

Woolridge Athletic Association Golf Tournament

The Woolridge Athletic Association is holding its first fundraising golf event on Mon., May 12, at Birkdale Golf Club. The range opens at 11 a.m., and there is a 1 p.m. shotgun start. The cost is \$125 per player or \$500 per team and includes driving range, greens fees, cart, boxed lunch, dinner and prizes.

from **BLIGHTED**, page 2

Blighted homes don't meet the "threshold of being unsafe and [have] a higher standard of notification," explained Dupler. The owner is notified and asked to provide a plan of correction. If he fails to respond or the county doesn't believe his corrective action is sufficient, the matter goes to the planning commission for a hearing. The commission must agree that the property meets the legal definition in the blight ordinance and decide what is the appropriate remedy. If the property is determined to be blighted, the owner then has a public hearing before the county board. The commission and the board tend to be lenient and grant more time for the corrective action.

Another problem is staffing to enforce county ordinances. Salem Woods residents

from **SWIFT CREEK**, page 7

better growth management...we want minimum standards," she said.

"How much more time are we going to discuss this?" asked resident Greg Blake. The citizens "want you to take action...please get on with it."

Despite the incomplete data, some speakers said the board should go ahead and enact the plan, pass the corresponding legal ordinances to enforce the new standards, and tweak them later, if necessary. The commission scheduled a public hearing on the plan for June 3 before it votes on a recommendation to the board.

In an overview at the beginning of the

from **FIRE DEPARTMENT**, page 12

Edgehill Apartments. At one incident, we had a close call. On Buford Road, a house was on fire. It was 2 a.m. Firefighter Wes Jones went in the front, and I had a hose-line and went in the back. The situation was more advanced than we knew. As we went in, the house flashed over (meaning the entire building became engulfed in fire). We scrambled, escaping the same way we had gone in. We were very lucky to have survived."

Proceeds from the tournament will be used to purchase helmets for the association's football program. This year the association would like to replace all of the helmets because new helmets require less maintenance and offer more protection.

For information, visit www.woolridgeathleticassociation.org.

turned in 19 potential violations recently - 12 of them for abandoned vehicles - and the zoning department reportedly had difficulty responding to the demand. Salem Woods has been very active in improving its community, including setting up a neighborhood Web site.

Even for a large community like Brandermill, which has a \$2 million annual budget and a staff of about 20, maintaining the community is a top priority for the 3,700 homeowners. Brandermill usually has two employees assigned to enforcing covenants. Most older neighborhoods don't have paid staff and miss the advantage of having written covenants that specify standards for upkeep of their homes.

meeting, Gulley said he found it difficult to send an incomplete land use plan to the board, but added, "We're going to have to do that...There's been some discussion that the planning commission has been dragging its feet. That's absolutely not true."

The land use plan proposes a growth management area where development is deferred to sometime in the future. The plan endorses that "additional rezoning for residential and commercial development within the recommended growth management boundary should be discouraged until public facilities,

Honaker served at both the original Buford Road station and the current station on Polo Parkway. The station on Buford Road was operational from 1948 until 1989 when the new station opened.

Today, the Bon Air Volunteer Fire Department, also known as Company 4, proudly protects approximately 25,000 people living in an area of approximately 12 square miles. The combination department consists of 12 career firefighters employed by the county

from **LETTERS**, page 23

school with them?

Mr. Rajah, to my knowledge, never followed up with the person who made the comment. If he was really offended, he should have followed up immediately with the person he believed made such a comment or with the committee facilitators.

In reference to Mr. Rajah's comment, "They didn't want their children to go to school with those heathens," the word "heathens" was whispered by a committee member as a sarcastic remark to another committee member at the end of a frustrating meeting. This person was referring to a group of non-committee parents who came to that meeting. The meeting got out of control when they invited themselves to be a part of our work process, in the attempt to make sure that we didn't propose moving their children to a school that is currently under capacity by 200 students. The person immediately apologized to those who heard the comment, and apologized again at the end of the meeting. No one ever called children heathens or said we didn't want our children to go to school with them. Mr. Rajah did not hear that statement firsthand. I believe he was told about the incident from someone who had his own personal agenda.

People misinterpret what is said all the time.

sufficient for orderly growth and development in this portion of the county, have been extended into the area." In the past, the idea of setting aside a deferred growth area has caused opposition among some affected property owners.

Several speakers alluded to the controversy over two plans - the one initiated by the commission on Feb. 19 which is scheduled to reach the board in July and the board plan, proposed later by Matoaca Supervisor Marlene Durfee and passed on a 3-2 board vote, which must be to the board by June 9.

Former Commissioner Will Shewmake

and 32 volunteers. Career firefighters man one engine, which provides Advanced Life Support, and an ambulance during weekdays. Volunteer personnel operate a Basic Life Support engine and a brush truck. The company responds to over 1,000 calls per year.

Bon Air's history hasn't been without tragedy. In 1999, the company lost one of its fellow firefighters in the line of duty. Bradley McNeer, 22, was killed when the fire engine

I believe that is the case here. The volunteers on this committee gave their time and energy to try to find a solution for a school that was built in the wrong place. We were concerned about finding a workable solution for all students. No child was ever discriminated against. We had to work with ineffective facilitators and inaccurate data. It was predicted four years ago when the site for the school was approved, that neighborhoods would be pitted against each other. That's exactly what has happened.

There are too many other critical issues that need to be addressed with our school system. Let's stop the accusations and move on.

Sharon Ritter Woodlake

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sided with not rushing the plan. "I agree with [Midlothian Supervisor Dan] Gecker," he said. Gecker voted against initiating a board plan.

But Mike Harton, who worked with Durfee on a citizen group last year, criticized some members of the commission. "I don't know why some of you are politicizing this issue out of proportion," he said.

Gulley, who supports the commission timetable and has termed two plans as "confusing," responded, saying it was part of the job as a commissioner to accept public criticism.

he was riding in crashed on Old Buckingham Road while responding to a gas leak. A portrait of McNeer hangs in the Memorial Room at the Eanes-Pittman Public Safety Training Center. A scholarship has also been established in his honor.

The company celebrates its anniversary on May 10 in tandem with Bon Air Victorian Day. The parade that day will feature vintage fire equipment. For more information, see the box on page 12.

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