

Under the new guidance, transgender students will also be required to" *continued on page 24*

