

BUSINESS

Find out what’s going on in the local business community **Page B2**

Perspective: A pair of local environmental activists write that solar energy is not always good and certainly not when it chews up farmlands and woodlands, often causing erosion and stream pollution in the process. **B3**

#MoveOverBob

#Angela Cacace, top, in a double-exposure photo, and center: Before she launched her company, A. Marie Design Build, in 2017, Cacace balanced free contracting work with her barbering job.

#Rachel Street, bottom: Began mixing up houses to sell and now has two TV shows.



A new wave of women in construction is creating a community, future for themselves

By MAILE PINGEL
The Washington Post

Angela Cacace’s career began with a magazine contest. The Washington, D.C., barber had moved to North Carolina for her husband’s job and so successfully remodeled their kitchen that she won a contest in This Old House. Encouraged by the story’s editor to pursue her contracting dreams, she enrolled in a local building program. “I was so nervous on the first day of class,” she recalls, “but six of the 12 students were women — I was blown away. I remember an instant feeling of confidence that we had a place here.”

She posted on Facebook about the number of women in the class, adding, as a joke, #MoveOverBob. “Every woman I knew fell in love with it,” says Cacace, 32, explaining that the hashtag was inspired by cartoon character Bob the Builder and isn’t about replacing men but simply asking them to make a little room. (In the interest of gender equality, Bob’s creators have since given his sidekick Wendy a promotion to electrical engineer and business partner.) That hashtag would grow into a Facebook page, a website and an Instagram handle featuring photos of women doing demo, laying tile and wielding sledgehammers.

#NormalizingIt

“There’s a demand in the field, and women want to fill the void. Normalizing it seemed like a fun thing to do,” Cacace says. “Young people need resources at their fingertips, and #MoveOverBob has been a great way to find other women. It can get lonely being a woman in construction.”



In those first years, “I was doing a lot of free work ... while keeping my barbering job,” she recalls. “Even though I’d taken the classes, I lacked the confidence in pursuing paid work. That was the attitude of a lot of the women in the class. The guys were there to get into the workforce, and the women were there to learn with no expectation of actually getting a job when we were done.”

#GiveALittleMore

It took two phone calls, Cacace says, one from a male classmate and friend and the other from her teacher, “both telling me that they believed in my abilities and I needed to stop working for free, quit barbering and get to work in construction,” she says, before she made contracting her full-time focus. “I still find myself doing work for free — part of that comes from my customer service background of always wanting to go the extra mile — but, unfortunately, the other part of it is a lack of confidence in my place in the industry. Like, to make up for being a woman I have to give a little more.”

And even though she’s owned her own company, A. Marie Design Build, for a couple of years now (she launched it in 2017), she still faces pro departments at big-box stores trying to direct her to customer service before she can even tell them she has a pro account. “It can be deflating to be excited about starting the workday, pulling up with my truck to pick up lumber for a job and then having to deal with condescension. But I’ve gotten better about shrugging it off.”

Inspiring women to connect has helped her, too. About a year after launching her firm,

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TOP AND CENTER PHOTOS BY MADELINE GRAY, BOTTOM BY DANIEL SEUNG LEE # FOR THE WASHINGTON POST

Mortgage rates boosted U.S. home sales 1.3% in August

Washington — U.S. home sales rose 1.3 percent in August to the highest level in 17 months, as mortgage rates near historic lows have spurred a rush of home-buying. The National Association of Realtors said homes sold at a seasonally adjusted annualized rate of 5.49 million units. Sales have increased 2.6 percent from a year ago. Cheaper borrowing costs have increased affordability for buyers, but they have also led to higher prices amid a shortage of properties for sale. The median sales price climbed 4.7 percent from a year ago to \$278,200, outpacing average wage gains. Homebuyers have been a beneficiary from the recent economic uncertainty, as interest rates have fallen in response to slower global growth and President Donald Trump’s tariffs against China. — Associated Press



STEVE HELBER/AP PHOTO

An “under-contract” sign is displayed along Park Avenue in Richmond, Va.

AIRBNB SAYS IT WILL GO PUBLIC IN 2020

New York — Home-sharing company Airbnb Inc. said it plans to go public in 2020. It’s a long-awaited move for the San Francisco company, which was founded in 2008 by Brian Chesky and Joe Gebbia, who put air mattresses on their apartment floor and charged \$80 per night to earn extra cash. Since then, Airbnb has grown into one of the largest home-sharing platforms. The company said earlier this week it has more than 7 million listings in 100,000 cities worldwide. Airbnb also said it made “substantially more than” \$1 billion in revenue in the second quarter of this year. It didn’t reveal its profits. — Associated Press

WALMART CEO NAMED ROUNDTABLE CHAIRMAN

The Business Roundtable, a group that represents the most powerful companies in America, is naming Walmart President and CEO Doug McMillon as its new chairman. McMillon succeeds JPMorgan Chase Chairman and CEO Jamie Dimon in the role. Dimon has served as chairman of the group since Jan. 1, 2017. He will continue to serve as a board member after completing his tenure as the group’s chairman at year’s end. “As chairman, I commit to keeping Business Roundtable CEOs at the forefront of constructive public policy debates as we pursue an agenda of greater growth and opportunity for all Americans,” McMillon said. — Associated Press