

LoudounNow

VOL. 8, NO. 13

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FEBRUARY 16, 2023

County Amasses Western Loudoun Public Land

BY RENSS GREENE
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If the planned purchase of 143 acres just west of Purcellville for a new Western Loudoun Recreation Center goes through, it will tie together more than 700 acres of publicly owned land stretching from Round Hill to Purcellville, much of it parkland.

The swath of public land would begin just east of Sleeter Lake, where the Town of Round Hill owns 28 acres which hosts the 11-acre Sleeter Lake Park. The lake itself is about 100 acres and is privately owned by the

PUBLIC LAND
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Renss Greene/Loudoun Now

Loudoun County Supervisor Tony R. Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) stands on land the county is hoping to buy for a new Western Loudoun Recreation Center. If the purchase goes through, it will connect more than 700 acres of publicly owned land from Sleeter Lake to Woodgrove High School.



Alexis Gustin/Loudoun Now

The Woodgrove high school swim team practices at the Round Hill Aquatic Center in January. The team has to fit all of its swimmers in the four lanes at the center.

New Western Loudoun Rec Center to Bring Relief for Swimmers

BY ALEXIS GUSTIN
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County supervisors on Feb. 7 voted to buy 143 acres of mostly vacant land just west of the Purcellville town limits for \$6.9 million for the construction of a Western Loudoun Recreation Center.

And for many Loudouners, especially

those who swim competitively, the facility can't be built fast enough.

The land is just west of the Catoc-tin Meadows HOA and between Rt. 7 and West Main Street, across from the Loudoun Golf and Country Club and a short walk from Franklin Park. If the purchase goes through, closing will likely be this summer. The land is assessed at \$1.8 million.

"This is a huge deal for western Loudoun County," Supervisor Tony Buffington (R-Blue Ridge) said. "I can't tell you how many times I've been asked about the site for the Western Loudoun Rec Center. This is centrally located throughout western Loudoun, so it's easily accessible for

WESTERN REC CENTER
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JUNE 29, 2023

Byard Acquitted

School District Spokesman Found Not Guilty in Perjury Case

BY ALEXIS GUSTIN
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Following two days of testimony, the jury in the perjury trial of long-time Loudoun County Public Schools Public Information Officer Wayde Byard took just two hours to return a not guilty verdict Thursday, June 22.

Byard spoke to the media outside the courthouse after the verdict.

"I can't say I'm really happy because I expected this. Jennifer made sure this would happen, she assured me every step of the way. I felt confident in this, I felt confident in Judge Fleming and I felt confident that the jury was going to reach an impartial and fair verdict," he said. "And really, as far as happiness or elation, no, I feel relieved obviously."

He thanked his wife, Brenda.

"It's quite a thing after 42 years when your wife invests your life savings into your defense. She is courageous and I couldn't ask for a better life partner. She's just reaffirmed why I love her and she stayed by me," Byard said.

He said it was his wife's budgeting and planning that helped get them through the last six months while he was on unpaid leave from the division.

Byard said during his extended time off he did a lot of reflecting and decided he was no longer going to "put quarters into the outrage machine."

"I'm not going to make incendiary statements, I'm not going to give counter points to political views because that is what has got our community here and our nation here and I just don't want to be part of it," he said. "I really feel like I can put things behind me. I don't know what my future will be, my future is day to day."

Asked if he would return to the school division as the public information officer he said he would think about it tomorrow.

ACQUITTED continues on page 35



Chip Beck

Hillsboro got a jump on Independence Day fireworks Sunday night, but there are plenty of more opportunities to watch the pyrotechnic displays across the county in the coming days. See the full schedule of events on Page 18.

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YOUR FAVORITES
PULL-OUT SECTION
INSIDE

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JULY 27, 2023



It's County Fair Week

Mary Everett/Loudoun Now

Pigs were on parade during the opening night of the Loudoun County Fair on Tuesday as youngsters competed in the swine showmanship judging in the fairground's Show Barn. The fair runs through Saturday offering carnival rides, concerts, rodeos, a demolition derby—and lots more animals. Tickets are \$15 per day for adults and \$5 for kids, plus a one-time \$5 parking fee. The fairgrounds are located on Dry Mill Road west of Leesburg. For details and the full schedule of events, go to loudouncountyfair.com.

Pirnat Installed as Leesburg Police Chief

BY NORMAN K. STYER
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Leesburg government leaders were joined by law enforcement officers from across the region July 20 to witness Thea Pirnat take the oath of office as the town's next police chief.

Pirnat comes to the leadership post following a 23-year career with the Fairfax County Police Department where she most recently served as commander of the Organized Crime and Intelligence Bureau.

She officially began her command in Leesburg on Monday, taking over from Interim Chief Vanessa Grigsby. While Grigsby has twice served as interim chief, Pirnat is the first woman hired as a permanent police chief in town.

NEW CHIEF
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Norman K. Styer/Loudoun Now

Leesburg Mayor Kelly Burk affixes the chief of police badge to the uniform of Thea Pirnat during her July 20 swearing-in ceremony.

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