

# Blue Ridge

L I V I N G · O N · T H E · M O U N T A I N

*October gave a party; The leaves by hundreds came,  
The Chestnuts, Oaks, and Maples, and leaves of every name.  
The sunshine spread a carpet, and everything was grand, Miss  
Weather led the dancing, Professor Wind the band.  
- George Cooper*

**Fall is just around the corner which means that winter is not too far behind. It's time to start thinking about checking that generator and snowblower to make sure they are in working condition. Have you had your chimney swept and ordered your firewood? We never know exactly what Mother Nature has in store for us. It is good to be prepared.**

## Firewise Update

*- Mick Newman*

Do not forget to go to the BRMCA website and report the time you have spent picking up sticks, taking down trees, and removing leaves and brush from your property. Also, report how much you've spent in these endeavors. All of this information will hopefully help us receive a grant next year to go towards chipping.

Fire prevention week is October 3rd - 9th 2021.

Don't forget to:

- Replace your smoke detector batteries
- Replace your smoke detectors if they are 10 years or older
- Check or install a carbon monoxide detector

For more information, go to **NFPA.org**

Before starting any fires outdoors, call:

Clarke County - 540-955-1234

Loudon County - 703-777-0637

**Report any and all outdoor  
fires**

[www.blueridge-mountain.org](http://www.blueridge-mountain.org)

We hope most of you have had the opportunity to visit the new BRMCA website. We are still in the process of adding information. We'd love any feedback you think could improve the site.

## What do you think?

- BRMCA Board

The BRMCA Board and Scott Seeburger's Committee have been keeping a close eye on new construction and development on the mountain. The Board is not opposed to businesses on the mountain but would like to avoid over development that would worsen traffic problems or affect our natural environment. Most of us moved to this mountain community because we appreciate the quiet, natural setting. While some development is inevitable, we would like to maintain our way of life as much as possible. Are these statements something that you agree with? Are you willing to share your thoughts or a helping hand? Please let us know at the October General Meeting.

## Natalie's Bench

- Paz Andrae

*And we wept that one so lovely should have a life so brief.*

*-William Cullen Bryant*

On a foggy Sunday morning in August, we met at Bear's Den to install Natalie's Bench. George Evancheck, Scott Andrae, Brian Morris and Glen, manager of Bear's Den, did all of the heavy lifting while Ashley Morris and I made suggestions for the perfect placement. If you find yourself hiking at Bear's Den, stop by Natalie's Bench and sit for a while. The bench dedication will be in October at the general membership meeting. A big thank you to Bob Barnett and Scott Andrae for picking up the bench from its original location, to Kim Larson for power washing it, and to two of your mountain neighbors, one of whom donated the unique bench, and the other who donated plaque.



Daylight Savings Time ends November 7th, 2021. Don't forget to roll back your clocks 1 hour.

# **BRMCA Land Use/Commercialization Committee**

*- Scott Seeberger*

The Committee has been following two VA ABC licenses (limited brewery and farm winery) submitted by Whitehall Estate in the Village of Bluemont. Earlier this year, BRMCA was an official objector to these licenses due to the potential lessening of quietude and saturation of these businesses in our local community. Against our wishes, the VA ABC approved both licenses on June 11 and has allowed the farm winery (Sapphire Vineyards) to stay open until 12:15 am and the limited brewery (Bluemont Station Brewery) to stay open until 01:15 am. The final VA ABC decision is disappointing and the permitted hours of operation seem excessive. We will continue to monitor the situation as these decisions could have repercussions to nearby VA ABC licensed businesses within our Association's boundaries. During June, pedestrian and traffic monitoring devices were placed at the Rt. 601/Rt. 7 intersection and at the entrance to Bear Chase Brewing Company. Loudoun County Board of Supervisor Tony Buffington (our Blue Ridge District) was the impetus behind this effort and has established a working group in an attempt to solve this intersection's congestion issues. Of note, the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors (BOS) allocated \$550K in their FY22 budget to address the numerous issues surrounding this intersection. The Committee has requested that the Loudoun County Transportation Planning and Traffic Engineering Department discuss with the Association any potential planned improvements to the intersection and Rt 601. On August 12, the Committee participated in a meeting with Supervisor Buffington's staff to discuss mountain resident reaction to a proposed natural surface walking trail from the VDOT parking lot (at the Rt. 601/Rt. 7 intersection) to Bear Chase. Supervisor Buffington is concerned with pedestrians walking along Rt. 601 and believes such a trail would enhance safety. The Committee expressed similar pedestrian safety concerns, but emphasized it would be nearly impossible to build a path without also facilitating a private business. A number of other concerns were communicated which can be found on the BRMCA Facebook Group or website ([blueridge-mountain.org](http://blueridge-mountain.org)). Supervisor Buffington's staff agreed to take all concerns to the working group.

On September 14, the Committee spoke before the Loudoun County BOS concerning a proposed Short Hill Mountain AT&T tower. Although the tower would not be located within our Association's boundaries, BRMCA felt the issue significant enough to warrant supporting our nearby neighbors who oppose it. Specific points addressed included: (1) the tower is in direct conflict with Loudoun County's 2019 Comprehensive Plan which calls for protecting viewsheds; (2) the tower is in direct conflict with the County's Zoning Ordinance (Section 5-618, 3-P) which states that such towers are not to be constructed along ridge lines; and (3) the tower is not supported by the local community. Although increased broadband and cell service are important to western Loudoun County, other technologies should be explored to avoid destroying important scenic aspects of our community. The Loudoun County Planning Commission and Heritage Commission have already rejected the AT&T proposal in its entirety. During the meeting, Supervisor Buffington was the only BOS member to staunchly oppose the tower. The final BOS vote will take place on October 5<sup>th</sup>. If the tower were approved, it would set a powerful precedent for additional unsightly towers along mountain ridgelines - further threatening the natural, rural beauty of western Loudoun County. On September 15, the Committee had the opportunity to present before the Clarke County Historic Preservation Commission on acquiring a highway marker for Bear's Den Rural Historic District. Over the past year, BRMCA has been urging Clarke County to better recognize our mountain's historic district and inform citizens of its existence. The Commission was receptive to the Committee's presentation and unanimously voted to move forward with pursuing historic highway markers for all of Clarke County's historic districts currently unrecognized. This is a tremendous victory for the Association and the Committee would like to thank those members who provided their support. The next step will be working with VDOT and the Commission to determine an ideal location along Rt. 601 for the marker. Please continue your dialogue with the Committee, as we greatly appreciate your input and concern regarding land use and potential commercialization plans on the mountain. As an Association, we believe property owners should work together in protecting and preserving the natural landscape of where we live. Please feel free to contact me should you have any questions. You can also receive more timely updates on Committee action by monitoring the BRMCA Facebook Group or website.

Our new segment, **Something New**, will be filled with exciting, fun, interesting, weird, or educational things most people don't experience daily. If you have had one of these experiences and you would like to share, please contact me and it may appear in our next newsletter.

*Paz Andrae, theandraes5@gmail.com*

## **Something New: Sensory Deprivation Therapy**

*- Paz Andrae*

Floating sounded to me much like the 'miracle elixirs' peddled in the West in the 1800s, which claimed to have the ability to cure disease, smooth wrinkles, and remove stains. Floating claims to improve sleep, alleviate pain, depression, and anxiety, and help with irritability and headaches. Some call the experience euphoric, others say they found inner peace, and some describe it as a spiritual experience. Can you understand why I was skeptical?

Developed by John C. Lilly, an American physician and neuroscientist, today Sensory Deprivation Tanks can easily be found in most spas and wellness centers, and after hearing about it from a friend, I decided to give it a try. When I arrived, I was led to a very warm and humid room. In the center was a large circular tank with a hydraulic lid. The water in the tank was heated to skin temperature, about 93 °F to 95 °F, and filled with Epsom salt (magnesium sulfate), which creates buoyancy. There were fluffy towels, shampoo and conditioner, and ear plugs for my use. I was asked to rinse off before stepping into the tank. I rinsed off, put in the ear plugs, turned off the room light, and stepped in. Suddenly a very soothing voice welcomed me to the tank. Music, which I had chosen beforehand, began to play. I closed the lid most of the way, laid my head on the floating halo and was pleasantly surprised as my body began to float. I decided to try the full experience, completely depriving myself of sound and light, though if I changed my mind, the large light and sound knobs were easy to find, even in the dark. Though I did not fall asleep, I did find myself in that faraway place you reach just before you do fall asleep. Suddenly, I began to feel too warm and gently pushed the lid open with my foot. I felt a rush of cool air and heard the same soothing voice ask me to exit the tank and shower.

I have to admit that I was very relaxed and stress-free when I left the wellness center. It felt as if my brain had been turned off and reset. I also felt squeaky clean. Before entering the tank I had some minor muscle aches and those seemed to have completely disappeared. The only thing that I experienced that was a slight negative was when I first laid back, I had a feeling of sea sickness, but it only lasted a short time. I am susceptible to motion sickness so I was not surprised by this.

Many wellness centers offer a first time discount. In our area, it typically costs anywhere from \$55 to \$75 for a one hour session. Sensory deprivation tanks are generally safe but **SPEAK TO YOUR DOCTOR** before using one.

Would I float again? Yes. Putting everything aside, I fell into the deepest sleep I have had in months that night. For those of you who know me, that alone is a reason for me to WOOHOO and float again!

# **BRMCA General Meeting - Fall 2021**

## **Topics for Discussion:**

### **Local Issues**

- Road traffic - Rt 601/Rt 7 improvements
- Walking path
- AT&T Tower update
- Zoning rewrite efforts - Clarke and Loudoun County Community

### **BRMCA**

- Website and Facebook page updates
- Spring 2022 Election: Three volunteers needed for Election Committee

### **Invited Guests**

Agenda may change depending on confirmation from below attendees:

**Jill Vogel** - State Senator

**Dave LaRock** - State Delegate

**Tony Buffington** - Loudoun County Supervisor

**Terri Catlett** - Clarke County Supervisor



**Executive Committee  
of the Blue Ridge  
Mountain Civic  
Association (BRMCA)**

**President**  
Joe Donovan

**Vice President**  
Jason Robinson

**Treasurer**  
Andrew Marusich

**Secretary**  
Patty Craighill

**Appointed Directors**  
Paz Andrae  
Kim Larson  
Bill Waite  
Melissa Pagano  
Scott Seeberger

**Upcoming Events**

**General Membership  
Meeting**  
October 12th  
7PM Bear's Den

**Potluck**  
*with Chili cook-off &  
live entertainment*  
October 16th  
6PM

Blue Ridge Fire Hall,  
Retreat Road  
Please RSVP:  
Paz Andrae

[theandraes5@gmail.com](mailto:theandraes5@gmail.com)

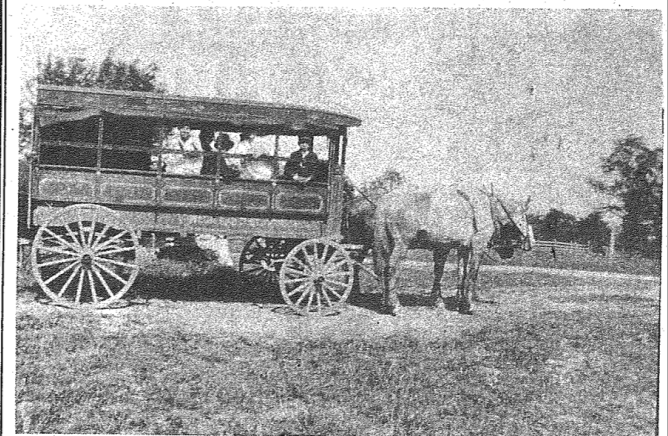
Don't forget to wear  
your favorite team  
jersey

**Road Clean-up**  
October 23rd  
You can pick up orange  
bags at the parking lot  
on Rt7 and Rt 601  
at 8AM  
Rain date October 24th

**Our History**

*Provided by Linda Martz*

**Out of the Attic**



**Traveled Bluemont mountain ridge**

This picture of Ed Fennell's horse-drawn bus was exhibited at Round Hill High School's 50th reunion last year. The bus traveled across Bluemont Mountain Ridge, picking up students to attend Round Hill High School. The picture was made in 1915.

*One minute you're young and fun. And the  
next, you are turning down the stereo in your  
car to see better.*

**2021 Membership is Now Due  
\$30 per household  
Send payment to  
BRMCA ♦ Post Office Box 303 ♦ Bluemont, VA  
20135  
Thank you!**