

NORTH OF THE JAMES

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ARE ALL BETS OFF?

Ground Game May Beat the Odds



BEFORE THE BENCH



Todd DuVal, Esq.
McDonald, Sutton & Duval

Each month, Todd DuVal, who has been practicing law for almost 30 years, will answer legal questions you may have so you can make the best decision about your representation in court.

A frequently asked legal question is “What is marital property and what is separate property?”

Every state determines its own answer to that question. In Virginia, if you are married, everything either of you acquires by your active efforts after the date of marriage is marital property, and it doesn't matter whose name is on it. Marital interests in retirement and other financial assets such as IRA accounts, savings, stocks purchased, real estate purchased, etc. begin the date of marriage. Separate property is property held in the name of either party individually, or otherwise owned individually by either party prior to marriage. Inheritances are separate property. A house solely owned by one party prior to marriage, regardless of whether it becomes the marital home, is still separate property.

The difference matters only when the parties get a divorce. The Courts cannot touch an individual's separate property. Marital property is what is divided up by the Courts between the parties if they cannot agree upon a distribution for themselves. That's the easy part. What happens when the two kinds of property are mixed up together? We call that commingling, and it opens up the can of worms that looks like most divorces. If your interest in this subject is more than curiosity, you might want to call a lawyer.

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TABLE of CONTENTS

- 4** **DIVERSIONS** **Excursion to Crabtree Falls**
For anyone seeking a springtime escape, I have the perfect suggestion: Crabtree Falls in Nelson County. We went for the waterfall hike, but lingered for all the other attractions in the area. Below I've listed a few must-see things along the way.
- 6** **COLUMN** **Spring Events**
Bellevue Porchella Redux, A Taste of Brookland Park Boulevard, 31st Annual Bellevue Garden Walk
- 8** **HIDDEN HISTORIES** **Of Luddites, Fascists and Futurism**
Percy Shelley contended, many years ago, that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. That's probably not true, but they can certainly cause problems. Take the wild-eyed Italian poet Filippo Marinetti: his Futurist Manifesto helped pave the way for Mussolini and the Fascist movement that would sweep Europe in the decades to come, leaving millions dead in its wake.
- 11** **RECOGNITION** **North of the James Entered into the Congressional Record**
NORTH of the JAMES was honored to recently discover that we have been entered into the Congressional Record on our 25th anniversary. A very special thanks to Senator Tim Kaine for doing this. We are humbled.
- 12** **COVER STORY** **Are All Bets Off? Ground Game May Beat the Odds**
In the architectural rendering of the Cordish casino proposal for the Bow Tie property, there looms an illuminated monolith of steel and glass that appears to rise a full 20 stories, dwarfing every other building for miles around. To put that in proper perspective, our City Hall, by comparison, is 19 stories tall. This edifice would forever change the cityscape along Arthur Ashe Boulevard and the sheer magnitude of this proposed casino is staggering, along with the unwieldy traffic it would generate. Citizens, civic associations, business owners and others are waging a ground game to defeat this proposal.
- 20** **RESTAURANT REVIEW** **Eat My Eggroll**
Eat My Eggroll bills itself as VA's first and only Egg Roll Shake Shop, with "Big dope Egg Rolls & other things you can bite, the Ultimate Munchie Truck." Exactly. But local chef and owner Bradley Gallier creates much more than snack food in his tiny metal truck. His may be the oddest menu I've ever seen. Yes—eggrolls, but there's more than one way to stuff an eggroll.
- 22** **BOOK REVIEW** **Three Not-So-Weird Sisters**
I had witches on my mind, having just finished Alice Hoffman's "Magic Lessons," when I received "The Once and Future Witches." I couldn't wait to dive in.

Cover image: photo illustration by Doug Dobej

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DIVERSIONS

Excursion to Crabtree Falls

by FAYERUZ REGAN

THE GLOBAL PANDEMIC may have curbed parties and international flights, but it revitalized a true American pastime — the road trip. For all the blessings there were in spending more time at home, escaping the sameness of it all saves us from restlessness.

This past year, our family filled its calendar with trips to semi-remote places to avoid crowds. Lately, I'd been craving a good hike. Prior to our move to Richmond, I'd been spoiled by the mountainous terrain of California. I found Richmond to be relatively flat, save for Shockoe Bottom and some trails around the James River. Charlottesville seems to have the big hikes. I'm hoping a reader will prove me wrong.

For anyone seeking a springtime escape, I have the perfect suggestion: Crabtree Falls in Nelson County. We went for the waterfall hike, but lingered for all the other attractions in the area. Below I've listed a few must-see things along the way.

DON'T FEAR THE REAPER

Soon after exiting I-64 en route to the falls, you'll pass a scene that seems straight out of Ireland. A grist mill from the 1700s sits atop rolling green hills and a winding stream. Made of stone and logs, it's breathtaking and happens to be a U.S. Historic Landmark. Cyrus McCormick invented the reaper, which revolutionized American farming. Stroll through his farm on bridges over streams, see his basement workshop and keep an eye out for the resident tabby.

KITSCHY COUNTRY STORE

Before winding up mountain roads to get to the falls, you'll encounter a handsome log cabin-style building. The Montebello Country Store is a dream pit stop. Taxidermy at every corner, and coffee. There's a variety of Virginia-made fudge, honey sticks, "White Trash" Chex Mix and more. There's a large hutch lined with mason jars, featuring Southern mainstays by the Montebello Country Store itself. From pickled beets to chow chow, peach salsa to homemade vinaigrettes — campers and locals alike came to stock up.

THE MAIN EVENT

Crabtree Falls is a dramatic place. Before you even reach the trailhead,



you encounter a small graveyard. The Fitzgeralds left no trace of their existence by Crabtree Falls, though the family of ten grew up in a log cabin overlooking the area in the mid-1800s. All that's left are the graves of the parents Achilles and Mary Elizabeth "Betsy" Fitzgerald, and two of their daughters. Both their names were Mary; one of whom died at five, the other in infancy.

The waterfall itself seems never-ending. Upon entering, there's a stunning drop where water crashes into a pool. But hike a little further, and you'll see that yet another waterfall fed into the one you just passed. And yet another. Throughout the modest 1.7 mile hike, there are sweeping views of the falls at every turn. Along the way your trails are laced with giant ferns and bellflowers.

SOMETHING FISHY

Fish culturists Darren Poole & Richard Fitzgerald run the Montebello Fish Hatchery, just minutes down the road from Crabtree Falls. Built in 1930, visitors are welcome to come see their spring-fed system where they raise trout. And since trout swim upstream, you can watch them run through the hilly, built-in raceways.

WHERE TO EAT

Depending on whether you stop to eat

before or after your hike, Dr. Ho's Humble Pie is off 64 between Louisa and your 118A Exit for Crabtree Falls. A place beloved by locals, it serves up a variety of what they call "alternative" pizzas, like the "Annie Oakley" which features buffalo chicken and pickled jalapenos. Or the "Lil Mermaid" with shrimp and homemade pesto sauce. But that's not my reason for going. If you're a fan of quality, homemade ranch dressing, they sell their addictive concoction by the pint and quart. If you leave without one, you will have wasted half the reason for going. Pack a cooler, buy at least a pint and thank me later.

BRING A CAMERA

Words won't do justice for the type of dilapidated beauty you will find. For all the natural beauty of winding roads and well-kept farmhouses, you'll find forgotten structures that are just as intriguing. Abandoned churches with torn steeples against the backdrop of the Southwest Mountains. Boarded up train stops that are easily one hundred years old. We could not resist the urge to poke around where we probably shouldn't have. Bring a camera and make sure it's charged. Blink and you might miss something.

Happy trails. 📷

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Taste of Brookland Park Boulevard on May Day

NO BETTER WAY TO celebrate May Day than a Taste of Brookland Park Boulevard. From noon till five on May 1, hundreds strolled up and down Brookland Park Boulevard, sampling food, drinks and ice cream, chatting, listening to music, wearing face masks, enjoying this mid-way mark between the Spring Equinox and the Summer Solstice. A block-long line waited patiently in the mild weather for a scoop of bliss from Ruby Scoops Ice Cream & Sweets, which was pretty much the case outside of Ms B's Juice Bar and half-a-dozen other eateries.

Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney Colette Wallace McEachin was there enjoying the festivities while doing a little stumping for this November's election.

"We're on historic Brookland Park Boulevard and this has been one of the places where African-Americans were first able to prosper once they moved out from the center of the city," she says. "I'm out here enjoying the people, the businesses, the food, and letting people see their Commonwealth's Attorney on the street."

Denise Lewis and Zanas Talley, both Northsiders, are absolutely thrilled by what has happened on Brookland Park Boulevard over the past ten years.

"It is nice to see it rejuvenated," says Denise Talley, who had served as principal at Chandler Middle School a few years back. "It's nice to see it coming back," Zanas nods. "It's got all these quality shops and these restaurants and minority-owned businesses," he says. "There's a real sense of community here, which is just great."

Anthony Tucker, owner of Nomad Deli and Catering Company, stands beside tables and a tent on the parking lot next to his building. People are seated, eating his food. "It was six years today that I opened," he tells me. "It's a wonderful thing to see what's happened on Brookland Park. We've been busy all day long."

Starting June 1st, Nomad Deli will be joined by Big Herm's Kitchen (located in the heart of Jackson Ward on Two Street) for Sunday dinners, which will be held the first Sunday of each month.



"We'll be out here doing food, outdoor seating, all the good stuff," says Anthony. "I love the Northside."



Above: Cold Harbor playing blue grass on Fauquier Avenue.

BELLEVUE PORCHELLA RETURNS MAY 15

Bellevue Porchella, which sprang to life last October, was the brainchild of Brooke Ullman. From 1 pm till 7 pm on May 15—with May 22 as a rain date—Bellevue Porchella returns. What's more, this day of local music for Bellevue resident will likely repeat in the early fall, becoming a semiannual event in the Northside. People are urged to wear masks, to practice social distance and to visit our local community of businesses on MacArthur and Bellevue Avenues. More than 20 bands and musicians from Bellevue are scheduled to play on May 15. "The hope is that Porchella can happen in the spring and fall, growing as the pandemic recedes, and bringing the community together for the powerful shared experience of connecting through live music," says Rob McAdams, who was instrumental in putting together Porchella.

Above and left: The sidewalks were teeming with neighbors for a Taste of Brookland Park Boulevard.

Below: One of the fifteen gardens on display on the Bellevue Garden Walk.

31ST ANNUAL BELLEVUE GARDEN WALK

Fifteen gardens of all shapes and sizes were featured on this year's Bellevue Garden Walk held on April 25, a day too perfect to describe—warm, clear, no humidity—and the streets were filled with people masked and strolling. For the past 31 years Bellevue residents have opened their backyards to neighbors and friends, revealing their gardens that are usually concealed behind privacy fences. It's a great way to get ideas for your own garden, and, more importantly, to get to know your neighbors. **NJ**



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Of Luddites, Fascists and Futurism

by JACK R JOHNSON

PERCY SHELLEY contended, many years ago, that poets are the unacknowledged legislators of the world. That's probably not true, but they can certainly cause problems. Take the wild-eyed Italian poet Filippo Marinetti: his Futurist Manifesto helped pave the way for Mussolini and the Fascist movement that would sweep Europe in the decades to come, leaving millions dead in its wake.

A great fan of drinking and high speed sports cars, Marinetti opened his Manifesto with a description of a race car accident in which he flips into a ditch because he is forced to break for much slower, tottering bicyclists. After he finished railing at the bicyclists, Marinetti used the crash as an emblem of what was wrong with his culture, and argued vehemently that nothing should impede his race to the future. Originally written in 1909, the manifesto was meant to cleanse the culture of a world order that by the turn of the century had exhausted itself. It starts there, with a love of new technology, but tends towards a much darker place; toward masculine aggression, and violence.

"Literature has up to now magnified pensive immobility, ecstasy and slumber," Marinetti wrote. "We want to exalt movements of aggression, feverish sleeplessness, the double march, the perilous leap, the slap and the blow with the fist."

Then, he turns up the rhetoric.

"We want to glorify war—the only hygiene for the world—militarism, patriotism, the destructive gesture of the anarchists, the beautiful ideas which kill, and contempt for woman."

And louder still...

"We want to demolish museums and libraries, fight morality, feminism and all opportunist and utilitarian cowardice."

With a few alterations, our slightly addled Marinetti could be swaddled in the clothing of the Proud Boys. His infantile love of technology is no less compelling than his utter disregard for anything that smacks of mediation or consideration for others.

"We declare that the splendor of the world has been enriched by a new



beauty: the beauty of speed," according to Marinetti. "A racing automobile with its bonnet adorned with great tubes like serpents with explosive breath...a roaring motor car which seems to run on machine-gun fire, is more beautiful than the Victory of Samothrace. We want to sing the man at the wheel, the ideal axis of which crosses the earth, itself hurled along its orbit."

If this extravagance seems vaguely familiar, we might recall that Elon Musk of Tesla and SpaceX fame, burnt through 90 million dollars to literally explode one of his Tesla automobiles into orbit. Rose Eveleth of *Wired* magazine makes the case that the difference between Musk and Musk-wannabes and the dark dreams of Marinetti from a previous century are very slight, indeed.

"If Marinetti could have lived to see Elon Musk launch a red Tesla to space, he would likely have been beside himself with joy," wrote Eveleth.

She continued, "But Musk and his colleagues should heed the warning that the Italian Futurist movement pro-

vides. This love of disruption and progress at all costs led Marinetti and his fellow artists to construct what some called 'a church of speed and violence.'"

There's also an equivalent and frightening thread of anti-history that runs through Marinetti's discourse and our contemporary technologists and 'futurists' of today. No less a figure than Henry Ford declaimed with brute simplicity: "History is Bunk!" The cofounder of Waymo, Anthony Levandowski, opined on the value of history for *Wired*: "The only thing that matters is the future. I don't even know why we study history. It's entertaining, I guess—the dinosaurs and the Neanderthals and the Industrial Revolution, and stuff like that. But what already happened doesn't really matter. You don't need to know that history to build on what they made. In technology, all that matters is tomorrow."

That's both incredibly arrogant, and naïve. If Levandowski or Ford had only studied a bit of history, they might have realized that the love of technology, efficiency and 'progress' divorced from context and compassion, led to

the worst dystopic nightmares of the last century; and may well do so again.

Indeed, even beyond the obvious technical advancement necessary to develop the weapons of mass death we've unleashed since Marinetti penned his angry manifesto (nuclear bombs, anthrax, nerve gas, napalm, etc...), we might recall the history of IBM's more conventional work on the Nazi census. It presents a chilling lesson for even superficially benign technical improvements. In service of the Nazi regime, IBM's German subsidiary customized its Hollerith punch card systems to allow the government to classify, track, and sort people based on categories like "Jewish." In fact, the numbers tattooed on the arms of many Nazi prisoners were their Hollerith codes, which allowed them to be neatly accounted for in the database. Of course, this goes without mentioning Bayer chemical (formally, IG Farben), which provided the Zyklon B gas used in the extermination camps.

Certainly, technology provides enormous human benefits, as well, but these benefits can be a double-edged sword, as the examples above illus-

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HIDDEN HISTORIES

trate. In South Africa, a similar situation occurred when IBM was again asked to help systemize their hated 'passbooks'. Without irony, IBM built an identity registration program named the 'Book of Life'. According to the Nation, "This system provided pretext for stop-and-frisk-style police domination and harassment and for managing an exploitable, racialized labor force." Such programs based on demographic profiles are now in the hands of almost every major corporation on Earth.

Another, perhaps more immediate concern, is the displacement of the labor force itself. If the goal for fascists is national glory through war and an unfettered future of technological advancement—that, not incidentally, could also make the upper strata extremely rich—it often comes at the cost of a decent living for those with much greater concern for their own existence in the present. This has been a concern of labor since the very beginning of the Industrial Revolution.

For example, the infamous Luddites of the 17th century, often ridiculed for their refusal to accept technological advancements, were wisely considering the negative impacts the 'advanced technology' of the day was having on their lives. They rebelled and were viciously put down—just as Marinetti would have desired.

Yet, despite their modern reputation, the original Luddites were neither opposed to technology nor inept at using it. Many were highly skilled machine operators in the textile industry. They confined their attacks to manufacturers who used machines in what they called "a fraudulent and deceitful manner" to get around standard labor practices of the day: to provide for fair pay, apprenticeship programs, quality products and a decent amount of time off. The influential historian E.J. Hobsbawm called their protests, "collective bargaining by riot."

At heart, their fight was not really about technology, at all. The Luddites were happy to use machinery—indeed, weavers had used smaller frames for decades. What galled them was the new logic of industrial capitalism, where the productivity gains from new technology enriched only the machines' owners and were not shared with the workers.

Like the Luddites of yore, the people that work our systems today are often under paid, especially when considering the enormous wealth that is aggregated at the top of the technological pyramid. Amazon workers

packaging gifts from across the oceans barely earn more than minimum wage themselves—and in some documented cases wear diapers to amend bathroom breaks—while Jeff Bezos, sitting atop this technological pyramid, is one of the richest men on Earth. A gig worker catching Uber calls has no retirement, no healthcare, and if something should happen to his vehicle, he won't be able to survive at his 'gig.' This gig economy has become so pervasive that economists have coined a new term for all the folks dependent on it—the "precariat", a conflation of precarious and proletariat.

Unfortunately, this isn't confined to app-based 'gig' workers either. As Meredith Whittaker notes, "Across all job categories, workers are being hired, surveilled, controlled, and assessed by opaque algorithmic systems tuned to maximize employers' objectives. A start-up called Argyle is even creating a kind of worker credit score by aggregating employment data across jobs. The company sells this information to businesses for use in hiring, along with other data that is also sold to insurers and lenders."

When you consider the blight of international workers who spend lifetimes constructing chips for phones they would never be able to actually afford, being surveilled by the very same chip technology they are suffering to produce, the system in place today is far worse than what the Luddites rebelled against over a century ago.

And, just as the Luddites, we're living through another period of technical upheaval. The question we need to put to technology lovers and futurists of today is how are they going to react when their technological advancements displace hundreds of thousands of workers, and under pay thousands if not millions more? Will they react with paranoid surveillance and violent suppression of revolt? Will they ignore or imprison the thousands of workers with no jobs and no social safety net? In short, will they follow the dictates of Fascism? Or will they finally begin to share equally in the benefits of our technological revolution? We know the answer Marinetti and his Futurist Manifesto would have offered—it led to two bloody world wars, and millions of deaths. Let us hope our current crop of technophiles and futurists begin to read and appreciate their history—and maybe even learn from it.

RECOGNITION

North of the James Entered into the Congressional Record



Congressional Record

PROCEEDINGS AND DEBATES OF THE 116th CONGRESS, FIRST SESSION

November 5, 2019

CONGRESSIONAL RECORD—SENATE

S6389

I was absent but had I been present, I would have voted on rollcall vote No. 322 the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 328, David John Novak of Virginia, to be United States District Judge for the Eastern District of Virginia.

I was absent but I would have voted No. 323 the confirmation of Executive Calendar No. 348, Robert J. B. U.S. District Judge for the Eastern District of New York.

ADDITIONAL STATEMENTS

TRIBUTE TO RANDY MCGUIGAN

Mr. BOOZMAN. I rise today to recognize Randy McGuigan, a man of dedication to farm families and rural communities. Randy has spent his life and passion for agriculture as president of the North of the James Farm Bureau.

As a third-generation farmer, Randy has made advocating for the farm his life's calling. He has served on the Lost Cane in Mississippi, continues farming on his wife Thelma's farm in North Carolina, soybeans, rice, wheat, and more.

His commitment to the farm has extended beyond his own farm. Randy has been a leader in the American Farm Bureau, serving in numerous positions at the local, state, and national level. He is currently serving on the U.S. Department of Agriculture's Trade Advisory for Tobacco, Cotton, and Peanuts.

For 11 years, Randy has been the helm of Arkansas Farm Bureau. He worked to advance the interests of farmers and ranchers. As a member of the Senate Agriculture Committee, he has been blessed to have helped craft farm bills and support Arkansas' agricultural industry and strengthen rural communities throughout our state.

I am grateful for the friendship and advice that Randy has built, for his service on behalf of the State's farmers and ranchers, and for his time as president in ending his advocacy for agriculture.

I wish Randy and Thelma many successes in this next chapter of their lives.

100TH ANNIVERSARY OF THE NEVADA FARM BUREAU FEDERATION

Ms. CORTEZ MASTO. Madam President, I come forward today to recognize the 100th anniversary of the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation. Founded in 1919, the Nevada Farm Bureau Federation has been a source of inspiration and support for farmers and ranchers in Nevada for over a century.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH OF THE JAMES MAGAZINE

Mr. KAINE. Madam President, I want to wish a happy 25th anniversary to North of the James magazine and congratulate it on reaching this milestone. I want to thank editor Charles McGuigan and all who worked tirelessly to make the publication what it is today. The magazine started off in a garage in Richmond's North Side neighborhood. It has been exciting to see the news outlet grow and become an integral part of the community it serves. North of the James has served as a unique, hyper-local voice that Richmonders can relate to. This is evident by the loyal readership in the area throughout all these years.

I am proud that this year, Charles McGuigan was awarded first place for the feature writing portfolio by the Virginia Press Association. He also was awarded second place for the feature titled "Kaitly Kasper: Blazing into that Good Night." I was proud to be featured by the magazine in 2012, and I was humbled to be among great Virginians, like Oliver Hill, who have been on the cover over the years.

Local news is a vital part of our communities. Whether it is keeping readers informed about art exhibits and food or shining a spotlight on Virginians, we are grateful for North of the James' dedication to serving Richmonders for the past 25 years. I know they will keep up the great work.

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floor, Kay took on an outdated Senate rule of her own by leading the successful effort to force the Senate to allow women. Making the Senate a welcoming place for everyone is a goal she is going to continue to pursue. Her efforts made it a little bit better for senators for years to come.

is an inspirational role model for girls and young women in Virginia. I often encourage my daughter to run for office at her events. I doubt that many of them now would have the courage to do so.

most sympathies are with the ones I am grateful for her service to her State and our country. I am proud to continue to serve the U.S. Senate.

25TH ANNIVERSARY OF NORTH OF THE JAMES MAGAZINE

E. Madam President, I want to wish a happy 25th anniversary to North of the James magazine and congratulate it on reaching this milestone. I want to thank editor Charles McGuigan and all who worked tirelessly to make the publication what it is today. The magazine started off in a garage in Richmond's North Side neighborhood. It has been exciting to see the news outlet grow and become an integral part of the community it serves. North of the James has served as a unique, hyper-local voice that Richmonders can relate to. This is evident by the loyal readership in the area throughout all these years.

I am proud that this year, Charles McGuigan was awarded first place for the feature writing portfolio by the Virginia Press Association. He also was awarded second place for the feature titled "Kaitly Kasper: Blazing into that Good Night." I was proud to be featured by the magazine in 2012, and I was humbled to be among great Virginians, like Oliver Hill, who have been on the cover over the years.

Local news is a vital part of our communities. Whether it is keeping readers informed about art exhibits and food or shining a spotlight on Virginians, we are grateful for North of the James' dedication to serving Richmonders for the past 25 years. I know they will keep up the great work.

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NORTH OF THE JAMES WAS honored to recently discover that we have been entered into the Congressional Record on our 25th anniversary. A very special thanks to Senator Tim Kaine for doing this. We are humbled.

NORTH of the JAMES began publishing in November of 1994. In the intervening years scores of talented writers, designers, and photographers have worked diligently to produce a magazine that has consistently been read

cover-to-cover. We have also had a devoted team of delivery personnel who ensure that the magazine is delivered directly to the front door of households in neighborhoods north of the James. Over the years we have received numerous awards from the Virginia Press Association, and from NotJ's inception, we have always been committed to our local business community. Our deepest thanks to our readers and advertisers—we would never have been able to do it without you.

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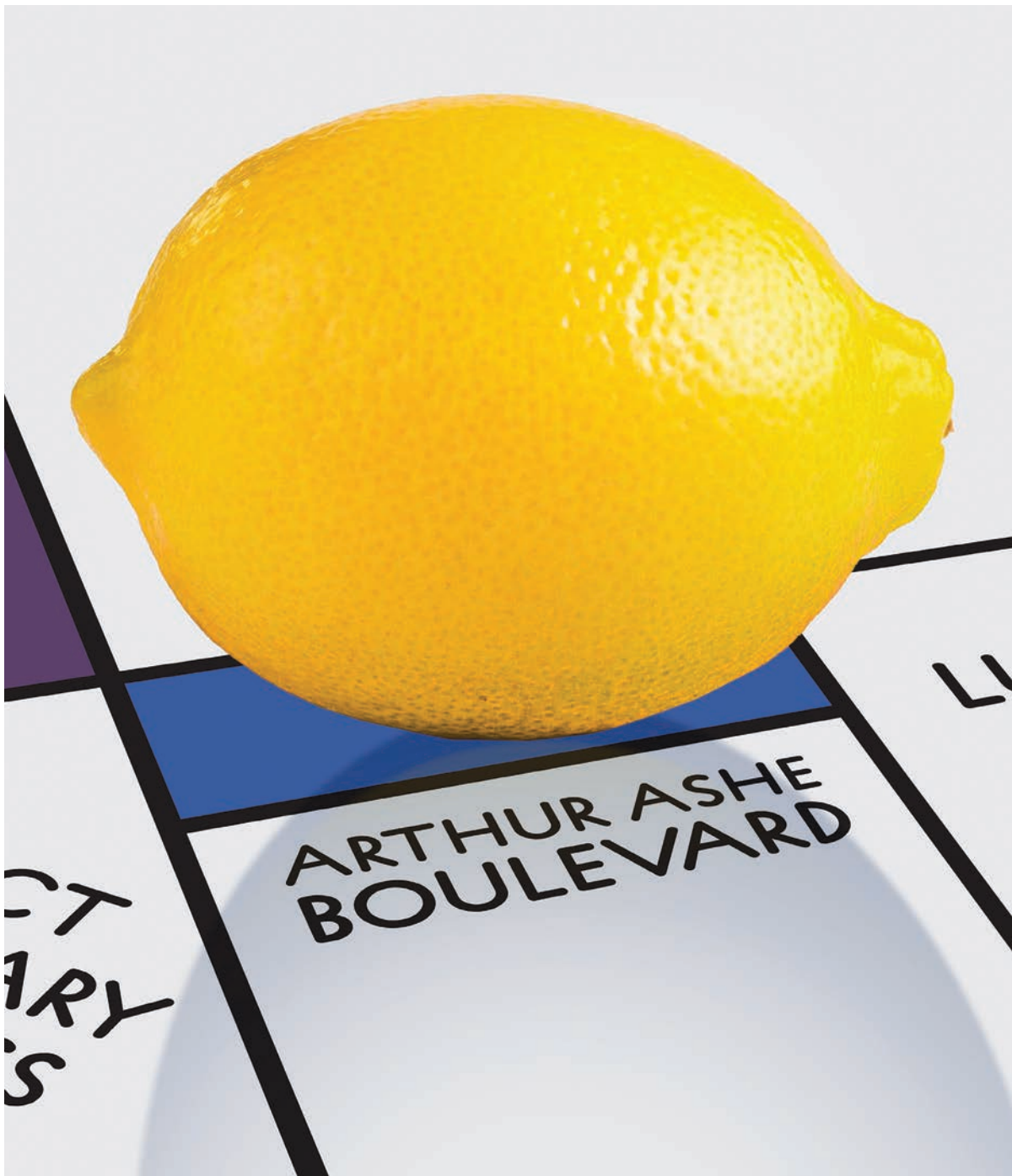
IN THE ARCHITECTURAL RENDERING OF THE CORDISH CASINO PROPOSAL

for the Bow Tie property, there looms an illuminated monolith of steel and glass that appears to rise a full 20 stories, dwarfing every other building for miles around. To put that in proper perspective, our City Hall, by comparison, is 19 stories tall. This edifice would forever change the cityscape along Arthur Ashe Boulevard. And the historic building constructed in 1887 as a factory where locomotives were assembled, a structure which was meticulously renovated by Bow Tie a little over ten years ago to house its theatre complex, is conspicuously absent in the rendering supplied by Cordish; yet another piece of Richmond history to be erased. At the eastern end of the property where there stands a seven-acre grove of trees, one of the last green spaces in that area of the city, not a stump appears to remain.

THE SHEER MAGNITUDE of this proposed casino is staggering, and the amount of traffic it would generate on three peak days each week would turn Arthur Ashe Boulevard into a crawl space. You may remember the name Pierce Homer. He served as the Virginia Secretary of Transportation for Governors Tim Kaine and Mark Warner. Before that, he was the deputy county executive for Prince William County where he oversaw land use, transporta-

tion and economic development. You may also recall that he chaired the Navy Hill Commission, which ultimately helped defeat the Navy Hill Project. “That was a very, very tough assignment,” says Pierce. “I think a lot of the members of the commission were disappointed that there wasn’t more forthright information coming from the city or the developer of the project.” Now, Pierce is lending his support to oppose the Bow Tie casino proposition.

by **CHARLES MCGUIGAN**



“I’ve tried to stay focused on just the transportation element of this which is quite significant for all of Northside, not just the immediate neighborhood around it,” he says.

But Pierce also invites me to grasp just how massive the Cordish development would be.

“Understand how big this project is,” says Pierce. “It’s 1.9 million square feet. And what does that mean? Well, Short Pump Town Center is 1.3 million square feet. Short Pump may have a bigger foot print, but for transportation purposes square footage is an indicator for traffic. The city has gone into this not having done any independent traffic studies or analyses of any of the sites.”

He then returns to the traffic the proposed casino would bring to Arthur Ashe Boulevard, which is often congested.

“Let me give you another metric,” Pierce says. “On busy days, three times a week, the Cordish folks anticipate there would be 10,000 visitors to their site. What does 10,000 visitors look like? That’s a sell-out crowd on July 4 for a Flying Squirrels game.”

Pierce then describes the parking garage Cordish has indicated for the site. “The proposal initially said 3,500 parking spaces,” he says. “That’s a gigantic structured parking garage. More recently, I’ve seen in at least some of their statements that they may be talking about 4000 parking spaces.”

When you consider these three “metrics”, the impact on Arthur Ashe Boulevard would be devastating. “One point nine million square feet; ten thousand visitors; four thousand parking spaces. This is a very, very, auto dependent development, like Short Pump. Short Pump doesn’t work if people can’t get there by car. So you’ve got the same thing here. This is a magnet to draw cars and there’s been no attention on the local level about those impacts.”

Anyone who lives in the Northside, Scott’s Addition, or the Fan and Museum districts knows full well that Arthur Ashe Boulevard becomes stop-and-go often enough already. In pre-pandemic times, traffic making a left hand turn onto Leigh Street to enter MovieLand was often backed up over the hump, sometimes all the way back to the Diamond. That would be the same route casino goers would use.

“You’ve got to get off 95 at that terrible interchange,” Pierce explains. “You’ve got to go south on Arthur Ashe which at peak hours is already not a lot of fun, and then you’ve got to turn left on Leigh Street. Just think about queuing distances to get 4000 cars into there with one entrance point. Just think about a Squirrels game.”

The way the City administration has approached the casino reminds Pierce of other projects it has touted.

“I think one of the issues here, once again, is process,” Pierce says. “The City has known for over a year that a casino is a possibility at the same time they were updating their comprehensive plan. They made a deliberate choice not to consider the casino as part of the comprehensive plan, and instead have opted, once again, for this very opaque, closed-door negotiating process which looks and feels very much like Navy Hill, like the Redskin Training Camp, like Stone Brewing. And so I think the process deserves mention here, and it’s not a good process.”

Even if the Mayor’s panel does support the Bow Tie project, there are a number of hurdles the proposal will still have to clear. “It will then require a City Council vote,” Pierce says. “And then it requires a conditional use permit and there’s always the possibility for litigation, and there are folks out there who are reviewing those opportunities. And so this may very well be a long drawn out battle.” Then, of course, there is the referendum come November on casinos anywhere in Richmond.

Consider the ultimate defeat of the environmentally destructive Atlantic Coast Pipeline, a fight which was won by civic resistance. “People won because they fought it every inch of the way,” says Pierce. “Bow Tie’s just a terrible location for a project like that. I’ve tried to advise the neighborhood folks. The simple mantra some of them use is ‘Casinos don’t belong in neighborhoods.’ They’re front and center on the grassroots work.”

MARTIAL BATTLES are won by ground wars. But on civilian battlefields, ground games rule. Consider Stacey Abrams who ran one of the most effective ground games in Georgia history. Her grassroots effort created a formidable voting bloc that delivered Georgia’s electoral votes along with the state’s two Senate seats in the runoff election to President Joe Biden.

And remember President Barack Obama, the man who built the largest grassroots organization in the history of American politics? He learned early in his political career out in Chicago about the importance of a ground game, which requires non-stop canvassing, and engaging with actual constituents.

Residents from across the Second and Third Districts seem to overwhelmingly oppose the Bow Tie location for a casino. The same holds true for many local business owners. They are all ramping up their ground game.

Not long ago, the Ginter Park Resident’s Association (GPRA) conducted a simple survey of its members. “We did two questions and then we had a comment section, so people could give feedback,” says Prudence Justis, GPRA president. “We asked for names, addresses and emails because we wanted to make sure they were residents in our neighborhood, but we also

wanted to make sure the poll wasn't being stacked or stuffed. We wanted to make sure it was honest and fair."

The results were an overwhelming thumbs down to the casino. "Ninety-four percent did not want the casino at the Bow Tie location," Prudence says. "And 83 percent said no to a casino anywhere in the City."

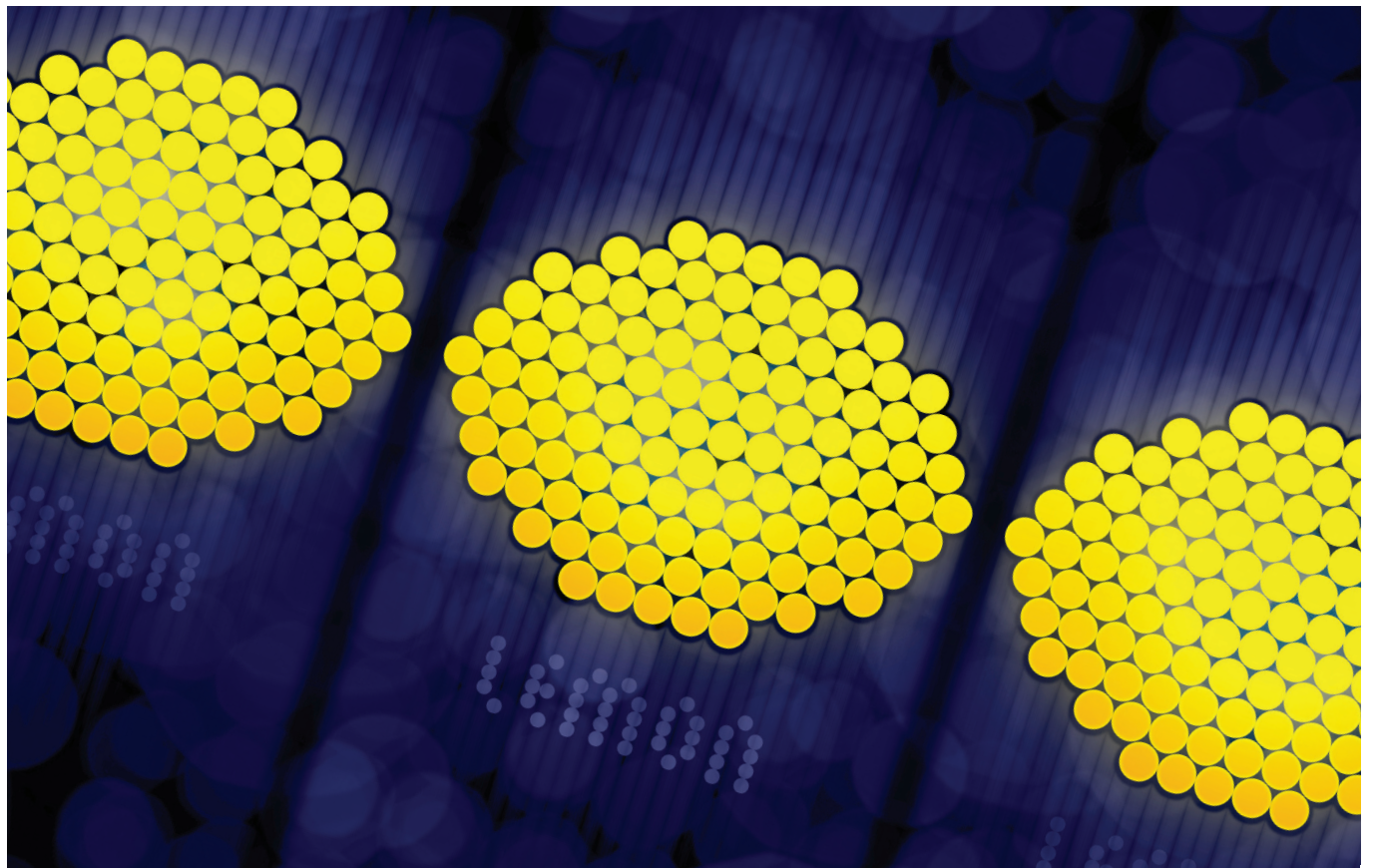
Comments left by the respondents are concise, and strike with the force of iron.

"I'm not anti-gambling in general," one respondent wrote. "But casinos are specifically designed to isolate its patrons from the outside world and direct their focus solely to the task of putting down their money, again and again, in an open-ended engagement without a cost ceiling or time constraints (as opposed to paying a fixed ticket price to attend a two-hour movie or concert). For those patrons with underdeveloped impulse control skills, it weaponizes their addiction. It also has a disproportionate financial impact on the economic classes that can least afford it. It is a form of the trickle-down economic fallacy that has been rightfully discredited and should be actively discouraged."

Another Ginter Park resident wrote, "Scott's Addition and surrounding areas are booming with great new businesses full of dreams. Instead of letting this area develop properly to benefit us all, in accordance with the new Richmond 300 plan, we have this godawful casino proposal, a place where dreams go to die . . . I am concerned about traffic, as well as damage to nearby restaurants and small businesses; I, for one, will avoid the area like the plague. A new casino in any part of Richmond would change the character of the city I have known and loved all my life."

Yet another respondent, drawing on his own experience, had this to say: "When I was working in King of Prussia, PA about 10 years ago, a casino opened next door to where I worked. It was a horrible blight on the community in every way. No riches were realized for anybody except the out-of-town company running the thing. The people going in and out looked miserable and desperate, not carefree and excited. I hope to never have to see something like that on a daily basis again."

JEANNE WALLS, a gifted organizer who recently headed up the opposition to another casino location near Stratford Hills—a location that was ultimately rejected—is lending her support to Northsiders. "We're going to strategize how we can help Northside," she says.



And by so doing, she believes she will be helping the city as a whole.

"I don't want regional casinos anywhere in our city," says Jeanne. "The city doesn't need them. We need to figure out another way to make money other than bringing the trash to town. The city and our mayor and a few others tried to pit Northside against Southside, and there's never been a competition in that at all. We obviously wanted to defeat Bally's being here, but we didn't want casinos anywhere. Northside doesn't deserve it; the Eighth District doesn't deserve it either. These choices were made for us, these decisions were made for us by the legislature. We didn't have a vote in that. It's dirty politics. They brought it in, and kept it under the rug."

Jeanne was frankly surprised by how many people in the Stratford hills area were unaware of the plans to build a casino in their backyard. "You have no idea how uninformed people are," she says. "These are business people, smart people that do not read the newspaper any more. They don't watch the news any more. I was amazed by the amount of people that were not aware of this going on."

She remembers when she planted the first NO Casino sign in her front yard just over a month ago. "People would stop and say, 'What casino?' They did not know the damned thing was going across the street from Stratford Hills."

So she and other volunteers hit the ground running. "We did a feet-on-the-street campaign," she says. "We had postcards printed up that had a list of all of the council people and the

mayor that we should be contacting to say we don't want this."

Once informed, the community's response was unprecedented. "I'm telling you," says Jeanne. "The neighbors came out of the woodwork."

Their ground game penetrated the entire community. "We strategized what neighborhoods to hit," Jeanne says. "We knocked on doors to make them aware of what was happening right under their noses. And it worked. We obviously had a lot of online social stuff as well, but feet-on-the-street is what did it. Actually talking to your neighbors is what works."

Jeanne is now lending her wisdom to Northsiders. "We're ready to fight this to the finish as well," she says. "We don't need this mess. This is not the answer. This is a Band-Aid, and a damned poor Band-Aid at that, for our financial problems."

Jeanne was critical of her Fourth District representative on City Council. "We never saw Kristen Larson," she says. "We had no representation. We never saw her, she wouldn't respond."

RANDEE HUMPHREY, one of the people heading up the ground game in Northside, is a Laburnum Park resident. She penned an eloquent letter to the City of Richmond's Resort Casino Evaluation Panel, and to Richmond City Councilors.

"As a Richmond resident for 37 years, I am writing to express my adamant opposition to the 1.9 million square foot resort casino proposal by The Cordish Companies on the 17-acre site cur-

rently occupied by the Bow Tie Cinemas at Arthur Ashe Boulevard and West Leigh Street. Using the panel's evaluation criteria, I feel strongly that the project fails to meet basic and critical qualifications.

"The proposal fails to show 'design creativity and quality of development' and does not demonstrate that it 'complement(s) or is compatible with the neighborhood and Richmond's culture and existing businesses'

"The Live! casino proposal is inarguably out of touch with the surrounding sense of place that has evolved through the organic, locally-driven, and decades-long devoted vision, energy, and investment of merchants, residents, and entrepreneurs of Greater Scott's Addition. The Cordish plan of development shows no respect for historical context or the local character and culture of the surrounding neighborhood and is over-scaled for the limitations of its geographically bound 17-acre parcel. This is not your 'little casino around the corner,' but a gargantuan, densely planned monstrosity towering over Arthur Ashe Boulevard, completely out of context with the 'complete streets' and scenic 'garden city' character described in the adopted Richmond 300 master plan.

"The proposal fails to achieve 'compatibility with land use principles.'

"The Live! casino does not 'enhance the public realm and create a sense of place,' nor does it fulfill the City's land use prescription and primary uses in a transit-oriented development for 'retail/office/personal services, multi-family residential, cultural, and open

space.” In fact, to its eastern boundary, the Live! development would be adjacent to the Southern Park described in the Richmond 300 master plan as a “public space with sports fields and active-use areas for youth with integrated green infrastructure that supports water quality.” Casinos by their very adult nature are not family-friendly destinations, and the Cordish plan is not the least bit convincing in its portrayal as a wholesome, synergistic addition to the fabric of midtown RVA. In stark contrast, VCU is pursuing expansion of its Athletic Village, in collaboration with professional baseball and in concert with the stated land use goals of Richmond 300.

“The proposal fails to achieve a “level of community support for proposed development and location/site” or demonstrate “economic development value of the proposed Casino and potential for community reinvestment and redevelopment in an area in need of such (e.g., potential to act as a catalyst for additional economic development in the area; level of need for such a catalyst in the corresponding area).”

“The Cordish proposal and its loca-

tion is opposed by a majority of the local community living and working within a 2-mile radius of the site. Residents have expressed grave concerns over the impact of this development on traffic and congestion, as well as its potential limited positive impact on nearby locally-owned businesses. The proposal fails to demonstrate a real knowledge of and commitment to the inclusion of local businesses in its business plan, and shows a complete disregard for real traffic impacts from Interstate 95/Exit 78 and along Arthur Ashe Boulevard/Hermitage and West Leigh Street corridors. The nearby residential neighborhoods distrust the Cordish Companies’ avowed commitment to local community benefits; the adage “a rising tide lifts all boats” does not apply in the case of casinos, which are designed as self-contained, all-purpose destinations that extract, rather than build, local wealth. With decades of evidence of local private investment in residential housing and small businesses, the Greater Scott’s Addition/Boulevard neighborhood does not need a casino as a catalyst for further development.

“Absent is any compelling “plan to mitigate any potential adverse effects on the neighborhood and community that may be caused by a Casino (generally (e.g., problem gaming initiatives) and traffic and parking mitigation plans”

“First of all, any proposed urban development that must include mitigation plans to offset the adverse negative impacts of such development makes no logical sense. Why would the City even engage in a process that begins by addressing the downsides of a potential development? The serious adverse traffic and congestion impacts on the nearby residential communities are hardly inconsequential or easily addressed with parking garages and weak arguments of “counter-cyclical uses.” And the potential social impacts resulting from problem gaming behaviors have been well-documented and cannot be “mitigated” by self-exclusion programs or employee training to help “identify clientele at risk of problem gaming.”

“Finally, I want to make clear that I am opposed to a casino in any location where the nearby neighborhoods ob-

ject to its development. For Richmond’s Northside, where I’ve resided since 1984, the Cordish proposal is just another example of the City chasing after a short-term gain of promised revenue at the expense of its own residents and the longer term viability of neighborhoods and local businesses. While I understand the City’s need for additional revenue sources, I have to wonder why we are not more creative in finding multiple solutions that have a cumulative positive impact on the health and prosperity of all Richmonders.”

Randee tells me that a total of 14 civic associations had recently polled their membership, and opposition to the casino was astounding.

“For the most part, these organizations are polling 85 to 95 percent opposition to Bowtie,” she says. “We know they have come out very firmly against the casino at Arthur Ashe and Leigh.”

HERE’S A LIST of the civic associations Randee mentioned: Bellevue Civic Association, Edgehill Chamberlayne Court Civic Association, Ginter Park Residents Association, Hermitage Road Historic

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District Association, Rosedale Civic Association, Sherwood Park Civic Association, Fan Area Business Alliance, Fan District Association, Hartshorn Community Association, Historic West Grace Street Association, Monument Avenue Preservation Society, Newtowne West Civic Association, Oregon Hill Neighborhood Association, and West Avenue Improvement Association. “And there is some indication that Battery Park will do a poll soon,” says Rande.

“For me it boils down to three things,” she says. “The first is my fear that we are expecting a casino to be a generator of economic prosperity. I feel that instead, small businesses in Scott’s Addition, in the Northside, the Fan District and in Carytown will be cannibalized. It is not likely that there will be spillover economic benefit. I love the fact that Scott’s Addition has grown so naturally and organically and the character of that neighborhood seems to me so in keeping with the entrepreneurial spirit of what we love about our small businesses in Richmond. I can’t envision us putting everything we built up at risk.”

“Number two is traffic concerns,” Rande tells me. “I am terribly concerned about the congestion we already experience on a daily basis along that north-south corridor (Arthur Ashe Boulevard). And we can expect a considerable increase in traffic and congestion. Those roadways were just simply not built for the kind of volume that Cordish is predicting. We’re also talking about motor coaches from out of the area.”

And Rande’s third point is about the very nature of casinos. “Casinos and neighborhoods are just not compatible,” she says. “It’s just flat out inconceivable to me that we would place a casino resort within a two-mile radius of dense, heavily populated neighborhoods. Casinos are not family-friendly destinations, no matter how they portray themselves. Casinos by their very nature extract wealth, they do not build wealth.”

JONATHAN MARCUS, president of RVA Coalition of Civic Associations, has tracked the citizen response to the Cordish proposal. “We have spoken with eighteen neighborhoods and none have come out in support,” he says. “Most of the neighborhoods have done some sort of survey of their membership. Opposition across all the neighborhoods that have done the survey is running about eighty to ninety percent opposed. It’s a



very broad opposition to the casino at Movieland.”

Jonathan recalls a zoom meeting he had with a Cordish executive. “He made statements like we’re going to donate \$200 million dollars over fifteen years to social justice causes,” he says. “This is someone I met on a zoom call for fifteen or twenty minutes who was expecting me to believe that some guy out of nowhere is going to come up with \$200 million. I said, ‘That’s very interesting, can you at least put a letter of intent in writing for me?’ And this Cordish executive said, ‘No we can’t do that.’”

If the name Cordish rings a distant bell, there’s reason for this. “Supposedly David Cordish, who’s the scion of the Cordish family, is friends with Donald Trump,” says Jonathan. Cordish’s son, Reed, a Baltimore-based developer, actually served in the former president’s administration as assistant to the president for intergovernmental and technology initiatives.

Jonathan wonders why the City does not seem to be following its own guidelines. “The original request for proposal (RFP) issued by the City stipulated that any casino proposal must have community support,” he says. “The Cordish proposal at Bow Tie fails to meet this simple requirement. I can’t even think of any issue that would generate eighty or ninety percent agreement. That level of opposition is astounding.”

2ND DISTRICT Councilor Katherine Jordan has listened to the resounding “No” from the people

she represents.

“They don’t want it,” she says. “And overwhelmingly I’m hearing they don’t want a casino period, anywhere in the city.”

The reasons she opposes the Cordish site are myriad. But she settles on four.

“One, overwhelmingly my constituents do not want this,” Katherine begins. “Two, Scott’s Addition is already thriving with locally driven development. Three, the traffic concerns that have been brought up have not been adequately addressed. Four, I’m not a proponent of gaming in general, let alone a casino.”

Katherine urges constituents far and wide to voice their opinion on this proposal. “I encourage everyone to continue sharing their feedback with our City Council, with the selection committee, and with our mayor,” she says.

Though there is extremely strong opposition to the proposal in the 3rd District, Councilor Ann-Frances Lambert is not taking a firm position on the Bow Tie location.

“I’m still on the fence because again it’s two proposals they’re negotiating with the City right now,” she says. “I’m not saying yea or nay for either one because I want the City to get the best out of the proposals.”

“I want people to take a breath,” Ann-Frances adds. “This is the process that’s in place so I’m going to allow the process to happen. But at the end of the day, you know, if most of my constituents don’t want it, so shoot I’m not going to want it.”

For most of us, our home is our biggest investment. I’ve spoken with a number real estate agents I know who fear the Cordish proposal could reduce property values in nearby neighborhoods.

The other day, I created a mental scenario. In it, I was talking with a real estate agent because I was looking for a new house. The place she was going to show me looked nice enough and it was in a neighborhood much like Bellevue. In this fictitious scenario I was prepared to sign a contract and put down earnest money, until the agent, who was very honest, said this: “One thing you should know, there’s a casino going in less than two miles away from that house.” I capped my pen, elbow-bumped her elbow and thanked her for her time. Who, after all, wants to live near a casino? The short answer, and the long answer, is: no one; no one at all, in Richmond at any rate.

The National Association of Realtors back in 2013 released a study that indicated property values in neighborhoods near casinos plummeted by up to ten percent. The same study characterized the impact of casinos on the housing market as “unambiguously negative.” In summary, the report stated, “In general, externalities of congestion and other social costs appear to have a negative impact on home values in the immediate area of a casino.”

IT’S NOT JUST homeowners who oppose the Cordish casino. Area merchants, whether they own yoga studios or restaurants, also strongly oppose the Bow Tie location for a casino.

Alex Graf, owner of ZZQ Craft Barbecue in the heart of Scott's Addition, is adamantly opposed to the Cordish plan.

"It has no place being here," she says. "I think the self-contained-ness of it is not going to benefit Richmond at all. It's literally like a cruise ship. It's not going to be a sensitive development. Nothing about it is going to relate to our city."

Alex refers to a recent poll conducted by the Scott's Addition Boulevard Association. "The SABA poll has 77 percent of us saying no," she says. "But they will not take an official stand. It's disappointing. I would like them to take an official stand against the casino."

Alex was part of the new commercial and residential awakening in Scott's Addition. She had an architecture firm there in 2011, and three years later began doing barbecue popups at Ardent Craft Ales. Three years ago, she opened the brick-and-mortar restaurant on West Moore Street.

"Scott's Addition is no place for a casino," says Alex.

Over on Arthur Ashe Boulevard, the owner of Janet Brown Interiors also opposes the casino.

"I don't think there's any plus to it," Janet Brown says. "I have not spent a lot of time at casinos, but the few times I've been it hasn't been a very desirable lot. My feeling is I don't think there's any positive to it; I think it's only negative."

Nearby neighbor Chris Haynie, owner of Happy Trees Agricultural Supply, agrees. "I am not enthusiastic about it at all," he says. "I don't trust these casino owners funneling profits away from the community."

He faults the City for not having carefully vetted the Bow Tie proposal. "I think my primary objection to the casino is lack of proper planning," he says. "When they're talking about having an extra ten to twelve thousand people in the city on three prime traffic days a week in an area where it's already hard to park and move around, that's a problem. For us as business owners I fear it could adversely impact our customers willingness to come here, if they know it's going to be a giant cluster on the way in and out. They might just go somewhere else."

And it's the institution itself that seems completely out of step with the Scott's

Addition community. "I also don't necessarily agree with a 24-hour gambling and alcohol spot being right down the street from neighborhoods," says Chris. "I don't know, man. It's similar to what they did with Navy Hill, they got this big greed sign in their eyes and they're like, 'Let's do it.' But they didn't think about how it would affect the community."

We step out onto the sidewalk, as cars come to a halt at a traffic light. Chris looks to the north and then to the south. "I don't think anyone or our block supports it," he says. He looks across the street at one of the locally owned restaurants that have made Richmond a foodie destination. "They're talking about putting in eighteen restaurants at that casino," says Chris. "None of that's going to help the local community. One of the things I like about Scott's Addition is there's really nothing corporate here. If I want lunch I walk over to En Su Boca, or I go to ZZQ, or Lunch or Supper. It's a very unique independently owned and operated neighborhood, and I don't think that putting eighteen restaurants in a casino is going to be great for the neighborhood."

Then he watches the traffic, which is now backing up several blocks. "I also don't think the City's really grasped what all that traffic is going to do," Chris says. "It's not only going to be vehicle traffic, it's going to be people extremely intoxicated on alcohol, and they might not be in the best mood or they might be blackout drunk"

Less than two miles north of Scott's Addition on MacArthur Avenue, Bob Kocher, who owns Once Upon a Vine, is clear in his opposition to the Cordish project.

He remembers a meeting with Cordish representatives that was hosted less than a month ago by the Bellevue Merchants Association and held behind his business. "I asked them about some of the problems I heard about in the casino in Baltimore," Bob says. "They skated around the issue, they wouldn't give you a direct answer."

"I am opposed to the casino at Bow Tie for several reasons. Number one," he says. "The crime rate—robbery and prostitutions—that goes along with it, and the influx of drugs which also goes along with it."

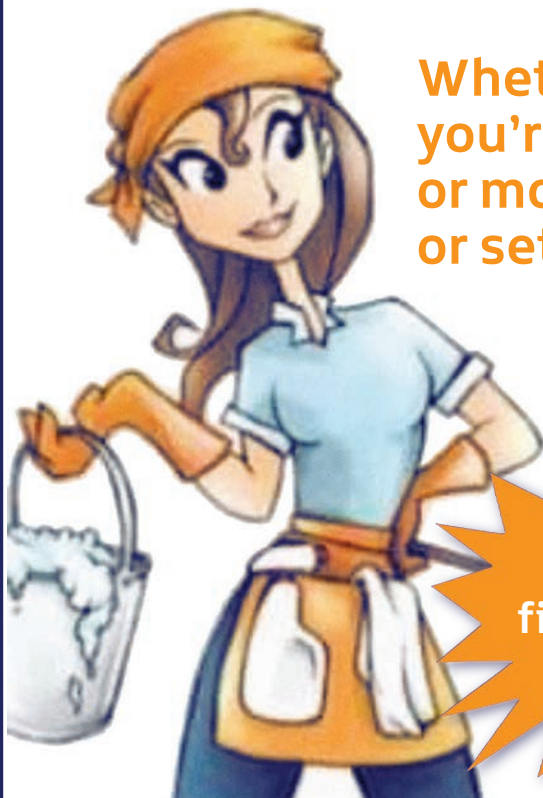
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"I'm also opposed because people who become addicted to gambling lose their homes, lose their families," he says. "There's a written document that attests to this fact. You know, 90 percent of the money that comes in that door goes to the casino, and not even ten percent of it goes to the players, and usually the big players. Casinos destroy families. You're going to have people losing their mortgage money, just gambling it away."

Bob Kocher, a long-time business owner, worries about the impact a casino would have on the local business community. "A casino will take away from retail stores like myself and restaurants," he says.

Just up the street I talk with restaurateur Jimmy Tsamouras who owns Dot's Back Inn and Demi's Mediterranean Kitchen, both of which are located on MacArthur Avenue.

"I'm against it," says Jimmy flatly. "I enjoy going to Vegas every once in a while, and I enjoy gambling. But I've been to the casinos in Baltimore, Pittsburgh, West Virginia and MGM, of course. There's nothing luxurious or

grand about them. I don't think it's a good fit for our neighborhood. I think if they want to do it they should do it in the Manchester location. Not that I'm in favor of that to begin with, but if they're going to do it, that's where it should go."

Jimmy is also concerned about the additional burden a casino would place on law enforcement. "It puts more on the shoulders of our police," he says.

And like other local business owners, Jimmy sees the casino as a drain on the local economy. "Casinos are designed for you not to leave," he says. "A casino will not benefit the local economy in Northside or Scott's Addition. It's only going to hurt it. It's only going to take business away. It's going to bring people in, but it's not going to bring people to Scott's Addition, it's going to bring people to the casino."

He again mentions the old Philip Morris tract on Walmsley Boulevard and Commerce Road in Southside. "People are not going to come to the casino because it's in Scott's Addition," says Jimmy. "They're going to go to the casino wherever it is. If you put the ca-

sino in Mechanicsville, they're going to go to that casino. Bow Tie is not the area for a casino. It's going to take away from the local economy. Richmond's going to get its tax money whether it's in Scott's Addition or Southside. They're not going to get more because it's in Scott's Addition."


Every single person I've spoken with, even informally on the streets, is utterly opposed to the casino on Arthur Ashe Boulevard. I ran into Richmond Commonwealth's Attorney Colette Wallace McEachin at a Taste of Brookland Park Boulevard recently. She was speaking as a citizen not in her official capacity.

"I know that there are two projects up, and that the project that is on Southside in Reva Tramell's district has her constituents' support," Colette told me. "So I think that's vital. So if somebody asked me where I thought a casino would be built, I think it's going to end up being built in Southside."

What finally happens with this proposal is a crapshoot. Still very much uncertain. But there are things that we do know. In the words of Pierce Hom-

er, "They (the City) made a deliberate choice not to consider the casino as part of the comprehensive plan, and instead have opted, once again, for this very opaque, closed-door negotiating process which looks and feels very much like Navy Hill, like the Redskin Training Camp, like Stone Brewing. And so I think the process deserves mention here, and it's not a good process."

Other words by Pierce bear repeating as well, words about the hurdles that will still have to be cleared even if the Mayor's selection panel decides on the Cordish plan. "It will then require a City Council vote," Pierce said. "And then it requires a conditional use permit and there's always the possibility for litigation, and there are folks out there who are reviewing those opportunities. And so this may very well be a long drawn out battle."

And this November, every Richmonder will be able to exercise their democratic right to cast a ballot in a referendum on any casino in Richmond. They can vote as the sign says "No CasiNo No". 

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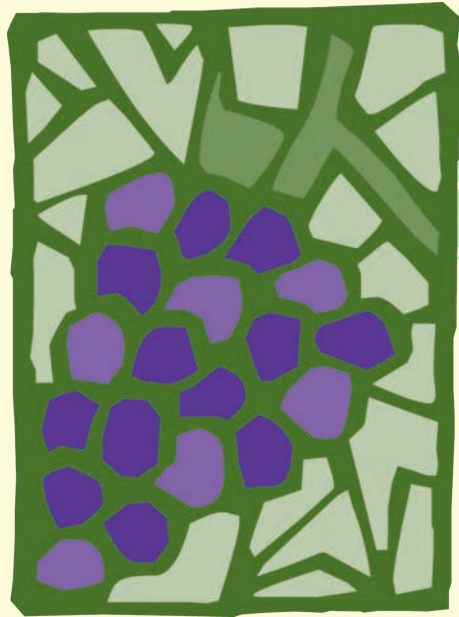
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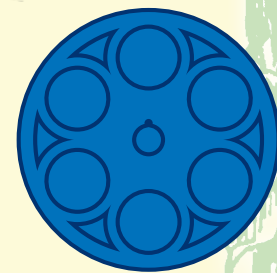
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RESTAURANT REVIEW

Eat My Eggroll

by ANNE JONES

WHEN I WAS seven years old, my friend's mother took us to see the movie, Darby O'Gill and The Little People. It was a big deal because I had only been to the movies three or four times before. Was I enthralled by the magic of the story and the characters on the big screen? No way. I was too busy stifling my giggles at the sight of my large spilled Coke forming rivulets as it rushed down the theatre floor onto row after row of people's shoes. A few years later my mother took me to see the fabulous Lipizzaner stallions. Another special night. The take-away? The lasting memory? One of the horses had relieved himself, in a big way, right ON THE STAGE. I couldn't have asked for anything more.

This is all to say that I've had a life-long habit of missing the point, being a little late to the game. Luckily, I'm only about 6 months late discovering the food truck that sits just five blocks away from me, in the wine store parking lot on MacArthur Avenue, a street I'm on twice a day. I've made it a personal goal to now make up for lost time.

Eat My Eggroll bills itself as VA's first and only Egg Roll Shake Shop, with "Big dope Egg Rolls & other things you can bite, the Ultimate Munchie Truck." Exactly. But local chef and owner Bradley Gallier creates much more than snack food in his tiny metal truck. His may be the oddest menu I've ever seen. Yes—eggrolls, but there's more than one way to stuff an eggroll. Like with crabmeat and old Bay and Duke's mayonnaise—a tasty, beautiful crab-cakey mix named The Raven. Or, the 76er, basically an eggroll stuffed with all the ingredients that make up an authentic Philly cheese steak, complete with perfectly caramelized onions that lend that scrumptious hint of sweetness. The Mr. For Real is a Reuben sandwich hiding in a savory eggroll disguise.



You can visit the eat My Eggroll truck in the parking lot of Once Upon a Vine on MacArthur Avenue in Bellevue.

Then there's the old-school diner fare—homemade creamy milkshakes with whipped cream and a cherry; fat, cheesy mozzarella sticks with that golden-fried, State Fair flavor, sans grease; tasty avocado fries; limeades better than Bills BBQ or the old Stuart Circle pharmacy drug store counter (also available in fresh-squeezed peach and mango). Exit the diner and move on down to the streets of Mexico for my all-time favorite menu item—the most fantastic street corn I've ever tasted. I once read that when a dog rides in the car with his head out the window, eyes closed and hair blowing, it's a sensory experience so powerful and mind-blowing that humans can't even begin to assimilate it. A bite of this buttery corn is just like that, almost: a true explosion of tastes melded so wonderfully with the dusting of grated cheese that I didn't even try to identify the seasonings. In fact, Gallier takes all his seasoning seriously, pairing perfectly-matched dipping sauces with everything. There's the spicy marinara with cherry tomatoes for the mozzarella sticks, cool ranch/lime/cilantro/jalapeno sauce for the avocado fries, and on and on.

The best way to find out what the deal is every week is to check out the amusing Eat My Eggroll Instagram page. Or just show up and chat with the friendly and accommodating creator of all this magic before you place your order. Menus are posted on the truck, and corn sell-outs are frequent, so get there early. Hours are posted weekly on the Instagram page, and it's open Thursday - Sunday. So roll down the windows, close your eyes, and take a big bite. **NS**

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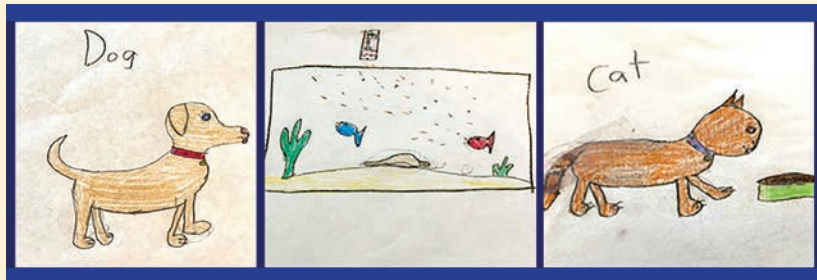
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BOOK REVIEW

Three Not-So-Weird Sisters

by FRAN WITHROW

HAD WITCHES ON MY mind, having just finished Alice Hoffman's "Magic Lessons," when I received "The Once and Future Witches." I couldn't wait to dive in.

It took me a while to get into this book, but when I finally did, oh, dear reader! This story tossed me on its back and away we flew on one of the grandest adventures I've experienced in quite a while. When I reached the end, I was so thrilled I immediately ordered author Alix Harrow's previous book. I can't wait to get it.

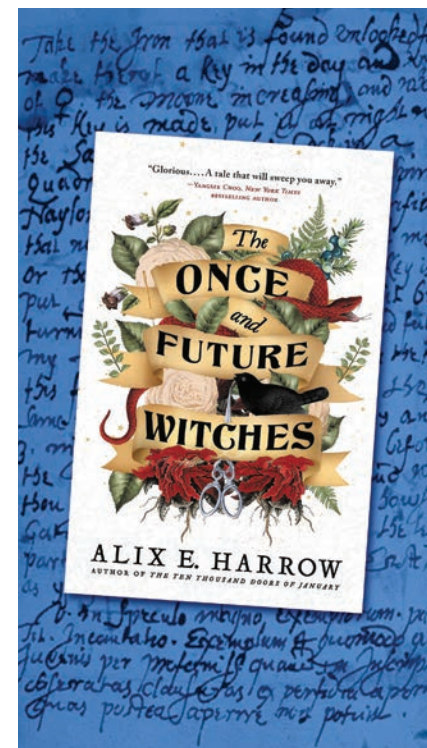
Once upon a time there were witches everywhere, and dragons too, but they were purged, and what remains in 1893 are spells hidden in nursery rhymes and fairy tale fragments, or stitched in embroidery and passed down from grandmothers to granddaughters.

Once upon a time in 1893, there were three sisters: James Juniper, Beatrice Belladonna, and Agnes Amaranth. The sisters have been estranged from each other for years due to a misunderstanding stemming from their relationship with their abusive father. But a thread pulls them all together in New Salem at the site of a march for women's suffrage, and when they reconnect, all the magic begins.

Even before the sisters bring magic to the fore in New Salem, women were quietly using magic. Herbs, chants, rhymes to heal a wound, comfort a heart, protect a child. But when the sisters use magic to cause a commotion during the march, the story really gets going.

Everything you could want is here: danger, a truly nasty bad guy, a trio of women who want more than they have been given. Women want the vote, social justice, and the right to have more power in their lives. The sisters form an alliance with other women, resurrect a tower full of magic, and fight those who think witches are cackling old crones who eat children for breakfast.

And the magic? "That's all magic is, really: the space between what you have and what you need," one delightful character says. Anyone can be a witch: one just needs the will, the way, and the words. A witch is "every woman



who says what she shouldn't, or wants what she can't have, who fights for her fair share."

I know a lot of wonderful witches.

Harrow brilliantly blends history with fiction. She meshes such tragedies as the Triangle Shirtwaist Fire, plagues, the suffrage movement, the plight of women of color, and the struggles of immigrant women in with the story of how Juniper, Bella, and Agnes unlock the secrets of magic, learn the magic of words (which I loved), and cast spells.

Gideon Hill, this book's resident epitome of evil, is glorious in his viciousness. I was on the edge of my seat as he attacks the women, and was taken aback to find out who he really is. How Harrow uses his character to keep magic alive for the three sisters will knock your socks off.

Once there were three sisters. I fell in love with all of them. And with all witches, everywhere. **NJ**

The Once and Future Witches

By Alex E. Harrow

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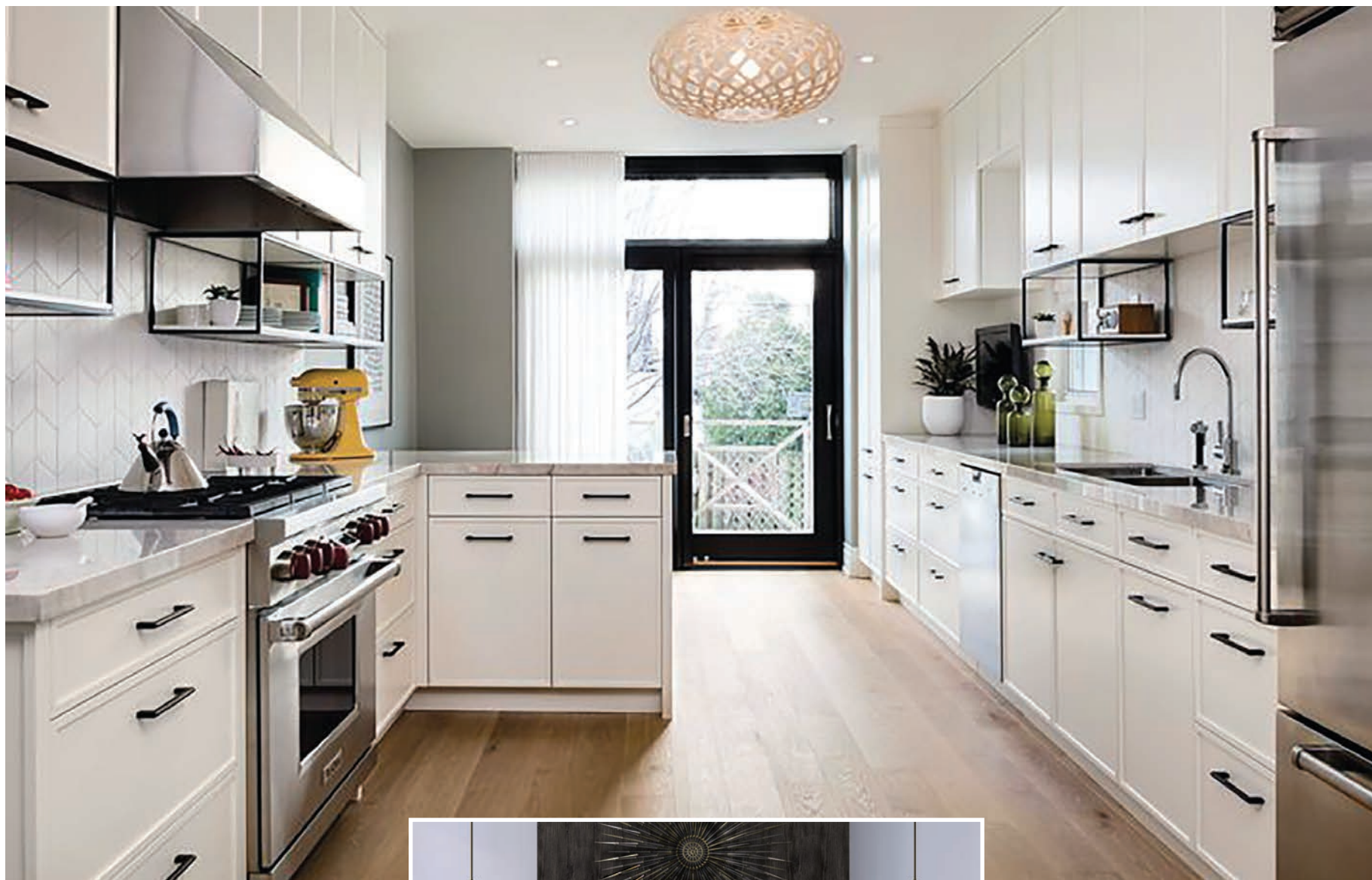


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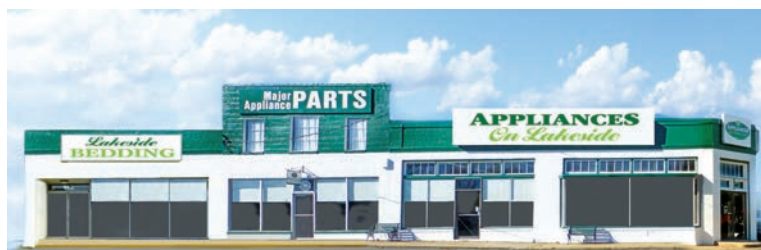


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