

Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 17, NO. 4

"EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION" — EDWARD R. MURROW

APRIL 2025

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FEMA cancels Fire Academy and EMI classes

An email from FEMA late Friday afternoon [March 7] cancelled all classes, effective immediately, at its two training institutes in Emmitsburg: the National Fire Academy and the Emergency Management Institute.

In an email sent to all staff and students, FEMA stated that it "is currently in the process of evaluating agency programs and spending to ensure alignment with Administration priorities."

The email caught just about everyone associated with the campus off guard, with security unsure if they should admit instructors arriving that afternoon to set up for classes.

The instructors were baffled and left wondering if they would be paid for the travel expenses already incurred, or for the completion of the contracts they had signed.

But the hardest hit will undoubtedly be to the local residents employed at the schools who provide housekeeping and cafeteria services for the estimated 400 to 450 students who routinely attend classes at the two schools.

In addition, local restaurants and businesses who cater to the students, to some degree, will see a drop in business.

Bobby Ott, of the Ott House, said the loss of the students will knock 25 to 30% off the Restaurant's bottom line. "It will not be as bad as during COVID, when we not only lost FEMA students, but the Mount as well, but it will hurt."

The Carriage House said the loss of the end of class parties, which usually happen on Thursdays, will impact them, but is not a significant portion of their business. Emmitsburg's Subway shop said they got hit hard. "A huge chunk of our business is simply gone."

Other businesses in Town will feel the effect of not only the loss of income from students, but the cutting back on unnecessary expenses by local residents, who will face job losses as a result of the closure.

Also affected will be the Town's Water Fund, which was hit hard during COVID due to a decrease in water usage at the academies, which resulted in a sharp drop in income for the Fund, which only



The National Fire Academy also cancelled the annual NFA Women's Weekend event scheduled for May, citing an order from the Department of Homeland Security.

recently got corrected.

According to a knowledgeable FEMA staffer, the institutes were flagged by the Department of Government Efficiency "due to its exorbitant travel budget." FEMA currently pays for all travel expenses, as well as all room and board, for all students attending classes at the two schools. "Travel expenses easily exceed \$250,000 a week," said the staffer.

While FEMA Management sorts through the future of the two schools, instructors have been directed to scrub all courses for any language associated with Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI).

"This is ludicrous," said one instructor. "I was told to change the wording in one of my courses which lays out what should be taken to an emergency site. The language 'equipment one should bring includes' was flagged as supportive of DEI and I was told to come up with another word than 'include'."

While the initial FEMA email stated that the shutdown would only be in effect until June, insiders said that the Administration's repeated calls to defund FEMA and turn its activities over to the states has doomed the schools and they don't foresee them reopening.

Fairfield Fire & EMS honor long term volunteers

On the evening of March 9, residents of the Fairfield community at large, as well as members of the Fairfield Volunteer Fire and EMS Company, came together to honor those who have put their lives at risk for their community.

While many volunteer fire companies focus their award banquets on those most active, Fairfield focuses their banquet on recognizing those who have dedicated a significant portion of their lives to the Company.

Such was the case again this year when FVFC recognized Charles "Charlie" Deardorff and Robert "Bud" Creighton for over half a century of selfless volunteering.

Charlie joined the Company at the age of 35 in 1972. "Charlie has been our person for words of wisdom on many financial and policy rules and regulations." President Gary Shorb said. "For years, Charlie actively ran fire calls, was a driver and pump operator, has served on the Board of Directors, and recently completed cataloging the historical minutes and financial records of the Company all the way back to May of 1922."

Like Charlie, Bud joined Company in 1972, while his work schedule prevented him from actively fighting fires he more them made up for it by being a regular volun-

teer at almost all of the Company's fundraising events. "Bud is always willing to help with whatever is asked of him," said Shorb. "He's always the first one in the building every morning to ensure that the coffee is ready for all that follows."

In addition to celebrating Deardorff and Creighton, the Company inducted Rose Jacobs, James Phillips and Jacquelyn Weikert into its precious Veteran's Program, which recognizes those that have served the Company for 30 years.

Gary Shorb was this year's recipient of the Company's Fire Fighter of the Year Award. In presenting the award, Jacobs said, "almost everyone in the Company deserves to get this award, but I'm only allowed to give out one. Gary has been one of our top Fire Responders for the past few years. He's one of our minute-men. Within a minute, he is always ready to go."

Chad Fogle was this year's recipient of the Chief's Award. In presenting the award, Jacobs noted Chad "was a repeat top responder, who freely provides insight and ideas from his experience as a paid fireman. Chad does lots of "behind the scenes" work on the Company's behalf, and this award acknowledges his service and commitment to the Company."



Fairfield Fire & EMS President Gary Shorb with Charlie Deardorff and Bud Creighton

Fairfield Mayor Robert Stanley and Carroll Valley Mayor Ronald Harris praised the service of the members and the community saying that without them, residents would not have the quality of life in which they do. Harris became emotional when he recounted how, over the past 6 weeks, the Company's EMS staff had to come to his rescue three times. "Thank you, from the bottom of my heart. I wish there were more of you, we need to see more young people in the Company."

State Representative Dan Moul picked up on Harris's pleas for more young firefighters by sharing a bill he is proposing later this year with the audience. Said bill will allow high school students to receive graduation credits for attending firefighting courses. "The State gives credits for attending plumbing and carpentry classes, why not firefighting classes?"

Go to page 22 to see photos from this year's award banquet.

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EMMITSBURG NEWS

Town kicks off neighborhood meals

At the beginning of March, a new program was initiated in an effort to not only provide for the people of Emmitsburg, but to unite the Emmitsburg community. The importance of having a strong, stable, and connected community is something that is seemingly overlooked. Showing support for your friends and neighbors is the key to a successful community. That is to say, you don't realize how necessary something is until you need it.

This was certainly the case for Emmitsburg's new Neighborhood Meals Program when Mayor Frank Davis received some insight from a resident suggesting the idea of a hot meal program. Mayor Davis saw this as an excellent opportunity and took advantage of the initiative brought before him. Mayor Davis's first step in bringing this program to fruition was contacting Brandy Malocha, Town Operations Specialist, to reach out to local churches and non-profit groups in Emmitsburg.

After establishing the Program, planning, and coordinating, the Program was set to begin in March. The Program is designed

so that each month a different church or organization will host a meal. The group hosting the meal will either prepare the food in the Town's Health Department-approved kitchen at the Activities Building, or they will be providing food purchased directly from a restaurant or deli. As for who can attend, everyone is welcome! Mayor Davis, Brandy Malocha, the churches, and non-profits in Emmitsburg are hoping to reach the folks and families that need a little help with a friendly place to enjoy a good meal. No identification is needed! The people who come to receive a free meal can take it to go or eat it in the activities building and enjoy spending time with other members of the community.

When asked about the goals of this program, Malocha stated, "First and foremost, we're hoping to help people who are in need of a meal. But also, the fellowship side of it is very important. We want everyone to feel they belong and are part of the community, no matter their financial situation."

The Emmitsburg Neighborhood Meals Program is an excel-

lent way to unite the community by surrounding people with friendly, kind, and compassionate neighbors. The first event for this program was held on March 12th, and it was sponsored by the Town of Emmitsburg. A goal for this program is to be able to eventually offer a weekly meal, rather than monthly. With your help, this could be very achievable. Not only would your cooperation benefit the community, but it would support this program so that a greater impact could be left on the Emmitsburg community and help those in need.

"Once the meal program gets up and running, we will have a better idea of what is needed to make the Program a success," Malocha stated when asked about how members of the community could contribute. The more people get involved, the bigger the impact will be on our humble town of Emmitsburg. For now, if you have any questions, comments, or suggestions, please contact Brandy Malocha at 301-600-6300 or Bmalocha@emmitsburgMD.gov.

Emmitsburg
NEWS-JOURNAL

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Emmett Ridge II hits roadblocks

Emmett Ridge, a 48 single-family-home development proposed off Irishtown Road, went before the Planning Commission in February to request plan approvals. Three major plans were highlighted: their Forest Stand Delineation Plan which catalogs the site's environmental features, their Preliminary Forest Conservation Plan where the specific strategies for retaining, protecting, and reforesting a potential site are outlined, and their Preliminary Subdivision Plan which shows how the land will be divided into lots, streets, and other areas.

The 11.49-acre subdivision is zoned as "R2 medium density," meaning each lot must be a minimum of 8,000 square feet. Last June, the Board of Appeals did approve a variance allowing the developer to reduce the lot sizes and setbacks

down to 6,000 square feet, citing challenging topographic conditions and existing land use constraints that limit the ability for the developer to adhere to the Town's lot dimensions ordinance.

Joe Ceci of Fox & Associates, who designed the plans, assured the Commission that the entirety of the Development would be built in a single phase. He said they hoped to begin land preparation in early 2026 and have the earthworks completed later in the year. The actual construction of the homes would likely take a while depending on how quickly they sell.

The biggest setback for the Development is the lack of space in the schools, particularly the elementary school, as they do not meet the Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO) standards at this time.

The APFO assesses how a proposed development will impact public facilities to include water, sewer, schools, and emergency services. "The School Adequacy Test was provided on February 21st, showing that the Project does not meet APFO school standards at the elementary level," said Town Planner Najila Ahsan.

Commissioner Tim O'Donnell, an avid proponent of replacing the Town's elementary school said, "My concern is the quality of what the students receive in the building and an overcrowded school is not a great thing." He asked what would happen if Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) isn't willing or able to reassign students. "There are schools in the County that have over 100% capacity so that's really up to the County," replied Ahsan. "But FCPS is not going to approve this, I mean

they don't have jurisdiction over this project." In response to this concern, the Town Staff has requested FCPS determine the viability of redistricting to accommodate the subdivision and the students that would potentially come with it.

Other concerns for the Development include water and sewer taps and traffic increases. Although the Town has sufficient water and sewer capacity to support the proposed development, water and sewer taps are not guaranteed until they are either purchased or secured through a Multi-Year Tap Agreement according to Ahsan.

A traffic study was done for the subdivision, and results showed the intersections operate at acceptable levels of traffic even at peak times. Although Irishtown Road will be widened to 32 feet, Davis questioned the "bridge" which is essentially a large concrete culvert pipe farther

down Irishtown Road and how widening the road will affect it.

Nicholas Decampo, of DRB Homes, said replacement of the "bridge" is not in the plans, however, repaving will be done. "I think we need to find a way to get that [replaced] because that's going to be a serious pinch point with a wider road," said O'Doneell. "You're going to have faster travel; they're going to be braking hard." Commission members also questioned the strength and current condition of the concrete culvert running under the road with the additional traffic the Development will bring in and thus requested the Town's Engineer, RK&K, review the bridge's current condition and determine if any replacement needed to be done at the Developer's expense. With this condition in mind, the Commission conditionally approved the plans.



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Fee for EV charging considered

The discussion of whether charging for use of the Town's EV charging stations would be a worthwhile endeavor was reintroduced at the March Town Council meeting. The question was initially introduced last September when Mayor Frank Davis requested the Council approve an ordinance to amend the Town Code for reserved parking for electric vehicles.

Davis made the request in response to multiple requests he received to extend the time to 24 hours per day that drivers could utilize charging stations. The only complaints received at that time were that cars were parking there after 10 p.m.

In the process of reviewing the parking concerns, the Council asked how much charging EV vehicles cost the Town. The Town has four EV charging

spots that were purchased in 2018 and completely funded by grants. The chargers had a five-year warranty that covered repairs which expired in 2023. As of today, the machines have not needed any major repairs.

Currently Emmitsburg does not charge owner of cars for use of the charging stations, however the Town has seen an uptick in use since June of 2024 by a minor amount. For the entirety of 2024 the chargers cost the Town around \$2,300 total. The first half of 2024 monthly charges ranged from \$20 to \$350 with only one month being in the \$300s. In the latter part of the year, the range was \$20 to \$583 with half of the months over \$475. Town Manager Cathy Willets said the cost should drop dramatically as of March 1st because the cost of

the chargers has been moved onto the Town's solar account.

Willets stated that Town staff thought the current chargers had credit card capability but as of now that is not the case, significantly limiting the ability of the town to charge drivers. Town staff are still researching whether the current machines can be upgraded and Willets said if grant funding is available to pay for the credit card usage capabilities, Town staff would find out.

Without exact numbers to compare costs, the Council agreed to wait approximately three months before readdressing whether to charge for use of the EV chargers. Once they see how much the chargers being on solar power costs the Town, they will decide whether charging drivers is a reasonable option.

FAIRFIELD/CARROLL VALLEY NEWS

Carroll Valley Councilman skips meeting to discuss claims

Carroll Valley Councilmember John Schubring continued his public criticism of the borough's mayor and police chief during the March Borough Council meeting even though he refused to attend a private executive session to discuss the matter.

Schubring repeated previous claims that an officer followed a former council member's daughter in April 2024 because the former council member opposed the 2024 budget. After Schubring's remarks, Council President Richard Mathews said he called

an executive session prior to the March meeting to address Schubring's claims. Pennsylvania law allows municipal governments to discuss personnel matters in private session.

Borough Manager Dave Hazlett said when asked that the council was notified of the executive session when they received their meeting packet on Friday, March 7. Hazlett said he did not want the special session notice to be overlooked so he sent a separate email highlighting the notice.

Hazlett said the communication is similar to those he received in his approx-

imately 20 years as a borough manager. He said he does not list the reasons for executive sessions in emails since they are often privileged information and emails can be accessible through the Pennsylvania Right to Know Law. Schubring said he reached out to Hazlett asking for the meeting's purpose, to which Hazlett confirmed it would be about the incident Schubring has been questioning.

Councilmember David Lillard told Schubring that he even called him personally to clarify the police incident would be discussed during the executive session.

"I didn't want to be backed into a corner because you guys disagree with me," he said.

Schubring skipping the executive session but continuing his pleas in public session when cameras were present drew the ire of several council members.

"We all came in here early to have this information you have been begging for, and you couldn't be bothered to show up," Councilmember Cody Gilbert said.

Council Vice President Bruce Carr said council members who reviewed

Chief Clifford Weikert's report on the incident believe the police handled it properly.

"This tirade needs to stop," Carr said. "Give it up, just give it up. It's unprofessional."

Schubring asked his peers how many people saw the police report for the first time before March's meeting. No one raised their hand.

Schubring reiterated that he believes he is looking out for citizens' safety by continuing to push the issue. In response, Carr urged citizens to contact him directly if they share Schubring's concerns.

Borough names Junior Council members

The Carroll Valley Borough Council will soon have insight from the municipality's teenage demographic. The council unanimously named twins Sarah Simmons and Emma Abigail Simmons junior council members. The sisters responded to a request posted on the borough's Facebook page.

"They are bright and do some pretty cool things," Borough Manager Dave Hazlett said.

The Pennsylvania State Association of Boroughs Junior Council Person Program allows youth to engage with

borough government and refine their leadership skills. It also gives borough officials the opportunity to serve as mentors to students who may be the town's future leaders.

Hazlett said Carroll Valley has participated in the program for some time, but no one has applied for more than 20 years.

The Simmons are tenth grade students who are homeschooled, according to their resumes. Both have received numerous awards in the field of Science, Technology, Engineering,

and Math. They are also 2023 members of the National Junior Honors Society, Archbishop James Bayley Chapter at Mother Seton School. They hold a 4.0 GPA. Their Cognitive Abilities Test, Iowa Assessments, and High School Placement Test results are in the 99th percentile.

"If I got job applications like this, I would be hiring them pretty fast," Hazlett said.

In their cover letters, the Simmons sisters said they believe their relationship with elected council members

would be mutually beneficial.

"I believe that the issues that the council addresses on a regular basis are not just 'adult' issues," Sarah Simmons wrote in her application's cover letter. "Issues such as safety, recreational opportunities, economic development, and sustainable growth all have a real impact on the youth of this community."

In her cover letter, Emma Simmons wrote her educational curriculum mostly focuses on state and national government so she views the position as an opportunity to expand her knowledge.

"I believe that the community level government is just as important, as so much of what affects people the most is what takes place in their own communities," she wrote.

Hazlett concurred. "I look forward to having an opportunity to have a whole different demographic of mindset to hear their take on some of the things that we face," he said.

The Simmons sisters will be advisory members and cannot vote on official actions. Their terms will likely begin this summer, Hazlett said. Councilman John Schubring volunteered to take the lead on making their experience valuable.

Liberty Township adds helicopter to fleet

Liberty Township Police Department will keep its residents safe from the sky.

During their March meeting, township supervisors unanimously approved commissioning a helicopter known as Liberty 1. The copter will be owned and operated by Tripwire South, a company specializing in equipment and training for first responders. Tripwire South is owned by Liberty Township Police Sgt. Ryan Morris. The sergeant said Tripwire is donating the use of the copter, but he expects the township to help him seek federal grants to cover costs. He recently met with Senator John Fetterman to discuss funding options.

"I think this type of public/private partnership is the right way to go about this," Supervisor Chris Hill said.

The helicopter will be equipped with specialized light systems to detect people when performing

search and rescue options. Morris said the helicopter cost \$1 million and the camera systems totaled \$350,000. Tripwire is also providing the required liability insurance coverage.

Police Chief Terry DeWitt endorsed the helicopter proposal. It is currently housed in Carroll County, Maryland, but Morris said it will soon be stationed in Mount Joy Township, Adams County. DeWitt said he expects it to have a 15-minute response

time. During a recent incident at WellSpan Gettysburg Hospital, Pennsylvania State Police took about two hours to respond with its helicopter, DeWitt said.

Supervisor Chairman Walter "Mickey" Barlow said the helicopter will be outfitted with Liberty's logos and colors, but the township will make it available to any Adams County police department.

Similarly, Barlow said the Fairfield Emergency Management Agency

seeks volunteers to assist police during search and rescue operations. Interested citizens should call the township office at 717-642-3780.

Bridge Troubles

The Old Waynesboro Bridge is failing but township supervisors are hitting dead ends when they try to fix it.

Barlow, who serves as township roadmaster, said state officials inspect the bridge every two years and share a list of recommended repairs. Last

year, the township released three requests for proposals for the work and received no responses. One contractor told Barlow the job was too small for his firm.

Barlow said he asked Adams County officials to include the bridge on their RFP for bridge work with the understanding that Liberty would reimburse the county. County officials declined the proposal, stating they would have to open the option to all municipalities. Barlow then pleaded with Rep. Dan Moul for guidance but received no answers as of the March 10 meeting.

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THURMONT NEWS

Cross & Company files second lawsuit

Controversy surrounds the Cannexation of Patricia Simmers' 16.7-acre farm, leaving many Thurmont residents frustrated. The annexation request was previously turned down, leading Cross and Company, the developer spearheaded by Danial Cross, to move forward with simultaneous lawsuits against the residents of the neighboring Albert Courts community, as well as the Town of Thurmont, Frederick County, two HOAs, and a construction company. The original lawsuit addresses the derelict stormwater management equipment, while a newer lawsuit, filed in February 2025, claims the unlawful discharge of pollutants onto the Simmers'

property and into Maryland's waters.

Although not the first-time the annexation has been proposed, this most recent attempt comes on the heels of a referendum where residents voted to overturn the annexation in 2023. Cross has since been working on a lower-density concept plan which was introduced in 2024 at the same time as the original lawsuit. His proposed concept gave the Town two options: develop the seven-acre portion already within Town limits and leave the 16.7 acres for a stormwater management facility or, once again, ask for annexation of the 16.7 acres and build a smaller development with lower density than

previously proposed.

Under the second option, Cross & Company claims they intended on addressing the abandoned stormwater management facility leftover from the construction of the neighboring Albert Courts community in the 90s. The facility was built on the Simmers' property with the intention of it being removed after construction was completed. However, Cross and Company allege that after its completion in 1997, it was instead abandoned. Cross claims the facility is trespassing on and damaging the Simmers' property as well as polluting local waters.

Residents at the January Planning and Zoning Commission meeting were adamant that the

lawsuit was in retaliation of the overturned annexation, and they pleaded with the Commission to not make any decisions until the lawsuit is cleared up. Less than a month later, Cross & Company filed a second lawsuit claiming the stormwater runoff from the 11.86 acres is not being treated for either quantity or quality. According to a letter written by Cross to a member of the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE). "[The] water appears to simply be disappearing into the ground or flowing across/eroding the fallow farm field on Mrs. Simmers' property."

In the letter, Cross pointed out that "Twenty-seven years does not constitute a tempo-

rary use of the Simmers' Property," and requests the Simmers' property be restored to its original condition. He also mentions that the Town of Thurmont has been derelict in management of its stormwater affairs and dependent on Frederick County. The County has in turn refused to become involved in the issue. This brings Cross to an impasse with the Town and the County, thus why he requested MDE to further investigate the abandoned facility.

The Town awaits to hear MDE's response to the newer lawsuit, however, the original lawsuit is set to be seen before a jury in June 2026. Meanwhile, residents of the Albert Courts community and the Town of Thurmont are embroiled in a legal battle for some time.

Sheetz remodeling underway

As anyone who has drives down Church Street to get onto Rt. 15 knows, the reconstruction of the Sheetz service station is well underway. The new facility will be from 4,510 square feet to 4,959 square feet. The four fuel pump islands will be replaced with six fueling islands. While the number of parking spaces will remain the same, two loading zones will be added on the north side of the property to create a safer area for deliveries to be unloaded into the store.

When the redesign was introduced in December, the Planning Commission requested changes that included increasing the bicycle amenities and adding a sidewalk and crosswalk. Thurmont has a large bicycle popula-

tion, so the new "Bicycle Plaza" will be a concrete pad with four bicycle parking spots, a bench, a trash can, and a bicycle repair station. The Plaza will connect to the North Church Street sidewalk by another sidewalk.

Town staff also asked Sheetz to increase pedestrian safety at the store so a crosswalk will be added from the Plaza to the store. "When the high school lets out, the sidewalk and crosswalk will allow teens to get to the store safely," said Town Planner Kelly Duty.

A big concern for the Commission was the agreement between Sheetz and the neighboring Rambler Inn regarding the entrances/exits between the properties.

The preliminary plan showed a

one-way into the Rambler Inn property, a two-way between Sheetz and the Rambler Inn, and another one-way out of the Rambler Inn property. Duty said, "While the existing plan does restrict traffic and increase landscaping, it doesn't appear to work well with how the site's traffic flows." She suggested removing the one-way out, moving the two-way closer to the main Sheetz entrance, and possibly removing the one-way in as well.

Planning Commission Chairman Randy Cabbage said he sat and watched the traffic one afternoon and he agreed that having an in/out would be better than having one-way entrances/exits.

Sheetz Project Manager Robert Franks explained the original agree-

ment with the hotel is from the 1950s and it requires Sheetz to provide three entrances between the properties that must be in specific locations.

Commissioner Marty Burns, whose wife's uncle owns the Sheetz property, said the entrance was widened a few years ago but thinks it should be widened more and lines should be painted to aid in direction. "People encroach into exit lanes so you can't fit two cars in," he said.

Cabbage agreed, "No one knows where they are going when they get into the parking lot." Franks explained that Sheetz ended up with the current design because of the chaos that ensues in the parking lot. He said they would be willing to add line painting to the plan.

In an effort to help ease congestion at the entrance, Sheetz contacted the

state to see if an entrance ramp could be made off the US 15 northbound ramp; however, the State Highway Administration said such an option was not permitted per Federal Highway Administration standards.

Franks also indicated that as part of the redesign, the kerosene pump will be removed, which concerned Cabbage. "This is a farming community and that pump in January and February is used by a lot of people. I'm taken aback at why Sheetz won't have one anymore." Franks explained that Sheetz is gradually getting out of the kerosene business. He said the sales at Thurmont didn't generate enough profit to make it worth continuing.

While EV charging stations are not in the preliminary plan, they could be added later Franks said.

Residents to see increase in electric bills

PJM, the Town's electricity provider, is increasing its capacity rate to \$1.7 million for the 2025-2026 fiscal year, a 900% increase, forcing Thurmont residents to endure a 17.3% increase in their electric bills this May. This is in addition to the increase residents can expect on the electric base rates later this year, which is expected to be around 12.3%.

The Board told residents in attendance at the March 18 meeting that the 17.3% increase on electric bills is made by PJM, not the Town and therefore, the Board has no control over. "This is a rate that guarantees that we will have the capacity we need for our electric moving for-

ward," Mayor John Kinnaird said. Chris Simms, a principal of Smart Utility Management, a consultant who researches energy management for the Town of Thurmont, explained that the Town would go into default with PJM if they didn't pay the bill with its increases, cutting off the power to residents and businesses.

In total, residents will see an overall 29.6% increase to their electric bills, if the base rate increase is approved in August. Kinnaird assured residents that, while the rates are increasing, Thurmont will still have one of the cheapest electric rates in the State of Maryland, which Commissioner Marty Burns

agreed with. The Mayor went on to explain that Thurmont also has better service than many other municipalities with fewer outages lasting longer than an hour, which will remain so after the rate increase. "We understand that this is going to be an extreme burden on our residents but I will say, it doesn't lessen the pain any, but, at the end of the day, we're still going to be one of the least expensive electric providers in the state of Maryland," Kinnaird said.

Burns spoke directly to the residents at the meeting, wanting to make sure they understood that PJM's rate increase was not something they liked or even agreed with

but that was necessary to keep the power on in Thurmont. "That's what they're charging us so it has to go up 17.3%. It's just a pass through—we don't make a dime off of it," Burns said.

Kinnaird reiterated to the residents in attendance that there would also be system upgrades with the price increase, in addition to continuing what he considers great service. Commissioner Bob Lookingbill pointed out that the price increases will help the Town stay on top of system maintenance, or the systems will eventually fail. "I can't say enough to the folks that are out there listening how much time and thought and long hours we've put

in trying to figure out a way around this, there just isn't one," her said.

Kinnaird explained that the base rate increases are also necessary to keep up maintenance and the good service for Thurmont residents. While the Town is receiving a 3.5 million bond for the Moser Road Substation project, there have also been increases to the workforce and improvements to equipment since the last rate increase in 2018 that need to be accounted for financially. "We made a decision several years ago to make those changes to our electric department to make our service more consistent and more reliable for our residents.," Kinnaird said.

Burns explained to residents that while they are paying more for their electricity, they are also receiving better quality service. The 12.3% increase for the base rate will work out to a \$12.89 hike for consumers who on average use 1,000 kWh per bill.

"We have to make these increases in order to get ourselves out of the hole on the electric department so we can get back to at least breaking even and hopefully having enough money leftover for future maintenance," Kinnaird said.

Simms will present Thurmont's rate filing to the Power Service Commission for approval in August. The new rate will be put in place sometime after that hearing.

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TANEYTOWN NEWS

Council spins tires on Main Street discussion

The March City Council workshop was intended to discuss what the vision of the new Main Street Program should be. However, it ended with Council members unable to agree on the priorities.

The Council started the discussion by looking at both the vision and mission of the Main Street Program, and what that means according to the Council. With big ideas such as historic preservation, the livability for current residents and the capability of current businesses to hold open hours, it was quickly evident that the Council was thinking of big goals but missing how the Main Street Program would actually accomplish those goals.

Guidelines provided by the Department of Housing and Community Development (DHCD) state that one of the most important priorities when creating a Main Street Program is to select a Main Street Manager and having a clear definition of this role. The requirements for this position were successfully outlined at the previous meeting. Some of these requirements

include a minimum of 35 hours a week and working in conjunction with the Economic Development position. At the March meeting, the Commissioners spiraled into a heated discussion over how much the position should be paid, as the City had received zero applications at the time of the meeting. The current application lists the annual pay as \$40,000 to \$50,000, which according to Mayor Christopher Miller, "Nobody's coming for \$40,000 to \$50,000," he said. "You get what you pay for."

Councilwoman Elizabeth Chaney asked what other local municipalities pay their Main Street Manager/Economic Development Directors, but no one was able to answer the question. Wieprecht chimed in stating, "We have talked about doing a compensation study to see where we rank compared to our local market, which includes Frederick County and Adams County and York, but we never pulled the trigger to do that." The Council argued between increasing the upper range of the salary to

\$70,000 or basing the salary on experience with no actual monetary number posted. Ultimately, a decision was made to list the position under the latter option; to base the salary on experience with no actual monetary number posted.

The financial responsibility of the City was another hot topic for the Council.

Traditionally, the City contributes \$12,000 to aid the Program with grants and donations sourced by the Main Street Board, providing the remaining funds needed. However, City Manager Jim Wieprecht pointed out that the DHCD recommends that funding should come from different streams: 1/3 from local government, 1/3 from grants and 1/3 from the local business community. Again, the Council couldn't agree on a final number, debating between giving more than the minimum \$12,000 versus basing the donation on a percentage suggested by Miller. No final decision was made on this topic.

With the 2026 Fiscal year bud-

get review on the horizon, Miller pointed out the need for the Council to determine whether funding the Main Street revitalization is a priority or not. "We've been asked to keep things lean," pointed out Wieprecht. "The Mayor has asked us to try to rein things in to essentials only, as far as any discretionary line items."

Miller has pushed for the City to find ways to save money in the budget for capital projects, such as road and infrastructure repairs, which could be harder to find funding for. "It is going to be a tough time for municipalities as the Federal government constricts, as the State government constricts and as the County government constricts, we need to start thinking of having extra money set aside."

Resident and former Main Street Board member Sharon Tillman reminded the council that the program already has guidelines and to follow what they have instead of 'reinventing the wheel'. "Main Street by definition is a grassroots program, a community driven program," she

said. "My advice to you is to work the Program. Thousands of communities make this program work. Follow the Program as it is designated and designed instead of trying to reinvent the mission of the Main Street." She asked the Council to collectively set the vision for Taneytown's Main Street by allowing the stakeholders to develop the mission in concert with the community.

Wieprecht, who has experience working on the Main Street Board in the past, said, "I'm a little bit concerned that we're talking through all these big picture things, and I think it's the City's role to set the guard rails and let something get started. Appoint a new board, give them the framework to work within, and let them come up with their plan, let them come up with their goals and objectives."

With that being said, the Council finished for the evening with intentions to review staff reports to be better prepared at a future workshop. They also agreed to edit the current EDC job posting to state, base salary on experience with no actual monetary number posted.

Plans for Sewell Farm development presented

The 126-acre Sewell Farm off Harney Road has been the center of controversy for many years. When it was annexed into the Town in 2021, residents fought not only to stop the annexation but tried to overturn it once approved. At the March Mayor and City Council meeting, Marty Hackett, President of CLSI, a civil engineering group, and Tom Poss, developer of the property, were present to introduce the most recent plans for the property.

According to the presentation the 126-acre farm, which is in medium density zoning, will have 375 homes, 105 rear loaded townhomes and 270 single family homes. About 40% of the

property will be open space. The development would be 'amenity heavy' with plans for a clubhouse, pool, multipurpose field and courts, covered gathering area with a barbeque pit, community gardens, dog park and a trail system. Poss plans on using the City's Community Village overlay, a zoning tool that provides guidelines for developers that consistently maintains the City's character throughout its developments.

As for the layout of the development, Hackett said the environmental portion of the development is along the north of the property and is primarily the flood plain and stream buffer. There is also an existing well in that

location that was drilled by the property owner years ago just to see how much water it would produce. Hackett assured the commission that a protective area is planned around the well just in case the Town may have need of it someday. The rest of the homes would be in clustered groups (a perk of the Community Village overlay) throughout the property.

Another possibility stemming from the development would be the continuation of the much-desired bypass. This has been discussed before with the prior developer regarding the 'Worthington Boulevard Corridor', essentially the southern portion of the bypass that

comes off Flow Serve property, across 140, through the southern end of the Sewell Farm, across Harney Road, and eventually connecting with RT 194 via Fringer Rd. The issue with this is the path through the floodplain is unsuitable for a road thus a bridge would be needed and that would be an expensive undertaking that most developers would not be willing to take on.

Poss added that their intentions are to work with the City on the bypass road. "You'll find a willing partner with us," he said. "We have a top-notch engineer that has a lot of experience in the State with projects like this and you know he is at y'all's disposal."

Councilman Christopher Tillman also asked if any portions of the development would be considered 'affordable'. "We do not have a LIHTC (Low-Income Housing Tax Credit program) project component as part of this," said Poss. He pointed out the need for LIHTC projects to be near mass transit as a key reason why this type of housing was not part of their plans.

With a lot of questions to be answered about the bypass in particular the developers will have to return with more concrete plans to present. Hopefully with work on the Comprehensive Plan taking place now, The City will be more prepared to discuss plans for the Southern bypass.

Council election candidates announced

Taneytown City residents will decide on May 5 who will fill three of the council's five seats.

Rachael Miller, Harry Meade, and Nick Kalinock will be on the ballot. Current council members Diane Foster, Judith Fuller, and Elizabeth Chaney have decided not to seek re-election. The terms of Mayor Christopher Miller, Mayor Pro Tem James McCarron, and Councilman Christopher Tillman do not expire this year.

"I'm not running because I disagree with the direction the city is going. I want no part of this mayor's agenda," Fuller said. She has been vocal at council meetings when disagreeing with Mayor Miller.

Foster, a 16-year-member of council, wrote in an email that she is beginning to scale back on her commitments. "I will continue to serve on the Board of Directors of the Human Services Program; Vice Chair of the Board of Trustees of Carroll Community College; the Board of Directors of the Silver Oak Academy; and the Family Selection Committee of the Carroll County Habitat

for Humanity," she wrote.

Miller, Meade, and Kalinock are running on a slate they dubbed MMK. On their Facebook page named MMK Slate Taneytown City Council 2025 they state they want to overhaul the city charter and code, implement term limits, and define clear roles for mayor and council. They also claim they wish to enhance public security, promote responsible growth, and push for community and economic development. They are holding a candidates' forum April 10 at 6 in the evening at the Activity Building on the carnival grounds, 48 Memorial Drive.

Meade's campaign page states, "My main goals are transparency from the council to the citizens of Taneytown, a balanced approach to future growth, and creating a more self-sufficient town for the benefit of our citizens."

Kalinock's says, "If elected, my guiding principle will always be to be a good steward of the city, its resources, institutions, and the people who work to serve the residents and businesses."

On Miller's campaign Facebook page, she says, "this is a campaign for the people of Taneytown. We're focused on the needs and desires of the residents who call this place home." Her priorities include responsible growth, public services and safety, economic vitality, traffic safety and efficiency, affordable living, and a commitment to serve the residents of Taneytown.

Candidate Miller and Mayor Miller's last name is no coincidence. They are married. McCarron questioned the ethics of having related members on the Council.


City Attorney Jay Gullo said Taneytown does not prohibit two spouses from holding an elected office. Therefore, it is their constitutional right to run. "It may create problems down the road because of potential collusion and issues that relate to the code of conduct but probably not directly with the ethics ordinance itself," he said.

Citizens wishing to vote must register with the Carroll County Board of Elections no later than 4 p.m. April 7. Absentee ballot request forms are

available and the ballots will be available April 17. Completed absentee

ballots must be returned no later than 4 p.m. April 7.

Election day is May 5 at the Taneytown police station with polls open from 7 to 7.



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FROM THE DESK OF...

US Congresswoman April Delaney

When I was sworn in to serve Maryland's 6th District in Congress, I was hopeful that we could find common ground to make life more affordable for Marylanders. Instead, the last month has been plagued by chaos and confusion from the Administration's actions, especially for federal workers, farmers, health care centers and those who rely on federal programs to help feed their families or operate their businesses. Last week, the House Republican majority put forth a budget plan to extend massive tax cuts for billionaires, using money allocated for farmers and Medicaid/CHIP and SNAP recipients to help pay for them.

I am disheartened to see how the proposal sadly prioritizes tax cuts at the expense of Medicaid, a program designed for only one purpose: to provide basic health care for children, families and seniors struggling to get by. In Maryland's 6th District, more than 109,000 people get their health care through Medicaid/CHIP—more than half of whom are children.

The proposal also mandates deep cuts to the Agriculture Committee, which oversees the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), on which over 10% of households rely in our district. These cuts not only jeopardize our moral obligation to take care of our communities, but they are also nonsensical to local economies; data shows that every dollar spent by SNAP recipients stabilizes our economy by sustaining the revenue of local small businesses and the food production of our agricultural sector. Disappointingly, despite my vote against these deep cuts, the legislation passed the U.S. House last week.

When the Administration is issuing tariffs that would inevitably drive up the cost of gas, food and other consumer goods, the last thing we should do is turn our backs on Americans working to build better lives for themselves and their families. Congress must work together to pass legislation that supports the working class and expands economic opportunity.

I recently visited Family Healthcare of Hagerstown, which heavily depends on HHS funding, to discuss the impact of ending Medicare with doctors and the over 60% of the Center's patients who use the federal healthcare program. Since the 1990s, Family Healthcare has provided affordable, accessible healthcare to Washington County, a designated Health Professional Shortage Area.

Not only is jeopardizing health care from 80 million people morally wrong, but it could also prove economically disastrous to poorer states, and end up costing taxpayers more in the long run.

I later met with the team at Thales, a private company that partners with agencies, such as DOD, to equip our active military with cutting-edge technology in the field to improve their communications, strengthen our national security and, most importantly, potentially save lives. They also rely largely on federal funding to support their R&D. Now more than ever, it is critical that we lift up our pub-

lic-private partnerships to continue to drive innovation and job creation in Maryland and across the country.

Farmers have also been caught in the crosshairs. As President Trump's 25% tariffs take effect, I'm thinking of our farmers, who will pay for more expensive aluminum and steel in their equipment and face difficulty exporting their crops when retaliatory tariffs take effect. These tariffs could devastate many family farms across Maryland and the country. On top of this, many USDA grants remain frozen by the President's Executive Order, despite a federal court's decision to release the funds to farmers in need. The Administration cut funding mechanisms and USDA staff, causing serious delays in repayment to farmers who have already invested in their land under the promise of federal reimbursement.

Last month, I hosted meetings with the Frederick and Washington County Farm Bureaus to hear how these tariffs and funding freezes could affect local farmers and to discuss this year's anticipated Farm Bill. As the daughter of a potato farmer and member of

the House Ag Committee, I will continue to listen to and fight for farmers in our district and across Maryland.

Lastly, I continue to fight against the indiscriminate layoffs, agency reductions and defunding of critical research programs at NIST, NIH, Fort Detrick and so many others by this Administration.

I sincerely believe our government should operate with the utmost efficiency for taxpayers, but these cuts are shortsighted and in fact harmful to our economy, national security and Maryland families.

Maryland is a national leader in scientific innovation and our local economy is powered by private-public partnerships, and I will continue to call on the Administration to stop its illegal freeze of Congressionally approved federal funding and widespread termination of critical federal workers.

If you are a federal employee or have concerns about the Trump Administration's policies, please share your story with me here. If you need help with a federal agency, please contact my office here or call 301-926-0300.

Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird

April showers will bring May flowers! Spring is here and flowers are blooming and the grass is getting green once again. It seemed like a long and cold winter, but before you know it we will be complaining about the heat. On the last weekend in March a group of 26 volunteers helped plant 24 new trees at East End Park.

I want to thank the volunteers, Anna Twigg with Maryland Forestry, the Thurmont Green Team, town staff and CAO Jim Humerick for adding to our green canopy. We also have daffodils popping up in Community Park and at other spots around town thanks to the Thurmont Green Team. I hope everyone appreciates the efforts of

our volunteers and Green Team as much as I do!

North Church Street is being repaved and they should be working on repaving Rte. 77 from Tipin Drive to Catoctin Hollow Road. Both of these projects are being done by the State Highway Administration. Due to recent cuts in the Maryland budget these are the only paving projects that the SHA will be doing in our area this year. The coming years may see a noticeable reduction in highway improvement projects state wide.

With the good weather there will be an increase in kids on bikes, runners and walkers on our streets, sidewalks and trails. Please be aware of pedestrians at all of our crossings and intersec-

tions, and remember that pedestrians in crosswalks have the right of way. Our Trolley Trail seems to get busier every day, and walkers cross East Main Street, Park Lane, Water Street and Moser Road at marked crosswalks. The Trolley Trail now connects with the new Mountaingate Trail, from Moser Road to Frederick Road. We continue to extend our trails and encourage residents to take advantage of these wonderful trails.

The Thurmont Planning and Zoning Commission is addressing an annexation request for the Simmers' property on Apples Church Road. I encourage residents to get involved by attending P&Z meetings to express your thoughts and concerns regarding this proposal.

Once P&Z has completed their review of the application the Board of Commissioners will then review the proposal and will be entertaining public comment and input before making a decision to approve or deny the application. Be sure to get involved in this process!

The construction of the new tennis courts at Community Park has been interrupted and will probably require a new bid to complete the project. It is our goal to get the work completed by the end of May. This project has been a challenge for staff and they are working hard to get things back on track.

We recently completed a new garage at the Public Works facility to house the Electric Department pole truck. The truck had been housed in a temporary building and will now have its own space. All of our departments take excep-

tional care of their equipment.

We have been addressing rate increases for our electric customers. This year our electric purchase cost were hit with a \$1,700,000 increase in our service costs. This figure represents an almost 25% increase in our power purchase costs. This increase will be reflected in a 19% increase in our rates. We have also added an additional 9% increase to cover debt service costs for the Moser Road Substation rebuilding and increased costs in material and labor costs. Even with these increases we still have the third least expensive electric rates in Maryland. If you have any questions about your electric bill or would like to set up a monthly payment plan please call our staff at 301-271-7313.

I hope everyone has an amazing Spring and a joyous Easter.

Emmitsburg Mayor Frank Davis

I do not want to jinx us, but I think the worst of winter may be over. The baseball field has been full of young players, the

dog park is barking, and the playgrounds are in full swing. Get out and enjoy the beautiful weather, as Spring has arrived.

The warm weather also brings the start of a few construction projects around town. The DePaul waterline project has begun its final stage of work. I know this caused some hardships

and inconvenience to the residents in the area, but this was a much-needed project to improve our water infrastructure. The contractor has been great to work with and for the most part has gone above and beyond to meet the needs of the neighborhood.

If you have any questions or concerns, please call the town office. Remember, no one on Facebook can fix your problems.

As we work to prepare the 2026 budget, we are doing our best to take into consideration the tax and fee increases levied by the County and State. We will do our best to tighten our spending belts and at the same time ensure your needs are met with your everyday needs.

Lastly, I want to thank you for the bottom of my heart for the support you showed for "Spending A Day in Their Shoes" fundraiser. As of now we have raised close to \$9,000 dollars and took in over a thousand food items. As always, Emmitsburg and our surrounding communities stepped up to help those in need.

If you have any questions or concerns, please give me a call.

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GOVERNMENT—SOUTH OF THE BORDER

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

April is Deaf History Month! Frederick County is home to a thriving community of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We were proud to celebrate by holding a Deaf History Month Proclamation event at the beginning of the month. This event was a moment for us to come together, honor and recognize the impact of the deaf community, and reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. If you couldn't join us in person, be sure to check out a recording of the event on FCG TV!

April also brings several other important updates and initiatives. From the unveiling of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget to new plans under the Livable Frederick initiative, there is much to discuss and look forward to.

Budget

Over the past several months, we have been working hard to develop the County's budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which begins July 1, 2025. Your input and feedback have been invaluable in helping us shape a budget that reflects our community's needs, priorities, and

values. Thank you for taking the time to be involved in the budget process.

Later this month, I will present my FY26 Proposed Budget. This is the most challenging budget we've faced in nearly two decades. Federal funds we've been promised are on hold. Federal workers' and contractors' income is uncertain. And the state is proposing to shift millions of dollars in costs to local governments.

Our biggest challenge, and my top priority, is education. Through this year's capital budget, we will make an historic investment in school construction projects to accommodate growing enrollment and renovate existing facilities.

Despite a tightening budget, I'm pleased to share that several school construction projects will move forward in the coming year. The budget includes substantial funding for the construction of a new Brunswick High School, renovations to Twin Ridge and Hillcrest Elementary Schools, and a new elementary school #41 in the eastern part of the County.

We must make budget decisions against the backdrop of chaos in Wash-

ington and a growing deficit in Annapolis. We will meet this uncertainty with a fiscally responsible spending plan that protects the core services our residents expect from Frederick County Government. To learn more about the budget process, visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Budget.

New Livable Frederick Plans

Planning for more affordable housing, historic preservation, and green infrastructure is critical to maintaining the high quality of life that we enjoy in Frederick County. That's why Livable Frederick has announced three new plans on Housing, Historic Preservation, and Green Infrastructure.

Members of the public are invited to attend an upcoming open house on Monday, April 7 at Urbana Regional Library from 6 – 8 p.m. to learn more and provide feedback on the new plans. This public meeting will feature interactive activities designed to engage the community.

The Livable Frederick Master Plan is an ongoing initiative designed to enhance the quality of life for residents

of Frederick County by addressing critical areas such as housing, historic preservation, the environment, health, and the economy.

The aim is to create a comprehensive and sustainable plan that reflects the community's needs. Through open houses and interactive activities, our Livable Frederick staff will gather diverse perspectives and ideas that can be incorporated into the plans. To learn more, visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/LivableFrederick.

Expanding Childcare Opportunities & Strengthening Our Workforce

To address the critical shortage of quality childcare in Frederick County, the Division of Family Services and Frederick County Workforce Services have partnered to launch a comprehensive Childcare Initiative. The goal is to add more childcare providers and increase families' access to childcare options.

Every family in Frederick County should have access to reliable, high-quality childcare, and every childcare provider should have the support they need to thrive. This initiative helps families find the care they need and empowers

individuals to build rewarding careers in childcare. By investing in our workforce and expanding access to childcare, we're strengthening our economy and ensuring a brighter future for our entire community.

Up to 70 Frederick County residents will gain access to free training and resources that enable them to start and operate a licensed family-owned childcare business or obtain certifications to work in various childcare settings. Participation is free, but space is limited so be sure to apply early. To learn more, visit www.FrederickWorks.com/Childcare-Initiative.

While we are working to improve childcare for workers and families, Frederick County has also begun a new comprehensive Child Care Study to reassess the current childcare landscape in our community. Public participation will be critical to the study's success and it will help shape our children's future.

Frederick County residents with children aged birth to 12 years old are invited to complete the survey and participate in focus groups. More information on how to get involved is available at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/ChildCare.

County Notes

Rural Historic Preservation Grants Awarded

Historic farmhouses, a former female seminary, and agricultural outbuildings are among the rural properties that will be preserved with support from the Frederick County Rural Historic Preservation Grant Program. In its fifth year, the initiative is one of only a few historic preservation programs that focuses on significant structures in rural areas.

"Protecting the places that make Frederick County unique is an important part of the Livable Frederick Master Plan," County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "Preserving these structures is more than safeguarding old buildings – it's protecting the stories, landscapes, and traditions that define our shared heritage. These sites connect us to our rich history and inspire future generations to appreciate the character and resilience of rural communities."

The Rural Historic Preservation Grant Program offers one-time grants of up to \$50,000 to individual property owners and nonprofit organizations to stabilize, rehabilitate, restore or preserve the exterior of a historic property. To qualify, properties must be located in an unincorporated area of the county, listed on the County Register of Historic Places, be designated as a contributing resource in a local historic district, or be determined eligible for County Register designation.

Grant awardees for 2025 within this papers distribution area include:

Judge William Stoner House – Apples Church Road, Thurmont. \$46,590 to repair the brick chimneys and replace the roof over the house. The property is a good

example of a vernacular mid-19th century farmhouse with Greek Revival elements. The property is listed on the County Register.

Liberty Female Seminary – Main Street, Libertytown. \$36,237 to repoint the north elevation. The property was originally constructed as a place to educate and board young women and may be the earliest female seminary in Frederick County. The property is listed on the County Register.

Oliver P. Harding Farm – Green Valley Road, New Market. \$22,173 to restore the historic wood windows on the house. The property is the newest addition to the Peace and Plenty Rural Historic District. The property is listed on the County Register.

Funding for the Frederick County Rural Historic Preservation Grants comes from the col-

lection of recordation fees charged on certain real estate transactions. For additional information about the grant program, visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/RuralGrants. Questions about the program can be directed to Amanda Whitmore, Historic Preservation Planner, at AWhitmore@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

Capital Budget Highlights Unveiled

Several school construction projects will move forward in the coming year, Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced today, even as the County tightens its operating budget. She unveiled highlights of her six-year Capital Improvement Program, as well as preliminary information about her FY-26 Operating Budget which begins July 1.

"Our biggest challenge and

my top priority is building new schools to accommodate growing enrollment and renovating existing facilities. Through this year's capital budget, we will make an historic investment in school construction projects to meet these needs," Executive Fitzwater said. "We are making budget decisions against the backdrop of chaos in Washington and a growing deficit in Annapolis. We will meet this uncertainty with a fiscally responsible spending plan that protects the core services our residents expect from Frederick County Government."

Federal Assistance Available to Nurseries, Small Businesses, and Private Nonprofits Affected by Drought.

Nurseries, small businesses, private nonprofit organizations in Frederick County that have been impacted by the drought that began July 23, 2024 are encour-

aged to apply for low-interest federal disaster loans from the U.S. Small Business Administration (SBA) by April 7.

The SBA's Economic Injury Disaster Loan program offers financial assistance to eligible entities experiencing economic hardship due to the drought. This program is available to small businesses, small agricultural cooperatives, nurseries, and private nonprofit organizations with financial losses directly related to the drought. Disaster loans are not available to agricultural producers, farmers, or ranchers, except for small aquaculture enterprises.

Economic Injury Disaster Loans provide working capital for businesses impacted by disasters, even if there has been no physical damage. The funds from this program may be used to pay fixed debts, payroll, accounts pay-

continued on page 23

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FROM THE DESK OF...

Carroll Valley Mayor Ron Harris

The 2025 Farmers' Almanac predicts Spring temperatures will be slightly warmer than usual and that precipitation will range from above average to average. As the weather improves, many residents start raking leaves and gathering fallen tree branches. The question is, what should we do with the debris? One suggestion is to transport the debris to the Washington Township Refuse Transfer Station at 12721 Buchanan Trail East (off Rt 16) in Waynesboro. Before going, check out their website at washtwp-franklin.org/transfer-station or call 717-762-4413 for further information on what they accept and the cost.

If you plan to burn, read the Carroll Valley Borough Ordinance 6-2008. The ordinance contains information about what you are and are not allowed to burn and your safety and supervisory responsibilities. To see a copy of the ordinance, go to carroll-valley.org, and on the home page, type open burning in the search box and

then click on the ordinance. If you have any questions, call the borough office at 717-642-8269.

Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) will have their spring clothing giveaway on Saturday, April 12th. You can drop off your spring/summer clothing only from 8-11 and then come shop for FREE from 11-2 at Liberty Worship Center. We usually have clothing from infants to adults, including maternity clothes. There will also be gently used shoes. We will also treat the nursing homes and Meals on Wheels to a little surprise for Easter. Thanks for the continued support! If you have any questions, please call Robin at 717-642-6578.

The Carroll Valley Blood Drive was held in the meeting room on Monday, February 24th. Twenty-nine donors gave blood, and twenty-five units of blood were collected. The difference between the number of blood donors and the number of units of blood counted arises because a single donor can contribute multi-

ple units of blood components (like red cells, platelets, or plasma) during a single donation. As reported by the Red Cross, seventy-five local lives will be saved. Thank you for your personal gift. The next Carroll Valley Blood Drive will be held on Monday, May 12th, at a new time: 10 to 6.

The Easter Bunny is visiting our area on Saturday, April 19th to host the Carroll Valley Easter Egg Hunt. The start time is 11. Be sure to show up earlier. Digital portraits with the Easter Bunny will be taken by Jarrell Studios free of charge. Over 5,000 eggs have been filled and hidden for our young participants. My advice is to show up earlier than 11 so you can have a picture taken and time to figure out where your child's group area is. The age groups are: 2 years and under, 3 to 4 years old, 5 to 7 years old, and 8 to 10 years old. A Special Thanks goes to our event sponsor, Jen Warden, State Farm Insurance Agency, in Emmitsburg. Also, I would appreciate it if you

would please tell your youngsters not to run over the old guy with the camera when the starting horn is blown.

April 26th, Saturday, from 10 to 2, in the Carroll Valley Borough parking lot, the Borough Police, Liberty Township, and the Cumberland Police Departments will partner with Collaborating For Youth to cooperate with the U.S. Drug Enforcement Agency to carry out the Adams County "Medicine Take-Back" collection. This medicine collection allows Adams County residents to dispose of unused or expired prescriptions and over-the-counter medications safely and free of charge. Pills, liquids, creams, and pill bubble packs will be accepted, and no needles or sharps will be accepted. Seventy percent of people abusing prescription pain relievers get them (take) from family and friends. In addition, safely disposing of prescription drugs and unused OTC medications helps reduce the damage to groundwater and the environment. For more information regarding the Adams County TAKE BACK, don't hesitate

to contact Collaborating For Youth at 717-338-0300.

Covered Device Recycling is scheduled to occur on Saturday, April 26th, from 8 to 11 at 31 Carrolls Tract Road. This event is only for customers of Parks Garbage Service who live in Carroll Valley and Fairfield Boroughs, as well as Freedom, Hamiltonban, Highland, and Liberty Townships. View the Carroll Valley Borough website for acceptable recycling items.

Plans are underway to hold a Carroll Valley Fishing Derby on Sunday, April 27th, from 9 until noon. All children 15 and under are invited to the park with their fishing poles, tackle boxes, and bait and participate in the Carroll Valley fishing derby. Registration and check-in are scheduled to occur between 8 and 9. Fishing begins at 9 and ends at noon. Each participant is permitted to keep five fish. Hope to see you at the derby. Keep well. Watch your speed in the borough. If you have questions, please do not hesitate to contact me by email using MayorRonHarris@comcast.net or phone 301-606-2021.

Liberty Township Supervisor Walter Barlow

Happy Spring! In March, the Township faced severe winds bringing trees down on to the roadways. The crews are working as fast as they can to respond to these incidents to reopen the roads. When you see an active work zone, please slow down or turn around to avoid any potential hazards. Be patient and courteous to the municipal employees working out on the roads cutting and clearing the debris. Safety is our number one concern.

As we enter mowing season, please be sure to clean up any grass that ends up on the

roads from mowing your yard or aim your mower, so the grass blows back into your yard and not the roads. Grass on roads is extremely dangerous for motorcyclists and those who ride bicycles. Please be courteous to those driving through our Township and keep our roads clean. Cold patch work will continue this Spring, and we will address filling the potholes as quickly as we can.

Roadway problem areas will be placed on our project list and given more attention when we are out resurfacing the roadways later this year. All materi-

als have been moved to the new salt shed and the demolition of the old equipment shed is complete. This has increased the parking lot area. We have made tremendous progress updating the outside maintenance of the township building during the past several months.

The Police Department is anticipating the new police car to be placed in service during the month of April. The 2016 police car was put out of service and taken to the Freedom Auto Auction. The proceeds are being donated to the Adams County Office for Aging. We were glad to be able to join forces with the Office for Aging to give back for the services they provide to our township residents.

The Police Department is excited to share that they have

acquired Liberty 1, the Liberty Township Police Department's Aviation Unit helicopter. It is another tool they can use to ensure the safety of Liberty Township and the surrounding community. This helicopter is owned by Tripwire Aviation but will be designated as air support for our police department on an as needed basis. We express our gratitude to Tripwire Aviation and Ryan Morris for his generous support to Liberty Township Police Department.

The speed monitoring sign is now in service. It will be placed throughout the township to monitor and help with speed enforcement. The Liberty Township Police Department continues to offer house checks on request for township residents. A house check form is

available on our website or call the Police Department at 717-642-6103.

Event Reminders: Pick Up PA event March 1st – May 31st. Contact the township to arrange a time to pick up FREE gloves, safety vests, and trash bags. If you are participating in this event, trash bags dumpster at the Liberty Township Municipal Building or they can be left along the road if you contact the Township to arrange pick up. National Prescription Drug Take Back Day will be held on April 26th, from 10 to 2 at Carroll Valley Borough. Please drop off any unwanted or expired medication. ECycle Event will be held Saturday, April 26, and Saturday, October 12, from 8 to 11, hosted at the Hamiltonban Township Maintenance Building at 31 Carrolls Tract Road. Both events will be open to Parks Garbage customers in the Southwest Group of Carroll Valley Borough, Fairfield Borough, Freedom Township, Hamiltonban Township, Highland Township, and Liberty Township. A descriptive flyer listing the detailed items that will be accepted can be found on our website.

Tax bills were mailed out in early March. Remember to take advantage of the 2% discount on your real estate taxes by making your payment by April 30. The Liberty Township Tax Collector will take payment in person on April 17, 22, 23, 24, 29, and 30 from 2 to 4 at the municipal building. Payment can also be submitted by mail or drop box.

I hope everyone has a great start to their Spring and I look forward to seeing everyone out participating in our Pickup PA Event, National Prescription Drug Take Back Day, and the ECycle Event at Hamiltonban Township.



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GOVERNMENT—NORTH OF THE BORDER

County Commissioner Randy Phiel

The January 22nd Commissioners meeting coincided perfectly with date of Adams County's 225th Anniversary. Adams County was formed on January 22nd, 1800. At the beginning of the meeting Adams County Historian Tim Smith provided a brief history of the County as well as displaying several significant County artifacts from the Adams County Historical Society archives. As part of the celebration on that day, Adams County residents were invited to enjoy free admission at Beyond the Battle Museum at the Adams County Historical Society. One artifact was an image of the first Adams County Courthouse that was in center of the town square until 1859. I was aware of that fact. One provided fact I did not know, was that prior to Adams being part of York County, both Adams and York were part of Lancaster County. You learn something every day!

To have received the nod from the Pennsylvania Dairyman's Association to locate the \$26M Pennsylvania AG Discovery Center in Adams County, is not only exciting and a great compliment to our Tourism industry, but it will educate the public and our youth to Pennsylvania's agriculture diversity, food origin and job opportunities. After competing against strong counties like Cumberland, Dauphin and Lancaster, the collaboration between Adams County Planning, Destination Gettysburg, Adams County Economic Alliance, and the Adams County Commissioners, resulted in the search committee choosing Adams County. I am happy to report the project is alive and well. An executive director was hired, and the search committee has located a suitable parcel, in open fields behind the Gettysburg Outlets along the RT 15. The center is expected to draw 150,000 visitors annually.

The long-term saga of Oak Lawn Cemetery has been a well-publicized and agonizing community concern for years. Left with few options, the County temporarily took over the Cemetery as a temporary caretaker when many other options failed. Allowing the cemetery to fail and become dormant was not an option! At the March 6th Commissioners meeting, the Board approved the Purchase Agreement between the County and the Adams County Industrial Development Authority of approximately 15.81 acres upon which the Oak Lawn Cemetery is located, and Lot 2 totaling approximately 9.63 acres of vacant land, with the exception of a structure that previously served as an office for the Oak Lawn Cemetery.

The intent of the Agreement is Lot 1 will be conveyed to the Oak Lawn Foundation, a Pennsylvania non-profit organization organized and existing to operate and maintain the Oak Lawn Cemetery, and that Lot 2 be conveyed to an appropriate entity for development consistent with the terms and conditions and covenants in the Agreement. Lot 1 will continue to operate as a cemetery, while the 9.63 acres on the western end will

be sold with the proceeds conveyed to support the non-profit. Oak Lawn Cemetery has been one of the most difficult, frustrating, agonizing, and challenging issues this Board has faced in 14-years. We will hopefully see a fully operating and vibrant cemetery again in the not-too-distant future!

At the March 6th public meeting the Commissioners had the pleasure of recognizing March 13 – April 22 as Land Conservancy of Adams County Month. The Land Conservancy of Adams County (LCAC) is an accredited, member-supported nonprofit land trust with the mission to preserve the rural lands and character of Adams County, using conservation easements, outreach, advocacy, and collaboration to maintain the benefits of open space and water quality to preserve our community's way of life and to protect our unique heritage and ecosystems. The LCAC is in its 30th year of operation and has recorded 193 easements, enabling Adams County landowners to preserve over 13,518 acres of farmland and open space. LCAC volunteers are the core of the organization, donating their time and energy to support its goals and purposes. Thank you to all those volunteers!

On the subject of preservation, Adams County continues its strong commitment to preserving our agricultural heritage. This year, the County's match of \$657,677 leveraged \$1,189,041 in state funding through the Pennsylvania Agricultural Conservation Easement Program — an impressive 1.81 to 1 match! These funds will help protect valuable Adams County farmland, ensuring that agriculture remains a vital part of our community for generations to come.

On the ever-evolving election front KNOWiNK Poll Pads are the most widely used electronic poll book. Poll pads are used in place of paper poll books to check in voters, see whether they already received or voted a mail ballot, and direct them to the correct polling place if they are at the wrong location. The poll pad software runs

on commercial off the shelf Apple iPad tablets. With voter experience, poll worker convenience, and election security paramount, at the February 19 public meeting, upon the recommendation of Election Director Angie Crouse, the Board authorized signing an agreement for 16 electronic polling pads for trial use during the 2025 Primary Election on May 20. We will keep you apprised of how well they worked!

Affordable housing remains near the top of the list for needed improvement and resources in Adams County. At the February 5th public meeting, Commissioners approved the Affordable Housing Trust Fund Agreement with the Adams County Housing Authority. This Agreement grants \$70,000 from the County's Affordable Housing Trust Fund to the Housing Authority to assist with continuing provision of affordable housing in the County. This comes at a time when we have received notice that the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development has been suspended Affordable Housing Vouchers.

Last month, I was asked to attend and make remarks regarding NEXTGEN 911 at a Pennsylvania Emergency Management press conference at Franklin County Department of Emergency Services. The purpose of the press conference was to highlight the statewide implementation of NEXTGEN911. Adams & Franklin Counties have a strong partnership in supporting each other with their 911 Centers operations. The benefits of NEXTGEN911 are significant and many. They include enhanced compatibility with cell phone calls, better and more specific location capability, use of fiber which is more stable and reliable resulting in less down time, improved data transfer, and redundancy that supports the primary system.

NEXTGEN 911 was made possible largely through the .30 cents a month increase in cell phone surcharge passed by the legislature in 2023. What a small price to pay

for response enhancement! This improvement was made possible by the Administration, Legislature and Counties working collaboratively to make this critical service improvement happen! Counties did a lot of the heavy lifting and thus a shout out to our Department of Emergency Services staff is warranted.

While on the subject of Emergency Services, it is a sad but well-known fact that it has become increasingly difficult to attract, train and equip Volunteer First Responders. In many Pennsylvania counties, like Adams, volunteers have historically been the backbone of emergency services. As a result, the state legislature passed into law Act 172 giving the authorization for counties and municipalities to provide tax

credits to volunteers who meet service goals and hours. Unfortunately, it should also be noted the legislation did not provide any funding. In 2023 the Adams County Board of Commissioners approved an ordinance providing for a tax rebate of up to \$250 for qualified volunteer firefighters and EMS personnel residing in the County who meet service requirements. When reviewing this program with tax services, at the end of this first year, 245 volunteers from 12 of 17 Adams County departments participated. These Adams County volunteer first responders qualified by meeting minimum guidelines and having their names and documentation submitted by their department. Thank you to all our volunteer responders! The goal is to have all Adams County departments participate in this incentive program.

April Events:

4: BINGO & 17: BINGO

Thursday night Bingo ONLY. When players purchase their cards, we will give you a free three pack of hard cards and random two hard card games we pick. Winner get the bingo and chance to pick an envelope for a Extra chance to win additional money.

Doors open @ 5:30 p.m.
Early Bird starts at 6:50 p.m.

Kitchen opens at 6 p.m.
and at 1/2 time.

12: Meat Raffle

\$15 per person. Ticket includes FREE meal.
Doors open at 5 p.m.

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Long Term Care Protection

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Emergency Back-Up

Set up a credit line to use only as needed.

Tenure Payments

Tax-free lifetime income stream, thereby reducing the need to make withdrawals from tax portfolios.

Consult a tax specialist.

HECM For Purchase

Use the HECM to purchase a new home ("right-size"), and invest the difference for retirement.

Divorce Settlement

Use the HECM to buy out a spouse's portion of the home without selling or withdrawing funds from portfolio.

COMMENTARY

Words from Winterbilt

Is the government size the real issue?

Shannon Bohrer

We are in the midst of reducing our government by laying off and firing government employees. Ostensibly, the federal workforce is rife with corruption and incompetence and is just too large. There also exists opposition to the reductions, with the belief that government employees are necessary to conduct the people's business. We do know that the process being used to reduce the employee numbers is divisive and controversial. One should expect some damage if one weeds their garden with a machete.

The argument about the size of our government has been a topic for generations, with the belief that reducing the number of government employees is long overdue. Additionally, there is a Deep State embedded in the government that runs everything. The Deep State consists of networks of agents from financial and industrial organizations that rule with a few elected officials. The theory is that a small group of billionaires run the country for their benefit. Another reason to downsize is that the government should be lean and mean, more like a private industry, and only employ the number of employees needed.

Both sides agree that our national debt, at thirty-six trillion dollars, is a bit too high. That equates to \$106,000 for every citizen. Senator John McCain once said, "Congress is now spending money like a drunken sailor, and I've never known a sailor, drunk or sober, with the imagination that this congress has." He was correct. Many elected officials talk about deficit spending and reducing the debt but rarely do anything constructive to address the problem.

A rational conversation about the size of the government in relation to what we expect from the government is needed. We need a consensus on what we expect from the government, and then how many employees are needed can be determined. While that is easy to say and even understand, politicians are masters at distraction and deception. For over forty years, one party has told us that government is too big, we spend too much, and we need fewer regulations. Many call this mantra the three-legged stool.

The three-legged stool sounds good, even responsible, and has been in the conversation for so long that many believe it. The belief is strong, and yet, the evidence is nonexistent. The premise of the three-legged stool is that with fewer regulations, business will thrive. We will spend less with fewer employees, and taxes can be reduced. Maybe the size of gov-

ernment should be determined not for the benefit of business and industry - but for its citizens. The Constitution is about the personal freedoms of individuals, not corporations.

It may surprise many that the government was reduced before. In 1990, there were 3.4 million civil service workers; today, before the firings, there were 2.4 million civil service workers. Other numbers run as high as 3 million workers. Why the different numbers exist is unknown. As one might expect, substantial false information does exist - possibly for deception. If you don't like something, just make something up. We were told that the government spent fifty million dollars on condoms and sent them to Gaza. The scary part is that people believe it. While that sounds implausible and farfetched, it was topped with the news that Ukraine started the war with Russia.

For discussion purposes, let's agree there are too many government employees. Therefore, it is understandable that reducing the number of federal employees will reduce the deficit. However, do the reductions allow billions in tax cuts for the billionaires without adding to the deficit? Most people familiar with math, addition, and subtraction say no. To pass the proposed tax reductions without creating more deficits, other programs comprising large budget segments must be reduced. Those segments include the big three: Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. The math

required to balance the budget does not work without additional reductions in spending, even if you believe that Ukraine started the war.

Under President Clinton, the number of federal workers was reduced, and we did have balanced budgets. He did not weed the garden with a machete or a chainsaw. The reductions were methodical with research and without disruptions of services. He also balanced the budget and paid down the national debt. Conversely, under President Trump's first term, he increased the national debt by almost eight trillion dollars, the largest four-year increase of any former president. He may be trying to top his four-year record.

Do the wealthy individuals really need additional tax breaks? In 2023, it was reported that there were 735 billionaires in the United States. Notably, billionaires' wealth has "increased 88 percent in the last four years." It was also reported in 2023 (the last year with available numbers) that "The 25 richest Americans paid little to no federal income taxes," as reported by ProPublica. The same document noted that "Nearly 50 companies in the S&P 500, including Tesla" and others, paid no income tax. So, are these the people and businesses that need tax breaks?

Additionally, our government subsidizes businesses to the tune of 100 billion dollars every year, twenty percent of which is for the fossil fuel industry. It was reported several years

ago that a few companies made record profits, paid no taxes, and received government subsidies. To be fair, many corporations take advantage of tax regulations that reduce what they pay - so it is legal.

Axios summarized the issue as follows: "Most politicians agree on three truths: We have a spending problem (too much), a tax problem (too high or too low), and a debt problem (way too much). Yet the typical response is to make all three worse." I think they got it right.

Considering that we have a deficit problem, we should examine ways to address the issue. Reducing the number of federal employees is not a bad idea, but using a chainsaw is not helpful. Many find it strange that we have yet to be told of the fraud, waste, and abuse related to employee firings. Maybe they have not found any. Almost every piece of information on savings posted by the DOGE committee has been questioned and found to be misleading and often just false. No one born in 1850 is collecting Social Security.

Maybe we should question the motives of individuals and groups that are supposedly fixing many parts of our government that may not be broken. DOGE is run by the richest man on earth. Could DOGE be part of the Deep State?

To read prior editions of Words From Winterbilt, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

The Bulwark

MAHA is a fraud

Jonathan Last

What America's new public health establishment—by which I don't mean actual public health experts but their dilettante conspiracist bosses—is doing is choosing to move the country backwards. Less medical research, a pull-back on life-saving vaccines, turning away from science and embracing folk medicine.

Our new health establishment is explicit about wanting to go backwards. It's right there on the hat: Make America Healthy Again.

Meaning: America used to be "healthy" and now is not.

I'm sorry, I know we're supposed to meet people where they are and give them a loving truth sandwich, but this is the stupidest thing I've ever heard.

Does anyone remember what "health" looked like in America a generation or two ago? Half the country smoked. People dropping dead at 50. Child birth was dangerous. Seatbelts were suss. Drug use was off the charts. Dangerous communicable diseases were still around. Cancer was a death sentence. AIDS looked like an unstoppable tsunami.

Food? Do remember what grocery stores looked like in 1980? Aisles of canned vegetables, processed foods, and frozen TV dinners. Fresh produce? Good luck.

But that's all anecdotal. Let's look at the data. Because it

shows—absolutely, unequivocally—that this is the healthiest period in American history.

Let's start with the dumbest possible metric: life expectancy.

We've had a slight downtick in the last year or two largely driven by COVID. You know why a lot of people died from COVID? Because they refused to follow public health advice during the pandemic and then refused to get vaccinated once we had vaccines in hand. So it was precisely the MAHA idiocy that moved our life expectancy backward.

How about infant mortality? That's another excellent marker of health in a society. Oh, look—it's incredibly low: 5.61 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is up slightly from 2020 because, again, COVID. But it's still a historic low.

When do you think the golden, "healthy" past was? In 1980, the infant mortality rate was more than double what it is today (12.0). In 1960 it was more double that number (25.9).

How about infectious diseases? In 1900 half of all deaths in America were from communicable diseases. Through medical advances—especially vaccines—we got that number down to about 5 percent—until COVID. All by itself COVID accounted for 12 percent of all deaths in the United States in 2021.

So again: If you want America to be healthy you'd do exactly the opposite of what the Trump

administration is doing and urge everyone to get vaccinated.

And while we're talking about healthy habits: Americans don't smoke like they used to. Also, forty years ago less than a fifth of people in cars used seatbelts. Today that number is well over 90 percent.

Let's talk about cancer. You ever feel like, "Man, people are getting cancer like crazy these days?" Here's what happened. There was a huge spike in the incidence of cancer diagnoses from 1975 to 1995. Why? Two things.

First, people were living longer and you have to die of something. Since people weren't dying from polio, measles, and communicable diseases, they were living long enough to get cancer. Second, medical science developed more tools to detect cancer. Inventing effective tests and screenings means finding more incidences. Donald Trump knows this.

In the early 1990s, people started surviving cancer at higher rates even as the incidences of cancer increased. And from 1995 to 2000, as the cancer incidence rate peaked, the mortality rate fell off a cliff.

Why? Because better tests = more cancer diagnoses = earlier interventions + therapeutic advances = much higher survival rates.

The pattern we see with cancer incidence describes a lot of our health challenges today. Why do so many people get dementia or Alzheimer's now? Because they're surviving cancer and—again—something is going to get us eventually.

Why so many autism diagnoses? Because 40 years ago doctors didn't understand what they were seeing in kids who had ASD. Now they do. Once medical science understands what it's looking at, you're going to get more diagnoses. This isn't hard to understand.

Look: There are some things that have legitimately gotten worse over time. The incidence of Type 2 diabetes has increased dramatically since 1950. Some of this is linked to increasing obesity.

What's the answer? Diet and exercise, which you may recall Michelle Obama talking a lot about (and getting ridiculed by Republicans for her trouble). Semaglutide drugs show tremendous potential for helping curb obesity and reduce the incidence of diabetes.

You may be surprised to hear that MAHA does not like this class of pharmaceuticals.

So what's going on here? Why does the "Make America Healthy Again" movement romanticize the health outcomes of the past (which were worse) and misunderstand the health outcomes of the present (which are significantly better along the most important vectors and continue to improve over time)?

Why do people like RFK Jr. oppose medical practices that create better outcomes?

I don't know.

But at the end of the day, the "why" doesn't matter. What matters is the results. And the results are going to be bad.

Buildings used to catch on fire all the time in America. It was a serious problem. That's why cities had as many fire stations as churches.

Over time, we cut way down on the number of fires. We switched construction materials. We came up with safer mechanisms for delivering gas and electricity. We developed best-practices and enshrined them in building codes. The big thing was the invention of the sprinkler system.

The result was that even as the total number of buildings in America kept growing, the annual number of structure fires kept going down. Dramatically.

Imagine a movement that looked at this data and decided America didn't need sprinkler systems anymore. Modern building costs are too high. There's too much red tape. We spend billions on sprinkler systems every year that are never used. Let's go back to the old ways. Make Buildings Great Again.

After all, we don't have to worry about fires anymore.

The MAHA movement is like that. Except that while trying to get rid of sprinkler systems and building codes, they are also walking around carelessly tossing lit matches.

These people aren't just frauds. They're arsonists. And right now they run the U.S. government, the CDC, the NIH, and the fire department, too.

To read other articles from the Bulwark, visit www.thebulwark.com.

The Liberal Patriot

How deep is the hole Democrats are in?

John Halpin

Trump's approval rating has declined to the point where his approval is "underwater"—that is, his net approval (approval minus disapproval) has turned negative. And his net approval rating is even more negative on the all-important issue of the economy, Trump's key issue in the 2024 election. Polls regularly show gloomy voter assessments of the economy's current trajectory. Voters by 17 points say the economy is getting worse rather than improving and that their personal financial situation is getting worse rather than improving.

This raises the hope in Democratic hearts that voters are wising up to how terrible Trump is for the economy and the country and that a combination of #Resisteverything and a thermostatic reaction against the incumbent Trump administration will rekindle their political fortunes. This is a comforting take for Democratic partisans because it implies that a combination of stout-hearted opposition and waiting around for the sky to fall on Trump will suffice; no need to do anything drastic like actually changing toxic party positions and doing serious surgery on the party brand.

I think there are grounds for considerable skepticism here. The hole the Democrats are in is so deep that it is doubtful that the comforting take is the right one. Their problems are just too severe.

You'd think that as Trump runs into difficulties and sows chaos, voters would like Democrats more. They do not. Instead, Democrats' favorability among

voters is scraping the bottom. In a March poll, favorability toward the Democratic Party clocked in at 29 percent, down ten points since right before the 2024 election and the lowest rating for the Democrats since 1992. Trump's job approval among working-class (non-college) respondents in the poll was 20 points higher than their favorability toward the Democratic Party. The working class does not appear to be warming to the Democrats.

Among independents, the party's favorability was an abysmal 11 percent vs. 56 percent unfavorable. These voters may not love Donald Trump but they really don't like the Democrats.

In a February poll, about two-thirds of voters thought the Democrats don't have a workable strategy for responding to Trump and around the same number found this take on the Democrats persuasive: "No one has any idea what the Democratic Party stands for anymore, other than opposing Donald Trump. Democrats have no message, no plan of their own, and no one knows what they would do if they got back into power. If Democrats ever want to win elections again, people need a clear message from them about what they stand for and what they'll do." Ouch.

On the plus side, voters in a February poll across the battleground Congressional districts thought Democrats in Congress "fight for what they believe." However, they also thought Democrats don't respect work, don't share my values, don't look out for working people, don't value work, don't care about people like me, don't have the right priorities and, by a massive 47 points, don't get things done. Double ouch.

There's lots of polling data along these lines and they send a clear message: Dem-

ocrats' image is atrocious and therefore cannot present an attractive alternative to Trump and the GOP.

This indicates a party that is truly in a deep hole. The party's severe image, identification, governance, and geographic weaknesses cannot be remedied by mounting the (rhetorical) barricades against Trump and waiting for his administration to self-destruct. This may make the partisan faithful happy but it is woefully inadequate as a program to bring the party back to full health.

Unfortunately, that so many Democrats are wedded to #Resisteverything—rather than making the Democrats into a party more voters actually like shows the depth of denial in the party. They think they're on the verge of a breakthrough if they just toughen up. They are not.

Democrats did worse in the 2024 election than you think. They completely failed to win over less engaged voters, who are becoming much more Republican. The higher the turnout, the more these voters show up and the worse it is for Democrats. Shor's analysis indicates that if everyone had voted last year Trump would have won the popular vote by five points rather than a point and a half. Low turnout is now the Democrats' BFF!

More broadly, ideological polarization among all nonwhites is shifting moderate to conservative voters away from the Democrats. This is making non-white voters less reliable constituencies for Democrats.

The issue landscape in 2024 was worse than most Democrats thought. The only really important issue Democrats had an advantage on was health care and that advantage was tiny by historical standards. The Democrats did have a large advantage on climate change—but voters don't really care about the issue.

To reverse their fortunes, the Dem-



ocrats must alter their image in voters' minds. Above all, they must be seen again as the party of the "normal American" and "the real America." The last time they succeeded in doing a makeover like this was in the 1992 election when a group of politicians and political operatives, working through a group called the Democratic Leadership Council, turned around voters' perception of the Democrats as weak on crime and defense and opposed to any reform of the welfare system. The DLC's former president Bill Clinton won in 1992 on the DLC's platform. I don't suggest that the Democrats need to mimic the content of the DLC platform, particularly on economic and trade issues, but they do need to transform their image, or what political consultants call their "brand."

Some commentators have insisted the Democrats' defeat had nothing to do with "wokeness." That is a fatal misreading. The Democratic makeover must start with the panoply of cultural and socio-economic stands that Republicans were able to use in 2024 to discredit Democratic candidates. These include the Democrats' positions on immigration, sex and gender, affirmative action, criminal justice, and climate change.

I'm not suggesting Democrats should hypocritically adopt positions that are wrong-headed. In rejecting the participation of biological males in competitive women's sports, Democrats would have biology and public opinion on their side. The same goes for policies that have encouraged street crime and illegal immigration. A more difficult issue is climate change. Democrats are right to reject Republican claims that it is a hoax or needs no serious attention—indeed, the Trump administration is actively discouraging the transition to renewable energy. But in order to win public support for any climate measures, Democrats will have to tone down their apocalyptic rhetoric and abandon unrealistic goals for achieving net-zero emissions. That would include, for instance, supporting natural gas as a transitional fuel and nuclear energy as a feasible alternative to fossil fuels.

Great advice. But I'm not holding my breath on when Democrats might choose to follow it. They're too busy pretending the deep hole they're in is just a shallow indentation and vanquishing Trump is right around the corner.

To read other articles from the Liberal Patriot, visit www.liberalpatriot.com.

Good Day Neighbor

DOGE-ing is fun until someone gets hurt

Dorothea Mordan

We've all heard this proverb.

For want of a nail the shoe was lost.

For want of a shoe the horse was lost.

For want of a horse the rider was

lost.

For want of a rider the message was

lost.

For want of a message the battle

was lost.

For want of a battle the kingdom

was lost.

And all for the want of a horseshoe

nail.

The British Colonies became the United States so property, and responsibility stayed within our borders. The colonial residents had a lot, but did they really own it? The American Revolution settled that question.

The colonies kept the home country strong. After the Revolution we had everything in our grasp to eventually build a strong, prosperous country of our own. Part of that is because of our ability to create a great infrastructure. Part of our strength comes from two centuries of working out how to build great industry, balanced with support for the workers and consumers who make business dreams become reality. State and fed-

eral agencies, and their different abilities to scale responses in emergencies, are the most critical nails that keep our infrastructure sound. It's tax season, take a look at what our tax dollars have brought us.

One component of our national infrastructure is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Services and emergency responses from FEMA can be found on FEMA.gov. Here are a few highlights.

At the federal level FEMA maintains detailed flood maps. Flood maps help communities decide where to live, where and what to build, and how to protect themselves.

Download PDFs on protecting your property from natural hazards such as flooding.

On FEMA.gov, search "interagency recovery coordination" for a list of recovery projects. This suggestion may or may not be effective. The federal government websites are currently being dismantled in bits and pieces. If you can't find what you are looking for, try the Internet Archive (Wayback Machine). The URL is: archive.org.

Maryland has received disaster relief actions and support. In 2016 a storm that dropped six inches of water in two hours, flooded Ellicott City. From the FEMA Case Study Report on this incident: "Prior to the flood, Howard County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff had attended a

FEMA recovery training for local governments in Emmitsburg that assisted in formulating and documenting a Recovery Framework for Howard County, identifying 10 Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) crucial to local disaster recovery." Because of federal resources, Howard County was prepared to meet the challenge.

FEMA responded when flash flooding came to Frederick a few years ago.

In Frederick City, the restoration of Carroll Creek and the flood control system built under the Creek, were supported by FEMA.

FEMA's National Emergency Training Center (NETC) is located in Emmitsburg, MD. This is home to The National Disaster & Emergency Management University (NDEMU), formerly the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy.

On April 19, 1995, the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed. 168 people killed and 684 people injured. A team of 6 personnel from Oklahoma City, including the Operations Director for the Medical Examiner's Office, had just completed training at the EMI in Emmitsburg. They credited the training for their successful handling of the operation.

The NDEMU had an annual training scheduled for March 10, 2025. On March 7, the federal government, aka Agents of D.O.G.E., sent by email the order, to everyone involved, that the training session was cancelled.

Students had arrived from all over

the country to take this course. Travel tickets bought and paid for. People had arrived at the dorms in Emmitsburg. All the expenses required to participate in a professional training session had been paid. Everyone sent home with no good explanation of why a scale back couldn't be planned in increments, rather than wasting everyone's time and money.

Agencies being reduced and/or dismantled include, but are not limited to, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, U.S. Agency for Global Media, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Museum and Library Services, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund and Minority Business Development Agency, Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, Office of Personnel Management, General Services Administration, Small Business Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Defense.

A major reason for having a nationwide agency run by the federal government is to have the agility to focus resources wherever in the country

they are needed. Resources needed to respond to crises, such as natural disasters or contagious disease outbreaks, affecting large areas of a city or state are generally greater than any one state can provide for its own population, much less for another state.

If getting rid of waste and fraud was the goal then federal agencies and departments would be examined in sections. Reducing federal services would be done in coordination with the fifty states' local agencies to maintain services needed by Americans. Agencies with international partners would be given time to change course on established agreements. Neither of these are happening.

The goal is to throw away federal services, and force Americans to spend more for privatized support. Or just take whatever a current administration feels like sending to Americans in need.

Americans are losing dependability of service in many agencies. Social Security? The checks in the mail. The US Post Office? Well, that check might sit around a while.

Sacrifice looks like a good idea if you have it bad. We had everything. We wanted more.

Let's see what happens in the next emergency.

For want of a nail...

To read prior editions of Good Day Neighbor, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net, or visit her website: ChandlerDesignsLimited.com.

THE PASTOR'S DESK

Finding strength in God's plan

Pastor John Talcott
Christ Community Church

During this season of Lent, as we approach Passion Week, we often view Jesus Christ's journey through our own cultural lens. Whether our background is Western, Eastern, Latino, or South Asian, it shapes how we perceive the Son of God. However, taking a step back to see things from a global perspective reveals something profound: the Scriptures were divinely crafted to include everyone. As John 3:16 states, "For God so loved the world that he gave his one and only Son, that whoever believes in him shall not perish but have eternal life." The inclusive phrase "the world" serves as a reminder that God's love extends to all people, regardless of their nation, ethnicity, or culture.

Although God's love is universal, our understanding of Him can be limited by its portrayal in media, television, education, and even in the church. Nevertheless, His divine plan transcends these narrow perspectives, uniting people from every background and providing not only hope for the future but a living hope for today. As 2 Peter 3:9 reminds us, "The Lord is not slow in keeping His promise... not wanting anyone to perish, but everyone to come to repentance."

Through His loving sacrifice, God has given, suffered, and bled enough to extend His grace to all of humanity.

The week following Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on what is known as Palm Sunday illustrates God's grace through His suffering. Betrayed by the Jewish leaders and handed over to the Romans, He was brutally scourged, leaving Him disfigured beyond recognition. Isaiah 52:14 describes this moment: "His appearance was disfigured beyond that of any human being, and his form marred beyond human likeness." This horrifying scene left many in shock, especially those who had witnessed and participated in His incredible miracles: restoring sight to the blind, helping the lame walk, feeding 5,000 in the countryside, and healing a woman who suffered from bleeding. Jesus' personal suffering revealed the depth of His love and sacrifice for all humanity.

As Jesus endured immense suffering, Pontius Pilate, the Roman governor, faced a difficult moral dilemma. His wife, disturbed by a dream, warned him to refrain from harming Jesus. Attempting to separate himself from the ordeal, Pilate addressed the crowd and asked, "Do you want me to release Barabbas or Jesus?" Despite Pilate's sarcasm when he labeled Jesus as "the king of the Jews" (Mark 15:9),

the chief priests had already influenced the crowd. They shouted, "Crucify him!" (Mark 15:13). Succumbing to pressure from both the crowd and the Roman authorities, Pilate reluctantly handed Jesus over for crucifixion.

The soldiers continued their cruel mockery of Jesus outside the governor's residence. They dressed Him in a purple robe, placed a crown of thorns on His head, mocked Him further by striking Him and spitting on Him, and sarcastically proclaimed, "Hail, King of the Jews!" (Mark 15:18). After finishing their taunts, they returned His clothes and led Him away to be crucified. Weak from significant blood loss and exhaustion, Jesus carried the heavy wooden cross-beam through the cobblestone streets of Jerusalem, His torn and bleeding back visible to the onlookers who observed the scene.

As Jesus struggled under the weight of the cross, Simon of Cyrene happened to be passing by on his way from the countryside. The soldiers compelled Simon to carry the cross (Mark 15:21), drawing him into the gospel narrative that would forever change history. An ordinary man, Simon lived a normal life but was called to fulfill an extraordinary role: bearing the weight of the Savior's suffering.

Being chosen by God may sound appealing, much like the scarlet robe worn by Jesus. However, being chosen often entails sacrifices, challenges, and responsibilities. Reflect on the moment you surrendered your life to Christ—those tears you shed were a response to God drawing you closer, convicting your heart, and selecting you. As Jesus stated in John 15:16, "You did not choose me, but I chose you and appointed you so that you might go and bear fruit—fruit that



will last." God's choice is an honor as it signifies his trust in your capacity to fulfill his purpose.

Consider David, who was chosen by God and anointed by Samuel to be king. However, instead of stepping into his role immediately, David returned to tending sheep because being chosen often requires humility, patience, and trust in God's timing. In fact, David's victory over Goliath wasn't a coincidence, it too was part of God's plan. He didn't go out that day intending to fight a giant; he was simply delivering lunch to his brothers when the opportunity arose.

In the same way, Jesus personally called His disciples, who were ordinary men leading ordinary lives. They weren't seeking Jesus; rather, Jesus sought them and said, "Come, follow me, and I will send you out to fish for people." At once, they left their nets and followed him (Matthew 4:19-20). Jesus not only calls those He chooses, but He also guides their steps.

Even Jesus was chosen. In His prayer, He said, "Father, if it be Your will, pass this bitter cup from me; nevertheless not my will, but Yours

be done" (Matthew 26:39). Jesus endured unimaginable suffering—rejection, brutal beatings, and public humiliation—to fulfill His mission of redeeming the world. As He declared, "And I, when I am lifted up from the earth, will draw all people to myself" (John 12:32).

God's purpose often operates through what appears to be chaos. Pilate's schemes and the priests' plots resulted in Jesus' betrayal and crucifixion, even persuading those He had healed to turn against Him. This fulfilled the prophecy: "He came to that which was His own, but His own did not receive Him" (John 1:11). What may seem like an earthly setback often transforms into a divine setup for God's glory.

Some of you need this reminder: the enemy wouldn't attack if you weren't meant for something extraordinary. Being chosen by God can feel overwhelming or even unfair, but it signifies His trust in you to fulfill His purpose. You might be facing a battle you didn't choose—perhaps it resulted from marriage, your job, or circumstances you found yourself in unknowingly. Like David delivering lunch to his brothers, you may have arrived innocently, only to discover you are called to face a great challenge.

You may encounter battles you didn't foresee, carrying burdens you never expected—but you've been chosen for this moment. Just as David was chosen to face Goliath and Simon was compelled to bear the Cross, you are selected for your unique calling. Whether it's raising your family, enduring challenges at work, or standing firm in your faith, God has equipped you to overcome.

Being chosen by God often involves embracing hardships that may feel overwhelming or unjust. Yet, through every trial, God is working in you to fulfill His greater purpose. He recognizes your strength, your resilience, and your heart. He knew that even amid your tears and struggles, you would endure. You were chosen—not just to survive—but to thrive, conquer, and glorify Him. So, take comfort in knowing that the safest, most fulfilling place to be is within the will of God. Embrace the calling, and understand that you are uniquely appointed for this extraordinary journey.

To learn more about Emmitsburg's Christ Community Church, visit them online at ccaog.org or better yet, join them for Sunday service.



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(Take 194 N. or S., turn onto Rt. 550 at Woodsboro to Creagerstown.)

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Regular Sunday Service 10:30 a.m.
Sunday School 9:15 a.m.



Holy Week Services 7 p.m. April 14-18
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Activities 10 to 11:30 a.m.
Easter Sunday April 20th
Sunrise Service 5:55 a.m.
LoveFeast 7:30 a.m.

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THE BOOK OF DAYS

A group of old ladies



April 2

Died at Edinburgh, on the 2nd of April 1856, Miss Elizabeth Gray, at the age of 108, having been born in May 1748. That cases of extra-ordinary longevity are seldom supported by clear documentary evidence has been very justly alleged; it has indeed been set forth that we scarcely have complete evidence for a single example of the centenarian. In this case, however, there was certainly no room for doubt. Miss Gray had been known all her life as a member of the upper circle of society in the Scottish metropolis, and her identity with the individual Elizabeth Gray, the daughter of William Gray, of Newholm, writer in Edinburgh, whose birth is chronicled in the register of her father's parish of Dolphington, in Lanarkshire, as having occurred in May 1748, is beyond dispute in the society to which the venerable lady belonged.

It may be remarked that she was a very cheerful person, and kept up her old love of whist till past the five score. Her mother attained ninety-six, and two of her sisters died at ninety-four and ninety-six respectively. She had, however, survived her father upwards of a hundred years, for he died in 1755; nay, a more remarkable thing than even this was to be told of Betty Gray—a brother of hers (strictly a half-brother) had died so long ago as 1728. A faded marble slab in the wall of Dolphington Kirk, which records the decease of this child—for such he was—must have been viewed with strange feelings, when,

idly before the mind as those of the present day. It was remarked as a curious circumstance, that of Dunrobin Castle, the place where her grandfather was taken prisoner as a rebel, her granddaughter became mistress.

It is well known that female life is considerably more enduring than male; so that, although boys are born in the proportion of 105 to 100 of girls—a fact that holds good all over Europe—there are always more women in existence than men. It really is surprising how enduring women some-times become, and how healthily enduring too, after passing the more trying crises of female existence. Mrs. Piozzi, who herself thought it a person's own fault if they got old, gives us in one of her letters a remarkable case of vigorous old-ladyism.

I must tell you,' says she, 'a story of a Cornish gentlewoman hard by here [Penzance], Zenobia Stevens, who held a lease under the Duke of Bolton by her own life only ninety-nine years—and going at the term's end ten miles to give it up, she obtained permission to continue in the house as long as she lived, and was asked of course to drink a glass of wine. She did take one, but declined the second, saying she had to ride home in the twilight upon a young colt, and was afraid to make herself giddy-headed.'

The well known Countess Dowager of Cork, who died in May 1840, had not reached a hundred—she had but just completed her ninety-fourth year—but she realized the typical character of a veteran lady who, to appearance, was little affected by age. Till within a few days of her death she was healthy and cheerful as in those youthful days when she charmed

Johnson and Boswell, the latter of whom was only six years her senior. She was in the custom to the last of dining out every day when she had not company at home. As to death, she always said she was ready for him, come when he might; but she did not like to see him coming. Lady Cork was daughter of the first Lord Galway, and she lived to see the sixth, her great grand-nephew.

Mr. Francis Brokesby, who writes a letter on antiquities and natural curiosities from Shottesbrooke in 1711. (published by Hearne in connection with Leland's Itinerary, vi. 104), mentions several instances of extremely protracted female life. He tells of a woman then living near the Tower in London, aged about 130, and who remembered Queen Elizabeth. Hearne himself subsequently states that this woman was Jane Scrimshaw, who had lived for four score years in the Merchant Tailors' alms-houses, near Little Tower-hill. She was, he says, born in the parish of Mary-le-Bow, London, on the 3rd of April 1584, so that she was then in the 127th year of her age, 'and likely to live much longer.' She, however, died on the 26th of December 1711.

It is stated that even at the last there was scarcely a grey hair on her head, and she never lost memory or judgment. Mr. Brokesby reported another venerable person

as having died about sixty years before—that is, about 1650—who attained the age of a hundred and forty. She had been the wife of a labouring man named. Humphry Broadhurst, who resided at Hedgerow, in Cheshire, on the property of the Leighs of Lyme. The familiar name she bore, The Cricket in the hedge, bore witness to her cheerful character; a peculiarity to which, along with great temperance and plainness of living, her great age was chiefly to be attributed. A hardly credible circumstance was alleged of this woman, that she had borne her youngest child at four score. Latterly, having been reduced by gradual decay to great bodily weakness, she used to be carried in the arms of this daughter, who was herself sixty. She was buried in the parish church of Prestbury. It was said of this woman that she remembered Bosworth Field; but here there must be some error, for to do so in 1650, she would have needed to be considerably more than 140 years old, the battle being fought in 1485. It is not unlikely, however, that her death took place earlier than 1650, as the time was only stated from memory.

To read other selections from Robert Chamber's 1864 *The Book of Days*, visit thebookofdays.com.

a hundred and twenty-eight years later, the age-worn sister was laid in the same spot.

Little more than two years after the death of Miss Gray, there died in Scotland another centenarian lady, about whose age there could be no ground for doubt, as she had lived in the eye of intelligent society all her days. This person was the Hon. Mrs. Hay Mackenzie, of Cromartie. She died in October 1858, at the age of 103; she was grandmother to the present Duchess of Sutherland; her father was the sixth Lord Elibank, brother and successor of Lord Patrick, who entertained Johnson in Edinburgh; her maternal grandfather was that unfortunate Earl of Cromartie who so narrowly escaped accompanying Kilmarnock and Balmerino to the scaffold in 1746. She was a most benevolent woman—a large giver—and enjoyed universal esteem. Her conversation made the events of the first half of the eighteenth century pass as viv-

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Photo with Mr. Bunny

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He humbled himself and became obedient to death—even death on a cross!
-Philippians 2:8

Trinity United Methodist Church

313 West Main St., Emmitsburg

Sunday Worship at 9 a.m.

Pastor Richard Baker

Holy Week Services

April 13 - Palm Sunday, 9 a.m., Distribution of Palms

April 20 - Easter Sunday Service of Joy and Celebration including Communion, 9 a.m.



www.TheTrinityUMC.org

ECOLOGY

Backyard invasives to know

Anne Gageby
Strawberry Hill Foundation

Spring is officially here, and buds are making their debut. This is a great time to become familiar with some of our area's biggest problematic invasive plants – Japanese barberry, stiltgrass, mile-a-minute, garlic mustard, and many more. You may spot some or all of these plants by roadways, along walking paths, or even in your own backyard. Most look innocent, if not sort of lovely as they grow. After all, greenery of all kinds makes a forest or field appear healthy and thriving. But non-native invasive plants can quickly take over an area, pushing out native species that our local wildlife depend

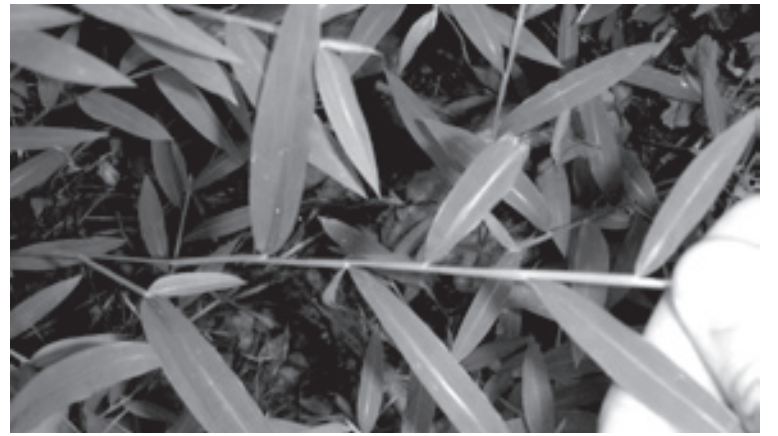
on. This can leave wildlife vulnerable in a variety of ways that might not be readily apparent. It can also have a serious negative impact on local flora.

For example, Japanese stiltgrass displaces native herbaceous and woody plants by crowding them out but it also leaves a more nefarious impact: it changes the soil's pH by making it more basic. Many of our native plants and shrubs need a more acidic environment to thrive. Our state flower, the mountain laurel, is one such shrub. Wood anemone and wild ginger, two lovely groundcover plants that attract early pollinators and butterflies, need acidic soil to grow. Even hardy spicebush, which can survive in a variety of soils, does best when the soil is acidic.

There is an upside to dealing with Japanese stiltgrass, however. It's easy to root out by hand. The roots are shallow and weak so hand pulling takes little effort. It's possible to get ahead of it if the infestation area is small. However, it will likely take time to fully eradicate it from a backyard or area since the seedbank can be quite large. So, if you find stiltgrass in your yard, start pulling now but know that you'll likely have to pull them up again next year.

Garlic mustard is another invasive you can root out by hand if the infestation is light or scattered. Make sure to pull the entire root and not just cut the plant back. Cutting a flowering plant will allow it time to resprout from the roots. This is problematic if the area of growth includes native spring ephemerals such as yellow trout-lily or spring beauty. Garlic mustard's monoculture nature shades out other plants and dominates the growing area. It outcompetes other plants for nutrients and resources and even releases allelopathic chemicals that can kill mycorrhizal fungi.

Of all the invasives we can find outside there is one that is the biggest thorn in my side (pun intended) and that is Japanese barberry. Barberry forms dense stands that can reach six feet high and multiple zig-zag branches that are extremely difficult to trim back. And trimming is a must if you'll have any hope of getting to the roots without being jabbed by the hundreds of needle-thin thorns along each branch. Barberry is quite a beast, for sure. These beast-like qualities make it a perfect habitat for white-footed mice which tend to be Lyme disease reservoirs. Added to the list of problematic features is Japanese barberry's unique self-created



Japanese Stiltgrass not only displaces native herbaceous and woody plants but also changes the soil's pH making it harder for native plants to grow.

micro-climate that supports blacklegged (deer) ticks. Yes, this plant creates its own perfect habitat for deer ticks, the main source of Lyme disease. Mice find shelter and protection from predators within the safety of barberry. Deer ticks travel on their mice hosts to new homes within a barberry bush and set up shop. As hikers and woodland creatures pass through barberry-invaded areas, deer ticks latch onto new hosts and spread disease. It's a viscous cycle.

So, how do we stop barberry? We do our best. It's an incredibly hardy plant, unfortunately. It's shade, drought, and cold tolerant so extreme winters won't have the effect one might hope for. But it can be removed using a weed wrench or similar tool. Be sure to remove the plant entirely because new growth can come from rhizomes and roots. Don't forget to wear protective gloves along with clothing to cover exposed skin. The thorns on a Japanese barberry are fierce.

One of the prettier invasive plants we find at Strawberry Hill is mile-a-minute, so called because it can grow up to six inches a day. It produces a large tangle of thin vines that smother other native vegetation by blocking sunlight. Like English ivy, mile-a-minute can weigh down its competition until fragile stems break and

plants die off from lack of light. And yet, it also produces a crop of striking blue-purple berries that stand out from the seas of green. The berries are dispersed after being eaten by a variety of wildlife and spread via elimination.

Interestingly, mile-a-minute berries are buoyant and can be spread via waterways for some time after being detached from their stems. They remain buoyant for a little over a week and so can travel long distances down creeks and rivers. They're able to spread over larger areas by not being entirely dependent upon wildlife for dispersion. That's great for mile-a-minute but bad news for us fighting an infestation of it. Fortunately, mile-a-minute requires less drastic eradication measures than other plants. Mile-a-minute can be pulled by hand and tossed aside to dry out and compost. Be sure to wear gloves and long sleeves, though. There are tiny, recurved barbs on the undersides of leaves.

Fighting the spread of invasives is a time-consuming process that takes patience and teamwork. At Strawberry Hill, we designate certain days each year for targeting specific areas and plants. It's an ongoing battle that will last for years. But is it worth it? Yes, absolutely. We do our best to give our native flora and fauna the best fighting chance. We tackle the barberry, mile-a-minute, and so many more when and where we can. We don't get them all, unfortunately.

Hope isn't lost, however. Every year brings new ideas, new methods – sometimes mechanical and sometimes biotic. As the seasons change and weather patterns shift, we may see some of these invasives die off on their own or become more manageable. For now, we're donning our gloves and getting to work.

To read past editions of Ecology, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Thurmont Green Fest "Wings of Change."

Birds, Butterflies, and Bees are the theme of this year's Thurmont Green Fest, scheduled for Saturday, April 12 from 10 to 2.

At the Thurmont Regional Library, This annual event inspires participants to learn about the many opportunities they have that can support a healthy and sustainable environment. Both Local and Statewide organizations will be on-hand to provide information and demonstrations.

A craft for children will be held throughout the event, and throughout the day, along with information on bluebird house making, games, and more courtesy of the Thurmont Green Team.

Ryan "The BugMan" Bridge will host a performance highlighting various live and preserved insects

and arthropods. This presentation is ideal for children, or anyone interested in these tiny titans of nature. Did you know, insects outnumber humans? For every 1 human on Earth, there are 1.4 billion insects!

Other organizations that will join us include Fox Haven Farm and Retreat Center, the Catoctin Forest Alliance, Frederick County Master Gardeners, and Mobilize Frederick and more!

While here, you can enter a raffle to win a bird feeder/camera from the Thurmont Green Team or take home a tree or shrub sapling, courtesy of the Frederick County Forestry Board (while supplies last).

We hope you'll join us in Thurmont – the Gateway to Greener Living!

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IN THE COUNTRY

“April showers”

Tim Iverson
Naturalist

The Potomac River is often called the “Nation’s River”, and every year there is an assessment compiled by a non-profit clean water advocacy organization, the Potomac Conservancy. The overall state of the nation’s river has been turbulent throughout recent years and decades. As recently as 2011 the Potomac River was classified with a ‘D’ grade. American Rivers, another clean water advocacy group, listed the Potomac as the nation’s “Most Endangered River” in 2012. There has been some progress though, and the Potomac Conservancy upgraded the state of the Potomac from a ‘D’ to a ‘C’ in 2013. This annual “State of the Nation’s River” report has not yet been released for 2014. This assessment is based off of fish populations, overall quality of habitat and water, and surrounding land use.

While all roads lead to Rome, our regional rivers lead to the Chesapeake Bay - the largest and most productive estuary in the United States. The most recent report, released in 2014, denotes the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay at a ‘D+’ grade. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation releases an updated report every two years based on fisheries populations (crabs, Rockfish, and oysters primarily), acreage of bay grasses, total poundage of estimated pollution emptied into the bay and its tributary waterways. While the overall report card seems dismal the report itself highlights a mixed bag of take-away themes. On the bright side: overall water quality is improving, bay grasses and oyster populations saw a +2 point increase. However, there was an overall decline in blue crab and rockfish populations, and forested buffer zones. This report highlights areas of progress and areas that need improvement. Restoration is

costly, but failure to do so would be catastrophic.

There is a path to restoration called the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. This is a provision of the Clean Water Act enacted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2010, the EPA began to legally enforce the “Total Maximum Daily Load” (TMDL) which is a scientifically derived basis of the acceptable amount of total pollutants the water system can handle while still being productive and meet water quality standards. Six states (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, W. Virginia) and the District of Columbia are now required to incrementally reduce nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment pollution over two year periods through 2025. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment are the top three pollutants contaminating the bay. Farms and agribusiness are responsible for 41% of the polluted runoff, but urban and suburban areas are responsible for 15% of the total deposited amount.

In order to ensure shared responsibility of a clean and productive estuary each state must meet the scientifically derived limits by 2025. The blueprint defines the parameters of what must be done, but it’s entirely up to the states to decide how to go about doing it. The task falls to each state to figure out how to best reduce the pollution generated through runoff. Maryland has its very own specific blueprint to reduce our TMDLs with several robust and progressive initiatives. One of these initiatives was established by MD House Bill 987: Stormwater Management - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. This law gave us the infamous “Storm Water Remediation Fee,” often derided as the “Rain Tax.” Currently the fate of this law is uncertain. Court battles have already reduced the impact and jurisdiction of the law, and Gov.

Hogan has introduced legislation to repeal the law altogether. The spirit of the law was to create revenue specifically allocated to combat the leading source of pollution and biggest threat to the Chesapeake Bay. Whether Gov. Hogan is successful or not may make little overall difference. Each state is federally mandated, and subsequently each county and locality, for reducing polluted runoff - this will likely require tax dollars.

Stormwater runoff undoubtedly holds one of the biggest pieces of the puzzle to the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay. So, what’s a homeowner to do? Regardless of whether or not you’re getting taxed on the rain you can help mitigate the effects. The issue with runoff is that the stormwater picks up pollutants and chemicals from impervious surfaces like roads, sidewalks, and roofs and carries them to drains and rivers instead of through the ground where those nasties get filtered out through the soil. Governments certainly play a role in remediating this problem, but citizens can help reduce the overall impact as well.

Citizens can’t prevent rain, but they can prevent run off. Collecting rain in rain barrels or by constructing rain gardens you can strategically utilize rain, reduce runoff, and save on your utility bill. A rain barrel is a storage system used to collect rain from downspouts and roofs. They are inexpensive and collected water can be used for anything. All you need is a 50 - 60 gallon drum (sold at hardware and outdoor stores), PVC coupling to connect to downspouts or roof drainage areas, screening to keep insects and debris out of the barrel, and a hose is optional.

For many homeowners up to 40% of summer water usage is dedicated to watering gardens and lawns, this can help to reduce that number and your water bills. A slightly more ambitious do it yourself project would be to plant a rain garden. Rain gardens are a landscaped area that hold stormwater so it will infiltrate into the soil as opposed to becoming runoff. These shallow depressions are low maintenance and beautify



Similar to the creek between the two adjoining pastures pictured above, natural buffers along stream borders greatly minimize both water and nutrient runoff, preserving the health of the local creek.

homes and neighborhoods. Other benefits include reducing erosion and flooding, recharging the water table, and increased property values. There are many how-to guides online or a local landscaping company can assist you with installing one.

We drink it, we bathe in it, we play in it, and we need it. Our water is invaluable and irreplaceable. The quality and state of the nation’s river and the most productive estuary the country has been in jeopardy for some time. Things are getting better, but the call to action is still ringing. By

doing what we can and playing our part on a local level we can make that 15% difference. Collecting rain water so we use less from the infrastructure, planting rain gardens to reduce runoff and filter water, or participating in river clean ups are all small tokens that can add up to big impacts. Ensuring we have the cleanest possible water pays dividends for our wallets, our ecosystems, and ourselves. Here’s to the April showers that bring May flowers!

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SCIENCE MATTERS

Can a “star in a bottle” make electricity?

Boyce Rensberger

If all goes well—and that is a very big assumption—one of science’s long-cherished dreams may become a reality in less than ten years. The dream is to make electricity from carbon-free, safe, nuclear fusion and to do it in a way that makes more energy than it consumes.

Nuclear fusion, as you may know, is a process very different from nuclear fission, the phenomenon that drives some 419 nuclear power plants now operating around the world. Fission uses heat released when atoms of uranium or, less commonly, plutonium are made to split into smaller atoms. Fusion, by contrast, forces hydrogen atoms through a series of reactions to fuse into helium, a phenomenon that also gives off heat. In both cases, the heat can then be used as in any other kind of power plant to boil water into steam that drives electrical turbines.

So, what’s happening now?

A private company spawned by M.I.T. announced in December that it will “independently finance, build, own, and operate” a grid-scale, thermonuclear fusion power plant in Chesterfield County, Virginia, just south of Richmond. Commonwealth Fusion Systems signed an agreement with that region’s power company, Dominion Energy Virginia. The fusion plant would be built on Dominion’s land. The newly made electricity would feed into Dominion’s grid.

Though many groups around the world are working to commercialize fusion energy, this would appear to be the furthest any group has ever gone toward delivering on that long-held dream. The goal first promised in the 1950s is to make electricity from a fusion process that gives off more energy than it consumes and

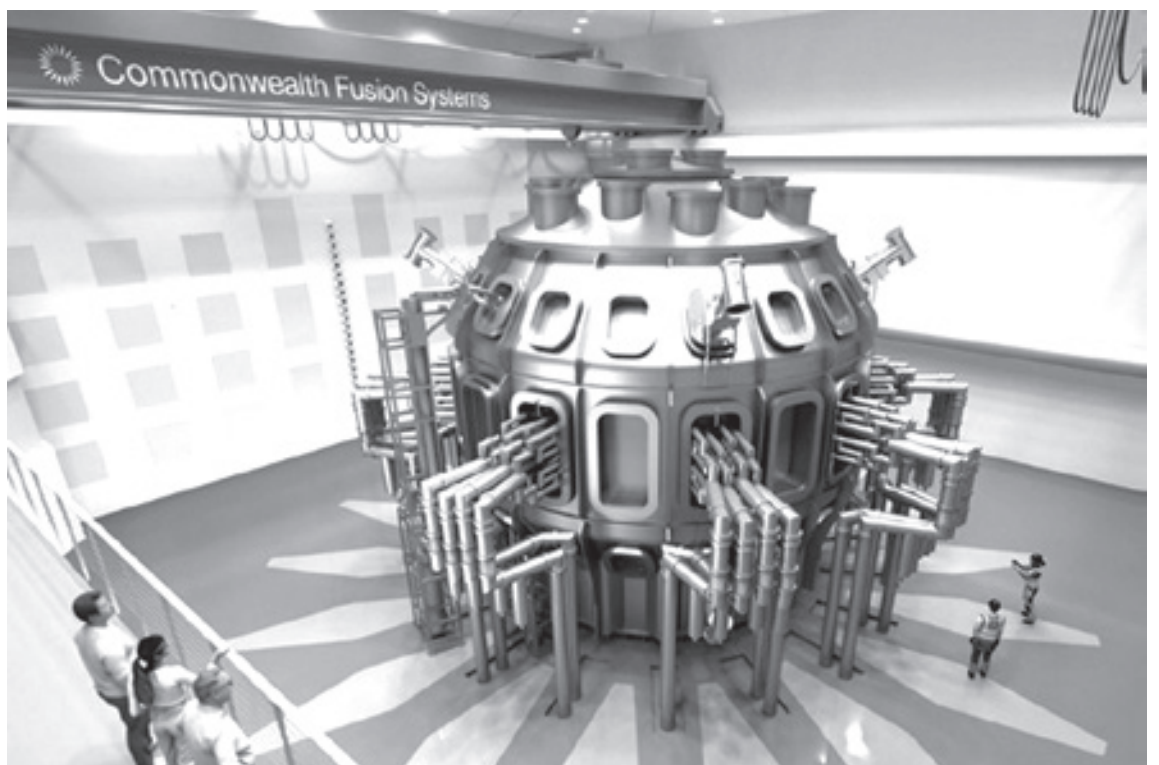
do it on a sustained basis. Much of the appeal of fusion power is that the “fuel” is an isotope, or version, of hydrogen (called deuterium) that can be extracted from sea water plus another hydrogen isotope (called tritium) that can be made from lithium. Fusing the two isotopes yields helium, a safe and valuable “waste product.” No greenhouse gases are produced.

A little background is in order.

In 1925 an astronomer named Cecilia Payne, whom I wrote about in 2023, discovered that stars are made almost entirely of hydrogen and helium, the two simplest elements and the first to come out of the Big Bang. They were created as loose atoms which eventually clumped together, the aggregation becoming ever larger as the growing mass exerted stronger gravitational pull. Once such a mass becomes great enough, the gravitational pressure deep inside creates intense heat—many millions of degrees. This ignites fusion reactions, and the great mass becomes a shining star. Nuclear fusion is the reaction that powers our local star, the sun.

The usual, over-simplified way of putting it is that the nuclei of hydrogen atoms, which are single protons, are forced to move so fast that they overcome their normal repulsion (both have a positive charge) and slam into one another, binding and creating helium, with its nucleus of two protons. In reality it’s more complicated, too complicated to fit in this space. The bottom line is that hydrogen nuclei fuse (making helium) and release huge amounts of energy as heat.

The idea of practical fusion power first arose in the Soviet Union in 1950. The world had recently seen what fission can do after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan. But fission was easier to con-



Artist’s conception of the proposed fusion reactor. [Editor’s note – the artist apparently never saw an actual Tokamak fusion reactor.]

trol, so it became the only practical form of atomic energy, despite producing lethally radioactive waste products. The wastes of more than 400 fission reactors that have been operating for decades are usually stored on site.

But the dream of fusion power did not die. When I started as a science writer in the 1960s, scientists promised that practical fusion power lay “only 30 years” ahead. A few decades later it was still “30 years” away. Come that elusive day, fusion would produce electricity “too cheap to meter.” The phrase was borrowed from advocates of fission power much earlier.

Work on fusion power continued through the decades with many different machines designed to replicate the intense heat and pressure inside the sun, creating what some dubbed “a star in a bottle.” In 1950 Soviet scientists proposed a machine they called a

tokamak. It bottled deuterium and tritium in a large donut-shaped ring surrounded by powerful magnets that repelled the charged particles from all directions, keeping them inside. The magnetic field’s pressure heats a cloud of hydrogen atoms as if they were inside stars, tearing away their electrons and forcing their nuclei to fuse into helium and release heat.

Countless engineers and scientists have worked to design and build fusion reactors in the tokamak form. Some worked, but none has achieved a system that would be practical. They all consumed more electricity than they could produce. Or, at best, some achieved “break-even.”

The private company aiming to build in Virginia has developed a tokamak at its campus outside Boston that they say will finally reach the goal, possibly next year or in 2027. Led by M.I.T. professors and grad students and funded with some \$2 billion in venture capital, it will use newly developed high temperature superconducting mag-

nets to confine and heat the hydrogen nuclei. The tokamak proposed for just south of us would be an upgraded version.

As the company says in a news release: “Commonwealth Fusion Systems is the world’s leading and largest private fusion company. The company’s marquee fusion project, SPARC, will generate net energy, paving the way for limitless carbon-free energy.”

They aren’t promising energy too cheap to meter, but neither are they saying the goal is 30 years away. They say their commercial fusion reactor will feed power to the grid in Virginia in the “early 2030s.”

I might live to see it.

Boyce Rensberger retired to Frederick County after some 40 years as a science writer and editor, primarily at *The Washington Post* and *The New York Times*. He welcomes feedback at boycerensberger@gmail.com.

To read other articles by Boyce Rensberger, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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April showers may bring flowers

Jack Deatherage

Being a child of Chaos has some advantages, lower expectations being primary. I know organization is not among them. A casual glance at my computer desk is proof of that!

The organization of files in the computer, at first glance, seem sane. Closer inspection finds fishing articles in the bread folder and bread recipes can be anywhere! My browser's bookmarks define chaos. Though a list of dog breeds tucked into ethnic foods kinda makes sense.

While chaos is survivable at the personal level- if one has a DW to manage the daily routines - it becomes inconvenient when she tells me, "You started that. You deal with it." As she has, repeatedly, concerning the community garden.

Okay, I had a 5 year plan that saw the garden expand in size and the number of people making use of it the first and second years. We were able to purchase raised beds out of pocket and with donations. A rototiller was donated by a member of the Knights of Columbus. Brian, Idiot 2, churned up a piece of old clay sewer pipe, slabs of concrete sidewalk, a golf ball, the heels of shoes and assorted chunks of red shale- lots of red shale and created the first in-ground flower and vegetable beds.

By the bye, I'm Idiot one. Brian and I argue constantly as to which of us is the bigger idiot. Given Brian's plan for the garden he may be the greater idiot, but the new community garden was my idea and I'm the idiot of record, according to this news-journal.

The second year, we were able to double the size of the garden with more donations of cash and materials. The children's librarians brought more eyes to the garden and people began asking about getting involved with the project. I didn't know what to tell them. The garden wasn't ready for more than 3 or 4 gardeners. Even so, people would stop by while the DW and First Sister were pulling weeds and I wandered about looking for ways to avoid anything mildly resembling work.

"We want to help. What can we do? How do we get a plot? How much does a plot cost?"

D'oh! I don't know! I'm building a garden. (Enter the laughing gods.)

The third gardening year begins with an email from Grants Administrator Ms Shaw:

[This is the timeline for project implementation that I put in the grant application. I based this off of having the garden beds ready to go by Mother's Day and hopefully no more frosts.

By March 1st - place order for shed (there is a 6-week lead time). Schedule installation of waterline for April. Order supplies to include rototiller, raised beds, cattle fence, T-posts, topsoil, hay bales, wheelbarrow, worm composters, garden sign, etc.. By May 9th - installation of garden beds via volunteers and town staff. Week of May 12th - schedule ribbon cutting ceremony with all partners.]

Gah! So much for my 5-year plan! Evidently, Ms Shaw was able to order almost everything I'd asked for back when I knew the town would not receive a Sustainable Maryland grant!

The waterline was installed in March followed by the delivery of cattle panels and T-posts. The shed should arrive by mid April and I'm guessing everything else will follow quickly after that's in place. Ms Shaw asked if I'll be able to assemble, place and fill the 20 metal raised beds that are on order. If I can organize enough interested people to help with all that- yes. Though given my organizational skills (insert maniacal laughter) the town's work crew will likely do most of that task.

I've done my best to not involve town employees in this project even though the mayor, commissioners and staffers have been urging me to let the town help with expenses- approximately \$7,300 to date. At least \$1,000 of that was spent on materials purchased by the town. I haven't a clue as to how many man-hours the town has put into the garden. Nor can I offer a guesstimate as to how much wear and tear on my vehicle, or the amount of fuel I've burnt fetching materials to the garden.

For the sake of argument I'm going to go high with an estimate- the garden at the end of 2025 will have cost \$25,000 to establish. I can easily spend twice that if the

town allows us to use the entire lot. (Oh the plans Idiot's 1 and 2 have in mind for the lot!) Anyhow, using the 26 metal raised beds and 5 stock tanks as a baseline, we'll have approximately \$807 tied up in each bed. Each bed is estimated to last 20 years so we'll shorten that to 15 years, which means each bed costs approximately \$54 a year.

Any serious gardener can squeeze more than \$54 worth of fruits, vegetables, herbs and flowers out of a 16-sq/ft bed. Gourmet garlic varieties alone, grown well in a 4'x4' bed, could be worth \$160. Follow the July garlic harvest with some fall/winter vegetables and \$200 worth of produce would be the average for a season- assuming the gardener knows what they's about. Me? Not being a gardener, I'm lucky to get my fill of taters and beans from a 30'x8' bed!

How would one calculate the value of the librarians' Summer STEM Program inspiring some kidlet to discover a passion for the sciences involved in gardening?

I'm told the garden also draws out of town visitors to this place! I'm rarely in the garden for more than an hour a day during the warm season so I've only spoken to a few of the visitors. Of those I've met- two were from an island in the Caribbean, a few farmers from PA, one from Georgia and another from Baltimore. A member of the Thur-



mont Green Team spent some time quizzing me on the use of cattle panels as trellises, congratulating me on what we've managed to build so far and commiserating with me on the difficulties involved in creating a community garden. The latter being: getting the word out to the public and a general lack of interest among the citizenry that are aware of the projects.

Meh. We're going to build the garden. Perhaps not as I envision it with roses lining South Seton Avenue and perennial, biennial and annual flowerbeds lining Cedar Avenue. Maybe we won't be able to have grape vines, or fruit trees. Maybe I'll never get around to building raised beds for blueberry bushes, or currants, or gooseberries. Maybe I'll never have 10 people ask me for

plots. Maybe I'll blow a knee, or enjoy a massive heart attack and drop dead dragging a semi-rotted straw bale across the lot to mulch a bed for the winter and someone else will take over with a vision of their's own?

Whatever. I'm building a garden. Want in?

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THE MASTER GARDENER

Planning your spring vegetable garden

Mary Ann Ryan

Adams County Master Gardener

Ready to plant your garden? April is a great time to start planting. Here are some tips on timing of the vegetable garden.

1. Begin with broccoli, peas and lettuce! Now is the perfect time to plant transplants and start some cool season seeds. Stop at your local garden center and pick up a pack or two. Head lettuce and broccoli do well as transplants. Plant them, water them, and cover them overnight if freezing temperatures are expected. Peas and leaf lettuce, as well as the spicier greens like arugula and mustard, do best planted by seed. Directly sow them in the garden, following the depth indicated on the seed packet. These are all cool crops – they tolerate light frosts and temperatures as low as 28°, short term.

2. To determine what kind of peas to grow, know the difference. Snap peas, also called sugar snap peas, have rounded pods and the entire pod can be eaten. Snow peas have flat pods, are harvested before the peas inside mature, and the entire pod is edible. Garden peas have pods that aren't edible and are harvested when the peas inside are plump. These peas are shelled.

Plant seeds 4 – 5 weeks before the last frost date. All

peas are best grown on a trellis and require a minimum of 6 – 8 hours of sun per day. Trellises can be bamboo and twine, chicken wire, cattle panels, netting and posts, or a combination. Read the seed packet to learn how tall they get to determine the height of the trellis needed.

3. Is growing blueberries in your future? Start preparing now for next year. First, test your soil. Blueberries grow best in a pH of 4.5 – 5.5. A Penn State soil test will provide you with recommendations on what and how much to add to your soil to address any pH or nutrient needs. Next, prepare the soil. Add the recommended sulfur to lower the pH as it takes a minimum of one year to correct soil pH. Mulch the blueberry bed with aged sawdust until next spring, when it's time to plant the plants.

And lastly, determine the cultivar. Blueberries do best with two cultivars for production. Many are available; take this year to research what kinds of blueberries you would like to grow. To learn more, go to: <https://extension.psu.edu/blueberries-in-the-garden-and-the-kitchen>.

4. Although April 20 is now our area's average last frost date, we can still get cold temperatures and frosty nights. If you planted

frost sensitive plants a bit too early and a frost advisory is in the forecast, cover up the plants! Use milk jugs with the bottom cut out, create a little hoop house with wire or PVC pipes covered with plastic (this will require a little planning), or lay a row cover – a light mesh fabric – over the top of the plants. And even easier, just throw an old sheet or blanket over the plants for the night and use stones to hold it down. Uncover after danger of frost has passed. This will protect those tender, sensitive plants up to 5°, depending on the type of cover. Be sure not to let the cover on during the day when things can heat up. If using plastic and it is touching the plants, they will likely burn in the heat of the day.

5. When we enter the month of May, consider companion planting. Some plants support others through attracting beneficial insects, acting as a deterrent for pests, adding nutrients to the soil, or providing shade to sun-sensitive plants. Some such combinations are growing the annual flower alyssum (a good pollinator attracting plant) with melons, tomatoes with basil (fragrant plant that deters insects), beans (adds nitrogen to the soil) with corn (heavy user of nitrogen), and lettuce (cool season crop) with tall or trellised vining crops like beans or melons (crops that can shade the lettuce). This also becomes a space saver in a garden as the shorter season crops can be grown in between the longer season crops. Try growing carrots (long taproots) alongside onions (shallow bulbs) and nasturtium (crops said to repel insects like aphids, squash bugs and white fly) with squash.

Mother's Day is the traditional beginning of the gardening season. The average last frost date



If you're looking for a bountiful spring garden, now is the time to plan for it!

has passed for most of Pennsylvania and all of Maryland; therefore, frost sensitive plants and warm loving seeds can be planted.

Of the many vegetable plants and seeds, plant beans now. There are bush beans and pole beans. Be sure to research which kind you prefer. Bush beans do not require a trellis, unlike pole beans that are vining and grow up to 10' tall! If space is minimal, try growing up and plant pole cultivars.

Consider relay planting. Sow some beans this week, next week sow another row and continue for three to four weeks. This allows production to harvest to last longer.

6. By late May, plant tomato plants, not seeds. There are indeterminate tomato plants and determinate tomato plants. Indeterminate will continue to grow taller (as much as 10' or more!) and produce fewer tomatoes at one time but continue to produce through fall. Whereas determinate plants will produce

a large crop in a short period of time and stop growing after harvesting. If you like to make tomato sauce, juice, etc. and preserve it, consider determinate varieties. If you are growing for fresh eating, indeterminate may be your best choice.

7. Love a good melon? Plant some seeds at the end of May through the middle June and grow your own! Make a small mound of soil and plant 3 – 5 seeds in the mound. Water them well. Seeds will sprout within a week after planting. Melon plants are vines and cover quite a bit of space in the garden. If there is limited space, consider growing up! Build a trellis for the vines. This makes it a bit easier, too, when scouting for pests and diseases as well as harvesting. Melons can take 80 – 110 days from seed to harvest, depending on what kind of melon is planted. Keep them watered well throughout the season. It is a commitment, but a fresh melon that you grow from your garden is the best tasting ever!

8. Zucchini and other squash do well when planted in late May through mid-June. Check the seed packet for how many days it takes for the plant to produce fruit to be sure the planting time is right for production. Direct sow zucchini seeds a bit later in the season, avoiding the first generation of squash vine borers. The adult vine borer will lay her eggs sometime in late May through early June. Waiting till after that part of their life cycle happens will prevent your zucchini plants from dying just as they begin to bear fruit.

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Frederick County Master Gardeners April Seminars

April 12 (10 to noon): “Back to Our Roots: Humans and Gardening Throughout History” Learn about our historical experiences with cultivation, nature, and public and private lands, from imperial gardens to personal plots and windowsill planters. Discover how we can reignite our passion and find peace in cultivating the land mindfully and resourcefully while encouraging others to do the same.

April 12 (1 to 3): “Bay-Wise Principles” Encourage wildlife; control stormwater runoff; mow & water efficiently; mulch appropriately & recycle yard

waste; fertilize, plant & manage yard pests wisely; and protect the waterfront. These ‘best practices’ can earn you Bay-Wise certification—and a distinctive yard sign.

All seminars are free unless otherwise stated. Seminars are held at the University of Maryland Extension office at 330 Montevue Lane, (off Rosemont Avenue) in Frederick.

For more information and sign-up links, visit the Events section of the Master Gardeners Frederick County Maryland webpage, or call the extension office at 301-600-1595.

Small Town Gardener

Fickle but fabulous April

Marianne Willburn

April is a month of watching the weather forecast and kicking myself once a week when I forget to close the greenhouse in the evening. There are far more pressing things in the world to worry about of course, but a fresh salad goes a long way towards helping one cope with the latest global disaster.

It’s frightening to think of the hours of work that can be lost because of a moment’s lapse in memory, and the new gardener must realize that to sprout seeds and take cuttings is to commit oneself to a babysitting job where life and death are on the line.

Extremes are what we’re afraid of, and extremes are exactly what we’re dealing with in early April – extremes of temperature and weather that bite us when we’re not paying attention. It is difficult to stay vigilant. So much easier to be soothed into a false sense of security by a warm day spent dividing ornamentals. But it’s still dangerous out there.

Some things are quite happy...and quite safe. Peony and aquilegia shoots have begun their upward thrust and seem to be secure in their timing. Not so the Rogersia. A late frost will cut it, wilted and blackened to the ground, where it must start again – so I look at those early shoots and developing leaves with some reservation, taking out the fleece when low temps threaten

One of the best joys of the April garden is watching the daffodils supported by the emerging foliage of larkspur, fennel and poppies, and I highly recommend this type of layered planting to extend



The arrival of Daffodils provides the first splash of color in otherwise desolate gardens.

your garden’s season, not just your daffodil season. Soon, the daffodil foliage will be swallowed up (but quite green) by the emerging perennials and self-seeded annuals, and I will not feel the need to yank it until it is quite yellow.

If only I could follow up with tulips, but the deer have spoiled that avenue of pleasure, forcing me to start containers in fenced areas for fenced areas. It is one of the main plant/deer resentments I have, for the show could be so great otherwise.

Speaking of deer, the self-seeded plain-Jane hosta will be carpeting a long, boring bed by May and be eaten by June, but April always makes me feel as if the hundreds of emerging shoots might survive. I cannot be bothered to rip them all out and save future disappointment, so instead I look at it more as a temporary flush of color, cutting the ‘celery stalks’ to the ground with a trimmer in early July.

You’d think it would weaken them, but it doesn’t seem to. The hosta I mean – nothing weakens the deer. Meanwhile, I am letting ostrich fern get a foot-hold on the bed, and regretting it even as they pick up steam. They are beautiful, lush and deer-proof; but they are

also thuggish and unstoppable. I would have preferred a well-woven tapestry to a mono-textural bolt of cloth, but sometimes you have no choice.

Greens, radishes and pea tendrils are making their way to our plates, and between that and a healthy supply of eggs, I suppose we could subsist somewhat happily. After all, we are consuming what must be the nation’s most expensive protein at the moment.

The chickens (a new flock last year) have laid well all winter, and spring sees an uptick in production. They eat table scraps, garden weeds, and non-GMO organic feed and it is extraordinary to think what a dozen of their premium protein pods would cost us at the store. Last night my husband went to the storage fridge packed with eggs and said he felt we must be doing something illegal. But when a raccoon can wipe out your golden geese overnight, and eggs store so well, it makes sense to hold on to them.

April is an unpredictable month, but in its gentler moments there is nothing like it. So many miracles each day to witness – so much awakening and joy. There is work, of course, but taken in small doses it is wonderful.

If you’re not into small doses, and you’ve planted too many seedlings (you have), please take a few pictures of your leftovers and post them online for the benefit of fellow local gardeners like myself who just wiped out an entire flat of tomato seedlings by leaving the greenhouse open last night. Ahh fickle April.

Marianne writes from Lovettsville, VA. Join her and co-host Leslie Harris as they stir up horticulture on their new podcast *The Garden Mixer* – found everywhere you get your podcasts.

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PETS

Needing people

Jennifer Vanderau
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

Did you ever see those bumper stickers that say, “The more people I meet, the more I like my dog?”

Some days that statement is more true than others. I’ll tell you, I’ve had a week where I feel like gluing thousands of those all over my car – and I don’t even own a dog! Maybe I can see if they have a cat one. Man, a lone cabin in rural Montana (with television, cable and an internet connection, of course) is looking sooooo good right now.

Barbra Streisand sings that people who need people are the luckiest people in the world. Really, Babs? Some days I’m not so sure.

People can be quite the conundrum – tough to figure out and occasionally difficult to handle. I’ll never forget when my sister took a cruise a few years ago. She said she became frustrated because she couldn’t get away from anyone. She was trapped in the middle of the ocean with no where to go.

I understood her plight, actually. Maybe we’re both isolationists at heart – we grew up in the country, after all, so it’s possible – but there are some moments in life where you just need a minute to yourself, you know?

I have a feeling that the ani-

mal-lovers who read this column have some idea what I’m talking about. Like the previously mentioned bumper sticker, sometimes an evening alone with our pets is just what we need to unwind from a stressful day. I know some nights that’s the perfect solution for me – even if I do have to run around the house trying to keep some of my felines from fighting with their siblings. Ugh.

On the other hand, do you remember that Twilight Zone episode, where all poor Henry Bemis wanted to do was read, but no one seemed willing to let him? He locked himself in a bank vault on his lunch break to get some peace away from people, just in time to survive an atomic bomb attack. When he emerged, he found himself alone and ironically, he couldn’t take the isolation. I think Mr. Bemis, at that moment, would have wholeheartedly agreed with Streisand.

I read a piece of fiction a few years ago that had the two main characters survive the apocalypse and become literally the only two people left on the planet. That’s it. Everything was still here – McDonald’s and Target and hotels – it’s just that the people were gone. The author did a magnificent job of really giving the reader the sense of remoteness and being completely alone. It was freaky.

So, technically, I suppose it really is people who make the world go around.

In fact, I’ve seen presentations that talk about how very much we need people. We are hard wired to seek out human connection, so too many days alone can actually affect your health.

People can be frustrating, horrifying, exasperating, appalling, apathetic, disgusting and cruel. Yet at the same time, they can be encouraging, thoughtful, attentive, sympathetic, inspirational and unselfish.

I think learning to accept all of that – and the plethora of other adjectives I’m sure you could add to both sentences – and live with the idiosyncrasies of people is a big part of the human condition.

Sometimes people will disappoint you, and yet other times, people can be surprisingly delightful.

Since I started working at CVAS, I’ve seen that first hand. Ours is a peculiar job. People can be incredibly frustrating, but at the same time, you need them. It’s people who give and people who adopt and people who go above and beyond for their animals, but it’s also people who abuse pets and drop them off with no information or throw them away like garbage.

See what I mean? It’s a real challenge and some days it’s tough not to let that back-and-forth get you down.

But, in some ways, that’s also life. It’s yin/yang. There’s good moments and bad moments. There’s frustrating people and there’s incredibly sweet and altruistic people.

Maybe it’s learning to find balance in those two opposing forces.

So I think what I’ll do is get just one of the bumper stickers and on the bad days, when people are bugging me, I’ll look at it and know that there are others out there, like me, who know what it means to some days like their pets more than the humans who also inhabit the planet.

The Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter accepts both monetary and pet supply donations. For more information, call the shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit the website www.cvas-pets.org.



Candy Cane came into the shelter as a stray on Christmas Eve (hence the name). She is a 3-year-old black and white girl who is a real sweetheart. She loves getting treats and is looking for a home that has a good nap spot. Do you have what she’s looking for?



Gloria came into the shelter as a stray, so we don’t know a whole lot about her, but we think she’s about 6 years old. She’s a dilute tortie who is a nice girl looking for her second chance. Could you give her one?



Sweet Pea came into the shelter as a stray, so we don’t have a lot of information about her, but we think she’s about 10 years old. She’s looking to find a place where she can spend her golden years. Could that be with you?



Jelly was brought into the shelter with another dog after they had been found running at large. Jelly did test positive for Lyme disease but is undergoing treatment for it and is doing quite well. Jelly does have some knee/hip issues, but it does not slow him down. He is on an affordable joint supplement that he should be on for the rest of his life to help. He’s around 5 years old and a hound mix.



Peaches is a sweet, loving 8-year-old Lab that was surrendered to the shelter when her owner could no longer care for her. Peaches was on treatment for the mange and secondary skin infection for 3 months and has made a full recovery since! She did very well during her treatment and is very glad to not be itchy anymore! Peaches would love to find her loving forever home soon!

For more information about Sweet Pea, Candy Cane, Gloria, Jelly, or Peaches, call the Cumberland Valley Animal shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at www.cvaspets.org or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

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Before humans die, they write their last Will & Testament, give their home & all they have, to those they leave behind. If, with my paws, I could do the same, this is what I’d ask...

To a poor and lonely stray I’d give:

- My happy home.
- My bowl & cozy bed, soft pillows and all my toys.
- The lap, which I loved so much.
- The hand that stroked my fur & the sweet voice which spoke my name.

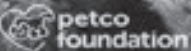
I’d Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human’s loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

So, when I die, please do not say, “I will never have a pet again, for the loss and pain is more than I can stand.”

Instead, go find an unloved dog, one whose life has held no joy or hope and give MY place to HIM.

This is the only thing I can give...
The love I left behind.

-- Author Unknown



Balancing law and compassion

Linda Shea

Working at an animal shelter—especially our shelter—is a unique and rewarding experience. We love animals and walk in every day to fur, feathers, and sometimes even hooves. We work with colleagues that have the same dedication to the animals in our care. While many times it doesn't even feel like work, reflecting at the end of each day produces thoughts of cleaning cages, feeding animals, changing litterboxes, washing dishes piled high from 100 (twice that many during kitten season!) residents, and non-stop laundry. In addition, of course, working with animals inevitably means working with people throughout the community.

On a routine basis, we explain our role in the community—to enforce existing laws and ordinances. It is not our place to exaggerate intent, extrapolate facts, or arrive at a decision without evaluating situations in a fair manner. For example, we can ensure a pet owner is providing "nutritious food in sufficient quantity for the species, breed, condition of the animal." However, we cannot mandate which brand of food to buy. We can make sure an owner in is compliance with Maryland State law on Rabies vaccinations, but we cannot mandate which Rabies vaccine their vet must administer. We do our best to be effective as we balance law and compassion, especially as some pet owners simply do not know the law. Sometimes we run into disagreement with citizens who want to see more done;

even some who broach vigilantism in their opinions. We take those opportunities to educate and reassure people that we are on the same page—but we approach every situation thoughtfully, thoroughly, and with experience.

Our mission at Frederick County Animal Control includes preventing the mistreatment of animals, sheltering animals in need, rehoming pets, and educating the public. While our mission revolves around animals, our successes often revolve around people. We try every day to build relationships with pet owners, volunteers, and people in the community who are also animal welfare minded. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our community and we appreciate those who understand what we can—and cannot—enforce.



Huskee is a staff and volunteer favorite. At only one years old, he is a handsome, friendly guy that loves to play. He is also well-mannered, walks nicely on leash and enjoys the company of other dogs. Like so many Siberian Huskies, Huskee arrived at the shelter as a stray. The breed is hard-wired to run, so left unattended they just can't help themselves.



At twelve years old, Callie hopes to find a nice, quiet retirement home. Her previous family owned her for the last nine years but relinquished Callie to the shelter when they were moving. The transition to shelter life has been challenging; however, she is slowly adapting. She is shy when meeting new people but with patience Callie can be very affectionate and sweet.



At eight months old, Gordon is currently our youngest cat available for adoption. He is at that perfect age where he's young enough to be playful but old enough to enjoy affection and not get into mischief. He was found by McCurdy Field in downtown Frederick, but no owner came to the shelter to reclaim him. Gordon is friendly and has an easy-going personality; therefore, shelter staff recommend him for families with kids of any age.



Staff and volunteers are scratching their heads as to why Lightning has been at the shelter for eighty plus days and no one has adopted him. At only two years old, he is well mannered, affectionate, enjoys the company of other dogs and has lived with kids of various ages. How did he end up at the shelter? His primary caregiver developed a medical issue and was no longer able to care for him.



Quibbles arrived at the shelter on December 26 as a stray and no owner came forward to reclaim her so she now waits to meet her new family. Quibbles can be overwhelmed by new people and experiences, but she does become comfortable with patience and repeat exposure. Once you gain her trust, she is a typical 10-month-old pup: playful and affectionate!



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For more information about Huskee, Lightning, Quibbles, Callie, or Gordon call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

FAIRFIELD FIRE & EMS AWARDS BANQUET



Chief Bill Jacobs presenting the Chiefs Award to Chad Fogle as Deputy Chief Adam Jacobs, & Assistant Chief Brad Hartdagen look on.



Chief Bill Jacobs presenting the Firefighter of the Year Award to Gary Shorb as Deputy Chief Adam Jacobs, & Assistant Chief Brad Hartdagen look on.



Diana Ratliff presenting Rose Jacobs with her membership into the Company's Veteran member program.



Once again the Vigilant Hose Company was in standby to answer a call so Fairfield could have a well deserved night off.



County Commissioners Randy Phiel and Jim Martin acknowledged the hard work of the Company.



Fountaindale Fire Chief Dave Martin and wife Peggy.



Administrative Officers: President Gary Shorb, Treasurer Holly Kuykendall, Membership Secretary Diana Ratliff, Recording Secretary Rose Jacobs, and Vice President Miles Leister.



Board of Directors: Mike Hardagen, Brad Shughart, Diana Ratliff, Rose Jacobs, Wyatt Shorb, Miles Leister, Brad Hartdagen.



Top Fire Responders for 2024: Bill Jacobs, Brad Shughart, Miles Leister, Gary Shorb Jr, Chad Fogle, Brad Hartdagen, and Adam Jacobs.



Chief Bill Jacobs, Deputy Chief Adam Jacobs, Assistant Chief Brad Hartdagen were given the Three Musketeers Award for over 10 years of dedication and service.

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President: Gary Shorb
 Vice President: Miles Leister
 Secretary: Rose Jacobs
 Treasurer: Holly Kuykendall
 Membership Sec: Diana Ratliff

Board of Directors for 2025

Miles Leister
 Bradley Hartdagen
 Michael Hartdagen
 Rose Jacobs
 Wyatt Shorb
 Diana Ratliff &
 Bradford Shughart

Line Officers for 2025

Chief: William Jacobs
 Deputy Chief: Adam Jacobs
 Asst. Chief: Bradley Hartdagen
 Captain: Chad Fogle
 Lieutenant: Bradford Shughart

Fire Police for 2025

Captain: Michael Hartdagen
 Lieutenant: Steve Bata

COMMUNITY NOTES

Global community science event comes to Frederick

Carey Murphy
Mobilize Frederick

For the first time, Frederick County residents are preparing to join a global community science event with a very local focus: the wildlife in our environment. The City Nature Challenge will take place from April 25th to April 28th. Thousands of people from MD, DC, VA and WV are expected to participate.

The mission: to observe and identify as many species of wild animals, plants, and fungi as they can during the Challenge period—in local parks, neighborhoods, front stoops, back yards...anywhere. The Challenge is a fun event that offers a great opportunity to get outdoors. It also has a serious intent; the data collected will provide valuable information to scientists on urban wildlife and global biodiversity.

The City Nature Challenge, sometimes called an annual “bioblitz,” started as a friendly competition between two cities in 2016, San Francisco and Los Angeles. Organizers in each city challenged their communities to see who could make the most observations of wildlife over one long weekend. Their competition soon attracted interest, and within two years people in over 50 cities were participating. In 2025, over 600 cities in more than 50 countries are expected to take part.

Frederick county participants (part of the Washington DC Metro Area) will use their cell phone cameras or digital cameras, and the iNaturalist platform to make observations. iNaturalist is a popular free app supported by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society to help community scientists make accurate observations of the natural world. Over 3million people worldwide have shared their observations on iNaturalist, making it one of the largest tools for biodiversity tracking.

Mobilize Frederick, the local non-profit focused on implement-

ing recommendations from the Climate Response and Resilience Report (CRR), is coordinating Frederick County’s participation. They are joined by more than 60 regional organizations, including Sustainable Frederick, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Frederick County Public Libraries, local scout and 4-H leaders, and ThorpeWood. The data collected will directly support Recommendation 26 from the CRR, enhancing and protecting regional biodiversity.

Jenny Willoughby, the City of Frederick’s Sustainability Manager is part of the planning team: “We’re excited to get more folks interested in the nature around us, especially in our local parks and green spaces. These areas are full of wildlife and are great places to relax with family and friends. The City of Frederick was recognized as a Bird City last year and we hope the City Nature Challenge will be a way for seasoned and aspiring naturalists to learn more about birds and other wildlife right here in the City.”

Carey Murphy is the Mobilize Frederick Challenge Coordinator and Project Coordinator for Growing Green!, which supports local schools pursuing Maryland Green Schools certification: “The Challenge is a fun opportunity to connect nature enthusiasts— even beginners—with one another from all parts of our large county. Students and educators participating can meet Green Schools objectives by engaging in hands-on community science.”

Carrie Seltzer, who also works for iNaturalist, says: “The Challenge is a great reminder that we don’t have to go far to see wildlife. Last year, we observed over 3,200 species in the DC area. If everyone looks in their neighborhood and nearby parks, I am sure we can find even more.”

Special events will be hosted across Frederick County during the Challenge. Sustainable Frederick, for example, has organized a guided walk and bioblitz with Master Nat-

uralists and entomologists at Riverside Park to search for birds and bugs on Sunday morning, April 27 from 9-11. The Frederick County Public Libraries will host nature-themed storytimes followed by guided explorations to search for wildlife nearby. iNaturalist enthusiasts are planning mothing nights, leading activities with after school groups, assisting Girl Scout troops, and more.

The Frederick Team will officially kick off the inaugural Challenge with a community event on the evening of April 2 at 6 at the Brown Community Center in downtown Frederick featuring guest speaker, Sam Droege, renowned USGS bee biologist and bioblitz pioneer. Attendees will learn how to partic-

ipate in the CNC and discover the importance of community science.

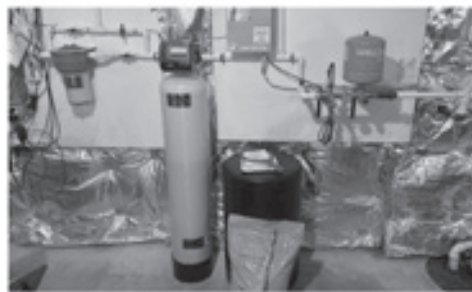
In the northern part of the county, there will be a City Nature Challenge themed storytime at the Emmitsburg Library on April 21 at 10:30 and a storytime at the Thurmout library on April 26 at 11. On April 28, from 2 to 4, as part of this year’s theme of “Love Your Federal Lands”, Mobilize Frederick will partner with the Catocin Mountain Park Visitor Center to empower visitors to explore the beautiful Catocin Mountain Park. Those seeking to join it will meet at the visitor center, get oriented with iNaturalist, and then explore nearby trails either as a group or on our own—your choice! Additional regional events and trainings are listed at: www.mobilizefrederick.org/cnc-events.

www.mobilizefrederick.org/cnc-events.

Getting involved is easy: 1) Create a free iNaturalist account (users must be 13 or older); 2) Learn basic observation tips at www.mobilizefrederick.org/city-nature-challenge; and, Start practicing and making observations

An in-person iNaturalist training is offered by the Frederick County Master Gardeners on April 9 at 5:30. A post-Challenge celebration is scheduled for May 13 at 6 part of ThorpeWood’s Nature on Tap series at RAK Brewery, featuring Jim Brighton from the Maryland Biodiversity Project.

For more information visit: www.mobilizefrederick.org/city-nature-challenge.



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County Notes continued from page 7

able, and other unpaid bills due to impacts of the drought.

The application for the program asks for the same information about the business and its principal owners that are generally required for a bank loan. If you need assistance, SBA staff will explain the forms and help at no charge. Applications for disaster loans may be submitted online using the MySBA Loan Portal at www.lending.sba.gov.

For more information on loan terms, eligibility, and the application process, please visit the SBA’s website at www.sba.gov/disaster. Applicants may also call SBA’s Customer Service Center at (800) 659-2955 or email disastercustomerservice@sba.gov for more information.

Frederick County Launches New Child Care Study to Address Need for Additional Child Care in the County

Frederick County, through the Divisions of Family Services and Parks and Recreation, in partnership with Public Consulting Group (PCG), has begun a comprehensive new Child Care Study to fully assess the accessibility, affordability, and quality of child care in the County for families with children aged birth to 12. This study builds upon the findings of the 2024 Child Care Market Study which focused on families with young children. The new study will gather additional information on families with children from birth through age 12 and identify viable solutions for expanding child care services to better support underserved communities.

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HEALTH

FMH recognized with prestigious 2nd Magnet designation

Joshua Faust
Frederick Health

Frederick Health has been recognized with its second prestigious Magnet redesignation, conferred by the American Nurses Credentialing Center of the American Nurses Association. Frederick Health first achieved Magnet recognition in 2020 and was informed of its second designation on February 25.

According to David Marshall, Chair and Executive Committee Member of the American Nurses Credentialing Center of the American Nurses Association, Frederick Health earned its redesignation for the following reasons:

- Patients and their families are at the forefront of care
- Patients experience fewer complications, lower mortality rates, and higher satisfaction scores
- Nurses identify Frederick Health as a

supportive work environment

- Nurses are empowered, and leadership is visible and accessible
- Nursing practices are based on evidence, and nurses advance professionally

Receiving this recognition for the quality of their nursing practices “Reinforces the fact that Frederick Health is making real contributions to our community by keeping patients healthy, informed, and safe,” says Dr. Jamie White, Vice President of Patient Care & Chief Nursing Officer.

Frederick Health is among only 10% of healthcare organizations in the United States to earn the Magnet honor and is one of only 12 acute care hospitals in Maryland to hold this distinction. Frederick Health is the only hospital in western Maryland with this distinction.

“Earning the prestigious Magnet designation for the second time is further

validation of the excellent care the Frederick Health team delivers to patients every day,” Dr. White added.

For over forty years, Magnet designation has been considered the industry gold-standard for nursing excellence awarded to healthcare organizations. Magnet recognition serves as an impressive and important distinction for Frederick Health and positively impacts the broader Frederick County community. Healthcare consumers view the Magnet designation as a credential for top-notch nursing care and a Magnet recognition demonstrates a high level of engagement and a healthy work environment.

“With a team of nearly 1,000 nurses, Frederick Health takes great pride in this redesignation. It translates into happier nurses and better care for the community we serve,” stated Dr. White.

The process to earn Magnet recognition is very thorough. It includes a three-day onsite validation and review by the

Commission on Magnet Recognition. Appraisers reviewed 3,000 pages of narratives with evidence and spoke with nearly 500 staff members from 23 different departments during a site visit in December 2024. Standards for this designation increase every four years when organizations seek renewal of their Magnet status. To maintain this designation, Frederick Health demonstrated improvements such as increasing the percentage of nurses with advanced degrees, having additional research studies or unique community health initiatives, and increasing quality patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Dr. White emphasized that earning Magnet redesignation is a team effort. While the accreditation recognizes the nursing team specifically, the organization must work collaboratively to meet the standards and benchmarks set forth by the American Nurses Association.

“From our nurses and care teams to the department heads, senior leaders, and members of nonclinical teams, every department at Frederick Health played a significant and supportive role in this designation process,” said Dr. White. “It is something we all take pride in.”

Magnet is also a useful tool in recruiting and retaining nurses. To earn this designation certain workplace metrics must be met by an organization, including nursing engagement, expertise, and workplace satisfaction. During the onsite visit, Magnet Appraisers speak candidly with nurses about their workplace happiness and satisfaction. These honest conversations are factored into to earning a designation.

The response from Frederick Health nurses was overwhelmingly positive. Chris Bumbaugh, Vice President of Human Resources with Frederick Health, said that when they hire and interview new nurses, Magnet is a topic of conversation.

“Being recognized by Magnet allows Frederick Health to recruit and retain the best nurses available. It says to nurses looking for work or a new opportunity that the Frederick Health nursing team is recognized as among the best,” Bumbaugh stated.

In addition to being Magnet redesignated, the healthcare system also earned several “exemplars” – specific categories that Magnet views as important or noteworthy. To earn an exemplar, a healthcare system must outperform the established national benchmarks or develop a unique programming or initiatives that benefits the community.

Frederick Health earned exemplars include:

- 100% of reporting inpatient units had fewer blood stream infections
- 100% of reporting inpatient units for pressure injuries
- 100% of reporting ambulatory units for coronary interventions
- 100% of reporting ambulatory had no patient burns
- 100% of reporting ambulatory units for surgical errors
- 92% unit-level professional board certification
- The ongoing Stroke Smart Initiative

The ongoing cultural & socially sensitive care provided by Frederick Health Hospice and Forensic Nursing teams

Dr. White, herself a nurse with decades of experience, knows the importance of teamwork and trust. She also understands that these awards help reinforces the excellent care available at Frederick Health.

“Being recognized for a second time as Magnet designated is an honor that reaffirms the hard work and dedication of both our nurses and our entire staff,” concluded Dr. White. “I am so proud of this team.”

To learn more about Frederick Health's Magnet redesignation, please visit www.frederickhealth.org/Magnet.

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 240-566-7632 or visit www.frederickhealth.org/MDC.

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The Frederick Bird Club

Claire Doll
MSMU Class of 2024

Birdwatching, the practice of observing birds, is not only a hobby, but also an escape—an opportunity to witness beautiful nature and wildlife first-hand. Believe it or not, in the Emmitsburg and Woodsboro-Walkersville communities, you don't have to travel far to see exquisite birds. In fact, you might not even need to leave your backyard!

The Frederick Bird Club is a local organization dedicated to all things birding: birdwatching, bird sitting, bird walking, bird listening. It is a community of nature enthusiasts who gather to celebrate Frederick's unique bird population and share good knowledge with each other, hoping to spot the most beautiful feathered friends among company. A chapter in the Maryland Ornithological Society, the Frederick Bird Club seeks to educate those in the Frederick area and beyond about conservation efforts and how to observe the flying fauna.

The club has a wide range of birders—from people who just enjoy the birds that come to their feeders to adventurers roaming the world. While the membership has traditionally consisted of those 50 and older, several younger birders have become active in recent years, bringing great energy and new ideas.

President Kari McPartland joined the Frederick Bird Club in 2021 when she moved to Frederick. She has been birding since 2018, in both Rockville, Maryland and Asheville, North Carolina.

In Asheville, Kari met with a local group that held nature walks in a nearby park. "Birding with serious birders," she says, "is the best way to learn about birding." Inspired by her birding experiences in North Carolina, Kari said it was a "no-brainer" to seek out the bird club upon her arrival to Frederick. "Being asked to be President was a really beautiful

thing," Kari feels that the bird club is an inclusive, informative, and overall fun time.

The club's Vice President, Riley Metcalfe, moved to Frederick in January 2021. Before this, he lived in Australia, where his love of birding began in 2020. "It's a good activity you can do outside," he says, noting the stringent pandemic restrictions in his country. "I could just birdwatch in my neighborhood." Riley expresses his enthusiasm for the "vibrant company of birders" in Maryland, exclaiming how his membership in the Frederick Bird Club is a great way to get to know his surrounding community.

Kathy Brown, one of the club's State Directors to the Maryland Ornithological Society and a former President, has been part of the Frederick Bird Club since she moved to the area. Upon her retirement, Kathy felt drawn to meeting others and getting to know her community. "What sparked my interest in birding was the feeder left behind by the previous owners when we moved here." Kathy is surrounded by the forest and has been regularly visited by woodpeckers. "There's always a nice show going on," she says. Kathy enjoys traveling for birding, highlighting her trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the highlands of Scotland, adding how it is a great way to vacation.

The Frederick Bird Club meets monthly, both virtually via Zoom and in person at Hood College in downtown Frederick. Each meeting consists of a guest speaker, brief presentations to share bird sightings and announcements, and time to mingle with other birders. The club also hosts field trips around Maryland including the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge.

Naturally, the club meets for birdwatching. "There are bird counts that have been going on for 76 years," says Kari. "One event we do in the fall is

'the big sit,' where we just sit in one place and count how many birds come to us."

The Frederick Bird Club plays a great role in educating the community. Members present to libraries and organizations, allowing citizens to get involved through learning and volunteering. Kathy notes that the club has a big presence at the Frederick Fair, where attendees can learn about conservation efforts such as habitat work and nesting boxes. "The club has consistently gotten more involved in supporting our community," Kathy adds. In fact, the City of Frederick is applying to become a Bird Community in the Bird City of Maryland Network. This would allow all communities to support bird conservation practices and ensure an environmental-friendly relationship between birds and people.

Even if you have no birding experience but you're interested in the nature around you, the Frederick Bird Club is the perfect place to start. "Maryland is a wonderful state if you're a birder," says Riley. Complete with mountains, water, and coastal plains, Maryland hosts exceptional native birds—cardinals, hawks, and chickadees. However, the state is also on a migration route, meaning that fall and spring are seasons filled with new and exciting species of birds such as warblers, cuckoos, and tanagers. "Birds that should be in tropics, I've seen at parks," Riley shares. "People always say, 'You must miss the Australian birds,' but because of our migration route, it is better to bird in Maryland."

Kari adds that within walking distance of the Monocacy River, she



American Bald Eagles have a frequent sight in the Catoclin area. Last year, a mother was spotted with two juveniles and this year those juveniles have been spotted on their own.

spotted a great blue heron standing in a parking lot. "You can see 100 great blue herons on the river," she says. "They're hidden in plain sight."

Looking to start birdwatching? Kari, Riley, and Kathy share their favorite birding spots. The Audrey Carroll Audubon Sanctuary in Mt. Airy, including 129 acres of diverse habitat, is open to the public and free of charge. Additionally, Fountain Rock Park and Nature Center in Walkersville boasts plenty of amenities perfect for birdwatching. Kari also shares several locations closer to Emmitsburg: Catoclin National Park, Strawberry Hill

Foundation, and Mount St. Mary's University campus walking trail. However, first try looking out your front door or walking to a park. "You might think, 'Surely there won't be anything here,' but often there is," says Kari.

If interested in joining the Frederick Bird Club, more information can be found on the Maryland Ornithological Society website: mdbirds.org/join/chapters/frederick-bird-club/, including a meeting schedule and ways to contact the club. "Anyone is welcome!" exclaims President Kari McPartland. "Frederick birders are the best."



According to the latest Catoclin Bird Count, Red-tailed Hawks are also having a resurgence in their numbers.

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HISTORY

The Contralto

Rev. Charles Maloy, C. M.
St. Joseph's Parish, Emmitsburg
Published in 1912

Chapter 11

The mania for travel, so characteristic of Americans, was not strongly developed amongst those who made Emmitsburg their home. Financial stringency was paramount in preserving them from this aberration and a trip to the neighboring city was an event in the lives of most. Once a year the Western Maryland ran an excursion at a rate of fare which licensed indulgence on the part of the inhabitants, and preparations were made weeks in advance. Many grew to man's estate, however, before being able to avail them-selves of the railroad's beneficence, while for others their first visit to the city came when they responded to the call for a decent livelihood. Of these a few came back periodically to dazzle the stay-at-homes with evidences of success and stories of the great world beyond the mountains; others, for whom the struggle was too strenuous, crawled back to die; most never returned. One or two who came home, still clung to the peroxide tints, and stories were whispered which bore out Miss Tyson's assertion of the lure of money's flash.

The older people were loath to wander, hence the Professor was surprised one morning when Uncle Bennett accosted him with:

"Going to Wash'inton, Professor, soon as I get through with this job."

"That will be splendid, have you ever been there?"

"Never, got a brother there way up in gov'ement contract work, been asking me to come for years, but I ain't had time before. Had a chance when I was mustered out of the service, but was needed here."

"You shall enjoy it very much; you will see the Capitol, the Library and the other public buildings, perhaps have a handshake with the President."

"I ain't got any hankering to shake hands with the gentleman," emphasizing his remark with a blow of the hammer.

"I didn't vote for him and I got more important business anyhow."

"It would be something to talk about afterwards."

"There's too darn much of that kind of boasting in this town already, what I want to see is their observatory and how they get their standard time."

The motive for the journey being now patent, Harry was sore afraid the authority of the Hagerstown Almanac, Olmstead's Physics, and the sun-dial was fated to fall. The watches of the village had led the carpenter to contemplate a trip which neither patriotism nor curiosity could. Gently touching on this he evoked the following from his homely philosopher friend:

"It's this way, some of these people get a trip to Brookville now and then and more stop in to Miss Rowe's telegraph office and get what they call standard time. Jack Rabbit Adlesberger, he's the shyster who Seabold makes a monkey of, was giving me guff last evening about being fast. I says, 'Adlesberger, you 'mind me of Mr. Berry, when he was painting his fence. Everyone who come along had a new color to suggest. Mr. Berry listened, then went to Zimmerman's and bought five cents worth of that color and painted one board. When they was all through with their advices he finished the fence in his own choice of paint. Then he got two signs made, one said, 'Mr. Berry's Fence,' the other 'Everybody's Fence.' Now, I says, 'Adlesberger, the men who made that clock know all about their business just as you're supposed to know all about the law, but when it comes to clock building you ain't got brains enough to have a headache.'"

For once Bennett's feelings caused him to desist momentarily from work, thus Harry appropriated a chapter from the annals of Emmitsburg's deceased prophet without undue effort.

Dr. Forman came into the hall whistling an air from the operetta, made a suggestion to the scenic artists which was received without warmth, then turned his attention to the carpenter:

"We shall need stringers to hang our drops from," pointing above the stage.



Rural mail carriers outside the old Emmitsburg Post Office, which was adjacent to the Annan Brothers' Dry Goods store—now home to the Ott House Inn.

"That's all provided for in the plans, Doc," curtly.

"Hadn't I better go up and measure off so you can strike the joists sure?"

"I built this hall, I could strike those joists with my eyes shut; let me show you."

Taking a step-ladder which he ordered the dentist to steady, he climbed up, hammer in hand, to make soundings. At last he drove a nail into the plaster but the second or third stroke showed that it met no solid resistance. Another attempt was like disastrous, then the old man from his perch on the ladder said indignantly:

"I wish you'd stay down in your office and tend to your teeth-making and not be poking in other peoples' business."

It was a heartbreaking incident in Bennett's career, for well he knew it would be reported, would come to Whitmore's ears and be a sweeter triumph than a theological victory. To have failed in a matter of his beloved avocation, one which the Saviour had graced, was more than disconcerting, it took several days for the first poignant sting to subside.

The Professor silenced, with a look, the guffaw which greeted the old man's discomfort, leading the dentist out of the hall through the churchyard, where he reverently raised his hat in passing the grave of a long-forgotten poet who had produced a medium deemed worthy of the histrionic ability of Edwin Forrest. Out on Main Street they parted, Forman entering

his workshop, Harry walking towards the Chronicle office. Passing the store, Peter Brucket hailed him:

"Like to speak to you, Professor."

"At your service, Mr. Druckett."

"Look at them bags," pointing to several crumpled grocery papers that lay on the counter, "at the mark, the maker's name."

"I have it, what's the point?"

"I sold sugar to a woman from the country, when she come to pay for it she claimed I give her short weight. She brings them bags, and if you notice they ain't the make I use at all. Now I want to know whether I should sue her?"

"What is the amount?" with solemn interest.

"Tain't only thirteen cents, but I ain't thinking about the money, it's the principle of the thing. She questions my honesty and that's something I won't stand for."

"I cannot blame you, Mr. Brucket," seriously, "but just at this time when we are trying to promote an era of good feeling, will it be worth while to start a lawsuit? The scandal will not tend to the social harmony of the town."

"That's all well and good, Professor, but I got my reputation for honesty to look out for. My father ran this store before me and I been here twenty years. He taught me to add on fifteen per cent to the wholesale cost for my investment; I'd sooner burn stuff in my back yard than sell below that. This woman's trying to come a crooked game on me and I don't think I ought

to stand for it. Of course," he continued after a pause, "if you say drop it, I'll do so, but that woman can't buy another five cents' worth in this store," and the determination of voice and eyes made it evident that the lady in question would henceforth deal elsewhere.

While they talked, a bargain hunter entered:

"How much is your lye, Mr. Brucket?"

"Eight cents a can, ma'am."

"Why, Annan's are advertising it three cans for a quarter."

"Go up to Annan's and get it, ma'am," without the least hesitation.

As she withdrew Harry thought Peter's reputation for honesty was worth a lawsuit for its preservation. Human nature was not all vitiated, the better elements were to be found in the most unexpected places. It was a lesson that did not fail to cause a readjustment of values in his soul, to help him to break away from his egoistic pessimism. His education in the broad university of life was going forward, mere children, as far as the higher learning was concerned, were leading him.

It occurred that in the grocer he had the proper person to fill the position of treasurer of the Dramatic Society. Out of his own exchequer he had borne the expenses so far, but as the tickets for the first performance were about to be issued, he deemed it advisable to hand over the financial affairs to some-one else. He broached the subject to Peter.

"I usually hold that position in the parish doings and I'm willing to serve you, Professor."

"Very well, I shall give the tickets into your charge for distribution."

"Give me an itemized account of expenses so far."

"Never mind those, I shall pay for the stage and scenery, we can begin the performances with a dean slate."

"I don't believe in that sort of thing, Professor, it ain't good policy, these people won't appreciate it. You don't do them no good by giving 'em something for nothing, that's what keeps 'em always beggars. Just you jot down what money you've spent and we'll refund it from the proceeds of the show."

"I could never make a list, Mr. Brucket," hopelessly.

"Then I'll do it," said Peter, taking an account book illustrated with the picture of a fat butcher surrounded by the denizens of a farm yard and duly inscribing it. "I'll get Bennett's bill

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HISTORY

and Stoner and Carrigan's and," with a wink, "Jim Elder's for sundries supplied the painters."

This matter settled to their satisfaction the Professor was about to pass to his duties at the office when he was again halted:

"Dr. Brawner was in this morning, says they're talking of allowing the college boys to come to the show if you give a matinee."

"That's good," thinking he saw signs of a rapprochement.

"Don't know about that, wouldn't put it past them to raise Cain and break up the play; Dr. Brawner hinted as much."

"We shall give a matinee," a steady look in his blue eyes, "we shall invite the boys to be our guests, we shall be fully prepared for the contingency of a rough-house, we have dealt with such before."

The suppressed indignation faded from his countenance, while the grocer broke into a smile which had nothing commercial in it, as Miss Seabold entered the store. The graceful young girl, dressed in a garment which seemed to emphasize her habitual languor, bowed to the Professor who quickly moved out of earshot to avoid hearing the object of her purchase, lingering, however, at the door, to have a few words with his whilom companion of the tea. Burkett waiting on her, asked in a tone that was meant to reach the other man:

"Heard the rumor, Vinny? They say the college boys are coming to the show if you give a matinee."

"That is rather interesting," smiling at Harry.

"I fully approve, we shall be stirred to our best efforts by having experts in the audience," with a shade of sarcasm in his voice.

"Guess you won't have nothing to fear on that score," declared Peter, as the Professor held the door open for the girl to pass out. On the street, he asked:

"Have you made any arrangements for our mountain climbing?"

"I have been waiting for you and

Marion." "Shall we need a chaperon?"

"Marion shall have a chap-her-own and I shall be the chaperon," she said archly, but noticing the blush beginning to mantle his face, hastened to add, "pardon me, I just read that wicked pun in the paper and could not refrain from working it off. I am sure Mrs. Forman will come, she is a dear little soul and anxious to meet you."

"Mrs. Forman shall assume the responsibility of guarding Emmitsburg's sense of propriety then. When do we do our first Alpine stunt—I mean when do we go for our first climb?"

"You seem to find difficulty in wrestling with slang, but it really isn't necessary to translate for me, I am a graduate in that school. Suppose we do our first Alpine stunt this afternoon?"

"As you say, will you notify the other tourists?" "We shall be ready at one, our house shall be the rendezvous."

At the office, the editor was in high good spirits; the first reform effort had met with partial success and Mr. Galt waited impatiently to communicate the news of his assistant. As part of the campaign against the Western Maryland they had dispatched to the postal authorities at Washington a detailed list of delays in the delivery of mails to Emmitsburg. The Government had responded by fining the railroad corporation nine hundred dollars, an account of which was published in the morning paper. He had also received a letter requesting that he and another reputable citizen repair to the Capital to answer certain questions relative to this matter. The editor was insistent that the reputable citizen could be none other than his assistant and as their presence at Washington was called for the second day after the performance of the operetta there could be no excuse on the Professor's part. Argument was required to drag him away from the safety of the "water-tank," but the persuasive powers of Galt at length overcame all objections and the trip was decided upon.

The paper was being run off, the press working to its capacity, Higbee shouting orders to make himself heard above the din of machinery and the explosions of the gasoline engine, at the same time folding copies for the mailing list. Harry coming from the editorial room moved about exchanging greetings with the ink-begrimed employees. A youngster, well known in the village for his ability to turn an honest penny, rushed into the building, breathless:

"How much for a hundred papers?" he shouted addressing the foreman.

"For whom do you want them?"

"Mother's layin' carpets," with a perceptible wink.

Higbee seemed to understand and struck a bargain with the juvenile baron of finance, who having received the papers still wet from the press, left by the rear door making off across the fields to the south. The transaction was not lost on the Professor. Addressing Higbee he inquired:

"What was your subscription list over there?" "About fifty or sixty."

"It has increased to a hundred and next week will probably reach two hundred. Trust Young America to exercise the time honored instinct anent forbidden fruit."

To be continued with chapter 12 next month.

To read other History articles, visit the History section of Emmitsburg.net.



FUN, FARM AND FAMILY DAYS

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

April 3

Get Immunized

If you have not been immunized within the last two years against typhoid fever, Dr. John Fulton, Director of the State Department of Health, urges you to go to your physician and have it done. The vaccine will be furnished free of charge by the State Department of Health and your physician get his supply either directly from the office of the Department in Baltimore, or from the local health officer. If it is not convenient for you to go to your own physician, the local or the deputy health officer will vaccinate you against the disease.

One of the most reliable gauges of the up-to-dateness of any community, according to Dr. Fulton, is its record in regard to typhoid fever. "A decline in typhoid fever," he says, "Indicates state and community activity, on the one side—protection of water supplies from pollution; protection of food supplies from contamination; care in detecting the presence of carriers—supplemented by personal intelligence on the other side.

"The State Department of Health safeguards every community in the State with all the means at its command, but there are unavoidable weak spots in every sort of defense. To off-set these and to afford the security that nothing but individual immunization can give, the Department urges all persons who have not been vaccinated against typhoid within the last two years to be vaccinated before June, before the 1925 'typhoid' season opens.

"Typhoid is what we call a seasonal disease. It reaches a low ebb during the winter; starts up again in the spring and reaches its peak in August or September. Vaccination against typhoid requires three treatments, one each week for three weeks. Each week it will take about five minutes of your time. The only cost to you will be your physician's fee. The anti-typhoid treatment is a sure preventive if taken in time.

"During the Spanish American War 80 percent of the deaths of soldiers were caused by typhoid; during the last Great War, typhoid fever was almost unknown because the men had been protected by vaccination against the disease.

"In 1914, there were 1,860 cases of typhoid fever reported to the Bureau of Communicable Diseases from the counties. In 1924, the number reported was 823—or over a thousand less. But

that was 823 cases too many!

"We want to cut down typhoid fever until it disappears entirely as a cause of sickness and death in Maryland. It can be done. Help to make it negligible this year."

Work Of Death

Mrs. Irene Reinewald, widow of the late Rev. Dr. Reinewald, who was pastor of the Lutheran Church of Emmitsburg, until the time of his death, several years ago, died at her home in Gettysburg, on Saturday evening, after an illness of about two weeks. Mrs. Reinewald was the daughter of the late Joel and Juliet Danner, of Gettysburg, and was the last of the Danner family. The funeral was held on Tuesday afternoon, with services at the home. Quite a number of her friends from Emmitsburg, attended the funeral.

Vincent Sebold, member of the Frederick County Bar Association, and manager of the Emmitsburg Railroad, died at the home of his daughter in Washington, early Monday morning, after an illness of some time. He was 68 years old. His body was brought to Emmitsburg, on Tuesday morning. He is survived by his widow, three daughters. The funeral was held Thursday morning at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, conducted by Rev. Hayden; interment was in the Mountain cemetery at Mt. St. Mary's College.

Escapes Injury At Railroad Crossing

John Little, of Emmitsburg, had a thrilling escape from probable serious injury, Friday night, when the truck he was driving sideswiped a western Maryland Railroad passenger train at Rocky Ridge.

By unusual presence of mind, Mr. Little, when he saw the truck and the train were reaching the crossing at the same time, quickly swerved his machine from the roadway. As he did, however, the truck, according to witnesses, swerved against the train.

After turning the truck from the road, Mr. Little endeavor to get off the truck, but when the engine and truck sideswipe, he was thrown out the side opposite the train.

The truck driver, who was working for an Emmitsburg firm was aware of the dangerous crossing, but a number of fright cars on a siding obstructed his view of the oncoming train. According to person who the accident the train gave no warning of its approach; the whistle

was not blown for the crossing, and the bell was not wrong. Persons who saw the pending accident shouted to the driver of the truck, but he apparently did not hear the warnings.

The collision snapped the front axle from the truck and knock several steps off one of the coaches in the train. After a new axle had been placed in the truck Mr. Little continued to Emmitsburg.

Child's Clinic At Emmitsburg

The Women's Club of Emmitsburg with the assistance of the District Nurse, Miss Margaret Newman, held a child's health conference, or baby clinic, at Slagle hotel, on Wednesday. Newman was assisted by Dr. Jamison of Emmitsburg.

53 children were examines. During the afternoon, Dr. Jamison gave a very interesting talk to the club touching on the great value of the health conference, and telling the mothers how to keep the children well. This is the first clinic ever held in Emmitsburg and was very successful.

Many women questioned if the advice given could also be utilized on their no-good boozier husbands. Many women expressed frustrations with husbands coming home every night 'loaded', demanding there vittles and making a racket that woke children when told to make their own vittles.

Dr. Jamison cautioning of the women to be understanding of their hard working husbands and stressed that carrying out their wifely duties to always ensure a husband's vittles were ready when they came home, no matter what the hour, would go a long way in please them meet with stunned silence, only the changing of a subject to how to clean dirty dippers got the women talking again ... although many did find a way to compare their husbands to dirty dippers.

April 10

Bridge To Be Built At Bridgeport

The state has definitely decided to build a new concrete bridge at Bridgeport, on the Taneytown-Emmitsburg state road, in place of the old wooden covered bridge now spanning the Monocacy, which is in bad condition. The bridge is to be built by the two counties, but the state will finance it according to agreement between the two counties and the state. The cost of the bridge is estimated at between \$40,000 and \$44,000. The

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new bridge will be built just north of the present bridge which will be left standing for use until the new structure is completed. Work is expected to begin in a few weeks.

Faces Liquor Charge

Charged with operating a motorcar under the influence liquor; George Mead Patterson, Emmitsburg cattle dealer, was arrested Tuesday night by the state police on the Fairfield Road, just west of town. A bottle containing about "four drinks of liquor", according to the trooper, was found on Patterson's person. Patterson was asleep behind the wheel of his car, when found by the state officer.

Patterson was under the influence of liquor, when arrested, according to the trooper, and he was placed in the county jail overnight to sober up. He waded a preliminary hearing and furnished \$500 bill for his appearance at the April term of the court.

Second Rocky Ridge Meeting Held

The second meeting to be held at Rocky Ridge for the purpose of protesting against the closing of the Appold's school, discussion of rumors that the Rocky Ridge school will be closed, and as an urge to the road authorities for the completion of the Rocky Ridge Road this summer, took place on April 6 in the town hall and was attended by more than 300 persons.

During the evening, each of the County Commissioners spoke briefly on the road question, and were unanimous in their support that it should be finished. It was learned that the commissioners had already recommended the road be completed, but that the Chairman of the State Road Commission had declare that a new road could not be built this summer due to the shortage of funds.

In regards to the school discussion, Paul Winchester and Reverend Hemler spoke on behalf of the community and said that people of that vicinity were much displeased with the County Superintendent and School Board for ordering the schools closed, and demanded not only they reopen the Appold's school, but the erection of a new one at Rocky ridge. The County Commissioners promised support and cooperation in the Appold's case but stated that the school budget this year is \$323,000 not including the bond issue for building new schools, while 23 years ago it was only \$42,000.

New Butcher Shop For Thurmont

Harry Bollinger, of Emmitsburg, brought from the Central Trust Company of Maryland, the property on the W. Main St., adjoining that of the New Citizens Savings Bank. The stone house is being rebuilt. And Mr. Bollinger will move-in in the next



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week or two. Bollinger will conduct a meat market on the first floor and live in the apartment above.

Fire

Saturday evening, a fire broke out at the home of Mr. and Mrs. Hobson Crouse's of Harney. Mr. Crouse had just come from the cellar where he banked the fire for the night, when a neighbor rushed in telling him he saw a fire upstairs. They immediately started, using chemicals, but were unsuccessful. The local fire company was summoned. It was necessary for two engines to draw the water 1,000 feet to get it on the fire.

Harney Flour Mill Reopens

David Sentz has re-built, re-equipped, and is now operating an up-to-date flour and custom mill, at the old stand along the Monocacy, near Harney. He says he has the best little mill in this section, and expects to have plenty to do.

April 17

Boy Admit, He Drank A Quart

Judge McPherson showed astonishment when a 16-year-old boy, frail and rather small for his age, told him that he had drunk a quart of wine in half an hour.

The boy, Joseph Cool, of Liberty Township, was committed to jail on March 1st and charged with having entered a school house in liberty Township, and taken some pencils, a pen, knife, and a number of window panes. The panes, it was explained, were to have been used to replace those broken by him and several other boys in a house in Liberty Township.

Joe's father was called before the bar, and the parent told the boy to tell him how one of the other boys who help break the window panes in the house, had given him wine to drink before he entered the school house.

"You don't mean to say that you drank wine?" Inquired judge McPherson. Joe nodded in the affirmative. "How much did you drink?" The court asked the boy.

The amount staggered the court, and the spectators agreed that the amount certainly would have staggered little Joe.

"How long did it take you to drink the wine?" Was Judge McPherson's next question. "You didn't drink it all at once did you?"

"I drank it in half an hour," was the boys whisper reply

After the court and spectators recovered from their surprise and astonishment, judge Pearson placed the boy on parole for one year and ordered him to replace the windows. He also lectured the boy on the evils of drinking and how drinking would eventually get him into more serious trouble and advised him to obey his parents. McPherson then went on to instruct the father to exercise parental authority over the lad. "A good beating every once in a while will go a long way in correcting bad behavior in young children," the judge told the father.

A Big Mountain Fire

Between 1,500 and 2,000 acres of timberland, for a large part young hickory and oak, were burned over on Sunday and Monday by fires which started in a dozen different places on a five-mile section, along the crest of the Catoclin Mountains, near the new storage dam at Fishing creek.

The big fire in the High Knob section was reported to be extinguished late Monday night, after it had re-kindled during the day. This section is being patrolled to prevent another out break. The fire was of incendiary origin, it is claimed by forest wardens. Fire raged fiercely Sunday in Oxen Hollow, a section of the Catoclin Mountain about three miles north west of the storage dam on Fishing Creek.

This fire was probably the larger of the two and was the hardest to bring under control. This section of the mountain is covered with dense and very dry underbrush, and fanned by a very strong south wind, it spread rapidly in every direction. The fire is believed to have been caused by carelessness.

More than 30 persons were in this section of the mountains Sunday and Monday picking arbutus, which grows there. As many of them were picnicking and had built fires, it is believed that they started the fire.

Work Of Death

The community of Bridgeport was greatly shocked last Friday, by the sudden death of Mrs. Phoebe Weant, from pneumonia. She was taken suddenly ill on Monday, and suffered until her death. She lived in the community for many years and had many friends. She was a member of Tom's Creek Church, at which place the funeral services were held. Interment was in Mt. View Cem-

etry, Emmitsburg. Before her marriage she was Phoebe Markell of near Thurmont. She is survived by her husband, two daughters Mrs. Thomas Angel, near Keymar; Mrs. Rose Grusheon, near Motter's Station; four sons, Frank and Charles, of Dayton, Ohio; Harry Weant, of Emmitsburg; and Hamilton Weant, near Motters.

April 24

Prisoners Break Jail, Captured Next Day

Four prisoners escaped from Carroll County jail late Wednesday by burning through the grating of an outside window with acid of some kind. They were William and Erman Smith, brothers, who were arrested in Baltimore, on a charge of stealing chickens; "Happy" Rinehart, who is charged with burglary in Taneytown; and Tom Smith, a hobo, was charged with the larceny of an automobile.

William and Erman Smith were originally from Taneytown, but have not lived there recently. The jail has no warden and Sheriff Phillips was away all day summoning jurors for the May term of Court.

Raymond Snyder, a prisoner, who was asleep was awakened by sounds at the window, and gave the alarm, just as a deputy was returning with new prisoners, but too late to intercept the escaping prisoners.

Mervin Spangler of Harney, a farmer, called the Adams County Sheriff around 9:30 Thursday morning of three suspicious characters, one of whom had asked him for a chew up tobacco, the Sheriff started out to run down the group, believing that the group might be those that had escaped from the Carroll County jail, and knowing that one of them was said to be a dangerous and notorious criminal, the Sheriff enlisted, a posse, whom he deputize.

When they got to Mr. Spangler's farm, Spangler told the Sheriff the three men had moved onto a woods, near Alloway Creek, on the farm of Mr. Harner. Surrounding the woods, the posse moved towards the denser brush, near the center, where they came upon four men, who were recognized at once, as the four jail breakers. The four made no resistance when they were surprised by the officers.

The most dangerous of the four Harry Reinhart, 47, who was being

held on charge of felonious entry and larceny. He has a lengthy criminal record in Pennsylvania, it is, and at present is on parole from the western penitentiary.

The four used acid and saws in breaking jail. A small steel saw was found where it had been dropped by one of the prisoners, but an examination show that had not been used. A silver table knife was also found, it was not the kind used by the prisoners at their meals, and evidently the knife, saw, and acid had been smuggled into the prisoners. It was said that the Smith Brothers had a few visitors, who were subject to the usual inquiry,

The men were believed to have headed for Pennsylvania, upon gaining their short freedom, and struck into the woods near Harney where they are believed to have been hiding since.

Big Storm

The storm on Sunday afternoon that was felt in northern Frederick & Carroll Counties where great damage was done by wind and hail.

Rising swiftly over the crest of the Catoclin mountains, the black laden storm clouds, extinguished the light of the sun, and made mid-afternoon as dark as the coming of the night. With the swiftness of a striking snake, the storm unleashed its fury, driving all forms of human, animal, and bird life to cover.

Sharp brilliant flashes of lightning, intermingled with the steady rumble and crash of thunder accompany the torrential downpour of rain and hail, which fell for more than 3/4 of an hour.

Trees were uprooted in several parts and many were splintered and shattered by bolts of lightning. The high wind, which accompany the storm blue heavy articles about, a large farm wagon was blown out of the barnyard and blocked Fairfield Road.

Blue Ridge Summit and Fairfield suffered heavy losses. Houses were unroofed, hundreds of trees blown down, and many automobiles were wrecked. The loss was divided between, wind, hail and rain, but mostly wind. Many buildings were wrecked, and much damage was done to telephone, telegraph and light wires. Some of the buildings were unroofed, while others were moved from their foundations and some

completely wrecked. Great damage was also done to orchards and trees.

At E. S. Shriver's tenant farm outside of Emmitsburg, the silo was blown against the barn, and a small chicken house completely demolished, with a loss of nearly 100 baby chicks. Four cows, grouped around a tree on the farm of Arthur Von on Emmitsburg Road were instantly killed when the tree was struck by lightning.

Losses running in 2000s of dollars are believed to have been suffered by Adams county peach growers by the freezing temperatures that followed the storm. According to the thermometer the lowest point was 26°, although it was reported elsewhere that the thermometer had gone as low as 24°.

Peach trees on which the blossoms were in the pollinization stage were the most seriously affected by the low temperature, the buds be more tender at that at that period in their germination, then afterwards.

So far as could be learned from the leading orchardist, apple trees were not affected by the frost, since trees, and only a few orchards were beginning to show pink

In the Oscar Rice's Peach Orchard, just north of Fairfield, severe damage was done to early peach tree buds and blossoms, and towards noon, Mr. Rice reported that most of the petals had turned brown, assure indication that they had been damaged by the freezing temperatures.

Harney Plays A Success

Plays recently given in the Harney hall were all good, and a complete success in every way. The first, entitled "Light House Man," by the Barlow Community Association, was of a comical nature. Second, "The Old Fashioned Mother," by the Ladies Aid Society of St. Paul's Lutheran Church, rendered twice to good audiences, was worthy of special mention, and all are to be congratulated on the way they carried their several parts. One of the Sunday School classes gave a short play and social for the benefit of the class.

To read past editions of 100 Years Ago This Month, visit the History section of Emmitsburg.net.



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TANEYTOWN HISTORY

How Benjamin Palmer changed prosthetics forever

David Buie

Few names stand out in the field of prosthetics as prominently throughout medical history as Benjamin Palmer, a 19th-century inventor from Taneytown. His groundbreaking advancements in artificial limb design revolutionized mobility for amputees, restoring dignity and independence to those who had lost limbs. Palmer's work stands as a testament to the power of human ingenuity and perseverance.

Born in 1824, Palmer's formative years remain largely undocumented, but his natural aptitude for mechanics and engineering set him on a path toward innovation. Some accounts suggest that Palmer himself may have experienced limb loss, which fueled his drive to improve the design of artificial limbs. During an era when medical advancements were still in their infancy, prosthetic limbs were rigid, uncomfortable, and severely limited in function. Recognizing these deficiencies, Palmer sought to create a superior alternative that would vastly improve the lives of amputees.

Palmer's defining achievement came in 1846 when he patented an artificial leg featuring a spring-loaded ankle joint, a pioneering design that allowed for a smoother, more natural gait. Unlike previous models, which were often slightly more than stiff wooden pegs, Palmer's innovation significantly enhanced comfort and stability. His prosthetic limb restored mobility and bolstered its users' confidence, enabling them to reclaim their independence.

His artificial limb design gained

widespread recognition, earning a prestigious medal at London's Crystal Palace Exhibition in 1851. The award solidified Palmer's status as a leading innovator and helped spread awareness of his prosthetics internationally. His designs featured concealed springs and tendons, allowing for a more natural walking motion and reducing the mechanical appearance of artificial limbs. These improvements set a new standard for prosthetic development.

Palmer's work had an impact far beyond his workshop. His artificial leg gained national recognition, drawing the attention of the U.S. government. Thousands of soldiers suffered traumatic amputations due to battlefield injuries at the outbreak of the Civil War, and Palmer's prosthetics were among those provided to wounded veterans. His contributions proved invaluable in aiding their recovery and reintegration into society.

One of the most notable recipients of a Palmer leg was Major General Daniel E. Sickles. Just days before losing his right leg at the Battle of Gettysburg, Sickles had reviewed his troops in Taneytown. In a dramatic battlefield moment, after being struck by a cannonball, he reportedly lifted his shattered limb over his saddle before being taken for amputation. Sickles later became a vocal advocate for Palmer's prosthetics, praising their superior construction and functionality. His continued military and political career after the war served as a powerful testament to the effectiveness of Palmer's invention.

Following his amputation, Sickles embarked on an ambitious

effort to preserve the Gettysburg battlefield. As a congressman, he secured federal funding that led to the establishment of Gettysburg National Military Park. His advocacy ensured the battlefield's preservation, allowing future generations to reflect on the sacrifices during the Civil War. Sickles' story exemplifies how Palmer's prosthetic technology helped wounded veterans continue to serve and leave lasting legacies beyond the battlefield.

Other distinguished military figures also attested to the quality of Palmer's prosthetic limbs. Brigadier General Bartlett, who lost a leg above the knee, relied on a Palmer leg throughout his military service. In a letter dated January 6, 1865, Bartlett expressed his gratitude, stating that the limb had withstood the rigors of campaigning, exposure to harsh weather, and constant use in the saddle. Another advocate, Brigadier General Francis Fessenden, who suffered an amputation below the knee, wrote in December 1864 that Palmer's invention had made his loss far less burdensome and restored much of his previous mobility and quality of life.

Palmer is renowned for his artificial leg, but his innovative work also encompassed prosthetic arms. He designed a mechanical arm featuring articulated joints and a flexible wrist, significantly improving dexterity for upper-limb amputees. His arm incorporated springs and levers that mimicked natural movement, allowing users to grasp objects with greater control. The increased functionality of his artificial arm set a new standard, moving prosthetics beyond simple cosmetic replacements to handy

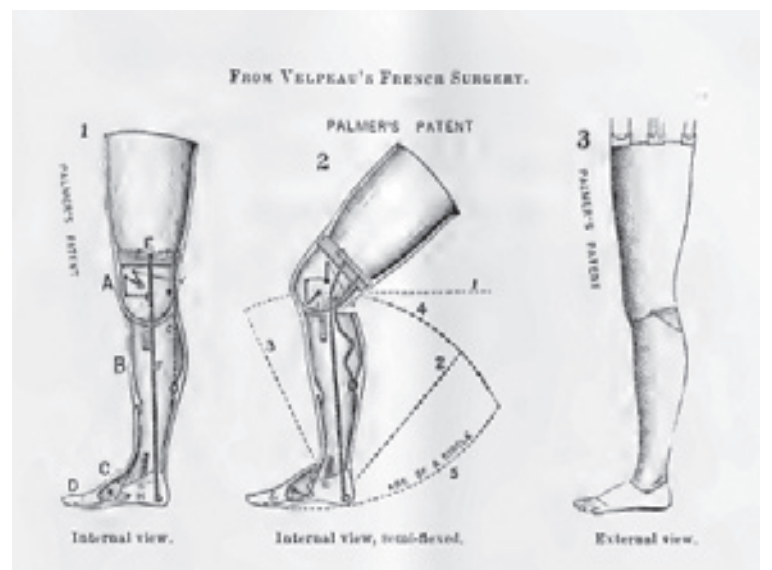


Illustration from Velpeau's French Surgery showcasing Palmer's Patent artificial leg.

tools for daily life.

Palmer's prosthetic innovations laid the foundation for future advancements, including using lightweight materials, enhanced mobility features, and, eventually, computerized prosthetic limbs. His designs influenced generations of engineers and medical professionals, cementing his place as a pioneer in the field.

Beyond his inventions, Palmer significantly influenced the medical approach to rehabilitating amputees. He worked to bridge the gap between engineering and medicine—referring to himself as a "Surgeon-Artist." His advanced artificial limbs demonstrated that technology could restore mobility and a sense of normalcy to patients, thereby contributing to the emerging field of rehabilitation medicine.

Palmer's impact extended beyond the battlefield. He established the American Artificial Limb Company in Meredith, New Hampshire, which produced thousands of prosthetic limbs for civilians and veterans alike. His company played a crucial role in the early medical rehabilitation of amputees, solidifying his reputation as a pioneer in prosthetic development.

Despite his significant contributions, Palmer's name is not as widely recognized as some of his

contemporaries. However, his influence on prosthetic technology is undeniable. His pioneering work laid the foundation for future advancements, from lightweight materials to computerized prosthetics. The principles and innovations introduced by Palmer continue to shape the development of prosthetic limbs, ensuring greater comfort and mobility for those in need.

Today, Palmer's legacy endures in the field of medical prosthetics. His commitment to improving the lives of amputees set a precedent for continuous innovation. Taneytown can take pride in being the birthplace of an inventor whose contributions changed the future of medical science. The Smithsonian Institution holds the patent model of his 1849 artificial leg design in its medical history collection, preserving his legacy for future generations.

In celebrating Taneytown's storied past, Benjamin Palmer emerges as a true pioneer—an innovator whose work brought hope and mobility to those in need. His legacy reflects determination, ingenuity, and an unwavering commitment to improving lives.

To read past articles on Taneytown History, visit the History section of Taneytown.net.



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TEACHER TALK!

School library month

Claire Doll
MSMU Class of 2024

April is “School Library Month”, recognizing school librarians and media specialists in this beautiful first full month of spring. Started in 1985 by the American Association of School Librarians, April is when “school librarians are encouraged to host activities to help their school and local community celebrate the essential role that strong school libraries play in transforming learning” (ala.org). And while school librarians should be celebrated every month of the year and every day of the week, this special month means several lessons and activities dedicated to the importance of our school libraries.

Some of my earliest school memories include going to the library once a week in elementary school. While I liked music and art classes, my absolute favorite period was spent roaming the bookshelves, finding the perfect picture book or chapter book to take home. I remember being read to and falling in love with the way books would come to life. My school librarian sitting in her rocking chair, gently swaying back and forth, and twenty-something kindergarteners awaiting her every word. The flip of a page, words dancing against pictures.

My librarian even had a stuffed animal unicorn and monkey that carried a journal. Each weekend, a student was chosen to take one of the stuffed animals home and document his or her experience. Every single student begged to take the toys and journal home, to intently spend his or her weekend well and write all about it. I was one of these students, and one year, I got to take the unicorn home for the entire summer. It was my greatest honor, and a fabulous summer.

My love of writing, in fact, grew immensely in that school library. At age six, I was already writing books—con-

struction paper stapled together with drawings and stories inside. After showing one of my books to my school librarian, she urged me to share it with the class. She showed me how to copyright by book—by drawing a “C” in a circle and adding the date—so it was official, it was mine. I then read it to my class, and my librarian even gifted me an “Author Award.” My book stayed in the school library for anyone to read, and I wrote more. Other students wrote more. It was my absolute favorite thing to do—go to the school library once a week, listen to stories from my classmates, and search for books. I don’t know where I would be without it.

Throughout middle and high school, I would visit my school library to not only search for books, but also do homework and work on projects. It was a space of safety, where I could edit my school literary magazine, or write an essay, or even each lunch with friends. And at my college library at the Mount, Phillips Library, there was never a shortage of books to read or spaces to study. I always ran into friends at my college library, and I have probably spent hundreds of hours reading and writing, surrounded by good people and good books. I also am a regular at the local public library, and I always have books checked out, or on hold, or requested. To me, the idea of taking a book home and knowing that the same pages have been read and enjoyed by others is super cool. My favorite part—besides actually reading the book—is returning it to the library, knowing that it will be circulated around the community, held in the hands of other readers who have the same taste in novels as me. In a way, it creates a bond, a bond between the community and a bond between avid readers. Reading offers you an opportunity to step into a whole new world, to leave reality for a bit and enter the world of your imagination. Returning the book, however,

brings you back to reality in the best way; it allows you to share this opportunity with those around you and let them fall into the worlds depicted on the pages of each novel you read.

Fast forward to now! As a lifelong library lover, being an educator feels like a full circle moment. As an ELA teacher, not a month goes by without spending a couple classes in the school library. To start off the new year, my students went “Speed Dating with Books”—a lesson designed to promote independent book selection. Each table in the library represented a different genre. The romance table had romance books, and science fiction table had books on space and robots and the future. Students spent around five minutes at each table, choosing a book from the genre selection and analyzing its title, cover, synopsis, and first page. They carried a worksheet with them where they could rate the books based on their first impression—would they decide to read the book, or would they shelve it? The lesson lasted until students spent time at each table, dabbling in the genres. Then, at the end of class, students could check out their preferred books, discuss options with the media specialist, or search for other books in the library.

This lesson was meant to prepare students for book reports. Students would read their library books, write a summary, create a review, and present their findings to the class. A month after the speed dating lesson, we spent an entire week in the library to work on presentations. Students had the



option of creating a poster, slideshow, book trailer, or podcast to share with the class. The reports were a resounding success, and my students admitted to enjoying the project and wanting to read more! Spending an entire week in the library was also a great change of scenery for my students. Our school library is big, with lots of different spaces for students to work, read, and collaborate. Sometimes, I will take my students to the school library just so we can spread out and enjoy the space.

This School Library Month, I plan to celebrate our media specialist and library space in any way possible. From reading informational texts about school libraries and researching

the history of School Library Month to writing thank-you cards to our media specialist, and even giving my students time to just read independently. It is important to teach students about their libraries, from its history and books to how they can be involved.

To learn more about School Library Month, or to advocate for school libraries nationwide, visit the American Library Association (ala.org). This April, take a moment to visit your public library and search for the perfect spring book!

To read past editions of Teacher Talk, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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COOKING

Longer April evenings

Sonya Verlaque
FCC Culinary Program

I feel like although the days have “gotten longer” they have also been jam packed with activities in the evenings, with sports practice, music recitals and events at school. This has made it extra hard to have dinner at home and not in the car from a drive through. Plus, the opening of grilling season is also at hand. So I hope some of these recipes can be helpful in getting meals on the table of your family at home.

Pork and Green Bean Stir Fry

This is an easy and fast recipe for dinner time that comes together in one pan, and also is simple to substitute for whatever you have available in your refrigerator. No ground pork, its ok, beef or chicken will work. Don't have green beans - you can use broccoli or even frozen mixed vegetables if that is what is available.

Ingredients

- 1 1/3 cups (265g) jasmine rice
- 2 cups (500ml) water
- 2 tbs. peanut oil
- 300g green beans, cut into 5cm lengths
- 500g ground pork
- 3 green onions, sliced
- 1 tbs. grated fresh ginger
- 2 cloves garlic, chopped
- 1 tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro stems
- 1/4 cup (60ml) gluten-free hoisin sauce

- 1 tbs. tamari
- 1 tsp. sesame oil
- 1/3 cup fresh cilantro leaves

Instructions

Rinse rice under cold running water until water runs clear; drain well. Add rice to a medium saucepan with the water; cover; bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, covered, for 10 minutes or until rice is tender. Stand covered. Meanwhile, heat half the peanut oil in a wok or large frying pan over high heat; stir-fry beans, in batches, until the skin begins to blister. Remove from wok. Add remaining peanut oil to wok over a high heat; stir-fry pork for 5 minutes or until browned. Add green onion, ginger, garlic and cilantro stems; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add hoisin, tamari and sesame oil; stir-fry until heated through. Return beans to wok; toss to combine. Top stir-fry with cilantro leaves; serve with rice.

Spring Lamb Kabobs

Somehow eating something off a stick makes it extra fun. Marshmallow, no thanks. How about put it on a stick and into a fire, yes please! Chunks of meat and veggies, no? How about here on a stick and we will stick it in a fire. All the sudden it's a whimsical hit. These spring lamb kababs can also be switched out for beef or chicken. You will need about 30 minutes to marinate the meat but that gives you

time to heat up the grill.

Ingredients

- 1 pound lamb, cut into 1-inch cubes
- 1 red bell pepper, cut into squares
- 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into squares
- 1 zucchini, sliced into thick rounds
- 1 red onion, cut into wedges
- 3 tbs. olive oil
- 2 tbs. lemon juice
- 2 tsp. dried oregano
- 2 tsp. garlic powder
- Salt and pepper to taste
- Skewers (soaked in water if wooden)

Instructions

In a bowl, mix olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Add lamb cubes and toss to coat. Cover and marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator. After marinating, thread the lamb, bell peppers, zucchini, and onion onto the skewers, alternating between ingredients. Preheat your grill to medium-high heat. Lightly oil the grates to prevent sticking. Place the skewers on the grill and cook for about 10-15 minutes, turning occasionally, until the lamb is cooked to your desired doneness and the vegetables are tender. Remove from the grill and let rest for a few minutes. Serve warm and enjoy!

Utah (Funeral) Potato Casserole

When I lived in Virginia, one of my good friends was from Utah and if we had a group potluck everyone asked her to make



Spring Lamb Kabobs

“Funeral Potatoes” which are creamy and cheesy and salty and delicious. And she usually prepped them the day before and then baked them right before coming to the gathering. I feel like these could be a fun side dish for Easter supper that can be prepped ahead of time. Although, I've never had them at Easter. My understanding also is that the cornflakes are the most “authentic” topping. (Recipe from “Just a Pinch” because I am not from Utah.)

Ingredients

- 4 tbs. unsalted butter
- 1 cup diced onion (about 1 small onion)
- 2 clove garlic, minced
- 30 oz package frozen shredded hash brown potatoes, lightly thawed
- 10 1/2 oz can condensed cream of celery soup (or cream of chicken soup)
- 1 cup sour cream
- 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
- 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
- 1/2 tsp black pepper

- 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
- 1 1/2 cup crushed potato chips or crushed corn flake cereal

Instructions

Preheat the oven to 350°F. Heat 2 tbs. butter over medium heat in a skillet. Add the diced onion and cook, stirring, until soft and translucent, about 6 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant and softened, an additional 2 minutes. In a bowl, toss together the cooked onions and garlic, hash brown potatoes, condensed soup, sour cream, Parmesan, salt, pepper and 1 1/2 cups Cheddar. Spread the mixture in a 9-by-13 inch casserole dish. Melt the remaining 2 tbs. butter. Top the casserole with the remaining 1/2 cup cheese and crushed potato chips (or cereal), then drizzle the melted butter over the top. Bake in the oven about 1 hour or until it bubbles around the sides.

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MOMS' TIME OUT

Family Fun???

Michele Angel

Well, we are at it again. My whole family is trying to get healthier. We all have different goals, but we are doing this together. Some of us want to lose weight, some want to build muscle, and some want to just eat healthier. The key is, since we are doing this as a family, we are supporting, challenging, and encouraging one another. This can look very different depending on the person and situation.

When we started this journey, it was the start of the New Year, and it began because my husband and I started having little aches and pains. For some reason my husband decided to get on the scale, and he was shocked. He had put on a large amount of weight since he had last climbed on a scale. This then prompted me to take the plunge and get on the scale. Obviously, I discovered I had gained weight as well. For me, it was extremely disappointing to see that I weighed more than I had ever weighed in my life, even when I was pregnant.

All of this led us to talk about our youngest child who has struggled with her weight for most of her life. She has been tested for many different diseases and disorders and tried many different programs to lose weight and nothing has worked. As we discussed her health, more than her weight, we decided we needed to help her any way we can. As the snowball effect worked, the conversation moved on to the rest of the kids.

After a long discussion we decided we had fallen short of teaching our kids some healthy habits surrounding food and activity. It wasn't that we hadn't discussed all of this, and they were certainly taught it in school, but we had not

demonstrated it. This was a case of taught but not caught. So many things our kids learn, especially bad habits, are learned through watching others, not what they are told verbally. So, we decided we were going to try and change our habits, our lifestyle, and take them along for the ride.

We began by eliminating most snacks from the house, but since we wanted to be successful, we did not eliminate everything. We started by trying to have at least one salad a day. If the kids asked, we would explain our reasoning behind what we were doing. "Why do we have a different salad dressing?", would be answered with, "Look at the back of both bottles". They were all in shock from the very beginning at the calorie differences in many of the foods they loved depending on the brand we chose. I do have to be honest and say that none of us are a fan of most "diet" foods that contain artificial sweeteners, as we feel the after taste is not worth it. That doesn't mean you can't find lower calorie options just by switching brands. My kids have mastered reading labels for calories, content, and nutritional facts.

Our next step was portion control. This proved to be met with much more opposition, since my kids love salads, but hate to be told no second helping. The good news is that this led to a conversation about all calories not being equal and what calories look like. In other words, 100 calories of broccoli and 100 calories of candy will not affect your body the same way. Also, if you want seconds at a meal and you only want to eat 100 calories you will find that 100 calories of broccoli will give you way more than 100 calories of chicken. Since my kids love vegetables, for the most part, this was eye open-



ing for them. This didn't mean they were always going to choose broccoli, but it meant they were more educated and could make a better choice in each individual situation.

Several of us found it helpful to get an app on our phones. My fitness Pal has always been my go-to. When I use it, I make better choices and lose weight, and when I don't, well, I don't. There is a free version and a paid version, like with most apps. I do not pay, but find it suits my needs just fine. What I find most helpful is when I am eating out, I can compare food calories, fat, and carbs for different restaurants and different meals. If someone says, "Where do you want to go to dinner?"

I can look at the choices and make an educated decision. Now that I have been using it for a while I now have my go to places and dishes, so it makes it easy to make a quick choice. This app also helps me at the end of the day, if I really want a treat, to see how many calories I have left and choose my treat accordingly. Just because you are trying to eat

a healthier diet, or lose weight, it does not mean you have to always do without. Instead, it means you have to make better decisions in each situation.

After we passed the hump of changing the family diet, which was met with a little bit of moaning, we moved onto activity. This was met with some resistance. It was a hard conversation to explain that we aren't all built for the same activities, nor would we all like the same ones. I have some friends who love running, but since I was a young girl, I have struggled with shin splints when I run. You can bet my activities will not be cen-

tered around running. A few of us got gym memberships to be able to have a variety of equipment, my boys go for a two-to-five-mile walk/run after work each day, and I prefer the quiet of my treadmill in the office. Some of us have programmed our watches or phones to remind us to get up and move at work, while others get up at the crack of dawn to work out. The lesson here was to get moving, any additional movement will be good for your body in the long run.

To read past editions of Moms' Time Out, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

This month, we asked our writers to create a children's story that highlights a theme deeply significant to them in honor of International Children's Book Day on April 2nd. Keep reading to see what creative stories they've come up with!

Freshman

Klyde and the orb

Cameron Madden
MSMU Class of 2028

Some time ago, there lived a kid in the woods. This child's name was Klyde, and Klyde's birthday was coming up. Klyde's parents loved him very much, and were planning to give him the best present possible, and since they were wizards, they could make it the most magical gift ever. So, when his birthday came, they gave him a box nearly twice his size. Inside, Klyde found himself a tall and darkened piece of wood, with rubies stuck to the top of it.

"What is this?" Klyde had asked, holding the large object next to him. "It is your birthday present, a magical staff for you to practice your magic on!" Klyde became excited, as he had not been able to learn magic at his young age, and now he was finally able to start training to become a wizard! Just then, the parents pulled out a smaller box and handed it to Klyde - it was a surprise gift! When he had opened it, a strange blue ball arose from the top and hovered in the air above. Klyde was

scared at first, and tried to back away, but the orb followed him wherever he went! Once he realized the orb was harmless, he asked his parents what this was for.

"It is an extra gift, passed down by your grandfather! It is an orb of wishes, which everyday can grant up to one wish for an entire week; be careful though, you cannot reverse the wishes you make!" Klyde's eyes widened more than when he had received his last gift, and immediately he took off to the front yard to test out this new present.

"I wish for a treehouse!" he asked, and before long without a wrong ladder dropped from the branches above, into a small house on top of the trees. He climbed up and played all around the house, until he grew bored and dropped down. He wondered what better he could wish for, and dreamed the rest of the day about how the orb was a better gift.

Not too long after the next day arose, and immediately Klyde awoke and set out for the fields. In between reeds and grains, he and the orb went away. Somewhere nearby he and the orb lay, where he thought and thought between his wishes to say. "Alright," said Klyde, "I wish for

the field to be growing candy, not grain!" and so it became. Soon the field's rows turned to chocolate, with peppermint sticks and pods of sugar being sowed to the ground. He ran now through the fields, picking as he went; until the farmer came out and found Klyde in his field. "Hey!" said the farmer, whose food was now gone. "How dare you remove all the work I had done!" And so, he chased Klyde all the way out, past the field then forests and all in between. Klyde did not mind, and went back all the way home, dreaming of what more he could do with his magic orb.

The next day came, and Klyde sought to do more; as he went out of the house and into the town. Here he found townspeople, all dressed up in gowns. Once he entered, he realized he had not brought his money. He suddenly jumped and turned to the orb and said, "I wish that everything in this town was free to me!" Once said, the shopkeepers looked up; they saw little Klyde and wondered what was up. Klyde came to the shoemaker and asked him for new shoes, and without a hitch, the Shoemaker gave him the best pair he knew. And then he went to the barber and asked for a haircut, and suddenly the barber walked up and cut

his hair for nothing. The next thing he did was he went to the toy shop, and soon he walked out with his cart filled to the top. As he was leaving the townspeople came out; they said, "Hey, how dare you do this all without pay!" Like before, Klyde ran out.

For the next couple of days Klyde used the orb; using it to do whatever he wanted for the day, and not caring about the consequences. He didn't practice with his wand, and did not become any closer to being a wizard; he simply played with the orb, and grew more bitter and bitter. For after the 6th wish, he knew not what he wanted. And so on the 7th day, he went around the area to see what he could do. He stopped at the field where he found the farmer, now hungry and tired, without crops to water. And he went to the town and saw stores closing; they had nothing to sell and now were not well. Everywhere he went, there were people that were hurt, by the wishes and actions that he and the orb caused. He fell, and distraught; without knowing what to do. Now nobody liked him, and there wasn't anything he could do.

That was until he came back home, where he had left his other present - the staff in his room! If he could learn to

become a wizard, then he could fix all of the problems. The only problem was he did not learn - he spent his time wishing, instead of earning. He thought it doomed, and knew people would suffer and hate him; until he realized he had one wish left to make.

"Orb!" He exclaimed, "I wish to know how to be a wizard, and use magic with my staff!" Without hesitation, all manner of color and sound now glowed from his staff, and when he had touched it, it sparked greatly and flew to his hand. He now was a wizard, and could fix his mistakes at last! He went to the farmer and tapped the candy fields with his staff. It was raised and replaced into crops; vegetables, fruits, and honey on top! The farmer was glad and thanked Klyde for forgiving him for the wish. Next, he went to the townspeople, and to every store he went to, paying the people double what he owed them. And all over the country, Klyde used his magic to help others; even those he did not use the orb against. He learned that it is ok to wish, but to learn and be kind is the real gift he could have ever wished!

To read other articles by Cameron Madden, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Sophomore

The perfect balance

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

It had been raining for nine days straight. At this point, the once-dry grass began to weep from the overconsumption of fresh, constant rainfall. I never thought you could get tired of something you needed to survive. For nine days I had watched the grass slowly resurrect from the crisp rain, only to die again from nature's stimulating generosity. It baffled me how easily something could die. If you don't get enough of something, you start to die. However, if you get too much of something, you also start to die. How solely dependent we were on balance.

My gaze out the window broke when my teacher, Mrs. Haney, dismissed us for lunch. The other students and I made our way to the cafeteria to eat, and I took my usual seat at the end of one of the long tables. I opened my lunch to reveal what my mother had packed for me. There was a tuna sandwich on wheat bread, baby carrots, blueberries, and two packs of string cheese. My eyes lingered on the tuna sandwich. Right, Friday.

During Lent, it was expected that we avoid eating meat on Fridays, and we fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Going to a public school made these obligations difficult to explain. I, being somewhat shy and modest, never wanted to put myself in a position to explain my Catholic practices or obligations. It was most unfortunate that a group of kids on the other half of the table took notice of this and decided to comment.

"What is that?" sneered a girl, with brownish hair and a pale complexion. She looked at my food in disgust. Her

eyes were particularly fixed on my sandwich, the tuna sandwich.

I thought a moment before commenting, trying to figure out the best way to answer without further questions. However, the only thing I could muster up was, "Oh, it's a tuna sandwich."

Stupid. Of course they know it's tuna. The girl with brown hair laughed an obnoxious sort of laugh that drew attention to the situation. Before I knew it, it felt like half of the cafeteria was looking at me and my tuna sandwich. Not only was my appetite lost, but I was numb. For the first time ever, I couldn't move. I just sat there holding my sandwich while the girl with brown hair laughed at my food.

After a seemingly long while, she finally stopped laughing. "Tuna? Who eats tuna?"

Her friends laughed in support of her ignorant comment. I gazed across the room, face red, and noticed now that everyone in the cafeteria was looking at me.

Again, I found myself considering my options, though, rather blindly. Looking down at the rest of the food my mother packed, I found myself angry at her. How could she do this to me? Why would she pack me tuna? Of all things!

Before I spoke, I quickly composed myself and dismissed my previous way of thinking. It wasn't my mother's fault, and I knew that.

I opened my mouth to speak, but the words came out weakly. "My mom made it for me, today's-" I stopped myself quickly before I continued. I can't tell them why, no, they wouldn't understand.

The girl with the brown hair met my gaze, her eyes clawing into me. I was at a loss for words. That is until one of the hall monitors approached the table. "What's going on here?"

First, the lady looked at me, then she shifted her stare to the other kids

on the opposite side of the table. The blatant snickering from that half the table silenced almost immediately. The girl with brown hair grabbed a strand of her hair to twirl, "nothing."

I couldn't believe that was all she said. I further couldn't believe that the hall monitor accepted her words - no - her word and went on.

I looked back at my food, refusing to touch it.

On the bus ride back home, I brainstormed ways to explain to my mom why I hadn't eaten the food she prepared for me. Deep down, I knew she'd be disappointed in me, but I didn't know what for. Would she be upset I didn't eat, or didn't stand up for myself?

I swallowed as I found myself robotically walking into my house. As the door opened, I could hear my mom yell from across the house, "Hey honey, how was your day?"

Her voice echoed across the room, and her footsteps followed. My heart only began to pound more as I let out a "It was fine."

Instinctively, she took my lunch box to empty it; I had a bad habit of never doing that. I watched her do this, bracing myself for the confrontation that was about to occur.

"You didn't eat?" Her voice shifted to one of concern, and her eyes darted at me for an explanation.

I knew I couldn't lie to my mom as I felt the tears coming on, "I-I couldn't eat... these kids, they- they were making fun of my food- and-"

My mother knelt down to me and took my shoulders, "Caleb," her voice wasn't mad, "you should never be ashamed of who you are, do you hear?"

I nodded, gaining control of my emotions, "but, but they don't understand."

"And?" My mother looked into my eyes, "they don't have to. You should never be ashamed of who you are, or

what you believe in, Caleb. The only person you need to please is Him."

I nodded, suddenly feeling foolish about this whole ordeal.

"Don't you ever let someone persuade you into doing something that goes against you, and what you believe in. Don't you ever feel ashamed, Caleb."

Her words echoed over and over in my head. I turned my head to look outside at the drowning grass. In a world

full of inconsistencies, it occurred to me that there is one thing that remains constant: God.

You can never have too little of Him, nor too much of Him. Perhaps He is the balance that we need in life. That, as my mother reminded me, is nothing to be ashamed of.

To read other articles by Gracie Smith, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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Junior

The beauty of learning

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

Della loved learning new things, whether it be hobbies or facts, she was always ready to grasp onto new pieces of information and never let go. Currently, she is learning about how to multiply numbers in her math class and how to write in cursive in her ELA class. Like any 8-year-old, her favorite time of the school day was recess, where she learned how to climb the monkey bars, play kickball, and throw a football! Della loved learning new things. She has learned how to count to one hundred, how to tie her shoelaces, and she is attempting to learn how to whistle...except it kind of just sounds like blowing air.

Della has begun to put together that learning is actually a really cool thing! It's so odd though that only kids get to learn new things. Adults should be allowed to learn too! Shouldn't adults be allowed to learn, too?

Little did Della know, adults never stop learning!

It was a perfect September afternoon. The sun still shone warmly, but a crisp breeze carried the scent of the chang-

ing autumn leaves. The school day had ended, and Della eagerly awaited her arrival at her grandparents' house—her favorite place to be until her mom and dad finished work. Della tapped her fingers on her backpack, wishing the bus would go faster. Finally, after what seemed like hours, the bus pulled up to her grandparents' house. On the front porch, Grandma Eileen sat with a glass of iced tea, the dogs lounging beside her. Grandpa Rick was just returning from checking on the horses ready to greet the young girl as she arrived. He saw her and begun waving and hollering as Della hopped off the bus.

"Well look who finally decided to join us! Only took you eight hours little miss!" he teased.

"Grandpa Rick! You know I don't have a choice when I get here...I have to go to school!" she called back, a grin spreading across her face.

Grandpa Rick began to chuckle and then asked, "School! Well, you must have learned lots today. What do they teach you there anyways?"

"All kinds of things! I'm learning how to multiply numbers and how to write in cursive like Grandma Eileen does! It's really fun actually, learning stuff is so cool. I'm sorry you and grandma can't learn new things anymore now that you're all grown up." Della replied.

Her grandparents exchanged a sur-

prised look before bursting into laughter—not in a way that made Della feel silly, but in the warm, amused way adults do when children say something unexpectedly funny. Wherever did their sweet granddaughter get this ridiculous idea? Adults learn new things all the time.

"Della, sweetie, what makes you think that me and grandpa can't learn new things anymore?" Grandma Eileen asked.

"Well adults don't go to school. Only kids go to school so that means you guys don't learn new things." Della said.

Again, her grandparents laughed to themselves a bit, careful not to make her feel like they were making fun of her. Grandpa Rick started "Oh, kiddo, that's not how it works at all! We learn new things all the time."

Grandma Eileen continued with a smile, "My dear you can always learn new things! Just because we're all grown up doesn't mean that we stop learning. In fact, your grandpa and I have started taking a cooking class to learn new recipes for dinners! You can also learn things outside of school, my girl. In fact, sometimes you learn more outside of school than you do in school!"

Della's eyes widened. "Wait...grown-ups can take classes too?"

"Of course!" said Grandpa Rick. "And you don't have to be in a class-

room to learn something new. Like your grandmother said, sometimes, you learn more outside of school than you do in school."

Della looked a bit confused for a moment but then realized that Grandma Eileen and Grandpa Rick were right! She has watched them both read books and newspapers and talk with her mom and dad about the new things they recently learned. "That's true! Like how I learn how to help take care of the horses here. I learned that outside of school and they definitely don't teach it there!" She exclaimed.

"Yes, precisely Della! Learning never stops no matter how old you are." Grandpa Rick stated.

This was a very eye-opening moment for young Della, not to mention exciting, as she learned that she could keep learning new things for the rest of her life! From that moment on, she made a promise to her grandparents: they would always keep learning new things and sharing them with each other.

Years have passed and Della is now 21 and about to graduate college! She decided to major in Education so that she could share her love for learning with the next generation of kids. Every break from school she makes it a habit to go visit Grandpa Rick and Grandma Eileen, it has become a tradition. With each visit they sit in the living room and

talk about all the new things they've recently learned. During her latest visit, Della beamed as she told them, "I started taking a painting class! I've been learning all about different ways to create beautiful art." She's been so excited to share this with them!

Grandma Eileen smiled. "That's wonderful! I actually just started reading a new book, and I've discovered that I love mystery novels. This one is called, 'Where the Crawdads Sing', you should read it honey!"

"And I just started learning pottery!" Grandpa Rick added. "It's tricky, but I think I'm getting the hang of it."

Della's eyes sparkled. "Pottery?! That sounds amazing! We should do it together while I'm here!"

And just like that, a new plan was made. That afternoon, Della, Grandpa Rick, and Grandma Eileen spent their time shaping clay, making wobbly pots and silly sculptures. Then, Della showed them some new ways to paint so that they could paint their new sculptures when they were ready. They laughed, learned, and proved something important—no matter how old you are, there's always something new to discover.

And Della, just like she had when she was a little girl, never stopped learning.

To read other articles by Devin Owen, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Senior

The smallest squirrel

Dolores Hans
MSMU class of 2025

There are many animals in the forest with important jobs. The beavers build strong dams, the birds sing beautiful songs throughout the skies, and the bees help pollinate the flowers and make honey. Then there are the squirrels, who help plants and trees grow by burying seeds and acorns in the ground. The trees grow big and tall, and make nice homes for lots of animals.

One day, a small squirrel named Lily came across the biggest acorn she had ever seen. She thought about eating it or playing with it, something that would make her happy. She simply couldn't decide. Eventually she decided to bury it.

Over the years, that acorn would become the biggest tree in the forest, and many future generations of squirrels would live there.

Now, Stella was the smallest squirrel in the tree. She would watch as her friends and neighbors scurried down the tree trunk each day to do their daily tasks.

From where she sat in the tree, she could see some squirrels go left through the tall grass, the path that led to a riverbank that was covered in fluffy moss. This moss was perfect for making cozy places for other squirrels to sleep in the tree. She knew how important this job was. She liked to picture herself going to see the riverbank herself and bringing back moss for her family to sleep on.

From her place in the tree, she also saw some squirrels go right through the tall grass, the path that led to a row of bushes, which were full of delicious hazelnuts. She loved the taste of this food, and it was espe-

cially important to scavenge these tasty treats before the winter.

As the summer came to a close and the autumn leaves began to fall, Stella knew she was old enough to do a job just like the rest of the squirrels. She was so excited to help her family and friends. She got to thinking though, what if she was too small? What if she chose the path to the moss but wasn't strong enough to carry it back to the tree? What if she chose the path to the bushes but couldn't reach high enough to take hazelnuts from the branches?

From her spot in the tree, she looked back and forth, from the path on the left to the path on the right. She just couldn't decide. She asked her mom what she should do. Her mom said "the moss is lighter than you think, and you are plenty strong. The hazelnuts are low to the ground, you would be able to reach them". This helped Stella realize she could do either job just fine, but for some reason she still couldn't decide. Her mom said, "Do you know how this tree came to be?"

"It came from a big acorn, right?" asked Stella.

"Yes, but the acorn wasn't put there by accident. A long time ago, there was a squirrel named Lily. She was small like you. She came across the acorn, and was trying to decide what to do with it. Now, she could have eaten it or played with it, or given it to someone else as a gift. But she decided to bury it."

"Why?" asked Stella curiously.

"Because she knew that the acorn might become a big strong tree for her family to live in for many years to come."

"So, Lily was in our family?"

"Yes," said her mother, "so you see, no matter what job you decide to do, as long as you are helping someone else, you are doing something important."

Stella smiled. She loved helping others, and she could do that with

both jobs. She slept well that night knowing that when she woke up, she could follow the rest of the squirrels down one of the paths through the tall grass and no matter what she was doing a good thing.

The next morning, as the sun beamed through the treetops, the squirrels scurried one by one down the tall trunk of the tree. Stella leaped off her mossy bed and scurried down too. She was going so fast that she started to trip over herself. She started to tumble down to the ground. When she landed in the dirt, she felt sad. She started to question her path again. If she couldn't go down the tree without falling, does that make her too small to carry moss or pick hazelnuts? Even if she got up and continued today, she would still have to go down the tree tomorrow and every day after that. She was afraid to fall. Maybe she was too small.

She looked up at the tree and tried to have courage. She remembered Lily, a small squirrel like her, a squirrel who did something important. "If she can do it, so can I", Stella thought. She thought about what her mother said, and about how much she wanted to help people. The idea of falling was scary, but even if she fell every day, it was a struggle she would have to face in order to do something for the good of squirrels in the tree.

She got up out of the dirt and decided to keep going. But there was one problem. From the top of the tree, she could see the paths, but from the ground, she was too small to see over the tall grass. She didn't know which direction to go in. She started to feel uneasy. Should she wait until someone else came along to direct her? Should she give up and go home? She looked back up at the tree.

Just then, a leaf floated down toward the ground from the top of the tree. It moved with grace and ease.

Not certain in a direction, it didn't have to be. It was just free. Inspired, Stella decided to just take a step forward. She didn't know if it would lead her to the riverbank or the bushes, she just went. She thought to herself "even if I don't end up carrying moss

or picking hazelnuts, I can still find something important to do. And who knows? Maybe I will come across a big acorn."

To read other articles by Dolores Hans, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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LIBRARY

Blue Ridge Summit Free Library
Mondays – Children’s Story Time from 4 to 5. Children and parents can join us for a weekly story, craft or coloring sheet, or play time. We will be running two identical 30 to minute sessions in an attempt to accommodate busy schedules.

Wednesdays – Coffee Club from 3 to 4, mingle with the gang for coffee, tea, puzzles, board games, coloring books, &c.

Thursdays – Teen’s Night. The community room is reserved for teen use from 4:30 to 6, just hang out or play Wii, play board games, do puzzles, eat snacks, watch movies, make movies, etc.!

Saturdays – Join us at 10:30 for an hour of Story Time and all of its festivities! What could be better than a great book and a fun craft?

Blue Ridge Summit Book Club – April 21 from 5 to 6. This month, we are reading and Elie Wiesel! This month we are reading The Sisters Brothers by Patrick DeWitt! This is our Western pick for the year. Copies will be available at the library and all are welcome to join us!

The Summit Stitchers Quilt Club meets at 5:30 on April 15. If you have always wanted to learn how to quilt, now is the perfect time to start! The group is

currently working on this year’s gorgeous raffle quilt.

For more information on the Blue Ridge Summit Free Library visit www.fcspa.org or call 717-792-2240.

Frederick County libraries
Spring into reading this April at Emmitsburg Branch Library! Experience a variety of programs for children, teens, and adults.

The annual Spring Fling is back! Join us on Saturday, April 12 from 11 to 1 for crafts, vendors, hands-on learning activities, live animals, pictures with the Spring Bunny, and an egg hunt to kick off the start of spring! The egg hunt will begin at 11, with one for grades 0-K and another for grades 1st-5th. Weather permitting, portions of this event will be held outdoors.

Hop into the library on Thursday, April 17 from 6:30 to 7:30 to meet live rabbits! Rabbit Raisers 4-H Club will be bringing their furry friends for an evening of education and engagement. This event is sure to provide fun for the whole family!

Explore our natural surroundings in the City Nature Challenge Storytime on Monday, April 21 from 10:30 to 11! We’ll read stories about nature, sing

songs, and learn more about plants and animals in the Emmitsburg community! Following storytime, families will have the opportunity to participate in a mini “bioblitz” as we identify and document species using the iNaturalist app. This program is recommended for ages birth-5 with a caregiver.

For Children: Just in time for Spring Break, the School’s Out series is back! Learn more about your library with Escape from the Emmitsburg Branch Library (Based on the Mr. Lemoncello’s Library series by Chris Grabenstein), enjoy a Spider-Man themed party, create abstract artwork with squeegees, and craft pinecone bird seed feeders! Saturday programming is not to be missed, with the Adopt a Peep Event occurring before the Easter holiday!

For Teens: Join us for Tuesday night Teen Time! Learn how to care for your own plants in Ready, Set, Grow Plant Studio, sample a variety of chocolates in Calling All Chocolate Lovers, practice the craft of writing in Maryland Writer’s Association-Teen Writer’s Club, and create art with recycled materials in the Earth Day Celebration! Teen programs are recommended for patrons ages 11-18.

For Adults: There’s plenty to explore for adults this month at the library! Listen to courageous guest speakers at the Heartly House Survivor Panel, learn how to craft simple greeting cards by hand, and hear more about using DNA matches to fill up your family tree! The Mind Care & Games for Seniors, People Experiencing Memory Loss, and Their Caregivers series continues, with Katrina from Agewell Senior Fitness serving as guest speaker.

For any questions, please call Emmitsburg Branch Library at 301-600-6329 or Thurmont Regional Library at 301-600-7212. For more information, visit FCPL.org.

Emmitsburg Branch Library:
Mondays, Family Storytime, 10:30.

Mondays, Little Adventurers, 11.

Thursdays, Pajama Storytime, 6 p.m.
April 1- Heartly House Survivor Speaker Panel, 6 to 7:30.

April 5- Adopt a Peep Event!, 2 to 3.

April 8- Teen Ready, Set, Grow Plant Studio (Ages 11-18), 6 to 7.

April 12- Spring Fling! and Egg Hunt, 11 to 1.

April 14- Tween Craft Day (Ages 9-13), 2 to 3.

April 15- School’s Out: Escape from the Emmitsburg Branch Library, 2 to 3.

April 15- Teen Calling All Chocolate Lovers (Ages 11-18), 6 to 7.

April 16- Mind Care & Games for Seniors, People Experiencing Memory Loss, and Their Caregivers, 11 to noon.

April 16- School’s Out: Spider-Man Party, 2 to 3.

April 17- School’s Out: Squeegee Art, 2 to 3.

April 17- Maryland Writer’s Association- Teen Writer’s Club, 5:30 to 7.

April 17- Rabbits in the Library, 6:30 to 7:30.

April 19- Handmade Greeting Cards for Beginners, 2 to 3.

April 21- City Nature Challenge Storytime, 10:30 to 11.

April 21- Little Adventurers: City Nature Challenge, 11 to 11:30.

April 21- School’s Out: Feathered Friends Bird Seed Pinecones, 2 to 3.

April 22- Teen Earth Day Celebration (Ages 11-18), 6 to 7.

April 28- Family Storytime with Seton Avenue Barber Company, 10:30 to 11.

April 28- How to Use Your DNA Matches for Your Genealogical Research, 1 to 2.

April 29- Teen Ready, Set, Grow Plant Studio (Ages 11 to 18), 6 to 7.

Thurmont Regional Library:

Mondays, Baby Storytime, 10:30.

Tuesdays, Preschool Storytime, 10:30.

Tuesdays, Get Ready for Kindergarten, 11:15.

Tuesdays, Night Owls, 6:30 p.m.

Wednesdays, Toddler Storytime, 10:30.

Thursdays, Musical Storytime, 10:30.

Thursdays, Elementary Explorers, 2 p.m.

Saturdays, Family Storytime, 11.

April 3- Teen and Tween Open Chess Play (Ages 9-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 5- First Saturday STEM Lab Drop-In, 2 to 2:45.

April 7- Teen Felt Name Flags! (Ages 13-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 9- A Conversation on International Affairs with Shaun Donnelly, 7 to 8.

April 10- Tween Felt Name Flags (Ages 9-13), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 12- Thurmont Green Fest: Birds, Bees, and Butterflies, 10 to 2.

April 13- Tea & Whimsy Musical Program, 3 to 4.

April 14- Teen Mud Cup Desserts! (Ages 13-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 17- Offsite: Digital Learning at the Thurmont Senior Center, 10 to noon.

April 17- Create, Make, and Take Tween Art (Ages 9-13), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 18- School’s Out: It’s Hoppin’ at the Library!, 2 to 3.

April 21- Teen Hobbit Door Wreath! (Ages 13-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 23- Documentary Screening: Cities of the Future, 7 to 8.

April 24- Life-Size Monopoly (Ages 11-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

April 26- Family Storytime/City Nature Challenge, 11 to noon.

April 26- Candle Making with Rose Hill Manor, 2 to 3.

April 27- Documentary Screening: Cities of the Future, 2 to 3.

April 28- Teen Video Game Hour: Switch Edition! (Ages 13-18), 5:30 to 6:30.

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SCHOOL NEWS

FCSB approves 26/27 school calendar

With a split vote of five to two, the Frederick County School Board voted to approve the 2026/2027 school calendar in February. Dr Eric Louers-Phillips presented options developed by a calendar committee, whose job is to create options with set parameters for the board to vote on. These options were introduced to the Board in November of last year and they were sent out to the community for feedback once approved.

Option one has school starting August 12 and ending May 25 with no days off for Eid al-Fitr or Eid al-Adha, which are Muslim holidays. Option two has school starting August 17 and ending May 28, also with no days off for Eid al-Fitr or

Eid al-Adha. The community overwhelmingly preferred option three, which has school starting on Aug 19 and ending June 4 with no day off for Eid al-Fitr, a teacher workday for Eid al-Adha and has parent teacher conferences later in the year. Option four came in a close second with a start date of August 19 and the last day as June 7 with a professional learning day for Eid al-Fitr, schools closed for Eid al-Adha and later conferences as well.

These options were developed with specific parameters set by The Code of Maryland Regulations, (COMAR) which governs the Maryland State Department of Education and sets certain regulations all school boards must follow.

These require students to do a minimum of 180 days of school in a calendar year and teachers 190 days. Winter break is also required to be from Christmas Eve to New Years Day, with 13 additional required holidays.

The Board can also ask for certain parameters to be considered in the creation of the options, which they did at a meeting in September of last year. They asked for a start date around August 19, to include options for the County Fair day, to keep school days as close to a contiguous five days as possible and consider strategic planning for inclement weather.

The Board was split on its opinion of the plans presented, with Members Jaime Brennan and Colt Black both

opposing the vote for different reasons. Brennan felt school shouldn't start until after Labor Day and should be finished by Memorial Day, "I don't like any of them," she said. "It doesn't seem so bad to me, personally, to get out a little later in June, but going back before Labor Day is painful! It's like, summer is not over yet!"

Black was more concerned with starting school on a Monday instead of Wednesday, "I really don't like any of these options either," he said. "Starting on Wednesdays, in my personal experience, is kind of miserable. It's like, 'Oh, two days of fun, and now we're going back to school.' It would be better to just end the weekend and be going to school on Monday."

Five members of the Board agreed

with the community in favor of Option three. Member Dean Rose pointed out that option three, "was overwhelmingly the favorite in the community." He also said, "I got a lot of feedback from teachers about the later teacher conferences, that they were pleased to have those later, particularly at the end of the semester."

Member Janie Inglis Monier praised the community for their involvement in the decision. "I do remember the community coming out and advocating at every Board meeting very civilly," she said. "We owe it to them to say, 'yes you have been heard and we are considering that', and this is why we are looking at option three."

The Board passed option three for the 26/27 school year with a split vote of five to two.

FASD leaders discuss college alternative

Fairfield Area School District administrators are looking at a more effective way to prepare their students for the future. During their March workshop, district leaders unveiled career pathways that will train students for a specific line of work.

High School Principal Brian McDowell said pathways help students define their career goals and offer real-world experience. Students can obtain necessary certifications while still in

high school and network with professionals who can connect them to career possibilities. McDowell said pathways also benefit the local community because the high school is training their potential workforce.

Aaron Taylor, assistant to the superintendent for curriculum, special education and student services, said the district is exploring the following pathways: welding, medical assistant, medical administrative office specialist,

Microsoft Office specialist, hospitality and tourism, and vocation/agriculture. The pathways were chosen based on current district infrastructure and workforce demand identified by the South Central High Priority Occupations Listing.

Taylor said Fairfield may be able to partner with HACC, Allegany Community College, Penn State Mont Alto, and Delaware Valley University to offer the courses without drastically increasing district staffing.

Superintendent Thomas Haupt said the majority of Fairfield Area High School graduates do not attend a two or four-year college.

Haupt said the proposal is not intended to compete with Adams County Technical Institute (ACTI). The institute is at capacity. Haupt stressed Fairfield continues to remain supportive of ACTI but recognizes any major changes will not occur for at least five years. Career pathways are a

way to help students now, he said.

Once ACTI expands, Haupt believes Fairfield will supplement its offerings. He noted Conewago Valley School District currently offers a welding program that is at capacity. The district could also open its programs to students in surrounding districts. The career pathways curriculum could also give the district the opportunity to host night classes for adults looking to expand their skill set.

The board agreed to discuss the proposal in future meetings.

Way Off Broadway Summer Theatre Camp

Registration for The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre's 2025 Summer Theatre Camp will begin on April 1st.

For over 20 years, Way Off Broadway has been offering budding young actors and actresses the opportunity to hone their craft during the theatre's annual summer camp. These camps focus on all aspects of musical theatre through vocal music, acting exercises, and basic choreography as students rehearse for a full musical production at the end of the session.

The ghost-with-the-most comes to the stage in Beetlejuice, JR., the frightfully funny musical based on the beloved motion picture turned Broadway phenomenon. Lydia Deetz is a strange and unusual teenager, still grieving the loss of her

mother and obsessed with the whole "being dead thing." Lucky for Lydia, she and her father move to a new house haunted by a recently deceased couple and Beetlejuice, a delightful demon with a real zest for life. When Lydia calls on Beetlejuice to scare away anyone with a pulse, this double-crossing specter shows his true stripes, unleashing a (Nether) world of pandemonium.

This year's camp will be held July 21st - 31st from 10 to 4, Monday - Thursday. Camp is open to students ages 9 and older. Registration is \$525 per student.

Registration is limited and done on a first-come, first-serve basis beginning Tuesday, April 1st. Visit www.wayoffbroadway.com for more details.

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ARTS

Totem Pole Playhouse announces 75th season

Come Join the Party! Totem Pole Playhouse's 75th Season is ready for you! Single tickets are officially on sale to the public. Subscription sales continue.

"Totem Pole is growing it's programming to give our community new ways and fresh opportunities to engage with us, and we are so excited to be able to finally roll out single tickets. Don't wait - grab them today," says the Playhouse's Producing Artistic Director Ryan B. Gibbs, as he shares his excitement for the 2025 summer season.

The Marvelous Wonderettes - a toe-tapping jukebox musical fol-

lowing a high school girl group as they perform at their 1958 prom, and a decade later at their reunion. Featuring classic 1950s and 1960s hits, the show blends humor, nostalgia, and heartfelt stories of friendship and growth. May 30 - June 8. Just 12 short performances.

9 to 5 the Musical - Based on the hit 1980 film, legend Dolly Parton provides the music and lyrics for this outrageous workplace comedy set in the Rolodex era and proving that women can conquer anything in the workplace! June 20 - July 6 for 20 performances

The 39 Steps - Framed for the murder and on the run, Richard Hannay faces plot twists galore in this parody of Alfred Hitchcock's classic film. Four Actors! Fifty characters! One riotous farce! Starring some deliciously compelling returning Totem Pole favorite Actors! July 18 - 27 Just 12 short performances.

Beautiful: the Carol King Musical - Featuring her timeless music, this Broadway mega hit tells the inspiring tale of Carole King's journey to Superstar! You will be singing these enduring tunes the whole way home after seeing this impressive rise-to-fame

show. August 8 - 24 for 20 performances

Diamond: the Neil Diamond Tribute - Totem Pole favorite Scott Moreau returns to rock the look, sing the songs, and tell the stories that bring legendary performer Neil Diamond to our stage. You won't want to miss this popular new show! August 27 - 31. Just 8 short performances.

Tucked Away Tuesdays: Mark Cordes is The Spouse Whisperer June 10, Brady & Caroline: Piano Bar Duo July 8, Boston Bachert July 29. Come join us for big entertainment tucked into a little Tuesday evening! We have something

for everyone - hilarious comedy, dueling pianos, and compelling all-ages magic - all at new and lower ticket prices and packed full of fun for your summer Tuesday evening break! ONE day only each for two performances with limited seating.

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For tickets call 717-352-2164 or view totempoleplayhouse.org - 9555 Golf Course Road, Fayetteville, PA 17222.

Majestic welcomes Gettysburg Film Festival

The Gettysburg Film Festival returns May 8-11, focusing on the legacy of World War II. Internationally acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns will open the festival on Thursday, May 8th, marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V-E) Day. Special guests include Martin Sheen, Anna Deavere Smith, Susan Eisenhower, Stephen Lang and more.

"We are thrilled to welcome Ken Burns and this extraordinary group of experts to Gettysburg for our film festival," said Gettysburg College President Bob Iuliano. "The festival honors not only the power

of storytelling but also the courage and wisdom of General Eisenhower—a leader whose legacy continues to inspire our College and our community today."

"As Gettysburg College's center for cinema and performing arts, the Majestic is excited to continue to connect our campus, community, and these luminaries for this celebration of history on film," stated Majestic Theater Executive Director, Brett Messenger. "Our historic venue is particularly suited to connect today's audiences to this year's theme, Victory in World War II, as it was where our community gath-

ered 80 years ago to stay connected to the war effort, on screen, through news reels from the front."

The Majestic Theater Box Office issues tickets for events located at the Majestic Theater only. Tickets are available now for:

Thursday, May 8

10 - da Vinci to D-Day: The Art of Documentary Filmmaking - \$35
 10:30 - The War - Pride of Our Nation - Free
 10:45 - The War - FUBAR - Free
 1:15 - The U.S. and the Holocaust - "The Homeless, Tempest-Tossed" - Free

1:30 - The Craft of Storytelling: Ken Burns and Anna Deavere Smith - \$35

1:45 - The War - The Ghost Front - Free

4 - Jazz - Dedicated to Chaos - Free

4:20 - The War - A World Without War - Free

Friday, May 9

10 - Martin Sheen: A Legacy of American History on Screen - \$35
 10:25 - The Monuments Men - \$10
 10:30 - The Rape of Europa - \$10
 1 - The Story of G.I. Joe - \$10

1:45 - Invisible Warriors - \$10
 2:30 - Saving Europe's Art, with Robert Edsel and Susan Eisenhower - \$35

3:10 - The True Glory - \$10

3:50 - Behind the Lines - \$10

Saturday, May 10

9:15 - There is Another Way - \$10

9:30 - Memphis Belle - \$10

11:45 - The Big Red One - \$10

12:30 - Band of Brothers - Day of Days - Free

2 - A Bridge Too Far - \$10

2:15 - Band of Brothers - Crossroads - Free
 3:50 - Band of Brothers - Why We Fight - Free

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On stage this month

Isabel Hagen
 April 11 - 7:30 p.m.
 April 12 - 7:30 p.m.

Hagen hosts and headlines an evening of local talent on April 11 and is joined by 2 touring friends, a comedian and a pianist on April 12 for an evening of comedy and music! She is a Juilliard-trained violinist and comedian and has been featured on Jimmy Fallon. This multi-talented artist will stun you with her musical and comedic prowess. Recommended for mature audiences due to adult themes and language.

360 ALL STARS
 Fri., May 2 at 7:30

Fun for the family! 360 All Stars connects the street with the elite to deliver a supercharged urban circus with a stellar cast of world champion and record holding artists and athletes! 360 All Stars is a spectacular fusion of the extraordinary artistry that emerges from the street culture!

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 Visit our website at www.gettysburgmajestic.com

Gettysburg Choral Society

The Gettysburg Choral Society, under the direction of John McKay, will present a pair of patriotic concerts entitled "God Bless the U.S.A." on Memorial Day weekend. The first concert will take place on

Friday, May 23rd at 7 in the evening at St. Paul's Lutheran Church, 127 York Street in Hanover. The second concert will take place on Sunday, May 25th at 3 in the afternoon in the chapel of The United Lutheran

Seminary, 61 Seminary Ridge in Gettysburg.

The concerts will honor America as the chorus pays tribute to our armed services and gives thanks for those who, in the words of Abraham Lincoln, "gave the last full measure of devotion." Showcasing the music that celebrates our great country from the Civil War to the present, some of the program's favorites will include "The Battle Hymn of the Republic," "God Bless America," and "God Bless the U.S.A."

There will be a special recognition of our veterans as the chorus presents "A Tribute to the Armed Services." Those men and women who have faithfully served our country in the military are encouraged to attend and be recognized for their service. Legendary bugler Jari Villanueva, the country's foremost expert on military bugle calls, will be present to play taps.

The Gettysburg Choral Society, Inc. is a nonprofit 501.3C organization composed of auditioned singers who utilize their talents to pursue excellence in choral music performance. As always, the concerts are free and open to the public. Tax-deductible contributions are appreciated to help defray concert-related expenses.

For more information, please visit gettysburgchoralsociety.org.

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The Lion Potter hosts its second-ever youth art show

Emelie Beckman
MSMU Class of 2026

On the early, foggy morning of Saturday March 15, I spun my wheels into the gravel parking lot of the small navy house on 855 Taneytown Rd in Gettysburg. The house has a large garden which on the day was filled with displays of ceramics, paintings, jewelry and more. Gleefully people were scattered all over the installment, busting around like small pollen bees in a happy honey farm. Some were deeply contemplating a pot, some were snacking on treats, and others were busy mingling.

The Lion Potter has been selling handmade and functional pottery since 2005. Located in the historic Town of Gettysburg, the location works to create a magical space that floods with creativity. The owners, David and Junko Young, have been doing pottery for decades and they draw inspiration from primarily Japanese and African art. Besides just creating and selling amazing pottery, The Lion Potter also sells art from various local artists and, during the summer and fall months, fresh fruits, vegetables, honey and other products grown by local farmers in the area.

However, this Saturday wasn't any usual day at The Lion Potter, namely I was on site to visit their second-ever Youth Art Show. The event showcased art by the four sons of David and Junko Young, as well as some close friends. By providing a space to showcase and sell some of the works created by younger talents, The Lion Potter wished to support and celebrate these young people in their artistic journey.

Irvin Young

The eldest son of David and Junko Young, Irvin is an artist and writer who has a great passion for travel. He explores this passion through his artwork. Having recently visited numerous countries, including Japan, Korea and Vietnam, Irvin's creations reflect his travels and cultural encounters. He utilizes mostly digital art and among his pieces are animated landscapes and people, one of which particularly stuck with me; the animated face of a beautiful woman whose eyes glance right at you and hold you in. Her slightly tilted face feels both welcoming and unfamiliar.

Having travelled for both educational purposes and to visit family in Japan, Irving spoke of how he liked to capture the sights he saw and the culture he experienced in his work. Also a writer, he is looking to publish a collection of short stories about his travels later in the summer of 2025. The book should be available at The Lion Potter!

Elisha Young

An architect and designer at heart, Elisha has been the mind and muscle behind creating the Young's current pottery studio. Standing in the backyard, it is a wooden building which Elisha built from scratch fairly recently. The rectangular space holds much natural light which comes in from the wide windows and bounces off the light wooden floors. The space is filled with ceramic wheels, various tools,

buckets and shells displaying multiple projects in process.

Besides being a talented architect, Elisha, like most of his siblings and friends, enjoys painting. Amongst some of the things he had put on display that Saturday was a particularly brilliant portrait of his father, Mr. Young, hunched over the pottery wheel. Next to the piece were also multiple smaller pieces of mice in trench coats.

When chatting about the future Elisha tells me that he is currently looking at grad schools for architecture. However, he remains torn in his decisions. He notes that he loves architecture and sees himself pursuing a career in it, but he has equally loved the designing and building of his projects and since the architecture programs are more directed towards just designing, he is unsure if he wants to give up on the building process.

Caleb Young

Sort of the "Art Manager on site," Caleb Young was the one who put in the most work to put this show together. Besides helping his parents and their business in many ways, he also possesses, like his parents, a talent for ceramics! Besides creating very impressive ceramic earrings, Caleb seemed to have a special place in his heart for sculpturing. Standing on the windowsill inside the navy house were three of Caleb's sculptures depicting a motorcyclist, a musician and more. He pointed out the sculpture of the musician, which is playing a large wind instrument, and told me the inspiration was a friend of his. The instrument wraps around the entirety of his friend and when played needs to have the musician fill both cheeks to their full volume with air. Caleb explained to that when he creates a sculpture he never wants it to appear inauthentic or posed. He doesn't want to sculpt his friend as if he had posed for a picture, rather Caleb wishes to capture the entirety of the moment. This requires adding details such as his friend's ballooning cheeks.

Kagen Young

The first Young brother I met, Kagen, was the one who introduced me to the show and the history of his family, all with a bright and passionate smile. Kagen has followed in the footsteps of his parents by pursuing ceramics. On one of the first tables in the yard, decorated with a grass-green tablecloth, Kagen had placed his beautiful ceramic beetles. Some palm-sized figurines and others no bigger than a fingernail, their style reminded me of how animals are usually depicted in ancient Latin American artwork, with rectangular forms and spiral-like patterns. His attention to detail and handwork were super impressive, especially considering how small some of his creations were in size. I was so impressed that I couldn't help but leave with a little grass-green beetle.

Emily Flaherty

A former Mount student, Emily Flaherty, now works at The Lion Potter as Mr. Young's apprentice after completing her bachelor's in theology at

Mount. She stays with the family full time and spends her days studying and developing her art. Very much a "hybrid artist," Emily had paintings, sculptures and works of pottery on display, all while she sang and played the piano in the background of the event. During her time with the Young family, she has gotten the chance to further expand her artistic talents by diving into the field of ceramics. One of her pieces she named "The Daughter Series." Said piece includes two scarlet leaf-like works of clay. She says that in this piece, as with all her art, she "draws inspiration from her relationship with God".

Hannah Campbell

Hannah Campbell is a high school student who met the Youngs at their church. When walking up to her table she greeted me with a sweet smile. Her collection of paintings all displayed natural, almost fantasy-like motives, and the majority of them had a common character. The main character of Hannah's paintings resembled a deer-like creature which, if she were to give it a name, would be called "Jeffery". Hannah said that Jeffery came to her while she was messing around with leftover paint from another piece. She liked him so much that she kept painting him in multiple pieces.

Brynn Lee

Another high school student, Brynn Lee, is a friend of the Young boys, hence how she came to display her work at this event. Her paintings included many portraits of animals and locations around the Gettysburg



Brynn Lee, Hannah Campbell, Irvin Young, Elisha Young, Caleb Young, Kagen Young and Emily Flaherty.

area. One of these paintings depicts an upside-down hanging sloth; it covers a ripped-out dictionary page, more specifically the page containing the definition of the word sloth, and gives its own creative take on art. A native of Thurmont, Brynn reveals to me how she is not planning to pursue art as more than a hobby. Bryan said that she loves science and dreams of one day studying blood-related diseases.

The Youth Art Show was truly wonderful. I left The Lion Potter feeling a sense of wonder and inspiration for the immense amount of talent and potential which exists in the younger generations. I can't wait to see what they create next! If you have time, I absolutely recommend taking a trip to visit The Lion Potter down the way in Gettysburg, and maybe even bringing a new art piece home!

Upcoming events on campus

There are many exciting events planned on campus for April. Start-

ing strong, on the 5th of April at 7pm, the Mount's Spring Ensemble will hold a performance. Following this event, we will be holding a "Broadway Big Band Review" on the 12th, hosted at 7pm in Horning Theatre. Later, on the 23rd of April Mount St. Mary's yearly SPARC Festival will begin, giving the Mount students the opportunity to showcase academic and artistic projects of all sorts. It's an event you don't want to miss! To close the month of April, on the 30th there will also be a department student recital at Horning Theatre beginning at 7pm.

The Makers House also has many workshops scheduled for the upcoming month for students of the Mount including, but not limited to, a spring market, a clothing swap, a ceramic workshop and more!

To read other articles by Emelie Beckman, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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CATOCTIN SPORTS

Lady Cougar's jaw-dropping victory!

Richelle Zheng
CHS Class of 2025

As the snowfall finally comes to a halt, so do most of the winter sports. However, Catoc-tin's indoor track and field and girls basketball teams continue on their season as they go off to compete in state championships. Both sports had amazing outcomes in their state competi-tions, and Catoc-tin cannot wait to see what the spring season will bring.

Indoor Track & Field

On February 26, the indoor track season came to a close with their final meet at Prince George's Sports and Learning Complex. Here, the boys competed in the MPSSAA 1A Indoor State Championships. Starting with the men's 55-meter dash, senior Shaymus Stull ran in the prelim-inary, placing fourth in his heat and 13th overall with a time of 6.81 seconds. Freshman Noah Riling competed in the men's 1600-meter. He finished the race with a time of 4:54.01 minutes, putting him in fourth place for his heat and 13th overall. Riling's second event was the men's 3200-meter event, where he marked a new personal record of 10:40.00 minutes, finishing in seventh place! In the men's 55-meter hur-dles, senior Gavin Scheetz par-ticipated in the preliminary and ended the race with a time of 8.37 seconds, placing fourth in his heat and eleventh overall. Next, in the men's 4x200-meter relay race, Catoc-tin was represented by the team of Stull, Brady Koe-

nig, Mason Ferrell, and Scheetz. The boys finished the race with a time of 1:38.83 minutes. For the men's 4x800-meter relay race, the freshmen team of Grady Abruzzese, Logan Holden, Ryan Leadbetter, and Sean Hoyle represented Catoc-tin and ran a time of 9:58.80 minutes. Over on the field, in the high jump event, junior Konner Dodson jumped 1.68 meters. Lastly, in the men's pole vault category, junior Wyatt Sullivan vaulted 3.35 meters, putting him in ninth place!

The girl's team was represented by Hadley McQuay, Charley Keilholtz, Isabel Brodsky, Olivia Baker, and Cora Durrschmidt at the MPSSAA 1A Indoor State Championships. Junior Olivia Baker competed in the women's 800-meter event and finished the race in 2:31.42 minutes! This allowed her to place fifth out of 18! Baker ran another event, which was the women's 1600-meter race. She placed sixth overall with a time of 5:39.32 minutes. Had-ley McQuay, Charley Keilholtz, Isabel Brodsky, and Baker made up the 4x400-meter relay team. These four girls set a new per-sonal record for themselves as they ended the race in 4:32.40 minutes and placed sixth overall. Over on the field, Cora Durrschmidt com-peted in the pole vault category, vaulting 2.44 meters!

Lady Cougar's Basketball

The Lady Cougars had their last game of the regular season on February 18 against Mountain Ridge High School. In the first four minutes of the game, both



Lady Cougars celebrate a win at Raising Cane's.

the Mountain Ridge Miners and the Catoc-tin Cougars had a slow start to the game with zero points scored. By the end of the first quarter, the Cougars were able to score six points and the Miners three. Then, the offense started pumping up their game, with junior Brooke Williams scoring all of the points. Wil-iams scored a total of 13 points during the second quarter, allow-ing the Cougars to have a one-point lead by halftime. The score was then 19-18 at halftime. After intermission ended and the second half of the game began, the Cougars were rejuvenated and came back fiercely at the Miners, with the defense taking control. The iron defensive wall the girls put up against the miners allowed the Cougars to further their lead to nine points. At the end of the third quarter, the score was now 35-26. Continuing to extend the lead in the last quarter, the Cougars could easily drift their way to their win, 50-34. Lead-ing the team was junior Kelsey Troxell, with 21 points and nine rebounds. Williams chimed in 16 points and three assists. In addition, senior Rebekah Zentz added seven points, and fresh-man Olivia Hoyt helped out with four assists and six rebounds.

The junior varsity team was also victorious against the Moutain Ridge Miners for their last home game, taking the win

30-20. Starting off on the wrong foot, the Cougars let the Miners gain a six-point lead early in the game. In the second quarter, the Cougars started to pick up their intensity on the defensive side, limiting the Miners to only two points. Later, in the third quarter, the girls began playing strategi-cally on offense and ran effective offense sets. This allowed the girls to extend their lead. How-ever, the Miners picked up their game late in the fourth quarter, giving the Cougars a tough time. Still, the girls managed to work together to finish the game off strong. Maddy Whetzel scored the most points in this game with ten points. Chloe Mathias chimed in with five points and six steals. Moreover, Josey Shaf-fer and Ryleigh Hammond both made four points, and Raquel Owens made eight rebounds.

The Lady Cougars (#2 seed) went on to play in the semifinals on March 3rd against South Car-roll High School (#3 seed). At the start of the first quarter, the South Carroll Cavaliers came out strong, gaining a five-point lead on the Cougars early in the game as the Cougars had a hard time scoring points. By the end of the first quarter, South Carroll was in the lead 12-8. Then, in the second quarter, the girls held up a tough defense against the Cav-aliers, restricting them to only seven points. However, because

the girls were busy holding up their defense, they were also hav-ing a tough time being able to make any points. With the Cav-aliers still remaining in the lead with the score being 19-15, the Cougars decided to strategize for a comeback. The girls came out stronger than ever in the third quarter, adding up their points until they were tied with the Cavaliers, and continued to gain points to overtake the lead. The third quarter ended with the Cougars leading 28-25. During the last quarter, the two teams fought back and forth for the lead, but with 19 seconds left of the game, the Cavaliers remained in a 39-38 lead. Nevertheless, Williams, with nine seconds left of the game, was not going to let the Cougars go home without a win and nailed a three-point shot, putting the Cougars into a 41-40 lead, ending the game! Troxell was notorious again this game with another double-dou-ble as she scored 22 points and 17 rebounds! Williams aided the team by making 11 points and seven rebounds. Lastly, Hoyt contributed nine rebounds and three steals. Catoc-tin is beyond proud to have such skillful and passionate student-athletes roam-ing their halls!

To read past Catoc-tin Sports arti-cles, visit the Current Events sec-tion of Emmitsburg.net.



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MOUNT SPORTS

Mount men's basketball win's first ever MAAC title

Steve Morano
MSMU Class of 2024

On March 15, 2025, Mount St. Mary's men's basketball marched to their first ever Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference title in Atlantic City, New Jersey while steam-rolling Iona by a score of 63-49. Their victory in the conference title game was followed up by an 83-72 win over American in the Men's NCAA Basketball Tournament First Four on March 19, booking their spot in the First Round of the tournament for the first time since 2017, where they will play No.1 seed Duke on March 21. A matchup with one of the best teams in college basketball history and projected NBA number one overall pick, Cooper Flagg, comes off the back of a record setting season in Emmitsburg for first year head coach Donny Lind and his team, going 23-12 with a MAAC record of 12-8. This twenty-three-win season gives Lind the winningest record as a Head Coach of the Mount in the school's Division I era.

The magical season started with a 93-89 overtime victory away in Lewisburg, as the Mountaineers downed perennial Patriot League powerhouse, Bucknell. They then marched to out of conference wins against Saint Francis, Delaware State, and Howard before losing their opening MAAC game to Marist in Poughkeepsie by a score of 53-50. They set the tone in their conference home opener against Fairfield however, beating the stags by a staggering scoreline 101-94, the team's biggest point margin in Division I.

In a soul crushing 77-69 loss at Knott Arena in the Catholic Clash against Loyola, the Mount eked out an 80-72 win against LIU and upset the University of Miami in an overtime 78-74 win in Florida. With the win against the Hurricanes, the Mountaineers also secured their first win against a Power Five school since their win against Georgia Tech in 1995. After a loss to George Mason on December 28, the Mount when on a three-game run, winning against Niagara and Manhattan by scorelines of 68-62 and 75-66 respectively. Returning home to Emmitsburg on January 12 to face off against Sacred Heart, the Mount found themselves up marginally against the Pioneers at the half by a score of 41-32. The team stayed steady with Sacred Heart but soon found themselves outpaced by the visitors, as Sacred Heart tied the game 71-71 with ten seconds left. The ball found itself to senior forward Dola Adebayo in the paint, and as the shot clock was about to expire, Adebayo step back and put a floater into the basket, sending Knott Arena into pandemonium.

After the 73-71 buzzer beater against Sacred Heart, the Mount dropped its next four games to Rider, Siena, Manhattan and a 91-57 loss to Quinnipiac, the worst blowout in Knott Arena

history. The team then travelled to North Andover, Massachusetts, where they downed Merrimack 66-58. The team stayed on the road, travelling to New Jersey while defeating Saint Peter's 79-64 while losing their next game to Iona 70-64, after the Gaels hit a buzzer beating, three-pointer to avoid overtime in Emmitsburg.

Motivated by their close loss to Iona, the Mount went on another prolonged win streak, notching victories against Niagara, Canisius, Saint Peter's and Rider, with their win streak coming to an end in Fairfield, Connecticut after the Mountaineers lost a close contest to the Stags by a score of 69-62. From then on, the Mount alternated wins with loses, beating Siena 85-79, losing away at Quinnipiac by a score of 79-70, and winning on Senior Day in Emmitsburg 62-52 against Marist before their trip to the Conference Tournament in Atlantic City.

In their final weeks of the season, the Mountaineers were hit with a plethora of injuries to key players including Terrell Ard jr., who tore his Achilles Tendon at Fairfield, and Carmelo Pacheco, who broke his finger in the game against Marist. The injuries coupled with the doubt of being ranked 11th in the preseason polls by other coaches gave the Mountaineers a fire under their belly that could not be contained. With their win against Marist, the Mountaineers bought themselves a bye to the quarterfinals with a matchup against the Red Foxes in Atlantic City scheduled before the visitors left the arena on March 8.

To start their tenure at MAAC's, the men's team took a commanding 27-19 lead against the Red Foxes with dominance in the paint from Adebayo and Jedy

Cordilia. Even after a wavering lead change by Marist, the Mountaineers recomposed their offense and closed out a 62-58 win and a trip to the semifinals for the rubber match against Merrimack.

Against the Warriors in the semifinals, the Mountaineers were uneasy to start the scoring through the first five minutes, holding Merrimack to 16-12 deficit through the first ten minutes. But for the rest of the half, the offense clawed its way back to take a one point, 25-24, lead heading into the half. And as score alternated in the second half, the Mountaineers began to pull away and squeezed out a 57-55 score, booking their first ever appearance in the MAAC Championship game.

The No. 4 seed Iona had defeated the No. 1 seed Quinnipiac men's team, who had become dominant in the regular season and who folded in the playoffs. The No. 6 seed Mountaineers came into the game with a three-game win streak extending from the regular season and into the playoffs. With full steam behind them, the Mount found themselves down 26-25 at the half and coming back from the locker room, decided to put all the energy they had left onto the court. Outpacing the Gael's with swift transition, long range, and three-point shooting, the Mountaineers finished their game with a scoreline of 63-49, not only winning their first championship since 2021, but winning the school's first ever MAAC title since moving to the conference in 2022.

In the first four game against American, the Mount started off the scoring early, taking a ten-point, 48-38 lead in the first half. A closer fought quarter from American in the second was no match for the consistent Mountaineers as Ade-



Dallas Hobbs goes for a lay-up against American in the NCAA Tournament First Four Round.

bayo and Cordilla once again had career games inside the paint to finish the game off at 83-72, booking their spot in the tournament proper, with a matchup against Duke awaiting in the first round.

No matter what the result of the first-round matchup will be, the team fielded by the Mount this season has been nothing but spectacular. This team was picked to finish eleventh in the conference and miss out completely on the Conference Playoffs. And why shouldn't they have? Bringing in first year Head Coach Donny Lind and retaining a roster that looked practically identical to

the one that went out in the first round of the Conference Playoffs last year seemed like a recipe for a under .500 finish. But, through sheer will power and sticking to their defense-heavy playbook, the Mount won at the right times and are now on a collision course with history. No matter what the finish against Duke will be, this shift in momentum may secure the Mount's men's basketball team its supremacy in the Conference, like the days of old Emmitsburg.

To read past Mount Sports articles, visit the Author's section of Emmitsburg.net.

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COMPLEMENTARY CORNER

Better stories about getting older

Jefferson Breland

I am hearing more and more of my friends complaining about getting older. This is probably a function of my being 63 years old. My friends generally range in age from about 40 to 75 years old, so I have a pretty good sampling of the various complaints in this population.

It might be better to call them concerns. Complaints are often about a personal and temporary dissatisfaction and seem a bit more superficial to me.

Concerns are similar to complaints in that they both wish for something to be different. And they differ in the root cause of their expression. Concerns are rooted in worry and doubt about something important to us. It is a more of a request for reassurance or information about an ongoing situation, not simply a call for change in the present moment.

Curiously, the concerns of my friends are often the same whether they are 40 or 75. The concerns are mostly about their bodies changing, their minds changing, finding someone to spend the Autumn of their life with, and what's wrong with the younger generations.

These concerns are based on our societal ideas about aging. One only need to go the birthday card section of Walmart or Target to see what these norms are. As the age on the birthday cards increases, the stories of inevitable decline and disfunction get worse and worse. We tend to accept these stories as the way life is.

And yes, as we get older our bodies change. We may be frustrated that we can't do what we used to do. We

may be frustrated that there are biases against older people seeking employment. We have fears about financial security. We want to maintain a sense of independence.

These are genuine concerns. I share them, too. I imagine these sorts of concerns are tens of thousands of years old. We are not alone in our concerns. Americans are living longer. Life expectancy in the United States has increased approximately 60% in the last 125 years.

According to the Centers for Disease Control/National Center for Health Statistics, in 1900, U.S. life expectancy at birth was 47 years. In 2023, U.S. life expectancy at birth was 78.4 years, with women having a life expectancy of 81.1 years and men 75.8 years. What to do with our aging population? The federal government began preparing for this inevitability in the 1930s.

A report by the Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Nursing Home Regulation, states that "the federal government first became involved in nursing homes with the passage of the Social Security Act of 1935. The Act established a federal-state public assistance program for the elderly called Old Age Assistance (OAA)... This stimulated the growth of voluntary and proprietary nursing homes. By the time of the first national survey of nursing homes in 1954, there were 9,000 homes classified as skilled nursing or personal care homes with skilled nursing facilities." It also states that "in 1950, amendments to the 1935 Social Security Act authorized payments to beneficiaries in public institutions and enabled direct payments to

health care providers. The 1950 legislation also required that participating states establish programs for licensing nursing homes."

A report by the Institute of Medicine (US) Committee on Implications of For-Profit Enterprise in Health Care states, "The nursing home industry has grown as a result of a multiplicity of factors. It has thrived on the infusion of public dollars (through a variety of programs), a growth in need due to changes in demographics and shifts in morbidity patterns toward chronic diseases, and the interplay of policies aimed at other institutions (e.g., almshouses, mental institutions, and acute care hospitals)."

I mention the above as a context for our current views on growing older and the accompanying concerns. In plain English, between 1920 and 1970, there was a shift in our society mainly due to changes in legislation, population increases, changing attitudes about elder care, the beginning of economic shifts that necessitated dual-income households, the increased need of medical supervision, and decreases in family size.

And so, housing our elderly family members in elder care facilities became an acceptable option due to necessity and economic factors.

This shift from having multigenerational households to separating younger family members from our older relatives has led to a limited and more negative view of aging. It is more difficult to see the gifts of our older family members and gifts we receive as we age.

In an interview in the early 1980's, the

actress Betty Davis said, «Old age ain't no place for sissies." Since then, variations on this statement have popped up like weeds in our society. I have heard: "Getting old isn't for the weak." "Getting old isn't for the timid." "Getting old isn't for the feint of heart."

But like many weeds, there may be medicine in them we don't yet recognize. By medicine, I am referring to what helps. If all we do is focus on what we can't do or what hurts today, we are blind to the what we have now, what we didn't have before.

The most important of these, which is the least obvious, is strength. Yes, strength.

It is probably not the physical strength we had when we were younger. It is the strength of being alive. It is our resilience.

Our strength is the wisdom we have earned and gained through our difficulties. Our most profound learning comes from being challenged on the body, mind, spirit levels.

If we have lived, we have had the opportunity to gain wisdom.

I am not talking about an idealized, capital "W," wisdom. I am talking about the wisdom that comes from the day to day living and learning what helps us and those around us. This day to day learning is unique to each of us. Many people can read books. That is simply knowledge. Wisdom comes from paying attention to the world around us and using it. If wisdom is too fancy a word for you, then call it experience.

Life is a gift. If we are alive, there must still be a purpose for our living. When my mother, Helen, broke her second hip within 10 months of breaking her first at the age of 94, she began to lose the will to live. She asked me and my brother

to look into assisted dying. She lived in Washington state where it is legal.

We inquired, and since her broken hip was treatable, the doctors said assisted dying was not an option. They did not consider her mind or spirit. Helen asked me, "Why am I still alive?"

I replied, "You must still have a reason to live, a purpose you don't see. It might be that you still have something to learn or something to teach. So, you either need to pay more attention to life or my brother and I need to get our act together to learn what you have to teach us."

Helen lived two more years living in our family home, cared for by her grandson. She experienced chronic pain and limited mobility. She also discovered the reason she was still alive.

Helen recovered her will to live by recognizing we weren't ready for her to die.

She still had to teach us how to live when she was gone. We had more to learn. She also wanted us to remain together as a family despite any differences.

Her purpose for living was to be love and in doing so, she taught us to be love, too.

Our strength always lies in what we can do. Our strength lies in recognizing that if we are alive we still have a purpose.

That purpose may be as simple as finding the beauty of the world around us and learning to love unconditionally.

I didn't say it would be easy, and it will be worth the effort because it is the most important thing we can do for ourselves and others.

Jefferson Breland is a board-certified acupuncture licensed in Pennsylvania and Maryland with offices in Gettysburg. He can be reached at 410-336-5876.

County Health Rankings

The 2025 County Health Rankings released its annual update of county health data today along with a new model that shows how community conditions, where we live, learn, work and play, affect our collective health and well-being. Frederick County continues to rank well above the national and state average and among the healthiest counties in Maryland for both Population Health and Well-being, how long and well people live on average within a community, and Community Conditions, which includes our health infrastructure, physical environment, and social and economic factors.

The new County Health Rankings model shows that a wide range of factors influence how well we live, and that the written and unwritten societal rules and who has power in our communities also influences our health and well-being.

"Models like this can help us understand how our options, choices, environment, relationships, community, and society all influence our health in a complex way," stated Dr. Barbara Brookmyer, Frederick County Health Officer. "When we see all the things that impact our health, we can address root causes of inequities, work with our community to identify and remove barriers, and help all our residents live their healthiest lives."

The 2025 County Health Rankings Report highlighted many areas

of strength in Frederick County, such as low percentage of uninsured residents. In the physical environment area, our strengths included only 70% of the workforce driving alone to work, and 93% of households having broadband internet connection. Social and economic factors such as high rates of high school completion, adults having some college, low rates of children in poverty, and low rates of income inequality, and low numbers of injury deaths were identified as strengths.

Some new factors were added to this year's report, such as library access and access to parks, as well as mental health factors like feelings of loneliness and lack of social and emotional support. These new factors, along with the changes reflected in the new County Health Rankings model, reinforce the findings of the recently released Community Health Needs Assessment that is currently open for public comment. Additionally, Frederick County's newly identified local health improvement priorities of food & nutrition, affordable housing, mental health, and racial equity & justice are in line with the County Health Rankings report, indicating that these issues are consistently top priorities for Frederick County. More information about the new priorities and details on how to join a workgroup are available at HealthierFrederick.org.



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HEALTH AND FITNESS

Spring temperatures are great exercise motivators!

Linda Stultz
Certified Fitness Trainer

The warm weather has finally arrived and we can put Winter's cold winds behind us. Spring is a great time to start that walking, jogging or bike program you have been thinking about. The weather is warm and pleasant and it feels great to get outside since it is not freezing anymore. Some people like to walk or exercise in the cold weather but most are more likely to start and stick to an outside exercise routine when the weather is nice.

Spring is also a busy time, cleaning up the yard from the winter and clearing out the flower beds. Getting the ground ready to plant a vegetable garden is another big job. It's a good idea to go for a few walks, maybe rake the leaves left from the fall or do some type of medium exercise before you jump right into the harder, more intense work of the summer. Get your muscles and body stretched out and built up before you start those big summer jobs you knew were just around the corner.

I think everyone enjoys getting out in the warm sunshine after a long, cold winter. Sunshine is the best way to get Vitamin D that we all need. Just ten to fifteen minutes a day in the morning sun, before the sun gets really hot and the rays are strong can be enough to boost and maintain our vitamin D level. Of course, sunscreen is extremely important to protect our skin from harmful rays that come later in the day and can bum skin quickly.

Eating healthy and moderately, staying hydrated, thinking positively and exercise are all part of achieving our

health goals. Finding an exercise that is both enjoyable and beneficial and one that you will stick with is key. Challenging others in a group setting may be the way for some people to start, stick to and achieve the weight and health goal they are looking for. Some people may need to challenge themselves and work on the things they want to accomplish on their own. Whatever works for you, the important thing is to compile a plan and get started on it. You may find you change course a few times until you figure out what is going to work for you. Health and fitness is not a one size fits all program, just don't give up. Keep looking for and challenging yourself until you find your routine and see the progress you are searching for. I've written some of these ideas in previous articles but I find reminders are always helpful. We can hear or read something several times but it may not register in our mind. I find if we are thinking about making a change or if something in our life or the life of a family member or friend is happening and you hear the same idea, it just may be the time it makes you remember and incorporate it into your life. Sometimes things happen just at the right time and it can be a sign that it's time for you to make a change.

I always tell people to Keep Moving, you will be glad you did and I firmly believe that. I'm always looking for new ways and ideas to help people find the right plan for them so if you have any ideas I would like to hear them. You can send me your ideas or give me a call at 717-334-6009. Working together is the best way I have found to help each other. Enjoy the warm weather!



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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of April

Professor Wayne Wooten

For April the waxing crescent moon passes just north of Jupiter on April 2nd. On April 4th, the first quarter moon passes just above Mars. The full moon, the Egg Moon, is on April 12th. The moon is last quarter on April 20th. In the dawn on April 24th, the waning crescent moon lies just to the left of bright Venus and below it, fainter Saturn; it lies to the right of the pair the following dawn, and just to upper right of Mercury near the horizon. The new moon is April 27th, and on the 30th, the waxing crescent again passes by bright Jupiter at dusk.

At the start of March, Mercury and Venus lay in the west after sunset. Now both have passed between us and the Sun into the dawn sky. Venus is brilliant in the dawn as April begins, just north of much fainter Saturn. Venus is at its brightest on April 27th. Mercury joins the pair at month's end.

Still in the evening sky, Jupiter is well up in west after sunset as April begins, but much lower by month's end. Mars is higher in the sky, in Gemini, and will stick around in the evening sky until the end of summer.

While the naked eye, dark adapted by several minutes away from any bright lights, is a wonderful instrument to stare up into deep space, far beyond our own Milky Way, binoculars are better for spotting specific deep sky objects. For a detailed map of northern hemi-



The Sombrero Galaxy (also known as M-104) is a galaxy in the constellation borders of Virgo and Corvus. It is slightly bigger in size than the Milky Way. It has a bright nucleus, an unusually large central bulge, and a prominent dust lane in its outer disk, which from Earth is viewed almost edge-on. The dark dust lane and the bulge give it the appearance of a sombrero hat (thus the name). It is easily visible with amateur telescopes. Its large bulge, central supermassive black hole, and dust lane all attract the attention of professional astronomers.

sphere skies visit the www.skymaps.com website and download the map for April; it will have a more extensive calendar, and list of best objects for the naked eyes, binoculars, and scopes on the back of the map. Also available is wonderful video exploring the April sky, available from the Hubble Space Telescope website at: www.hubblesite.com. Sky and Telescope has highlights at www.skyandtelescope.com/observing.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the northwestern sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pol-

lux highlight the Gemini. South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the southern sky at dusk.

The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. The bright diamond of four stars that light it up are the trapezium cluster, one of the finest sights in a telescope. In the east are the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises minutes before Sir-

ius, the brightest star in the sky. At 8 light years, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see here.

To the northeast, look for the Big Dipper rising, with the top two stars of the bowl, the pointers, giving you a line to find Polaris, the Pole Star. Look for Mizar-Alcor, a nice naked eye double star, in the bend of the big dipper's handle. Take the pointers at the front of the dipper's bowl south instead to the head of Leo, looking much like the profile of the famed Sphinx.

The bright star at the Lion's heart is Regulus, the "regal star". Now take the curved handle of the Big Dipper, and follow the arc SE to bright orange Arcturus, the brightest star of the spring sky. Studies of its motion

link it to the Sagittarius Dwarf Galaxy, a companion of our Milky Way being tidally disrupted and spilling its stars above and below the plane of the Milky Way, much like dust falling away from a decomposing comet nucleus. So this brightest star of Bootes the Bear Driver is apparently a refugee from another galaxy, but now trapped by our Galaxy's gravity.

Now spike south to Spica, the blue-white gem in Virgo rising in the SE. Virgo is home to many galaxies, as we look away from the obscuring gas and dust in the plane of the Milky Way into deep space. To the southwest of Spica is the four sided Crow, Corvus. To the ancient Greeks, Spica was associated with Persephone, daughter of Ceres, goddess of the harvest. She was abducted by her suitor Pluto, carried down to Hades (going to Hell for a honeymoon!) and when Jupiter worked out a compromise between the newlyweds and the angry mother-in-law, the agreement dictated Persephone come back to the earth's surface for six months of the year, and Mama Ceres was again placated, and the crops could grow again.

As you see Spica rising in the SE, it is time to "plant your peas", and six months from now, when Spica again disappears in the sun's glare in the SW, you need to "get your corn in the crib"...so was set our calendar of planting and harvesting in antiquity. There is indeed a rich harvest in Virgo, of galaxies. Between Spica and Corvus is M-104, the famed "Sombrero".

Farmers' Almanac

"Here cometh April again, and as far as I can see the world hath more fools in it than ever."

—Charles Lamb (1835-1910)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Dry and mild at first, then warmer with showers and thunderstorms, then turning much cooler and dry (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); rain and mild, then much colder with flurries west followed by more rain and milder temperatures (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); unseasonably warm with heavy rain then dry and cooler (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); chilly at night and warm during the day, then warm and humid with rain and thunderstorms, then cooler and dry (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); dry and turning warmer then showers and storms and turning much cooler with a light frost (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); turning very warm and dry, then rain and cooler (26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

Severe Weather Watch: The Town and Country Almanack sees high winds (3, 4, 5), hard freeze (7, 8), heavy rain (12, 13) and another hard freeze (23).

Full Moon: April's Full Moon will occur on April 12th. Many Native American tribes referred to it as Fish Moon because the fishing starts to improve as the weather

warms up. It also has been called Pink Moon because of the many pretty flowers that begin to display their bright pink hues as they bloom throughout the month.

Special Notes: April Fool's Day falls on Tuesday, April 1st in 2025. Watch out for practical jokes and pranks that may be coming your way from family, co-workers, and even your friends! Earth Day is observed on Monday, April 22nd. Check out The Earth Day Network, at 202-518-0044, and at www.earthday.net offers some interesting, fun, and easy activities that you and your family can do that will help promote a healthier relationship with our fragile Mother Earth! Arbor Day falls on Wednesday, April 30th. Go to www.arborday.org/ for more on The Arbor Day Foundation's mission, which focuses on helping others understand and use trees as a solution to the many global issues we face today that include air quality, water quality, a rapidly changing climate, deforestation, poverty, and hunger.

Holidays: Easter Sunday falls on April 20th in 2025. Celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, by attending the church of your choice and enjoying a fine meal with family and/or friends

The Garden: Set out annuals and other perennials now. Cool season vegetables, such as spinach, lettuce, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and beets can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked. A good test of "soil readiness" is to take a handful of soil and squeeze it. If it remains in a ball, it's too moist and should be allowed to dry further. If it crumbles, start planting! Begin planting indoor seedlings outdoors. Harden them off first with several short days outside under cover.

The Farm: Best days for planting root crops (19, 20); weeding and stirring the soil (29, 30); planting above-ground crops (4, 5); harvesting all crops (16, 17, 18); to set hens and incubators (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21); the slaughtering and butchering of meats (1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, 30); transplanting (1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, 30); harvesting and storing of grain (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); weaning of animals and livestock (16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

Gardens are for all ages: the young for hope of the future, the elderly, for fond memories of the past, and for those in between, the rewards of a good life, now.



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COMPUTER Q&A

When to say goodbye to your old computer

Ayse Stenabaugh
Jesters Computer
Fairfield

In the rapidly advancing field of technology, deciding to replace your computer can be a complex decision for many users. Several factors must be considered when assessing whether an upgrade to your existing system or purchasing a new one is more appropriate. Two primary considerations are the device's compatibility with the latest operating systems, such as Windows 11, and the age of the hardware. This, along with the additional information provided below, will assist you in making an informed decision based on what best suits your needs.

OS Compatibility

Whether you are a Mac user or a Windows user, having compatible hardware is critical to ensure that you can stay up to date with the latest supported operating system. While it may not seem important to you to have the latest operating system, users on unsupported systems will no longer receive critical security updates and over time software support will become unavailable.

Performance and User Experience

Even if your computer meets the minimum requirements, users should consider whether it will provide a satisfactory user experience with Windows 11. Systems that are already experiencing slowness, have not been maintained or are out of date are not good candidates for an upgrade to Windows 11. Furthermore, older hardware may struggle to keep up with the demands of the new operating system, leading to slower performance and potential compatibility issues with new software applications. If you are already running Windows 10 on your PC you can determine if your system is compatible with Windows 11 by running the PC Health Check app which can be downloaded on the Microsoft Website.

Age of the Hardware

The age of your computer's hardware is another critical factor to consider when deciding on a replacement. Take into consideration that as computers age, they undergo wear and tear, affecting your systems performance and reliability. Components such as hard drives, cooling fans, and batteries have limited lifespans and may fail over time. An older computer is more likely to experience hardware failures, which can result in data loss and costly repairs. If reliability is an important factor, replacing your computer may be a more appealing option for you.

Technological Advancements

Technology advances rapidly, and older hardware may struggle to keep up with the latest software and applications. Newer comput-

ers come equipped with faster processors, more efficient memory, and improved connectivity options. Upgrading to a modern computer can enhance your productivity and provide better overall user experience. Users who rely on their computer for demanding tasks such as video editing, gaming, or programming, may find that an upgrade may be necessary to ensure optimal performance. Conversely, for those using the computer for basic tasks like browsing the web and checking email, your current device may suffice.

Cost of Repairs and Upgrades

Evaluate the cost of repairing or upgrading your current computer compared to purchasing a new one. If your computer requires significant repairs or upgrades to meet your needs, it may be more cost-effective to invest in a new device. Knowing how much life you can expect from your device can help you to determine whether replacing your device is a good financial decision. If maintained properly, desktop computers have an average life expectancy of 7-10 years. Laptops, All-in-one computers

and devices that are more susceptible to heat buildup have an average life expectancy of 3-5 years. The individual components installed in your device, how you use your device and how you maintain your device can have a big impact on the true-life expectancy of your device.

Replacing Your Device: Next Steps

Many users report experiencing frustration when changing to a new device. There are several things that you can do to prepare ahead of time to make the transition to Windows 11 easier. First, know that when you get your new device there will be some initial setup involved. You may want to consider any software that you have installed on your old device (Such as Microsoft Office, QuickBooks etc.) that you may want to use on your new device. Since software cannot be transferred from one device to another you will need to plan on how to download and install the software that you want to use. In most cases data will not automatically be transferred to your new device. Lastly, if you are using a printer, you will



need to ensure that your printer will be compatible with your new device, and you may need to take additional steps to configure your printer to work with your laptop.

If you'd rather have your device professionally set up, get in touch with Jester's Computer Services in Fair-

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AFFORDABLE HOUSING

2025 Affordable Housing Policy

Gary Bennett and Hugh Gordon

On March 10, Frederick County's Affordable Housing Council (hereafter referred to as "the Council") released its 2025 affordable housing policy priorities.

The Council advises Frederick city and county government officials on housing policy and advocates for safe, sanitary and affordable housing for all Frederick County lower- and middle-income households.

The policy priorities for 2025 do not take into consideration matters likely to be covered by Frederick County's new housing needs assessment and strategic plan currently in the planning stages. The study is being conducted by TPMA Consultants and the county's Division of Housing. Once the draft is presented for public comment, the Council will respond. Following final county approval of the study, the Council will incorporate recommendations from the study into its policy priorities for 2026.

The 2025 policy priorities outlined below are matters deemed important enough to go forward without waiting for completion of

the housing needs assessment study.

- Streamline Frederick County's and the City of Frederick's building permitting process.

At a September 2024 meeting hosted by the Council, non-profit and for-profit developers and builders indicated that the permitting process is overly cumbersome and costly. The Council has contacted city and county officials to establish a strategy and action plan to resolve permitting obstacles, working with the public sector and developer/builder stakeholders to address these matters with established timelines.

- Encourage municipalities, the public and other stakeholders beyond the City of Frederick and Frederick County to develop relationships with the Council regarding housing policy best practices.

The Council will develop a strategy and action plan in the second quarter of 2025 to address specific municipalities at public forums. Independent of this effort, the Council will reach out to invite municipal officials, the public and stakeholders to monthly Council meetings.

- Continue working with Frederick County and municipalities on implementation of area plans as part of the Livable Fredrick Master Plan.

As such, the Council will continue its active participation with the Housing Element Advisory Group and offer recommendations. It is also working with the county on attaining the goals set out in the 2023 county executive's Housing and Quality of Life Transition Plan.

- Appoint a Council member or consultant to act as liaison with county and city legislative officials with a goal to accomplish the recommendations of the forthcoming Frederick County Housing Needs Assessment and Strategic Plan.

Hugh Gordon, chair of the Council, commented that accomplishing these priorities demonstrate a proactive effort on the part of the Council to address one of the greatest needs existing in the Frederick community: "The need for affecting implementation and the potential for assisting seniors, school teachers, police

officers, firefighters, restaurant workers, and other vulnerable residents of Frederick County to achieve their dream of living in a safe, sanitary and affordable home."

Historically, the Council has been quite successful in developing housing priorities and encouraging elected officials to give them fair consideration.

Last year, the Council was instrumental in advocating to update the city's Moderately Priced Development Units (MPDU) ordinance. The ordinance now encourages increased development of affordable housing in the city by requiring developers to pay \$2 per square foot for every unit in the development if they opt out of building the required number of MPDUs.

The Council also pushed for updating the 2016 Frederick County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment study to better reflect current housing and economic realities and to develop a strategic plan to address the findings. This project is now in the early planning stages.

Finally, the Council has helped institute the implementation of the City of Frederick's rental registration and inspection program and encouraged municipalities in the county to allow con-

struction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs), many of which are doing that.

The Frederick County Affordable Housing Council meets the second Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm at a location designated by the Council. Confirm meeting dates and location by checking <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/6371/Affordable-Housing-Council> or by calling the Frederick County Division of Housing at 301-600-3518.

The issues are difficult but the stakes are high for all of us. The Frederick County Affordable Housing Council invites you to participate.

Meetings are open to the public and public participation is highly encouraged. Agendas can be obtained at the website noted above. Public comment is welcome at all meetings.

Gary Bennett is a retired association executive with no stake in the housing market except for being a concerned citizen. Hugh Gordon is the association executive for the Frederick County Association of Realtors and has decades of experience as a mortgage banker. They are long-time Frederick County residents and members of Frederick County's Affordable Housing Council.



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