

Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

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

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VHC inducts three into its Hall of Fame

For the first time in its history, at its 141st award banquet, the Vigilant Hose Company inducted three members of the Company into its perspicuous Hall of Fame. This year's recipients were Julie Davis, Denny Stahley and Mary Lou Little.

The recipients are nominated by current Hall of Fame members and are chosen based upon having made a lasting contribution to "the department, the community, and the region."

Recipient Julie Davis, wife of Hall of Fame member Mayor Frank Davis, was recognized for her 42+ years of service to the Company as a member of the Auxiliary. According to the President, Tim Clarke, Davis was the principal behind the scenes mover and shaker at most of the Company's fundraising events. "Regardless of the request, regardless of the hour and regardless of the sacrifice required, she never said 'no'."

"Her support and presence at just about every function of the organization is taken for granted and when they are not in attendance, ultimately, the questions of

their whereabouts are asked and if everything is okay. That is a testament of her dedication and commitment to the Vigilant Hose Company."

Denny Stahley joined the company in 1968, and has worn many hats over the years, including operational and administrative positions. Clarke noted that Stahley was always visible at fundraising events and instrumental in setting them up. "Stahley can always be located early in the morning at the fire station preparing coffee for everyone and making sure everyone has a good start to their day."

"Stahley," Clarke continued, "enjoys working with the supporting efforts of his wife, son, daughter and grandchildren who are also active in the Company. Stahley served on several committees throughout the year." Clarke praised Stahley for his efforts at "keeping track of all the sick and ill of the organization and making sure those individuals know that the organization is thinking about them and offering any support necessary to recover successfully. Stahley is a pleasure to be around. He has a pos-



Newly inducted VHC Hall of Fame members: Denny Stahley, Julie Davis, and Mary Lou Little.

itive, supportive attitude and has an outstanding sense of humor."

Last but not least, Mary Lou Little was inducted for her role in salvaging the old Emmitsburg Ambulance Company and overseeing its merger with the Vigilant Hose Company back in 2018.

Clarke recounted Little's 26-year involvement in the Ambulance Company, from her joining as a simple EMT back in 1992 to eventually rising to the role of President. Little, Clarke said, "worked hard to maintain the Ambulance Company as a viable organization." Her determination was tested mightily, Clarke said, and while some indi-

viduals would have walked away, she "kept fighting and eventually got the Ambulance Company back on its feet." These difficult times eventually led to the merger of the two companies, and we are all better for it, said Clarke.

Davis, Stahley and Little join Frank Davis, Austin Umbel, Steve Hollinger, Doug Orner, Jim Click, Dot Davis, Bob Rosensteel, Wayne Powell, Cliff Shriner, Steve Valentine, James Kittinger, John Glass, Tim Clarke, Carl White, Bill Boyd, Mike Orndorff, Gabe Baker and Chad Umbel, Scott Maly, and Jo Ann Boyd in the Company's Hall of Fame.

Emmitsburg hesitates on Main Street Program

Town Operations Specialist Brandy Malocha asked the Town Council on their interest in the State's Main Street Program. The Program was started in 1998 by the Maryland Department of Housing and Community Development to improve the economy and appearance of downtown business districts.

Currently, Emmitsburg is an official affiliate of the Main Street Program, meaning they are not full members but rather in the early stages of developing a program. Being an affiliate does offer perks similar to the original designation, but not as many as there would be if Emmitsburg was a full member. By becoming a full member of the Main Street Program, Emmitsburg can see more and larger grants that can be used to better the town, thus resulting in an increase of tourism to attract business. One example of an increase in benefits is as an affiliate, Emmitsburg receives \$10,000 in improvement grants, however as full members, they can get \$25,000 annually.

Malocha said that one of the most important things that needs to be done before applying for the official designation is to hire a Main Street manager. The Main Street manager would be required to do

20 to 25 hours a week, concentrating on the plans to revitalize and improve the Commercial District of Town. This includes creating tactics to increase business to the town, maintaining and improving the historic character of the downtown area, organizing events, and the overall management of the Program and its volunteers.

Although the Program does include funding from the State level, it does need its initial boost from the Town to demonstrate that it can provide a sustainable funding program. Typically, a Main Street program submits an annual action plan that details how it plans to spend the money, what sort of matching funds it's providing, and then, after spending the money, it will also provide receipts to the State for reimbursement. The Program awards a set \$20,000-25,000 grant annually to each Main Street Town.

Another big requirement is having established and running committees with volunteers. This has proven challenging for Malocha to find volunteers for the Town's current programs due to the lack of participation by the town's businesses. "If you look at some of our committees that we are struggling to fill, it's always



the same people," she said. "It's wonderful and I'm glad that we have support, but it's limited."

Commissioner Valerie Turnquist was in favor of the Program from the start of Malocha's presentation. However, she did ask whether the Town has enough businesses to warrant the Program's benefits. With this question in mind, Town Manager Cathy Willets suggested the Town formally gauge interest from residents and business owners before doing any extra legwork. "If you don't have the support of

your residents and you don't have the support of your businesses, this is a waste of time," she said.

Malocha told the Council that it would take three to five years to address all of the requirements before applying to be full members of the Program. After discussing the requirements to be full members and the difficulties involved, the Council decided to remain affiliates of the Program until more businesses move into town and the other requirements can be filled.

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EMMITSBURG NEWS

Town receives \$15,000 grant

Emmitsburg, along with other local communities, was awarded \$15,000 from the Sustainable Maryland Action Grant, a new grant awarded by the Sustainable Maryland Program.

The Sustainable Maryland Program's mission is "to provide opportunities for Maryland municipalities to continue to thrive and build a better tomorrow," according to their website. The new grant is especially helpful in aiding applicants that are looking for a greener lifestyle by "protecting their natural assets, reducing their carbon footprint, and revitalizing and improving the long-term quality of life for current and future generations."

The new grant is primarily funded by the State of Maryland with contributions from local, county and federal governments, as well as foundations and corporations. The Program was created in 2022. A portion of the State's annual budget is set aside to support community type sustainability efforts and is designed

to bridge the gap between a municipality's budget and state funding.

Although a free and voluntary program, municipalities were required to register and be certified with the Sustainable Maryland Program to qualify for grant money. Certification involves establishing "green" action plans and then implementing and completing a required number of actions. By doing so, the municipality earns points that qualify them to be a part of the Program. These actions can include a variety of choices, such as creating insect hotels, developing pet waste programs, creating renewable energy options and much more.

A certification is good for three years before needing to recertify. The Program awarded anywhere from \$5,000 to \$20,000. Emmitsburg received \$15,000, with plans to use the money to improve the Cedar Avenue Community Garden extension. The improvements must be completed by January 2026.

Other purposes that the grant money

can be used for include community garden improvements, electric vehicle charging stations, climate action planning (climate plans, greenhouse gas inventories, flood risk planning), renewable energy sources (solar panels, solar parking canopies), green infrastructure (rain gardens, bioswale, pervious paving, green roofs), biodiversity (native plantings, pollinator meadows and corridors), energy efficiency (energy audits, LED streetlights, heat pumps, high-efficiency HVACs, white roofs), bicycle and pedestrian infrastructure or planning (bike lanes, bike parking, safe routes to school), land preservation and enhancements (parks, trails, easements, tree canopy plans) and outreach and educational programming.

Nine towns in total were awarded grants from across the State: Bowie, Emmitsburg, Frostburg, Gaithersburg, Galena, Hampstead, Laurel, Middletown and Mount Airy. The total funds awarded were \$120,000.

Town passes financial audit

At the January Council meeting, the Town's financial audit for FY-23/24 was presented to the mayor and Town Council. The audit reviewed the Town's financial records to determine if the Town is following correct accounting principles, as well as the accuracy of their financial statements.

The time period reviewed was July 1, 2023 through June 30, 2024. Overall, the auditors found the Town's financials to be in order, with two discrepancies. They looked at the General Fund and the Business Fund. The Town's assets exceeded its liabilities by \$631,758, also known as a net position. The biggest contributor to this increase was due to capital grants and contributions, increasing from \$294,012 in FY-23 to \$523,520 in FY24.

The General Fund is the primary operating fund of the Town; it receives funds through various mechanisms, including taxes, licenses and permit fees. The

General Fund is where the Town accesses funds for items such as the majority of staff payroll, insurance and pension payments, new police cars, etc.


The Business Fund is broken down further into three separate funds: the Sanitary Sewer Enterprise Fund, the Water Enterprise Fund and the Stormwater Management Enterprise Fund, with the last being a non-major fund. These funds are primarily financed through quarterly homeowner water payments and hookup fees for new homes and businesses. Money in the Water Enterprise Fund is used to pay for the upkeep of the Town's water and sewer systems and salaries of staff who operate them and is considered self-sustaining.

Both the General Fund and Business Fund are considered separate accounts and the expenses and revenues are audited separately. When combined, their assets total \$44.4 million (\$8.9 million in the General

Fund and \$35.5 million in the Business Fund). The Town's liabilities total \$7.3 million (\$1 million in the General Fund and \$6.3 million in the Business Fund), which is considerably less than the assets, with a total net position of \$33.9 million after all funds and capital projects are considered.

Total revenues for the Town were \$5,599,401, which was 14.4% higher than last fiscal year (\$3,095,742 for General Fund and \$2,503,659 for the Water Fund). These higher revenues were generated from increases in utility charges for both the Water and Sewer Funds' services, as well as the \$300,000 in ARPA funds that were transferred from the Capital Project Fund to the Water Fund for operating expenses. Total expenses were \$4,967,643 (\$2,523,336 for the General Fund and \$2,444,307 for the Water Fund).

Real estate property tax is revenue listed



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under the General Fund, which was approved at 34 cents per \$100 of assessed property value, which is consistent with prior years. The generated revenue from this rate was \$878,509, an increase of \$48,986 over the last fiscal year.

Operating revenues for the Business Fund were \$2,038,138 (an increase of \$540,316, or 36.1%, from last year) due to the transfer of ARPA funds. Utility charges in the Water and Sewer Funds increased in FY24 to \$1,604,464 (up \$259,208). This was primarily due to the controversial 36% water rate increase implemented earlier in the year.

Operating expenses for the Business Fund were \$2,321,684 in FY24 (an increase of \$235,203, or 11.3%, from last year). The increases can be contributed to the purchasing of sup-

plies and repairs in both the Water and Sewer Funds.

The Capital Projects Fund revenues were \$307,800, a decrease of 43.5% compared to FY23 due to the transfer of ARPA funds. Expenses were \$677,900, a decrease of \$446,600, or 39.7%. Overall, FY24 saw an increase in revenue over expenditures of \$145,400 compared to a deficiency of \$171,000 in FY23.

The auditors found two discrepancies in the Town's financial records. The first was due to inadequate reporting in how the Town reports and requests reimbursements for grant funding. The second discrepancy involved the cost of Capital projects and how they are reported. These combined reduced grant revenues by \$323,103 but did not affect the Town's bottom line.

Residents asked to assist in lead pipe survey

Like all municipalities, Emmitsburg is currently working on the Lead and Copper Rule Revision mandate

that was released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency in 2021. The project requires the Town to identify the

composition of the water lines to every house and categorize the service line materials as "Lead, Galvanized Requiring Replacement, Non-lead" or "Lead Status Unknown."

A complete service line material inventory was required to be done by October of 2024, with a complete replacement plan needed by 2027. The mandate requires every lead and galvanized pipe in the Nation to be replaced by 2034.

The inventory must include all water supply lines to each home or building, regardless of ownership or current use of the house; meaning even if a house is vacant or abandoned, it must be inspected.

The Town must also notify the homeowner, if they discover that their connection to the Town's water system is through lead pipes, with a recommendation to replace the pipes. Replacement, however, will be at the expense of the homeowner. The Town is responsible for lines traveling from the water plant to the water main while home-

owners are responsible from the main to their residence.

Per the 1986 Safe Drinking Water Act, lead water pipes were banned for use in drinking water and distribution. Maryland, however, had prohibited the use of lead water pipes in 1972, a prohibition that was subsequently enacted in Frederick County building codes by the prohibition of lead water pipes in homes.

Because Maryland banned the use of lead water pipes in 1972, the MDE Lead Pipe Inventory criteria calls for Towns to prioritize the inspection of water pipe connections for homes built before 1972. However, the inventory still requires a certification for all homes, which will require the Town to document that homes built after 1972 were built to the updated code. This also allows the Town to rule out non-lead lines based on when the home was built.

According to Town Manager Cathy Willets, the second round of survey letters notifying residents of the required information went out in November.

As of December, the Town is aware of 2 lead, 16 galvanized, 571 non-lead and 473 unknowns, due to lack of information on either the Town or customer side. The survey does require residents to photograph their lines, which, according to Willets, was missing on some surveys, thus making them "unknowns."

The Town will be required to verify a minimum of 20% of all unknown lines; this is approximately 95 to 100 homes to date, costing the Town an estimated \$70,000 to \$100,000. To do this the Town has two options: one is by excavation, which is costly and requires digging the pipes up. The second option is a camera system called "Swordfish" that can travel down the pipes to view their construction. The camera option is less invasive and less costly at an estimated \$67,000. There is a federal grant available to cover the cost of verification.

The Town's goal in 2025 is to eliminate as many "unknowns" as possible. Residents are encouraged to continue doing the surveys and taking the required photo of their service lines.



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FAIRFIELD/CARROLL VALLEY NEWS

Carroll Valley hopes citizens remove holding tanks

Carroll Valley residents who have holding tanks on their property are likely to soon shell out more money to have them emptied.

The borough council unanimously approved a request for bids for a holding tank waste hauler during its January meeting. Borough Manager Dave Hazlett said the request was necessitated by an attorney pointing out that the borough never previously advertised the service for competitive bids.

Hazlett said about 90-100 Carroll Valley properties have holding tanks,

which collect anything that goes down a drain or toilet. Residents must have their holding tank pumped every two weeks at a cost of about \$55 to \$75 per pump. The borough's requirement for biweekly collection is based on a recommendation from the Pennsylvania Department of Environmental Protection. Residents who have holding tanks must have them pumped biweekly, regardless of whether they are using the home.

Hazlett suspects the mandated bid will result in increased fees, which are

paid for entirely by the homeowner. An alternative, Hazlett said, is to remove holding tanks.

"We are prepared to help holding tank customers explore the options available to them," he said.

Hazlett said holding tanks began to appear in Carroll Valley in the 1990s when the borough council pushed for more home construction. Some of these homes, Hazlett said, could be connected to a septic tank, which only needs to be pumped about every three years because it treats water and releases

it into the ground.

Hazlett acknowledged that connecting to a septic tank will involve up-front costs but the requirement to only pump every three years will lead to long-term savings. Assistant Borough Manager Gail Marthers said grants or low-interest loans are available to help cover costs.

Marthers said residents often complain that their holding tank fills too quickly. She shares water-saving tips such as taking shorter showers or turning the water off while brushing teeth.

"If you have three children and want to take 20-minute showers everyday, it just doesn't work," she said.

Marthers and Hazlett said complaints often come from new homeowners unaware of a holding tank's limitations.

"I think it is fair to say the real estate process lets people down," Hazlett said.

Hazlett said the borough staff are eager to help property owners find alternatives to holding tanks.

"To be quite frank about it, we will roll out the red carpet for you," he said.

Borough police officers busy in 2024

The demand for the Carroll Valley Borough Police Department is on the rise.

Police Chief Cliff Weikert announced during January's council meeting that the department responded to 1,807 calls in Carroll Valley throughout 2024, a 38% increase compared to 2023. The department also provides coverage to nearby Fairfield Borough and responded to 641 calls there, Weikert said.

Carroll Valley and Fairfield citizens rely on Pennsylvania State

Police when local officers are not on duty. In 2024, state police responded to 85 calls, a 45% decrease from 2023, Weikert said. The chief noted the decline was despite the local department not being fully staffed until May.

Mental health-related calls are on the rise, Weikert said. The department responded to 102 mental health/welfare checks, a 55% increase from 2023. Weikert praised the work of McKenzie Johnson, a Wellspan employee who is a trained crisis intervention specialist. John-

son co-responds with police officers to ensure the residents are getting the help they need.

"A lot of times when they are in crisis, that's what they need—to talk to someone," Weikert said.

Traffic stops are also on the rise. In 2024, officers stopped 480 vehicles. Weikert noted the increase could be attributed to more officers on the road.

In a related matter, the council unanimously voted to abolish the Public Safety Committee. Borough Manager Dave Hazlett said

the committee has met four times since December 2016 and not once since March 2022.

Hazlett told the board that the committee was only an advisory board and council often discusses matters that would fall under its purview. For example, the council recently discussed asking PennDOT to add a traffic light to the intersection of Route 116 and 16 and add yellow reflectors along Route 116. Resident Steve Semiatin submitted both requests.

If the committee was active, council

would need to tell Semiatin to go to the Public Safety Committee meeting. The committee would discuss it and make a recommendation that would ultimately land back on council's agenda.

"We try to avoid red tape as much as we can at the local level," Hazlett said. "That really does add a level of red tape to the problem."

At the beginning of the meeting, Councilman John Schubring continued his plea for an independent investigation into the police department and Mayor Ron Harris concerning an alleged tailgating incident in April. Council allowed Schubring to speak but did not respond to his comments.

Liberty appoints new police chief and sergeant

Liberty Township supervisors began their year by welcoming new leadership to the police department.

Supervisors Walter "Mickey" Barlow and Bobby Keiholtz unanimously appointed Terry DeWitt as full-time police chief and Ryan Morris as sergeant. Supervisor Chris Hill was absent. DeWitt and Morris will be paid \$32 and \$25.50 per hour, respectively.

DeWitt joined the police force as its officer-in-charge in August after the resignation of Chief Don Boehs. Boehs remains a part-time patrol officer on the township staff. Since taking office, DeWitt has upgraded many aspects of the police department, including purchasing spike strips, new patch and car logos, and new rifles.

"Since you have been here, we have brought the township police department forward by leaps and bounds,"

Barlow said. "Job well done; we look forward to working with you."

DeWitt also reported that Patrol Officer Kenny Hassinger upgraded the department's evidence room and inventoried its contents. In the near future, DeWitt will present a list of inventory that he recommends should be purged, sold, or donated.

The Liberty Township Police Department also provides protection to Highland and Freedom townships. DeWitt said officers

responded to 923 complaints in 2024, with the majority being traffic or domestic incidents.

While the police department adapts to several changes, the Board Of Supervisors is continuing with the status quo. During their annual reorganization meeting, Barlow was named Chair, Keiholtz was appointed Vice Chair, and Hill was elected Secretary.

Elected officials in the township will receive a pay raise when

their next term begins. Pennsylvania law states supervisors cannot change the rate of pay for elected officials while they are in office.

The elected auditors will receive \$15 per hour, a \$5 per hour pay raise. The auditors' sole job is to set the rate of pay for working supervisors since the township hires a professional auditing firm to ensure its financial records are in order. The township tax collector will receive 3% of each bill collected, an increase from a

flat rate of \$1.50 per bill. Supervisors' pay will be changed from \$1,200 annually to \$3,145 per year.

During their annual reorganization, the auditors set Barlow's roadmaster salary at \$25.09 per hour. Last year, Keiholtz asked the auditors to set Barlow's salary higher than his since Barlow oversees the department and holds more certifications. The auditors granted his request and set Keiholtz's salary at \$24.46 per hour.

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THURMONT NEWS

Residents sued by Simmers Farm developer

Thurmont residents flocked to the January Planning and Zoning Commission meeting where Daniel Cross, of Cross and Company, once again asked for annexation of the 24.5-acre Simmers property off Apples Church Road while simultaneously suing the residents of the neighboring Albert Courts Community, the Town of Thurmont, Frederick County, two HOAs and a construction company.

The controversial annexation has been before the Commission as well as the Town Council multiple times over the last few years with various proposals.

The property consists of seven acres zoned R-5 (high density development) in Town, and another 16.7 acres zoned agriculture in the County.

Thurmont is unique in that one requirement for any annexation request is a detailed concept plan for the property. In early 2022, Cross presented the required plans to develop the 24.5 acres into at least 172 residential units, as well as an assisted-living facility. The

Planning and Zoning Commission approved the annexation of the 16.7 acres and rezoned it to R-5 which matched the other seven acres later that year. In response, residents pushed for the decision to be put to a referendum. Two months later a petition was submitted in opposition to the annexation which triggered a vote on the Annexation Resolution 2022-03 and the annexation was overturned in January of 2023.

More than a year later, Cross unveiled a new concept plan specific to the seven acres already within Town limits calling it "Albert Meadows". The Plan offered the Town a choice: 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 of 102 dwellings instead of the original 172, a decrease of 42%. Under the second option, Cross and Company intended on addressing a derelict silt pond that was part of a larger stormwa-

ter facility on the Simmer's parcel that is left over from the construction of the Albert Courts Community from 1992.

This facility is the center of a lawsuit filed by Cross and Company in May of 2024 where they demanded the defendants remove the abandoned facility because its presence on the Simmers property prevents it from being developed.

According to the lawsuit, former owner of the Simmers property, Kenneth Simmers, granted permission to Gateway Enterprises (responsible for the Albert Courts community) a temporary stormwater drainage and management easement to temporarily serve Albert Courts while the community was being built. The Town of Thurmont also had a similar agreement with Gateway and the agreements placed both Gateway and Thurmont as responsible for any maintenance, repairs and operations of the facilities.

Once the Albert Courts community was completed, the Simmers property was supposed to be returned to its original condi-

tion and the easements cancelled. In 1996, Gateway built a temporary stormwater management facility with a portion of it within the easements and another portion outside. However, Cross and Company allege that after competition in 1997 Gateway and Thurmont failed to maintain the facility, thus abandoning it.

Albert Courts resident Alicia Kuchinsky questioned why the proposed annexation was even on the table when there is a pending lawsuit. "My fear is if the Town of Thurmont has another referendum, he [Cross] will hold us hostage," she said. "Until this [the lawsuit] is settled, nothing should be going forward."

Resident Deborah Schray was appalled at the news of a lawsuit. "That really says, 'I have money and I'm going to make you be quiet' doesn't it?" she asked. She also pointed out the challenge the sued homeowners have if they wanted to sell their homes with a pending lawsuit in place, "It really is a hostage situation," she said. She agreed with Kuchinsky that

nothing should go further with the annexation or development until the lawsuit is taken care of.

Of the over 30 residents that came to the meeting the most common concerns were increased traffic, school overcrowding, and the too high density. Concerns over affordability also prevailed at the meeting, with most wondering how much "affordable" really was. Other residents pointed out the possibility of the lawsuit being a direct retaliation to the referendum and wondered if it would be dropped if the annexation was approved for the second time. "This is a bogus lawsuit against the residents," said resident Judy Miller. "We are being used as pawns."

(The point of the discussion was to introduce annexation for the second time with a concept plan that has a lower density than before.) Given the whole article, feel this sentence is not necessary and distracting, think should just end with the last sentence as a closing. The Planning Commission opted to wait on any further discussion and hold a workshop in March to specifically discuss the issue.

ADUs back before Planning Commission

For the second time in two months, the Planning and Zoning Commission discussed allowing accessory dwelling units (ADUs) in Town. After a lengthy dialogue last month, the Commission agreed to ask Town staff to create a draft ordinance outlining all of the details discussed and researched from other municipalities.

The secondary housing units are gaining popularity for their affordability to rent or own, as well as for easy income opportunities. Also known as "tiny homes" and "in-law suites" amongst other names, they are placed on single-family residential lots and are currently allowed as conversions, not stand-alone

dwellings, in Thurmont.

The Thurmont Master Plan recommends providing affordable housing to accommodate the Town's changing housing needs as a long-term goal. This is one of the primary reasons for the Commission revisiting the topic. As before, commission members pointed out that the definition of affordable housing is vastly different for each person.

Another perk to ADUs is the ability to answer the affordable housing question without losing the "small town" feel. There is a financial benefit when renting them and the additional tax that the Town would receive when the ADU is added to a home increases the home's value.

The Commission has already decided on a couple of standards to follow: ADU size is limited to a max of 800 square feet, the max height of the ADU will be restricted, only one ADU is allowed per lot, the ADU must aesthetically match the existing dwelling, owner occupancy is required in at least one of the dwellings, at least one off street parking spot must be available, tree retention must be maintained on the property, and nearby neighbors must be notified of the intent to build an ADU. The Commission also discussed how corner lots will handle ADUs, how utilities will be handled, and building code requirements and how they would

be implemented in an ADU. Staff also recommended zoning certificates be required for any ADU.

The Commission considered whether ADUs could have reduced impact fees because of their small size, similar to what efficiency apartments have gotten in the past. However, Chair Meredith Wivell suggested the use of the ADU should be considered before waiving the fees. Vice Chair Greg Goodhart added that the initial use of the ADU should also impact these fees. After the discussion, they decided to not completely waive the fees, but instead to reduce them and to consider the impact fees along with water and sewer connection fees suggested by

Town Attorney Leslie Powell.

One suggestion was to develop a list of standards for ADUs; however, it was pointed out by Powell that by doing a needs analysis (where a caretaker dwelling may receive bigger fee discounts than an ADU built for income), the concept of a standard becomes hard to delineate.

Utilizing the examples from other municipalities as well as the meeting discussion points, Powell will be working on a mock ordinance for the Commission to review at a future meeting. The write-up will address the previously mentioned concerns as well as other questions directed at the Commission. Commission members will continue to research ADUs with other municipalities as well.

Final remaining ARPA funds reallocated before deadline

The Town Council voted to reallocate the remaining American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funds, which need to be spoken for by Dec. 31. The ARPA funds, leftover from an MS4 project, will be reallocated to three separate projects.

Town Manager Jim Humerick

first introduced a water infrastructure project with a budget of \$105,000 and the Council approved the reallocation unanimously. The project will involve installing a new tie to the water main at the North Center Street and Main Street intersection. "That's a definite need," he said.

Humerick went on to explain that the funding can also go toward preliminary work to replace the entire water main along N. Center St. The project would also include replacing a few fire hydrants throughout the Town as well. S-Works Construction will complete the project through the already-existing contract with Gordian, who has worked with the Town before and recommended the former for the project.

The Council also approved reallocating \$15,825 of the funds to build a garage building to house the Electric Department's digger derrick truck. The truck has been in a temporary "tent" structure since 2018, which, Humerick explained, does not sufficiently protect it, resulting in damage from weather and animals. "That truck needs to be in top operating form when it gets called out," he said. "We can't worry about the risk of something not operat-

ing because of exposure to weather." The Council approved Carolina Carport's bid of \$15,825 to build a 20'x40' structure with a 16' door to properly house and protect the truck.

After brief discussion, the Council approved the final \$11,732 to purchase two additional modules, permitting and fixed assets, for the Town's current financial software program. "It'll allow us to intake permits online as well as in person," Town Planner Kelly Duty said. "And we'll be able to review and inspect those permits that come in and be able to do it live and essentially email it almost instantly to the applicant."

The concern, brought up by Commissioner Bob Lookingbill, was the uncertainty regarding sending water/sewer and electric bills separately rather than at the same time—the latter being preferred to save the Town money. Humerick said he would look into it and the Council

agreed that the reallocation would be rescinded if the Town couldn't mail water/sewer and electric bills at the same time, in one envelope.

Humerick reminded Lookingbill and the Council that the funds need to be obligated by Dec. 31, so the Town will need to return the \$11,732 to the federal government if the funding for the additional modules is rescinded.

ARPA funds are provided to help finance infrastructure and "other qualified projects," according to Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird. According to the National League of Cities website, "ARPA regulations require local governments to return grant funding that remains unobligated beyond the December 2024 end-of-year deadline to the U.S. Department of Treasury — making this deadline one of the most important for cities, towns and villages."

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TANEYTOWN NEWS

Preparations begin for May's City Council election

With the start of a new year, a new election season also begins. Taneytown residents will have a chance to say something about who they want on their City Council, as there are three open Council seats in this election: Councilwoman Diane Foster's, Councilwoman Judith Fuller's and Councilwoman Elizabeth Chaney's. Mayor Christopher Miller, Mayor Pro Tem James McCarron and Councilman Christopher Tillman will remain on the Council until their terms finish.

Before the actual election on May fifth, there are other necessary requirements that must be fulfilled. It takes months of planning to get these requirements completed, thus why the Council is starting as early as January.

According to the City's Attorney Jay Gullo, the City must have a fully staffed election board well in advance of the actual election. This is necessary to allow the board time to approve the financial disclosure forms of the potential candidates before any of the candidates are certified as official candidates.

The board needs new appointments because many of the current members have already resigned or their terms have expired and they need to be re-appointed. Four people were nominated and approved to serve on the election board for a 2-year term, 2025 to 2027: Michelle Harris, Alex Kelly, Ruth Gwyn and Janice Hill.

The Ethics Commission must also be fully staffed and is critical later in the election process. Their duties include maintaining records and financial disclosure forms in the years following

an election. Robert Hill was nominated into the Ethics Commission at the January meeting to join already existing members.

Gullo also pointed out the need for the current Council to begin work on the new City budget as soon as possible. Typically, budgets are approved before a new Council takes office so as not to have new members voting on something they are not familiar with. The Council's goal is to finish and approve the fiscal year 25/26 well before the new commissioners are sworn in.

City Clerk Clara Kalman outlined the expected timeline for the election process. Candidate nomination forms will be available beginning February 18th and must be submitted by March 24th. The certification of candidates will be scheduled for April 7th and all residents must register with Carroll County election board no later than April 7th in order to vote in this election.

Election day will be May 5th at the Taneytown police station, with polls open from 7 in the morning to 7 in the evening.

City looks for additional water sources

Last fall, City Manager Jim Wieprecht discussed "recharge acreage" with the City Council. These are potential properties that are undeveloped and allow water to naturally seep into the ground and fill the City's aquifer. Frederick County recently secured "recharge easements" in agriculture preservation zones which legally protect water recharge areas from development. Some of these potential properties already sit

within Taneytown's Piney Creek and Town Creek aquifers.

Wieprecht asked the Council for consensus to proceed with making changes to the City's Code that would impact the water and the building construction chapters. According to Wieprecht, the code is not current and does not reflect what is really happening in the City.

The new changes will require all major projects to procure their own recharge acreage and smaller projects

will be required to pay a fee in lieu. The guidelines that will be written in the Code will be similar to the Program Open Space guidelines. The cost of buying recharge acreage is passed on to the builders and developers, including an increase in impact fees which cover the public services and infrastructure needs, such as new schools, parks, and roads.

The City has changed the requirements for developers many

times over the years. At one time, the developer was required to cover 100% of the costs associated with finding, developing, and making the recharge land available. Later, the City changed the rule to make the City 100% responsible for the water sources, meaning that all costs were paid up front and once in demand, the cost was then sold to the developer.

Wieprecht said staff were looking to amend the fee schedule in

the next fiscal year and update specifics then. "We have a lot of details to work out still," said Wieprecht. "We need to know if this is the direction we want to take."

The City will continue to look for its own recharge acreage as well as making the changes to the Code. The City will also need to finalize the "Memorandum of Understanding" (MOU) with the County, which will signal the intent to dedicate the recharge easement land to the City.

Speed cameras to be placed in school zones

After hearing complaints from concerned citizens about speeding in the City's school zones, the Council began the process of determining the best way to prevent excessive speed. January's Council meeting discussed one way, which is to install speed cameras to catch violators and automatically generate and deliver tickets. Doing so allows the City to have extra enforcement capabilities without having to hire additional personnel. The City does already utilize a decoy police car to deter speeding.

There are two areas that were "tested" in October to see if a speed camera would be useful: Trevanion Road close to Taneytown Elementary School and Northwest Middle School and the Baumgardner and East Baltimore Street intersection on the opposite side of the schools. After testing, it was determined that the Baumgardner and East Baltimore Street intersection did not see enough speed violations to make a speed camera a worthwhile endeavor. Trevanion, however, saw "277 cars going 12 mph over the posted limit," according to Mayor Christopher Miller, a supporter of the project.

Mike Phelan, the director of strategic accounts for Altumint, a provider of AI-enabled traffic technology, presented to the Council an overview of what they can do for speeding enforcement in Taneytown. Located a little more than an hour away, the company utilizes speed cam-

eras and red-light technology to catch speed violators and distribute tickets.

There are two ways to mount the speed cameras: on a pole or with a trailer system. The Council debated the pros and cons of both options, deciding that a pole mounted camera would best suit the location. Altumint would be responsible for the equipment during its service. By choosing a local company, any repairs or replacements could be easily performed. According to Phelan, most speed cameras are in service Monday through Friday, 6 a.m. to 6 p.m. each day, including holidays. However, this schedule can be altered to whatever the Council deems appropriate.

Phelan assured the Council that the services provided by Altumint are 100% violator funded with no upfront cost to install. "You will never have to pay out of pocket," he said. He also said any permits required by the State Highway Administration would be the

responsibility of Altumint. State law limits the max speed threshold to 12mph, meaning if the speed limit is 25 mph, a vehicle must be going 37 mph in order to be ticketed. The State also sets the ticket violation at \$40.

Along with the physical cameras detecting speed, Altumint uses a program that can be accessed by the Chief of Police and other City officials allowing them to run reports, reject or approve violations and receive payments. The cameras take pictures and a short video of the violation. The Chief of Police will then need to log into the Altumint program and approve or deny the violation. If approved, the information is forwarded to the MVA where the registered owner of the vehicle's information is obtained and a ticket is sent. The owner can either pay the ticket or go to court. If nothing is done, a delinquent notice is then sent.

Mayor Pro Tem James McCarron has a long history of opposition to the use of speed cameras to aid in controlling speeding. At previous meetings, he argued the numbers received in preliminary inspections of the chosen location were not high enough to warrant using speed cameras. Miller countered by reminding the Council, "that section of Trevanion isn't fully side walked and kids walk up and down that road."

From the contract signing to the final installation of the equipment it should take

about five months, according to Phelan. However, before Altumint can do anything for the City, the Council must pass legislation allowing red-light speed camera technology to be used in a school zone.

The Council voted 3 to 1, with McCarron against, to begin writing an Ordinance allowing the use of speed cameras in a school zone. According to City Manager Jim Wieprecht it will take time to get the ordinance in full effect. Once that is achieved, a contract with a chosen vendor must be written and approved before any real work begins.

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FROM THE DESK OF...

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

I have a couple of updates to share regarding the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project (MPRP), the proposed 70 mile high-voltage power line project that will cross areas in Baltimore, Carroll, and Frederick Counties. The line would run through rural areas near New Market, Ijamsville, Buckeystown, and Adamstown. Since last summer, when I and other elected officials were made aware of this plan, a steady drumbeat of opposition from the community has only gotten louder. The County Council joined County Executive Fitzwater in opposition to the process the Public Service Enterprise Group (PSEG) is using to attain the land necessary to construct the power line project they have designed. We have been adamantly opposed to use of eminent domain to take Frederick

County properties to execute their acquisition plan.

Last month, the County Council discussed a resolution in opposition to the MPRP, drafted by Council Member McKay (District 2). A resolution goes beyond sending a letter to Public Service Commission (PSC) appealing for a better process for consideration of PSEG's approval application to construct the line. Without any substantive changes being made to the proposal, opposition to the project itself is the next logical step in continuing to advocate for our residents and constituents. Baltimore County and Carroll County have taken similar actions, and being unified can only help this cause.

Additionally, County Executive Fitzwater has authorized Frederick County to intervene

in the state approval process. This action enables the County to file a petition to intervene in approval process that the PSC will conduct for the MPRP. If a petition to intervene is granted to Frederick County by the PSC, the County would become a party to the case. This would grant the County the ability to file testimony and evidence of the damaging effects on rural areas, conduct discovery to make the process more transparent, and the ability to call and cross-examine witnesses.

Member of both parties in our state delegation plan to introduce legislation in this year's Maryland General Assembly in response to the negative effects of the MPRP on the County. Senator Karen Lewis Young (MD District 3) is proposing a bill to require local

utilities to provide periodic reports of anticipated electricity load growth and response. Many residents are frustrated with the lack of transparency about regional grid planning, mostly because of seeing their monthly bill increase without detailed explanation. Perhaps most importantly, the senator's bill would require the PSC to consider a utility's effort to use existing infrastructure and right of ways when considering approval of a new project. This may be the most frequent appeal I hear regarding the MPRP. Why can't PSEG improve and update the existing power lines with more modern equipment? We are counting on the PSC to ask PSEG that question, and as an intervener, Frederick County may have an opportunity to ask them directly.

Delegation Chair Jesse Pippy (MD District 4) also plans to introduce a bill that could affect this process moving forward. His bill would require the PSC to review alternatives to proposed transmission projects, rather than an up or down vote on one plan. Given how long the approval process can take, this is a much more efficient approach. Regardless of whether this bill could pass in time to positively impact the MPRP project, it would be an improvement in the process for future transmission projects.

There is a lot of advocacy being done on this issue to protect the interests of Frederick County residents and businesses. I will keep you informed as this process unfolds during 2025. If you have thoughts on the MPRP or another issue, please contact me at rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov.

Happy Presidents' Day!

Emmitsburg Mayor Frank Davis

It seems like old man winter has decided to stick around for a while. The past two months remind me of winters of the past in the 1970's and 80's. I guess we will see what the next two months have to offer.

Speaking of winter, I want to share with you my message pertaining to what to expect when the Maryland State Police activate the Snow Emergency Plan.

Why some seem this is extreme, I find it necessary to ensure our crews can keep our streets open to prevent our town from becoming paralyzed during major snow events.

Thank you to everyone who has been following the Snow Emergency Plan over the past two winter seasons. Your cooperation greatly helps our crews do their jobs efficiently!

Unfortunately, some residents continue to park on the streets during snow emergencies, creating challenges for our snow removal efforts.

For those unfamiliar with the Snow Emergency Plan, please: visit the Town's website; or use the My Emmitsburg app; or call the Town Office at 301-600-6300 for assistance.

Effective immediately, vehicles that remain on the streets during the activation of the Snow Emergency Plan will be ticketed and/or towed in accordance with State and Local laws.

It is with regret that I take this action, but it has become necessary to ensure the safety

and efficiency of our snow removal operations. If you need assistance relocating your vehicle before the storm arrives, please contact the Town Office at 301-600-6300.

For some good news. In December, the Town began an initiative to bring the non-profit group and the civic organizations together to meet to discuss ways to make our organization stronger and support our residents. The group has been very proactive, and several projects are moving full steam ahead.

A Community calendar has been developed where you can find upcoming events and services. Each organization is responsible for posting their events to make this an easy one-stop shop to view happening

around Emmitsburg.


A workgroup has been established to plan and provide hot meals for community members in need. This important project is still in the early stages, and we look forward to sharing more updates in the coming months.

The next meeting is February 12 at 6:30 in the Town office. We encourage all organizations within the 21727-zip code to join us and collaborate on this meaningful effort.

As always, we are committed to exploring new opportunities and initiatives to enhance our community. If you have ideas or suggestions, please don't hesitate to share them. Together, we can continue to grow and improve Emmitsburg!

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County Council President Brad Young

The Council has two upcoming Bills advancing through our legislative process. Bill 24-20 Amends the Frederick County Uniformed Employees Retirement Plan Offering a Deferred Retirement Option Program. Bill 25-01 Amends Ch. 1-23-8 and Ch. 1-23-9 of the Frederick County Code - Historic Preservation Ordinance. I am sponsoring both of these upcoming Bills on behalf of the County Executive. For the most up to date agendas, full text of Bills, and Bill schedules, please visit our website.

Please stay tuned as we release important dates for the upcoming Frederick County FY-26 Budget. These dates will include Public Hearings, Budget Workshops, Budget Amendment discussions, and Final Budget Adoption.

The County Executive is currently working on developing the fiscal year 2026 Frederick

County Budget. She is required to submit that to the County Council by April 15th. The Council then must adopt it by May 31st, or the County Executive's proposed budget becomes law. Under the County Charter, the Council can only cut budget line items. The Council may not add to the budget or move funding between agencies.

The County Executive has budget town halls throughout the County. Please make your voices and concerns heard as early as possible. With the state of Maryland looking at a nearly \$3 billion budget deficit this year, funding will be tighter than usual for local governments through Maryland.

The Frederick County Council encourages public involvement at every stage of the legislative process. We welcome public comment at every Council meeting on Tuesday evenings. Members of the public are wel-

come to attend and give comment in person, leave a voicemail to be forwarded to each Council Member, or email us any time at councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov. Please visit our website at www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil to view our latest agendas, legislation, and upcoming calendar of events.

The Frederick County Council meets regularly on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 at Winchester Hall, located at 12 East Church Street in downtown Frederick. All meetings are open to the public, and we welcome participation. Members of the public are welcome to attend in person or participate over the phone.

And as always, if there is ever anything I can do for you, please feel free to reach out to me and my office. You can contact me via email at: BYoung@FrederickCountyMD.gov, or you can call my office at 301-600-1108.

GOVERNMENT—SOUTH OF THE BORDER

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

February may be the shortest month of the year, but it's packed with meaning and plenty to keep us moving forward. This month offers us an opportunity to reconnect, collaborate, and bring awareness to many important causes such as Black History Month and American Heart Month.

We have a lot to celebrate in Frederick County as we strive to create a strong sense of belonging for all residents. Black History Month is not only a time to honor the trailblazers who have shaped our nation, but also recommit ourselves to building a community rooted in equity, understanding, and opportunity for all.

Our annual Black History Month Celebration will be held Monday, February 20 at 6 p.m. at Winchester Hall, located at 12 E. Church Street in Frederick. This event will be broadcast live on FCG TV, Comcast channels 1072 and 19. Tune in or join us in person!

As we also celebrate American Heart Month, we are reminded to prioritize our health and support initiatives that promote healthier lifestyles for everyone. Small changes can make a big dif-

ference in building a stronger, healthier future for ourselves and our communities.

State Budget Priorities

Last month, Governor Wes Moore visited Frederick County to make some exciting announcements about his proposed Fiscal Year 2026 budget.

The Governor highlighted critical investments to fund long-awaited safety and capacity improvements along U.S. 15 between I-70 and MD-26, which is our County's top transportation priority because it is among the most dangerous stretches of road in the region.

This project, which has broad support from local leaders, is vital to the safety of our community and to the economic development of surrounding areas. I remain committed to ensuring this funding is included in the State's final approved budget.

During the Governor's visit, he also highlighted school construction investments in the proposed budget. Frederick County is the fastest growing school system in Maryland and this additional funding will help us move quickly on school construction projects already in the pipeline,

improving the experience of students, educators, and families.

Budgets are the clearest expression of our values. I appreciate that Governor Moore is prioritizing highway safety needs and school construction, which will improve our quality of life and help grow our economy. I also want to thank members of the Frederick County Delegation for their support on these critical issues. I look forward to working with the Governor, the General Assembly, and local leaders to pass this budget so we can continue making progress for residents.

County Budget

I want to take a moment to thank everyone who came out to the budget town hall meetings last month to share their priorities for the County's upcoming budget. These meetings were productive sessions, and I enjoyed hearing from you about what matters most in our communities.

If you did not get a chance to attend a meeting, you can watch the video recordings in the FCG TV archives at www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/FCGTV. To learn more about the budget process and next steps, please

visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Budget.

Frederick County Earns Three AAA Bond Ratings

I am proud to share that Frederick County has once again earned AAA bond ratings from all three major bond-rating agencies. Fitch, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's each recently reaffirmed Frederick County at the highest possible rating based on the County's exceptional financial management.

Only 55 of the 3,000+ counties in the nation have AAA ratings from all three agencies. Similar to how a consumer's high credit score allows them to borrow money for loans or mortgages at lower interest rates, bond ratings allow Frederick County to pay lower interest rates on the construction of schools, roads, libraries, parks, and more.

This achievement is a testament to our unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and sound management of tax dollars. We can be proud that our AAA ratings allow us to invest in schools and other critical infrastructure for our community.

Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project

Along with residents, I have been

incredibly concerned about the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project's (MPRP) impact on our communities. Last month, I announced that Frederick is intervening in the Maryland Public Service Commission's (PSC) Case 9773.

Frederick County totally opposes MPRP, and our decision to intervene should send a clear message that we will use the legal tools at our disposal to protect our community. While the law is clear that Frederick County does not have the authority to stop MPRP ourselves, we will continue to work with our partners on the County Council to amplify our residents' voices and advocate against the project.

The PSC indicated it will hold a public hearing in Frederick County, which will provide another opportunity for residents to be heard on this matter.

Please visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/MPRP to stay informed about upcoming meetings, check facts related to the potential impacts, learn about project timelines and details, view letters sent to and received by County officials, and watch the recording of the County's October 2024 public meeting. This page will be updated regularly as more information becomes available.

Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird

Can you believe this it's February already! The winter has been hitting us pretty hard with the snowfall and freezing temperatures, hopefully, it will warm up a little for us. When the temperatures drop please watch family friends and neighbors to ensure they are safe and warm. Make sure your outdoor pets have dry bedding and fresh water and feed. Dress appropriately with several layers including hats and gloves. If you have any cold-weather clothing items you no longer wear, please donate them to the Thurmont Clothes Closet. Also remember to donate non-perishable food items, baby food, diapers, toiletries, and personal care items to the Thurmont Food Bank. Our neighbors, friends, and families in need will appreciate your generosity.

Here are updates on several projects in Thurmont. The Tennis Court at Community Park will be completed in early summer. We will be soliciting bids to complete the project shortly. We apologize for the delay in finishing the court. The North Church Street infrastructure project is complete except for the final blacktop work.

The State Highway Administration plans to complete the blacktop sometime in April or early May. Work will begin this summer on the Water Pumping Station on Radio Lane. The project will connect the high-pres-

sure and low-pressure water systems. This will allow water to flow between both systems and will provide improved service when well, pump or valve system repairs are needed.

The repairs to the wastewater line running from Thurmont Blvd to the wastewater treatment plant will be completed shortly. The project included the replacement of the manholes on the line from Weis Market to the main wastewater line into the treatment plant. The remaining work includes lining the pipes between the manholes and repairing the

surface impact during construction. The planning is progressing on the water filtration units at our wells.

The funding for these units will come from Maryland Department of the Environment Grants and monetary damages resulting from our participation in legal action against manufacturers of the contaminants. We are anticipating the receipt of \$1,000,000.00 in funding to work on Carroll Street. This funding is realized through the hard work of our State Delegation and will be coming from a Federal Grant. We

hope to rebuild the damaged sections of Carroll Street and install needed infrastructure elements.

I am proud to announce that The Thurmont Police Department is now fully staffed. All of our Officers and civilian staff are well trained and experienced. Our community enjoys 24-hour police staffing and patrol. I want to congratulate our Police Department for the outstanding service and peace of mind they provide our community.

I also want to thank our Public Works Department for their dedication to keeping our streets clear of snow and for their response to water and wastewa-

ter emergencies. On the weekend of Jan 25th and 26th there were two major water line breaks. Our Waste Water, Streets and Parks, and Water Departments respond to each

emergency and worked diligently to repair the breaks. The snow crews were right on top of the snow clearing our streets. They work long and hard to make sure our streets are passable. If possible, please make sure your cars are off the streets when we have snow so our crews can clear the streets.

Please contact me at 301-606-9458 or jkinnaird@thurmont.com with any questions, concerns, or recommendations.

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FROM THE DESK OF...

Carroll Valley Mayor Ron Harris

Groundhog Day falls on Sunday, February 2, in Punxsutawney, Pennsylvania, about 170 miles from us. It is said that this legend was brought to Pennsylvania by the German settlers. These settlers determined that the groundhog resembled the European hedgehog, considered the most intelligent and sensible animal for predicting weather. The legend goes that on February 2, if the groundhog, our Pennsylvania Punxsutawney Phil, sees his shadow, he will return to his underground home, and there will be another six weeks of winter weather. However, our current weather groundhog forecaster, Mr. Phil, has been correct only 39% of the time.

In preparation for Valentine's Day, the Carroll Valley Borough is holding its annual fabulous, fantastic "Father-Daughter Dance." The theme for the dance is "Sweetheart Ball – A Date with Daddy". The dance will be held in the Liberty Mountain Resort Overlook Ballroom on Saturday, February 8, from 6 to 9. Pre-registration is required at www.carrollvalley.org or 717-642-6269. There is a \$25 per person charge. Thanks to Herb's Exteriors for their generous donation, which provided a DJ, Glitter tattoo artists, favors,

and decorations. Hope to see you there. I am the guy with the camera.

March 4 is "Fat Tuesday," the day before Ash Wednesday and the last day of Mardi Gras. It was the custom of the German immigrants who settled in Pennsylvania to use up all the fat in their house before Lent by making the fastnacht. It is a square doughnut without a hole, fried in fat. I hope you enjoy your fried cakes.

The Blood Drive will be held on February 24 from 11 to 5 inside the Borough Conference Room. Everyone will receive two free admission vouchers to Harrisburg Comedy Zone Show. There are two ways to schedule your donation appointment: go to 717GiveBlood.org or call 800-771-0059. It is highly recommended you make an appointment to donate blood. Appointments help the Red Cross improve your donation experience. Walk-ins are welcome; however, donors with appointments will be taken first, which may result in a significant wait time.

Robin Dicken from Neighbors Helping Neighbors (NHN) shared with me that they are going to Valentine's cards again this year for the nursing homes and Meals on Wheels. NHN is reaching

out to anyone who would enjoy making some or having your group or organization make some to share and let them know they are thought of. Pass the word along! Robin would like to have them by February 10. Please message Robin at dickenrobin@gmail.com if you have any questions so NHN can make arrangements for collection.

As of this writing, we have experienced two snowstorms and very low temperatures. There are a couple of things to keep in mind. Are you prepared? What happens if there is an ice storm or flood? You can learn about these threats and how to prepare by visiting www.readypa.org. I recommend you download the Pennsylvania Emergency Preparedness Guide. If an emergency/disaster occurs, you must be ready to survive for at least three days. Do you have an Emergency Kit? The recommended supplies to include in that Emergency Kit are Water (one gallon per person per day for at least three days for drinking and sanitation); Battery-powered radio and extra batteries; Flashlight and extra batteries; Medical (prescription medications, First Aid kit); Food (non-perishable food); Tools (manual can opener, wrench and pliers to turn off util-

ities); Garbage bags with ties (for personal sanitation); Whistle (to signal for help); and Plastic sheeting and duct tape (if you need to shelter in place) and cash.

If there is a power outage and you have a cell phone, do you know your electric company's emergency number to let them know the power is out or to follow the company's progress in restoring power? If you use a portable generator, do you know how to use it safely? The biggest worry is carbon monoxide (CO) poisoning from the toxic engine exhaust. It would be best to never use a portable generator in a garage, carport, basement, or crawl space, even with ventilation. Opening doors and windows or using fans will not prevent CO buildup in the home. Install home CO alarms that are battery-operated or have battery backup. The Red Cross has information on how to use a portable generator when an emergency or disaster strikes.

Is your house or mailbox number "up" properly so the police, fire department, or an ambulance can find you? In an emergency, seconds count. It is so important that your street address be posted on your property. Recommend your address be posted on the mailbox post or mailbox, and the address should be shown as three (3) inch numbers that are luminous

(reflective). The number should be easily read from 20 feet away, day or night. If there is no mailbox at a residence or if it does not clearly identify the house, the reflective street address numbers shall be placed on the front of the house. A sign displaying the proper address should be erected if the residence sits back off the road or is not visible due to trees or bushes. You can buy a reflective mailbox sign for just \$8 from the Borough. These signs are 6" x 18" aluminum and covered in green reflective vinyl with white reflective vinyl numbers attached on both signs. They have the same highly visible qualities as PennDOT directional signs. If you are interested in one of these signs, visit the Borough and ask about ordering one.

Borough meetings in February are Planning Commission (February 3rd), Borough Council (February 11th), Park Ad Hoc Committee (February 13th), Nature Trail Committee (February 18th), Public Sewer Advisory Committee (February 24th), and Parks and Recreation Committee (February 26th). The Borough office will be closed on Monday, February 17th, for President's Day. If you have any questions, call me at 301-606-2021 or email MayorRonHarris@comcast.net.

Liberty Township Supervisor Walter Barlow

I hope everyone had a spectacular New Year and you are managing to stay warm! At our reorganization meeting we did confirm a tax increase of 0.5 millage for 2025. A 0.5 millage is equivalent to \$50 per \$100,000. The Adams County Board of Commissioners also approved a 0.7 mil tax increase for County taxes. All taxpayers will

see an increase in their Municipal/County 2025 tax bill. I do apologize and I understand this is a financial burden on everyone, but it is necessary to meet projected expenses.

At our January Board of Supervisors meeting, Terry DeWitt was promoted to the full-time Chief of Police of Liberty Township. We thank him for all his hard work

over the past six months as Officer in Charge. He is very deserving of his promotion. Ryan Morris was promoted to Sergeant. He has been very instrumental in helping us obtain new equipment for the police department to make the department more efficient. We thank him for his generous donations to Liberty Township. We congratulate them both on being promoted and we look forward to them continuing to serve in Highland, Freedom, and Liberty Township. Furthermore, Chad Fuchs was hired as a part-time Police Officer for the Township. He will begin patrolling in February. We also hired a part-time plow driver, on an as needed basis for the township, Richard Hartle. We welcome them both to the Liberty Township Staff.

The Police Department would kindly like to remind drivers of the "Duty of Drivers in Emergency Response Areas." In an emergency response area, a driver is required

to "move over" by passing in a lane not adjacent to the area if possible, or if unable to do so, slow down to a speed no more than 20 miles per hour below the posted speed limit while safely passing through the area; this is commonly referred to as the "Move Over" law and applies to situations where emergency responders, tow trucks, or disabled vehicles with hazard lights are present. This also applies during inclement weather.

The operator of a vehicle upon a roadway shall display lighted head lamps and other lamps and illuminating devices between sunset and sunrise, anytime when the operator cannot discern a person or a vehicle from 1,000 feet due to insufficient light or unfavorable conditions including rain, snow, sleet, hail fog smoke or smog, and anytime when the vehicle's windshield wipers are in continuous or intermittent use. Please understand that the people who are trying to restore the infra-

structure of the roadways are trying to keep everyone safe. The move over law needs to be followed as the Liberty Township Police Department will not tolerate violation of this law placing our volunteers, Patrols, and other assisting agencies in danger. Failure to comply with the "Move Over" law can result in a traffic violation and associated fines. The speed enforcement signs are currently being programmed. The signs will provide data speed collection which will help with speed enforcement in all three townships. The Liberty Township Police Department is also planning to host National Night Out on August 5. This provides a terrific opportunity to bring police and neighbors together under positive circumstances. Stay tuned for more information to be provided soon.

We were able to award the bid for the concrete pad for the new salt shed. As soon as the weather permits, the contractor will complete the job. We can then transfer the

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GOVERNMENT—NORTH OF THE BORDER

County Commissioner Mary Qually

In 2023 the PA Department of Environmental Protection hosted the first PA Clean Water Gathering. This was a collection of over 80 partners in PA and beyond focused on establishing a framework to improve clean water programming within the Chesapeake Bay watershed. Partners ranged from local conservation districts, state and federal partners, and private non-profits. After this initial discussion three areas were presented as high priority challenges.

These areas were 1. Technical and Administrative Assistance, 2. Staff Building and Retention, and 3. Funding and multi-grant coordination. For those of you not in government or in a large private organization, this article is about to get wonky. The clean up of the Chesapeake Bay is a massive landscape restoration effort, one of the largest and most complicated projects in the world. This requires an equally massive investment in cooperation between partners in order to get everyone going in the same direction. The challenge in structuring this restoration effort is finding the balance between getting the work done effectively and efficiently, while not becoming overly bureaucratic.

Technical and Administrative Assistance

There are 43 Pennsylvania counties and about 1,200 local municipalities within Pennsylvania's share of the watershed. These counties and municipalities have various populations, geographies, and government sizes. When a small government is asked or tasked with improving local water quality, they may not have the staff or technical knowledge to get the job done. Likewise for small community non-profits. Over the past year here are the recommendations that came out.

- Engineering Assistance is needed, especially in smaller municipalities
- Streamline and Centralize Reporting, to reduce paperwork at the local level
- Create a more structured approach to encourage Private/Public Partnerships
- Increase support and resources for project prioritization and timeline management
- Block permitting applications for watershed projects
- Funding and Multi-grant Coordination

Most of us were taught to clean up after ourselves. While cleaning up your bedroom is pretty simple, it didn't stop me from complain-

ing. As my mom, would say, "You spend more time complaining about cleaning your room, than it would take to just clean it." Well cleaning up our local waterways is also pretty simple, if we all (corporations included) simply live by the motto "clean up your own messes". The challenge is that we don't always know how we damage our waterways and we don't always know the best way to clean it up. This is why on a community, county, and state level there is a need for grant funding. And due to people wasting, stealing, or using grant money inefficiently, obtaining and tracking grants has become very complex. Here is how PA hopes to cut through the bureaucracy and assist local governments and our partners get back on track without all of the confusion and paperwork.

- Create a Central Funding Spreadsheet
- Common Application/Letter of Intent Concept
- Connecting Projects with Funding
- Leverage Available Funding Sources More Efficiently
- Outreach and Education About Financing
- Staff Building/Staff Retention

Today, this is a challenge in so many industries, but I do need to

stress this. Against popular belief, government jobs are not as cushy or high paying as many think. Not just at the state, but at the local level many staff are trained to do a job and then leave to find a more profitable private sector job. The skills for both jobs may be the same, but the pay is not. In government it isn't just about being efficient, it is also about getting quality staff to stay for less. The list below is what we need to attract, train, and keep the best and the brightest working here in our community making our lives better.

- Make Management and Leadership Training Available
- Diversify Staff Hires: Hire Staff with Different Backgrounds
- Regionalization: Regionalize Staff, Especially for Smaller Conservation Districts
- Cross Train to Build on Employee Knowledge and Address Turnover
- Allocate Dedicated Funding Annually for More Administrative/Program Staffing

At the end of the day these three initiatives may seem obvious, long overdue, or just boring, but they are a huge step in the right direction. At the 2025 Clean Water gathering PA Agriculture Secretary Russell Redding said it best, "When we see the Bay's challenges

and solutions, as not just about the Chesapeake Bay, but about our own waterways, we start to see improvements in PA." He is 100% right. Since 2022, thanks to local water testing volunteers, we learned that most creeks in Adams County contain E-coli. We know that storms are getting more severe and causing more flooding. We know that without fish stocking there would be little or no recreational fishing. While the solutions above, may be too wonky for most, they are important. So is local action.

If you are interested in helping clean up our local waterways, here are some great organizations to join or just do a few hours of volunteering. Watershed Alliance of Adams County at www.adamswatersheds.org and I suggest you join their newsletter. Penn State Extension Master Watershed Stewards, www.extension.psu.edu. Penn State Extension has multiple priorities, so you will have to search for local resources. Gettysburg Green Gathering at www.gettysburggreengathering.com. Or if you want to get involved in a larger Bay effort, but still stay local for projects, reach out to the Alliance for the Chesapeake Bay at www.allianceforthebay.org. Or just drop me an email and I'll point you in the right direction. Marty Qually at mqually@adamscountypa.gov.

continued from previous page

snow material to the new salt shed and move forward with the plan to utilize the land that we have to best suit township needs.

January has been a cold month with moderate snow precipitation in our township. The road crew was able to get the roads salted, cindered, and open for the harsh weather. As temperatures continue to be in the single digits, teens, and low twenties, it is important to be vigilant of black ice on the roads and to drive safely.

I want to thank the road department for doing an excellent job of keeping our roadways safe during the winter months. Snow plowing does bring complaints from residents who find that their mailbox was knocked over after a snowstorm or ice storm. While our plow truck drivers make every effort to avoid mailboxes, they do on occasion, hit, or knock one over. If it is believed that a mailbox was struck by a Township plow vehicle, a damage report must be filed within 48 hours of the snowfall. The form is available on our website or by contacting the township office. Placing a 6-to-8-inch piece of reflective tape on the mailbox will help snowplow operators see the mailbox at night.

Winter Safety Reminders: Please have your furnaces serviced, especially if you have oil because they are more prone to giving off carbon monoxide poisoning. Remember to change your smoke and carbon monoxide alarm batteries and make sure they are working properly. Keep an eye on your pipes and prevent them from freezing. Top

off the antifreeze in your cars and remember to keep emergency supplies in your vehicle in case you break down. Make sure your tires are well inflated and keep your cell phone charged.

School taxes are due March 31st. You can submit your payments by mail, drop them in the drop box

at the Township Office, or contact Jessica Ilko to schedule an appointment to pay them in person. Her information can be found on your tax bill.

Thank you very much for your continued support of the Liberty Township Supervisors. If you have any issues, please feel free to con-

tact us individually or you can come to one of the Board of Supervisor meetings at 6 PM the first Tuesday

of each month. We would love to see you, hear your input, and learn how we can better serve you.

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COMMENTARY

Words from Winterbilt

The deficit, colonialism, TikTok & pardons

Shannon Bohrer

Since last year's election, numerous disparities have developed between the previous administration and the incoming party, now the new administration. The previous administration made changes, enacting laws, and regulations, etc., before leaving office, which is normal for an outgoing party. In normal times, the incoming party says very little about the changes, but that has changed. It appeared that the incoming administration believed they should have input on everything. It is as if the Trump administration believes they should be the governing party before their term starts.

Beginning with our national debt, which is always contentious. Congress is frequently raising the debt ceiling with a continuing resolution. It is easier than passing a budget. The previous continuing resolution was to expire on December 20th, 2024. Congress passed a spending bill, keeping the government running through March 2025. We are accustomed to last-minute spending bills, with both sides arguing that we spend too much. Therefore, the continuing resolutions have deficit limits. However, with this last continuing resolution, the President-elect requested that Congress "suspend the federal debt

limit" ostensibly to prevent future political disagreements. How much does the next administration plan to spend? Thankfully, they did not suspend the debt limit, at least until March 25th.

Another contentious and seemingly continuous issue is the fate of TikTok. The Chinese-owned social media company has been accused of spying while collecting user data. Congress banned TikTok because the company presents a national security risk. The law banning TikTok is effective January 19, 2025, one day before the inauguration. TikTok has lost all appeals and can only continue if it divests its Chinese ownership. However, Donald Trump's lawyers filed a last-minute appeal with the Supreme Court.

TikTok's history of being a national security risk is paralleled with its popularity. It has been banned in other countries for collecting private information and weaponizing false information. When Trump was in office four years ago, he denounced the "Chinese-owned video sharing app" as a threat to Americans' national security. The appeal conflicted with the outgoing administration's position on national security concerns. So, why is Trump appealing the ban to the Supreme Court?

Of course, by the time you read this, either the Supreme Court will have stayed the ban, or TikTok will have survived, at least temporarily. Another possibility is that TikTok divests itself of its Chinese ownership.

Another issue is the Presidential pardon power. This was an unexpected issue with the previous administration until the former president pardoned his son for charges related to illegal gun possession and income tax violations. The pardon was surprising because the former president was questioned on the topic multiple times, each time saying he would not pardon his son. Both parties questioned the pardon, but the incoming party vilified the decision.

Trump's lawyers filed motions, making their case that the incoming president should also be exonerated in the New York hush money trial. Trump's lawyers' argument included the position that the hush money case "must be immediately dismissed" because to continue the process disrupts the president-elect's transition and "threatens the functioning of the federal government." They argued that if Biden pardoned his son, the Hush Money trial where Trump was found guilty, should also be dismissed.

The equivalency of dismissing a state conviction for the incoming president because President Biden pardoned his son does not exist. Of course, when you read this, the incoming president will be the sitting president who pardoned and commuted sentences for individuals who worked in his administration during his first presidency.

Steve Bannon, a consultant to Trump's first administration, was accused of collecting money for the "We Build the Wall" program and then pocketing it. Bannon was charged with

fraud, as he "covertly routed" the money to himself and others. Trump pardoned Bannon before he went to trial; however, he can still be tried on state charges for the same crime. It was reported that the program collected over twenty-five million dollars, none of which went to building the wall.

Another Trump consultant who received a pardon was Paul Manafort. Manafort managed the Trump campaign while having connections to foreign adversaries. He was charged with financial crimes, illegal lobbying for foreign entities, and witness tampering. He was found guilty and sentenced to seven years. Trump granted Manafort a pardon.

A Trump confidant and longtime ally, Roger Stone, faced charges related to a Russian interference investigation during the 2016 election. He was charged and found guilty of witness tampering and giving false statements to Congress and was sentenced to forty months. He was pardoned.

Trump's first national security advisor, Michael Flynn, was also pardoned. He lied to the FBI about his Russian connections, and the charges stemmed from Muller's Russian investigation. Trump pardoned him after he pleaded guilty but before he was tried. Later, the government declined to pursue additional charges stemming from the same investigation.

The pardoning of so many people within Trump's first administration and the promise of pardoning others on his first day in his new administration do not seem relatable to

Biden's pardoning of his son.

The deficit, TikTok, and pardons are minor topics of interest, compared to the proposal of adding Canada to the United States as another state. At a recent press conference, President-elect Trump said he was planning to do so. Canada has not responded in a positive manner. Trump says he will use economic pressure to procure Canada. At the same conference, Trump said he wanted to acquire Greenland and would use force if necessary. Greenland is a territory of Denmark. Since Denmark is part of NATO, using the American military to secure another NATO country's acquisition does - not sound right!

At the press conference, the acquisition of other countries began when Trump said the United States would take back the Panama Canal. The canal was transferred back to Panama with a treaty between Panama and the United States. The treaty calls for the canal to remain neutral in peace and war. Since the U.S. ships pay the same price as other countries, the United States is not being "ripped off" as Trump professes.

This article was written before Trump was sworn in, so some things may change before it is published. While not sworn in, Trump's proposed actions and policies resemble those of a dictator, believing he is in control of everything. His position is also compatible with favoring Colonialism.

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

The Bulwark

America needs a real opposition party

Jonathan Last

We've got another moment in which professional wrestling provides the key to understanding American politics. But we have to build up to it. I hope you'll take the ride with me.

Irrelevant

Democrats in Washington are, as a matter of governing, irrelevant for the next year. They cannot pass or propose legislation. They cannot hold hearings. They are in no position to stop the Trump administration from doing whatever it wants. The job of the Democratic party, then is to get into position to get into position. That job comes in two parts.

First: Do not help Republicans. Not in any way. On any issue. Republicans can't pass a budget, or raise the debt ceiling? Tough luck. Do not provide them any bailout votes on any issue. Period, the end.

Second: Make Donald Trump own every bad outcome that happens, anywhere in the world while paying special attention to areas where Republicans are particularly vulnerable. Like housing and Ukraine.

I'm kind of obsessed with housing costs. To start with, housing was the one valid economic complaint people had during the Biden years. Take a look at the Case-Shiller index, which tracks changes in U.S. home prices:

Biden didn't start the housing affordability crisis—that train left the

station in the late '90s. It got worse under Trump. And then it got even worse under Biden.

Housing affordability is a real problem and there is no reason to believe Trump can solve it. Why? Because housing supply is in tension with his proposed deportation regime.

Something like a quarter of the construction workers in America are here illegally. That's just the national average. In Texas the number is estimated to be 60 percent.

You can't address housing affordability without substantially increasing the housing supply. But if Trump is serious about mass deportations, then housing starts will be under downward pressure. Housing, as an issue, is a trap for Trump and Republicans. It's a problem they can't solve without creating other problems for themselves.

Democrats ought to talk about housing all day, every day. Make it the new price of eggs.

Then there's Ukraine.

For starters, Trump has set up impossible expectations: He promised to end the war in 24 hours. Starting on January 22, Democrats should ask, every day, why the war is still ongoing.

If Putin wants to do Trump a solid, he could halt offensive operations and be content to walk away with the territory he currently controls. But it's not clear that Putin would be satisfied with a quarter loaf when the whole thing is suddenly there for the taking. And if Putin pushes forward, things could go horribly wrong in Ukraine. It is not inconceivable that Ukrainian defenses could collapse and Russia

could start advancing with alacrity.

Presidents own the wars they inherit. Always. Nixon didn't send troops to Vietnam, but he owned the conflict anyway. Biden didn't sign the surrender with the Taliban, but he owned the withdrawal and everything bad that came with it.

If things go south in Ukraine, Democrats should make sure that Trump owns every death, every horrible picture, every atrocity.

Ukraine is like housing for Trump in that the only solutions for avoiding disaster are actions that would put him at odds with his base.

Prediction: Pain

The job of an opposition party is to impose political pain. The point of political pain is to make the president unpopular. By driving up the president's unfavorable numbers, you make him a millstone for his party's congressmen and senators as they prepare for midterm elections. To the extent that the president becomes an electoral liability for members of his party, it curbs the ability of his coalition to govern. Which, in turn, takes his marginal agenda items off the table.

I feel silly even saying this because it's Politics 101. It's like explaining to a fish that water is supposed to be wet.

But Democrats aren't acting anything like an opposition party. Joe Biden is bragging to USA Today about how Trump said something nice about him. Merrick Garland is deferring to Aileen Cannon. John Fetterman is vouching for Kash Patel's sacred honor. Chuck Schumer is playing footsie with Trump's Gulf of America nonsense.

What is wrong with these people?

One more request, because I can't stop myself.

This week Trump said of Greenland: "We need it for national security."

Democrats: For the love of God, stop trying to explain how silly the Greenland stunt is. Or arguing that America doesn't need Greenland for national security purposes.

Instead, get out there and say, "The president-elect says that America needs Greenland for national security. I want to know what he's doing to secure it for us."

Don't argue with Trump. Tell him: Show me the money.

Keep this up once he's in office. Trump says the Panama Canal is essential for American security? Then what is he, as the commander-in-chief, going to do about it? Park an aircraft carrier on either side?

Trump says Canada needs to be a U.S. state? Okay then. What is he doing about it? Why isn't he crushing Canada with tariffs and putting troops on the border?

Because that's what an opposition party with a spine would do.

Instead, Democrats get the worst of all worlds.

They protect Trump from the consequences of his stupidest ideas by getting loud about opposition to his dumbest stunts.

And then they give Trump cover by acquiescing to his most harmful ideas, by normalizing Kash Patel.

Stop it, Democrats. You're an opposition party now. Act like one.

Ruthless Aggression

As always, professional wrestling is

the codex for politics and the key for Democrats understanding their position.

In 2002 the WWE was searching for a new identity as a product. Both figuratively and literally: It lost a trademark fight with the World Wildlife Federation and was forced to rename itself.

More importantly, the WWE had spent the previous years in an era defined by its competition with a rival wrestling promotion, the WCW. This was a period of great creative ferment and in many ways a high point for McMahon's company. But the WWE won the ratings war and McMahon ultimately purchased the WCW for pennies on the dollar. Following this merger, McMahon's company was at sea. He had consolidated an almost total monopoly in an industry that had historically been heavily fragmented. He didn't know what to do next.

On June 24, 2002, McMahon came into the ring on his company's flagship show, Monday Night Raw and delivered what would become an era-defining promo in which he challenged his wrestlers to exhibit "ruthless aggression."

Looking back, you can see the future by looking at the faces of the wrestlers on the ring apron. Watching the way they reacted to McMahon, you could tell who would rise and who would stall out.

The Republican party operates in a ruthless aggression posture while Democrats are stuck in Hulk Hogan's Rock'n'Wrestling.

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

The Liberal Patriot

Democrats' continued fixation on identity politics carries risks

Michael Baharaeen

Ben Wikler one of two leading candidates to be the next chair of the DNC—posted this message to his X account:

“We unite our coalition by making sure everyone’s at the table. As DNC Chair, our leadership team will lift up our full coalition – with Black, Latino, Native, AANHPI, LGBTQ, Youth, Interfaith, Ethnic, Rural, Veteran, and Disability representation.”

Wikler was obviously trying to demonstrate the party’s commitment to groups that have historically been a core part of the Democratic coalition, especially minorities. His post also exemplified a way of thinking that has dominated the party over roughly the past decade: an insistence on seeing the electorate as a collection of identity groups—formed on the basis of shared, often immutable traits—that need to be spoken to individually and treated as distinct from other groups. This is based on the paradigm of “identity politics,” in which people’s sociopolitical attitudes and interests are rooted primarily in their identity traits. However, it is becoming harder to justify using this framework in the year 2025.

Some will argue that “all politics is identity politics.” Most people vote in what they see as their self-interest, and this can be informed by one’s identity. For instance, a person’s religious beliefs, financial status, or sexual orientation may have some bearing on the issues they care about or the politicians whom they believe have their best interest in mind. Similarly, if someone belongs to a group that has historically faced discrimination that, too, may influence their attitudes and voting behaviors.

But viewing American politics and society through this lens also carries serious risks, especially for political parties, whose primary concern is winning elections.

One such risk is coming to believe that the shared characteristic that binds a group of people together is the most important factor informing that group’s voting habits. A good example of this is the assumption many Democrats have had that immigrants would be so put off by Trump’s demagoguery that relentlessly highlighting his bigoted remarks would move many Hispanics and Asians into their corner. Hillary Clinton operated on this assumption in the 2016 campaign—to no avail. But this didn’t stop her party from trying again.

Last cycle, after a speaker at a Trump rally made a crass joke about Puerto Rico in the final week of the campaign, the Democrats thought they had an issue they could use to galvanize Hispanic voters. They put up billboards around Allentown, Pennsylvania, home to a sizable Puerto Rican population, highlighting the speaker’s words. Kamala Harris also hammered home the topic at her final campaign rally in the state. But it made no difference. On Election Day, Trump flipped Pennsylvania, Hispanics in the state moved toward him by 14 points, and Allentown and other localities with large Hispanic populations shifted in his direction.

This same thinking has been present in other recent contexts as well. The Biden administration pursued a widely unpopular student loan forgiveness plan in hopes of energizing young voters, despite the fact that student loans were near the bottom of young people’s list of priorities. Harris also clearly hoped that campaigning hard on the abortion issue would move women to support her in record numbers. In the same vain, Democrats touted her race and gender in an effort to boost her support. But in the

end, she underperformed Biden with young voters, black voters, and women.

All this is a good reminder that conceiving of any group in monolithic terms risks missing meaningful differences within it. Even terms like “Latino” have limited utility, as they lump the very different life experiences of people with ancestry in, say, Mexico, Cuba, and Colombia into one broad category. In Wikler’s case, his preferred term, “AANHPI” (Asian American, Native Hawaiian, and Pacific Islander), does the same thing with people from different countries in different parts of the globe—and often with very different cultures. This is perplexing, though, as we started to see the importance of understanding the nuances within these populations just last year.

Additionally, when parties and candidates are hyper-focused on messaging to certain identity groups, others then expect to receive the same treatment—and take notice when they don’t get it.

Consider young men. It’s no secret that many have been falling behind their female peers on numerous metrics, including educational attainment and employment. However, there was little in the Democrats’ messaging for men in this past election that matched their much more overt appeals to women. Some Harris surrogates did make a direct pitch to men in the home stretch of the campaign, but they argued that men needed to vote for Harris to show support for the women in their lives.

The lack of a clear agenda for men hasn’t been exclusive to Harris or her campaign, either. Pollster Daniel Cox has noted that the DNC’s website includes a page called “Who We Serve,” which lists fully 16 different groups they claim to represent. One group conspicuously missing? Men. In light of all this, is it any surprise that they not only didn’t break heavily for Harris but swung to Trump overall by eight points?

Post-election polling showed that the perception that Harris and the Demo-



crats cared more about individual groups than the broader electorate was a real vulnerability for her. A plurality of swing voters said they believed that Harris was “more focused on cultural issues like transgender issues rather than helping the middle class.” Many Democrats protested this, saying that Harris took pains to not talk about such issues on the trail. But this sentiment was likely less about trans issues, specifically, and more in response to the sense that the party talks about issues that affect certain groups at the expense of the electorate’s primary concerns like the economy and immigration.

The point is this: when a party gets bogged down in identity politics, it often becomes harder to develop a clear and compelling message with universal appeal. People may know that you stand behind this or that group, but they don’t have a clear sense of who you are or what you’ll do for them.

What’s strange about the Democratic Party’s almost monomaniacal

focus on identity over the past decade is that it’s a stark departure from both its recent past and the ethos that guided one of the party’s most revered figures: Barack Obama. When Obama first came onto the scene at the 2004 Democratic National Convention, his vision for the country explicitly rejected the identity politics paradigm.

Of course, none of this is to say that some groups aren’t disproportionately impacted by certain issues or that politicians should never acknowledge that fact. Ultimately, though, most Americans, regardless of identity, basically want the same things: a general sense of overall stability, a strong economy, good jobs, safe streets and schools, affordable health-care, and basic respect for their rights.

It shouldn’t be hard to make that case, but doing so requires leaving behind a politics that prioritizes group identity above all else.

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

Good Day Neighbor

Valentine to public education

Dorothea Mordan

Public school was designed to help society by guiding our children to grow up to be productive citizens, ready and able to interact with other people in society.

Education starts with common language. Teachers use language to build understanding. Having a shared method of communication gives us a reason to write it down. Having something to share gives us a reason to read. Having a system of commerce gives us a reason for addition and subtraction. Readin’, writin’, ’rithmetic. Another reason three is a magic number.

With language we learn to listen to the voice of authority from a young age. Our first and strongest leaders—parents, teachers. They instill respect for leadership in our social structure of employment, government, religion.

Our public education system has gotten more complicated since Horace Mann advocated for a public school system in the 1830’s. That’s because humans are complicated.

Public school provides a place to debate the historical causes of man’s inhumanity to man, and the merits of solutions. Slow, passive resistance that changes the course of a country, Gandhi in India, the Underground Railroad in our own country. The big picture reasons for human suffering always include breaking the Golden Rule. The solutions always include following the Golden Rule.

Suffering, exclusion, internment camps, “No [insert anyone you don’t like] allowed”, stay out of the bathroom. There are people actually spending time, right now, making it impossible for other people to use a restroom.

Education taught me the lessons others learned from breaking commandments, and committing the deadly sins. Greed, arrogance, flying too close to the sun. Do we have the Icarus administration, or simply a living example of the Peter Principle. Don’t remember the Peter Principle? Educators, and my parents, taught me to “look it up, you’ll remember it longer.”

Historical examples of breaking the Golden Rule? Slavery, in any and all eras, is as simple to understand as it is bad. If you wouldn’t want to be treated

as a slave, don’t treat others as slaves.

Education teaches that humans can rationalize anything. Right now, in 2025, there is a rationalizing of changing everything because the Icarus administration said so. There are such great things that will happen, and you will get everything you have always deserved when all the bad things are removed. By me.

History class taught me a lot about how compromise was reached so that we now have our Constitution. Successfully following the Golden Rule requires us to compromise. Everything about the US Constitution is some form of codification of the Golden Rule.

Civics class taught me that my vote matters. I do not have to vote for cruel people so that I can get my righteous eggs at the grocery store. Just because an Icarus administration is behaving as though to protect property rights some American citizens can be stripped of their personal and civil rights, no American has to support these actions. Firing career government employees without cause, threatening states with withholding lifesaving funds, isolating lifesaving medical research from the public, these actions break everything about the Golden Rule. These acts are performed by newly elected or appointed people, many who claim to be devout Christians.

We may disagree on what is good for our country, but most people could agree that the Golden Rule is the most universal tenet of Judeo-Christian history.

The Maryland Toleration Act of 1649 was a first, and pretty selective, attempt at religious tolerance in the Colonies. The Colonists were newly arrived from England, where they took turns killing each other. The New World bought new opportunities to compromise. Not to mention reasons to compromise, with all of huge amounts of property available to grab. The main goal of the Toleration Act was to keep the peace between Catholics and Protestants. Eventually that first compromise led to our First Amendment.

“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the government for a redress of grievances.”

The founding Fathers knew from experience that a fight over religion was a loser for everyone. No exceptions. The ultimate lesson in the Golden Rule.

School was not meant to make parents feel good. In our modern lives we have the ability to make our social norms, and our customary interactions with each other almost anything we could wish for.

The lesson from teachers and from our educational system is to be careful what you wish for, in particular if your wish does not incorporate the Golden Rule. Wishes that thoughtlessly exclude other people can have repercussions persisting through generations.

It takes each of us to have a healthy society. It takes each of us to support the foundation of our society. Our education system is one of the cornerstones. To have a school system that teaches children to respect each of us and our society, requires investment of our attention on the body elected to manage that system. Recordings of the Frederick County Maryland Board of Education meetings can be found on the Frederick County website.

Democrats make lots of mistakes, but the common thread is that each of us has the right to be an individual and live life on their own terms. Even Icarus is free to fly into the sun. Let’s hope very few are dragged there with him.

(Answer: The Peter Principle is the condition of a person rising up the employment ladder to the level of their incompetence. You should still look it up.)

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

THE PASTOR'S DESK

When you come to a fork in the road, take it

Pastor Mark Englund-Krieger
Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Church

Of course, that is a popular, famous and funny quote from Yogi Berra. But the fork in the road which the American Christian Church is facing is not a funny situation to behold. I am the pastor of the Lower Marsh Creek Presbyterian Church in Gettysburg. Our congregation is part of the national Presbyterian Church. The Presbyterian Church is a classic expression of Christianity in America. We have been here in the United States before the actual founding of our United States.

The congregation I serve was formed in 1740, and the building where we still worship God every Sunday was built in 1790. The remains of the original log meeting house, which was probably within the bounds of our historic cemetery, are long gone; these long years have devoured any visible sign of our first Church structure. But our congregation continues today standing in and appreciating the long heritage we have as Presbyterians here in Adams County, in Pennsylvania, in these great United States.

I am grateful for this opportunity to share these reflections. But I am not going to write about my congregation specifically or my own denomination, The Presbyterian Church. I would like to reflect here in this essay on a larger context and a bigger story. I would like to ponder a bit about the fork in the road which American Christianity faces as we seek to be faithful to the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ in the midst of our awesome, powerful and all-consuming American culture. For those of us who seek to be obedient Christians, we face an important question today. Are we going to follow the calling and expectations of our Christian faith or follow some of the different priorities that our American culture is now expressing and leading us toward? There is a fork in the road.

The Christian faith is one path which opens in front of us. The American culture which we are all immersed in and which holds amazing power in our lives is increasingly veering off in a different direction. Which path will you follow? I would like to offer here some hints of the places where our Christian path and our cultural path are diverging. Maybe this list can be

expanded? Maybe a similar list may be developed naming those ways that our Christian faith and our American culture are supporting and encouraging one another. I focus here on a few of the places where the paths diverge; forks in the road:

Compassion: Clearly our American culture has taken a turn in recent years toward a more nasty, coarse and ugly tone in our public speech. There is an increasingly ugly and demeaning tone to the ways we talk to one another. Personal insults and derogatory rhetoric seems to be more common and acceptable, and in some circles even encouraged. This is not acceptable for those of us deeply motivated by our Christian faith. We are called to speak gently and kindly to all people, especially those with whom we disagree and differ. Compassion is the foundational Christian principle and the motivating force behind much of Jesus' behavior. Compassion is a foundational moral commitment for Christians. Do we speak with a compassionate tone? Do we act with compassion toward our neighbors and especially to those who are different from us?

Mutual Forbearance: I believe that Christianity has a deep moral commitment to mutual forbearance. Simply stated, this is the idea that we should not condemn, reject and ridicule those with whom we disagree. There may be different points of views, different perspectives and different moral commitments and convictions. Christians must claim and proclaim our own deepest theological and moral convictions. But this does not mean that people who disagree with us or have come to hold differing convictions are our enemies who must be crushed and condemned in word and deed. It is possible, and



actually gratifying, to find ways to agree to disagree. It is possible to cooperate and collaborate with people who hold profoundly different moral convictions. The American way today seeks to crush those who are different; the Christian way seeks to express a mutual forbearance which respects difference.

Big is not always better: American culture is obsessed with BIG. A big house is better than a smaller house. A big bank account is a sign of success. A simple 8-ounce drink is not good enough; we must have a huge, super-sized, extra large drink. Restaurants often do not list small as an option; it is large and extra-large. How did small come to be associated with poor and bad? Big is always better according to our culture. This way of thinking has deeply infected the thinking of the Church today. As a pastor, for example, when I meet a new person one of the first questions I am often asked is, "How big is your Church?" This question about size seems to contain the whole evaluation of whether or not my Church is good or bad. If my Church is perceived to be big, then it is a good Church.

If my Church is perceived to be small, then there must be something wrong with me and with my Church.

Is big always better? A bigger house, a bigger truck, a bigger bank account, a bigger Church, a bigger hamburger does not make you a better person! There is a real fork in the road here between our cultural obsession with big and the Christian faith. I grew up in and I serve today what would commonly be considered a small Church. But these Churches are rich in faith, powerful in relationships, profound in caring and supporting one another. Small Churches nurture a deep, interpersonal intimacy and relationships with one another. Jesus taught a very important lesson about a mustard seed, what he called the smallest of all seeds.

Service: Our culture has veered aggressively toward an all-encompassing obsession with the idea, "What's in it for me?" We have become focussed on me and mine. So, it seems, we are increasingly motivated by selfishness. Our culture seems to advocate more and more that what matters is what I get out of it, what do I gain, how does it help me, what's in it for me? If we continue down this path of selfish focus, we will soon be lost from the classic Christian calling of serving others. The Christian question, forever, has been how may I serve and support, encourage and love others. How do my actions, my behavior, my deeds contribute to the well-being of others? Service, or what we often in the Church call mission work, is central and empowering in our Christian faith. "What's in it for me?" or "How may I help you?" are two, profoundly different questions. Which one motivates you?

In this short message I wanted to ponder some of the ways I perceive our American culture and our historic Christian faith are diverging. I named several ways in which our cultural emphasis and trends are moving in directions different from our Christian faith. This is uncomfortable and difficult. This, of course, also begs the question of whether there are also ways in which our American cultural trends and Christian faith support and encourage one another? And another rich question also comes to mind. Are these issues different today than a generation ago or even earlier in American history? If so, what changed and why?

At the end, my question may be summarized: what is the most powerful, influential and motivating force in your life, for both your belief and your behavior? I hope and pray that the grace and love of our Lord Jesus Christ is your answer to that question!

To learn more about Lower Marsh Presbyterian Church, visit them online at www.imcpc.org.

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THE BOOK OF DAYS

Lady Sarah Lennox



Lady Sarah Lennox—born 14th February 1745—is an interesting figure of a subordinate class in modern English history. Her father, the second Duke of Richmond of his creation (grandson of King Charles II), had made, in early life, not exactly a romantic marriage, but a marriage which was followed by romantic circumstances. The bride was Lady Sarah Cadogan, daughter of Marlborough's favourite general.

Their union was a bargain to cancel a gambling debt between the parents, and the young Lord March was brought from college, the lady from the nursery, for the ceremony. The bride was amazed and silent, but the bridegroom exclaimed—"Surely you are not going to marry me to that dowdy?" Married he was, however, and his tutor instantly carried him off to the Continent ... Three years afterwards, Lord March returned from his travels an accomplished gentleman, but having such a disagreeable re-collection of his wife that he avoided home, and repaired on the first night of his arrival to the theatre. There he saw a lady of so fine an appearance that he asked who she was. "The reigning toast, the beautiful Lady March." He hastened to claim her, and they lived together so affectionately, that, one year after his decease in 1750, she died of grief.

Lady Sarah, one of the numerous children of this loving pair, grew up an extraordinary beauty. Of this we get some testimony from the great domestic chronicler of the last century.

The charms of this lovely creature had already made an impression on the heart of George III, then newly come to the throne at two and twenty. There seems no reason to doubt that the young monarch formed the design of rais-

return in summer for the coronation.' Lady Susan answered that she did not know—she hoped so. 'But,' said the King again, 'they talk of a wedding. There have been many proposals: but I think an English match would do better than a foreign one. Pray tell Lady Sarah Lennox I say so.' Here was a sufficiently broad hint to inflame the hopes of a family, and to raise the head of a blooming girl of sixteen to the fifth heavens.

It happened, however, that Lady Sarah had already allowed her heart to be pre-occupied, having formed a girlish attachment for the young Lord Newbottle, grandson of the Marquis of Lothian. She did not therefore enter into the views of her family with all the alacrity which they desired. According to a narrative of Mr. Grenville:

'She went the next drawing-room to St. James's, and stated to the King, in as few words as she could, the inconveniences and difficulties in which such a step would involve him. He said, that was his business: he would stand them all: his part was taken, he wished to hear hers was likewise.'

In this state it continued, whilst she, by advice of her friends, broke off with Lord Newbottle, very reluctantly on her part. She went into the country for a few days, and by a fall from her horse broke her leg. The absence which this occasioned gave time and opportunities for her enemies to work; they instilled jealousy into the King's mind upon the subject of Lord Newbottle, telling him that Lady Sarah still continued her intercourse with him, and immediately the marriage with the Princess of Strelitz was set on foot: and, at Lady Sarah's return from the country, she found herself deprived of her crown and her lover Lord Newbottle, who complained as much of her as she did of the King.

While this was in agitation, Lady Sarah used to meet the King in his rides early in the morning, driving a little chaise with Lady Susan Strangeways: and once it is said

that, wanting to speak to him, she went dressed like a servant-maid, and stood amongst the crowd in the Guard-room, to say a few words to him as he passed by.'

Lady Sarah would sometimes appear as a haymaker in the park at Holland House, in order to attract the attention of the King as he rode past but the opportunity was lost. The habit of obedience to his mother's will carried the day, and he allowed an emissary to go on a mission to obtain a bride for him in the Protestant courts of Germany.

It is believed that lady Sarah was allowed to have hopes till the very day when the young sovereign announced to his council that he had resolved on wedding the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg. She felt ill-used, and her friends were all greatly displeased. With the King she remained an object of virtuous admiration,—perhaps also of pity. He wished to soften the disappointment by endeavouring to get her established in a high position near his wife: but the impropriety of such a course

was obvious, and it was not persisted in.

Lady Sarah, however, was asked by the King to take a place among the ten unmarried daughters of dukes and earls who held up the train of his queen at the coronation: and this office, which we cannot help thinking in the circumstances derogatory, she consented to perform. It is said that, in the sober, duty-compelled mind of the sovereign, there always was a softness towards the object of his youthful attachment.

Lady Sarah Lennox in 1764 made a marriage which proved that ambition was not a ruling principle in her nature, her husband being 'a clergyman's son.' The marriage however was dissolved by an Act of Parliament in 1776, and she subsequently married Major-General George Napier. In 1826, Her ladyship died at the age of eighty-two, believed to be the last surviving great grand-daughter of Charles II.

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

Emmitsburg Presbyterian



"Come Home to Church"

Recently, a visitor to the Emmitsburg Presbyterian Church remarked: "Coming here is like coming home to church".

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Becky Jones

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ECOLOGY

This winter feels like a real winter

Anne Gageby
 Director of Environmental Education
 Strawberry Hill Foundation

Like the ones we had when I was a kid growing up on Mount Hope. The kind of winter that makes you want to go play in the snow then snuggle under a warm, dry blanket. The kind of winter that makes you look out your window at the vast ocean of white and wonder at how anything survives. The snow, the plunging temperatures, the frozen creek beds. It has been a gloriously icy season.

Snow is as functional as it is beautiful. Snow's albedo, or ability to reflect sunlight back into the atmosphere, is very high. It reflects an average of 80-90 percent of incoming sunlight. This reflection of light helps Earth's energy balance and cools the planet. Without snow, or in areas where dust has collected on snowpack's surface, dark-colored debris absorbs and retains heat causing faster snowmelt and decreases the likelihood of snow sticking to the ground. It becomes a vicious cycle. But when snow does stay it does miraculous things for the forest.

Those delicate white flakes gather and become an insulating blanket that protects plants, trees, and wildlife from the creeping midwinter chill. Without snow, super cold temperatures like we experienced last week freeze the soil deeper underground. This can lead to damaged root systems and kill plants and trees. Snow's insulation efficacy is due to the air pockets found between fallen snowflakes. These air pockets trap warmer air and moisture, effec-

tively slowing down heat loss between the ground and outer temperatures.

And the insulation effect of snow helps protect roots from the cyclic freezing and thawing that often happens this time of year. Milder temperatures and sunshine warm snow-free soil at the surface level and can lead to damage from soil heaving. When this happens, roots dry out and break. Snow-coated soil, however, helps conserve moisture during the long winter months and provides a much-needed dose of water as the snow melts into the ground. These protections help set the pace for spring budding.

But not all snowmelt penetrates the ground. Depending on the landscape, snowmelt also flows over land, contributing to the flow streams and rivers. This helps create temporary streams and vernal pools which become homes to a variety of amphibians such as salamanders and frogs. Vernal pools filled in early spring by snowmelt and rain dry up during summer and yet are incredibly important to certain amphibian species' mating seasons as they provide a habitat safe from fish predators. It's a delicate balance but one that often depends on winter precipitation as much as it depends on spring rains.

It's fun to discover the benefits of a snowy winter but let's be honest, snow isn't for everyone. As we experienced recently, it can disrupt travel plans, close schools and businesses, and requires physical investment in its removal. Yet, to the forest snow is a welcome sight. A variety of rodents such as mice, voles, and shrews live in or utilize the subnivean zone, that almost-magical world between the

snowpack and the Earth's surface. These creatures live, rest, and find meals here. They go about their days protected from winter's harshest attitudes by the thick layer of white above them. Without this protection, rodent populations decrease as food supplies dry up and lack of cover opens them to higher rates of predation.

Of course, snow doesn't give them protection all the time. Owls and foxes are well adapted to hunt for small rodents even in deep snow. Owls' hearing is stellar, and their ears are designed to triangulate a prey's location under a thick carpet of white. Studies have shown that owls experience sounds with the visual part of their brain. This means they are likely to see the sounds around them. A mole doesn't stand much chance against that even if they are tunneled under several inches of snow. Foxes, on the other hand, have not only excellent hearing but an incredible sense of smell as well. They use their well-equipped noses to locate prey tunneling underfoot. And since they grow thick fur coats every year, the cold isn't likely to stop them hunting for a late-evening meal.

For people, however, winter can be rough. The bitter cold we recently experienced made spending time outside difficult and unsafe. Fortunately, those temperatures were more of an anomaly than the rule in our area of Pennsylvania. And as we've seen, more normal temps came back as quickly as they left. It may still be cold out but overall winter is a great time to be outside.

Hiking in the cold brings a wide variety of health benefits from improving overall immunity to boosting your mood and reducing stress. Your body burns more calories when you go hiking in the cold and it can help improve your cardiovascular system. And walking through snow is kind of similar to walking on sand in that it forces you to slow down and works muscles you may have forgotten you had.

Winter hikes have more than just health benefits for anyone willing to brave the chilly air. The lack of bugs is a universal upside for any hiker. No spiderwebs in your hair or mosquitos making you a snack. Plus, there's something fun about the crunch of snow under our feet as we take a walk outside. It brings out a child-like wonder and excitement as you traipse around the woods.

Or maybe that's just me. I definitely



As you can plainly see in this paper, there is no shortage of good winter photos!

feel like a kid again when I'm out on a winter hike. Tapping into that energy makes being out in the cold more enjoyable. Plus, the forest is beautiful this time of year. Shimmering ice and snow-dusted trees make a spectacular backdrop for any hike. If you're looking for an excuse to get outside, this is it. Check out our list of upcoming winter hikes and programs at Straw-

berry Hill and join us for some winter fun. While you're out, take in the forest around you and all that winter is doing behind the scenes. After all, this has been a winter to remember and one that will make spring even better for creatures and plants of all varieties.

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

Buttonwood Nature Center StoryWalk

Area families are invited to join a walk along the story trail on Sunday, February 9 from 1:30 to 3 at the Pine Hill Recreation Area, hosted by Buttonwood Nature Center.

New for 2025, Buttonwood is scheduling a special Story-Walk event for each of the four seasons. Kids join a guided walk with fun activities along the trail as they read a story book together. Each seasonal event will feature a different post-story activity.

"After the story trail, we'll gather around a roaring campfire where we will share s'mores and hot chocolate," said Mary Claire King, Buttonwood's watershed science coordinator and the event organizer.

The featured book for February is Hibernation Station by

Michelle Meadows, with illustrations by Kurt Cyrus. "This delightful book teaches children about the many animals that hibernate during the winter season," King said. "Kids enjoy the rhyming text and beautiful illustrations, too."

The story shows many animals on a train, preparing to snuggle into sleep for the winter season—but with chipmunks, bears, snakes, hedgehogs, groundhogs, frogs, turtles, mice, bats, and more, there's a lot of noise—will the hibernating critters ever get to sleep? The event is free and pre-registration is not required.

For more information, visit www.buttonwoodnaturecenter.org, or contact Buttonwood at 717-762-0373.

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The Maple Mafia

Tim Iverson, Naturalist

Maple syrup, as the name implies, comes from the Maple tree, usually the Sugar, Red, or Black Maple. During the summer months the leaves of trees create sugar, which is stored as starch in the roots and trunks prior to winter. With the onset of spring trees will convert these starches back into sugar. The sugar combines with ground water to create sap, and the sap rises in the tree with the advent of warmer weather. In February winter begins to wane, and sugar makers venture out to tap Maples in anticipation for the coming seasonal changes.

To tap a tree a sugarmaker will bore a hole into a tree and insert a spile, or tap, to collect sap. The warm days and cold nights, generally 40-45°F high and 30°F or below low, build up pressure within the tree and causes sap to flow out. This process is entirely sustainable, and is a lot like a person donating blood. Once a Maple reaches 30 to 40 years old it can be tapped. A tree can support between one and three taps at a time, and will produce 9 – 13 gallons of sap in a given season. At this point the syrup making process is far from over. The collected sap must be boiled down to create the syrup.

It takes 40 gallons of sap to make just one gallon of syrup. Sap collected from trees is mostly water and contains about 2% sugar. Maple syrup typically contains 66% sugar, so to achieve this syrup producers send the sap through a reverse osmosis machine to extract most of the water. The remaining sap is then boiled down to evaporate the rest of the water and thicken the sap. As the water evaporates the sap thickens and sugar crystallizes. A sugarmaker continually tests the thickness and viscosity during this process. Once the pan reaches 219°F the syrup is siphoned off and is filtered to remove by-products like sugar crystals that affect grittiness or flavor. After filtering the syrup is adjusted

for density and graded on color and flavor. The U.S. and Canada, even some states (Vermont, New Hampshire, and New York), have different scales of classification. Grade A generally includes the light to medium colored syrups with mild flavors – these are table syrups used for pancakes, French toast, and that sort of thing. Grade B is dark and has an intense flavor and is primarily used for cooking.

Syrup producers generally take production, regulation, and grading pretty seriously. Vermont arguably has the strictest standards in the US. You can't label anything as Maple Syrup if it isn't made with 100% pure maple syrup, and they even got into a legal battle with McDonalds over the issue. While there are legal standards for syrup it's mostly industry regulated. The real deal Maple syrup isn't cheap as a result. If you found bargain syrup it probably isn't authentic. IHOP, most breakfast establishments, and popular commercial breakfast syrups (Log Cabin, Hungry Man, Mrs. Butterworth's, and Aunt Jemima to name a few) don't serve genuine Maple syrup. What you're getting is actually corn syrup that's been dyed a caramel color and artificially flavored.

Maple Syrup is taken so seriously that there is an entire organization dedicated to its regulation, production, and marketing. Allow me to introduce you to the Federation of Quebec Maple Syrup Producers (FPAQ). Canada produces 80% of the world's maple syrup, and 90% of that comes from Quebec. With such a large stake in syrup it's only natural that they should want to protect their market share, product, and overall success and well being. In 1958 a small group of syrup producers banded together to market their products and to protect their rights. The idea caught on, and in 1966 the collective agreement was expanded to include nearly the entire Quebec province. Today members of the FPAQ abide by a collective agreement that serves to establish certain



"A sap run is the sweet goodbye on winter. It is the fruit of the equal marriage of the sun and the frosts." – John Burroughs, Signs and Seasons, 1886

quality criteria, a production quota, establish industry policies, negotiate selling agreements, and marketing strategies. The FPAQ even maintains warehouses full of barrels of syrup. It is referred to as the Global Strategic Maple Syrup Reserve, and operates essentially to control supply, syrup prices and to shield producers from a poor harvest. This organization essentially runs as a legal cartel, and are jeeringly called the OPEC of Syrup.

This strategic reserve and the organization that runs it has helped to steadily increase the profitability and total returns that producers see every year. In fact, a gallon of maple syrup trades at \$32 a gallon, and \$1800 per barrel. To put that into perspective a barrel of oil trades at approximately \$30 at the time of this publication. The FPAQ are clearly doing their jobs well. However, there is a flipside to this coin. The intense regulation of the product and industry has created a black market of sorts.

In the summer of 2012 during a regularly scheduled audit of the strategic reserve stockpile a large quantity of syrup had been discovered missing. Some barrels had been outright taken, while others were drained and refilled with water to conceal the heist. All in all, \$18 million worth of syrup had been stolen. This is considered one of the largest agricultural heists of all time. Over the years the FPAQ had created a number of enemies, and has long been involved in what's referred to as the "Maple Wars" with producers, buyers, and suppliers both in and out of the province and country. It didn't take too long to trace the trail back to a long time maple renegade and illegal buyer of syrup, Richard Vallières. The accused is allegedly the ring leader of the operation. Thieves rented another portion of the warehouse where a portion of the strategic reserve is held and overtime smuggled out 6 million pounds of syrup. The police followed the trail further to

an exporter in neighboring New Brunswick, and seized his stockpile on the suspicion of purchasing stolen goods. Authorities have recovered most of the missing amount, but much of it is feared to have been sold to unsuspecting buyers. 22 people have been charged in relation to the theft, but most still await an official disposition – including Richard Vallières.

If you're interest has been piqued and you'd like to learn more, or even if you're now craving that sweet sticky substance you're in luck! Cunningham Falls State Park will be hosting their 45th Annual Maple Syrup Festival on March 14, 15, 21, and 22 from 9:30 – 2:30. You can see the maple syrup making process, enjoy authentic maple syrup with freshly made pancakes, see ranger led programs, live animals, and arts and crafts.

To read past articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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SCIENCE MATTERS

Why “The Telepathy Tapes” are like Uri Geller

Boyce Rensberger

Our country may be experiencing another Uri Geller moment. Let me explain.

If you were following the news in the 1970s, you may recall that name. Geller was an Israeli performer who claimed supernatural powers such as the ability to bend spoons with his mind and to recreate drawings made by somebody in another room. He could even read other people's minds.

He gained such fame that he was tested by the Stanford Research Institute, undergoing eight days of experiments in which, as the SRI scientists wrote, Geller “has demonstrated his paranormal perceptual ability in a convincing and unambiguous manner.” A report of the SRI findings appeared in *Nature*, one of the most prestigious scientific journals.

Geller even appeared on Johnny Carson, the long reigning king of late-night television in those days. Carson had set up some materials and asked Uri to demonstrate his powers with them. Note that Geller usually worked with objects that he himself supplied. This time Geller appeared to try hard but eventually failed, making the excuse that his supernatural abilities don't always come to him. Paradoxically, that failure only boosted the guy's fame because it showed that he wasn't simply a magician, doing tricks by sleight-of-hand. A magician would have succeeded.

In fact, professional magicians did soon perform Geller's tricks and could attest that they were simply using ordinary magic tricks to fool the eye. Geller admitted that magicians could duplicate his feats using sleight-of-hand, but asserted that he himself possessed supernatural powers to do those things. Magicians also found flaws in SRI's method that would have allowed Geller to cheat.

That brings me to today's Uri Geller moment.

This has not yet made it to the couches of today's late-night shows, but in January it dominated our currently prominent medium of podcasting. In the first week of January “The Telepathy Tapes,” as the podcast is known, knocked “The Joe Rogan Experience” off its usual No. 1 place on Spotify's chart of the Top 100 podcasts. Then it held on to No. 2 and as of this writing in mid-January, it is the fifth most listened to podcast in America.

The show claims that nonverbal autistic children have supernatural powers, especially to read the minds of other people. The host visits several autistic children and their parents and records interactions that appear to show that the abilities are real. For example, a mother is shown a word and thinks about it, and the child then spells out the word by pointing to letters of the alphabet printed on a panel held by the mother.

But wait, there's more. The podcast runs for ten one-hour episodes. Some of them claim that mother and child communicate through something called dream telepathy, which uses no words at all. The show even claims that the phenomena offer “a new scientific paradigm where consciousness is viewed as the most fundamental building block of the universe.”

Tantalizingly, the show says that nonspeakers may be tapping into a “foundational consciousness ... connecting them to others' thoughts, glimpses of the future, and knowledge beyond the physical world.” The text introducing one episode says the phenomenon “opens the door to possibilities that defy conventional science.”

So it would appear. But as this column is named, science matters! That's why I'm writing about this. I was prompted to look into the current controversy by a famous scientist



Trainer Wilhelm von Osten with Clever Hans

I know who heard about the telepathy claims, searched online and happened on a story I wrote in *The New York Times* in 1975 about magicians debunking Uri Geller. She thought this might be the same sort of phenomenon. I think it could be.

At this point, though, I want to tell you about a horse named Clever Hans. I'm not changing the subject. It might explain a key factor better than anything else. Perhaps you have heard of this.

In the early years of the 20th century, a horse in Germany created a sensation when it was claimed that he could do arithmetic, tell time, read and spell German, and more. For example, how much is two plus two? Hans would tap his hoof exactly four times. How do you spell “Hans”? The trainer points to a series of letters on a board and Hans taps his foot when the trainer reaches the correct letter.

So real did the phenomenon seem that the German government created a commission to examine Hans. Eventually a skeptical psychologist carried out various tests and realized that the only thing Hans was doing

was watching his trainer for subtle movements that the trainer inadvertently made when Hans tapped the correct number of times or he pointed to the correct letter. Horses are good at sensing subtle movements of people. It's important to state that Hans's trainer was honestly unaware that he was giving signals to his horse. The phenomenon is known as the Clever Hans effect.

Now back to the telepathy claims. They almost always involve the parent holding a letter board, or alphabet board, in front of the autistic person and having that person touch letters to spell out the word that the parent has in mind. It's a technique called facilitated communication that was developed decades ago in the belief that it could help nonspeaking persons to communicate. A more recent version uses a computer keyboard, either holding it in front of the subject or, in what's called facilitated typing, having the parent steady the person's hand over the keyboard.

Rigorous studies of such activities have concluded that the facilitator is causing the nonspeaker's finger to touch the letters that spell the expected word. To be sure, the facilitators may honestly deny that they

are guiding the other person's hand or moving the letter board to the correct position. But—and this is key—when the facilitator is someone who does not know the expected word or number, the process fails.

Today facilitated communication is considered pseudoscience and major professional organizations such as the American Psychological Association and the American Academy of Pediatrics have condemned its usage. Yet advocates continue to promote it in what scientific societies term as part of a cult.

The Telepathy Tapes are the newest outbreak of this unfortunate practice, regardless of whether the advocates are charlatans or are merely self-deluded by the Clever Hans effect. Today, more than ever, we should know that the world is full of con artists.

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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THE VILLAGE IDIOT

Out of chaos

Jack Deatherage

"Farming looks mighty easy when your plow is a pencil and you're a thousand miles from a cornfield."

I was two years old when President Eisenhower made that statement during an address at Bradley University in 1956. Sixty-eight years later I nod in agreement. Though I've never worked a cornfield with a pencil or a plow I have plotted gardens, sometimes on paper, but mostly in my head. Neither form of plotting has ever made it into a garden intact.

Since the Town Council approved my building a new community garden along Cedar Avenue during the January 2023 Board meeting... nothing has gone according to my vision for the garden. Which is understandable given all the possible designs, functions and purposes of any garden let alone a community garden. When combined with my bobble-headedness it's a wonder anything remotely resembling a garden exists on that one time farmers' market lot. (By the way, one dictionary definition of "bobble-headed" - a thoughtless person. I'm the opposite of that. Way too many thoughts ricocheting within the confines of my skull.)

Add the uncontrollable variables of: weather (a cold Spring set most of the garden a month behind last year), wildlife (the Summer drought brought deer into the garden seeking moisture and nourishment in the form of cabbages) and human intervention (three new gardeners, thankfully, took over beds I'd other plans for) and I'm often left amazed at what little a handful of volunteers have managed to do with the garden. Inferior bulbs and corms purchased from previously reliable suppliers wrecked the display flowerbeds along the avenue and in the library's section at the rear of the garden. Spotted lantern flies, while not unexpected, didn't do as much damage as anticipated, though Harlequin bugs eventually devastated the kale until cold weather knocked them down. Oleander aphid (*Aphis nerii*) - the cutest black-legged yellow aphid I've ever seen - sucked several swamp milkweeds dry in the library's section of the garden.

Side note: several Europeans

I've chatted with have told me poisons, oleander being one of them, among other non-firearms related murder methods, have long been their cultures' go-to means of ridding themselves of unwanted people. Poisons were, probably still are in areas without modern forensic technology, favored for several reasons. They are easy to administer, take long enough to do the job so's the killer has time to leave the scene and are usually very painful should the killer want to hang around to enjoy the victim's suffering. I'll do my best to keep poisonous plants out of the garden. Eh-hem. No need to tempt anyone.

Back to the variables that influence the garden's development. Money being a prime example. Because I don't ask the town for help unless I can't get around a problem, I'm limited by what money I can get the DW to part with, or garden supporters press upon me. Which in turn slows down the growth of the garden. Which keeps us (mostly me) from taking on more than we (the few people helping) can handle each year. However!

The mayor, town manager and several commissioners have urged me to make use of the money they've set aside for projects such as the community garden. I just can't bring myself to build the garden with taxpayer money. It's always in my mind that the garden can still fail. That we might not ever get enough people involved in the project to justify the money currently being spent. It worries me that people I respect keep telling me the moment I quit the garden the garden is over. That no one else will step up to maintain it let alone expand it.

I have a 10-year plan, sort of. I guesstimate the DW will let me spend about \$2,000 a year on the garden. I don't expect anyone else to donate materials or cash so two grand, spread over the course of the season, dictates what we'll do each year. This year I planned on adding 4 metal raised beds, purchase soil to fill them as well as a wheel barrow, and about 100 straw bales - all of which surpasses the 2 grand limit the DW has. A minor detail if everything is acquired piecemeal. Enter forces beyond my control.

Town Manager, Cathy Willets, emails me about a possible grant from Sustainable Maryland for the garden. Grants Administrator, Madeline Shaw, sends a follow-up email asking a bunch of questions about the community garden. Both warn me the grant is very competitive and I shouldn't expect any money this first time the town applies for it. I look the grant up online and realize there is no chance the garden, as it currently is, will get a penny from the state. I contentedly go back to planning the 2025 garden with the librarians and their children's STEM program. HA! Enter the laughing gods!

During the January board of commissioners meeting Ms Willets announces Emmitsburg has been awarded a grant for the Cedar Avenue community garden. Turns out the state thinks the garden is worth a \$15,000 investment. I almost said a bad word as all the possible trouble that much money would cause if dumped in my lap, which I feared would happen as I'm the designated head of this idiot's project.

Fortunately for everyone the grant was for specific things- a waterline into the lot, a garden shed and more raised beds if any money is leftover. I considered thanking the laughing gods, but they'd just set me up for some other prank so I let them have their laugh and went back to figuring out how to make happen what the librarians want for the season. If town staff needs



Jack searching for his lost pet Oleander aphid among the cane begonia trunks—whatever they are.

my thoughts on where and what with the waterline and shed I have more questions than I do suggestions.

Since the primary users of the garden, to date, are the children's librarians I'm going to rely on their wants and needs for expanding the garden going forward. It will be the current crop of preschoolers who will eventually take over the garden when we adult gardeners age out. Keeping the kids engaged shouldn't be a problem as more adults begin planting plots as we expand the garden. The librarians tell me the kids are fascinated by the public and private beds outside of their section of the garden.

\$15,000 from the state? Never expected that, though Brian McKenney, the muscle and brains building the garden, told

me this was going to happen and happen quickly. Non-believer that I am, I'm going to continue planning the garden as if people are not going to show up to help, which he also said was going to happen once the garden became a reality.

Adding to the chaos, Brian and I are planning to tear up most of what we've already built. Move it and rebuild as we slowly figure out a design that suits the function of the garden. Of course we aren't sure what the function is though we know it will involve sustainability, education and kids.

And garlic, shallots and onions if I'm involved in planting the garden each year!

To read past editions of *The Village Idiot*, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

THE MASTER GARDENER

Trees and shrubs for the winter landscape

Mary Ann Ryan
Adams County Master Gardener

Winter landscapes can be beautiful. Shapes and forms come to the forefront in winter design as well as textures and silhouettes. Evergreen trees and shrubs become our mainstay in the winter landscape. But if we look beyond the obvious, we can recognize beauty in deciduous shrubs and trees, like bark and stems.

Trees like the paperbark maple, river birch and sycamore have three distinct silhouettes, three mature sizes and habits, but all share the same common interest: their bark.

The paperbark maple, *Acer griseum*, is one of my favorite trees. This slow-growing tree offers a cinnamon colored, peeling bark on the trunk and branches. It is a slow grower that likes part shade to full sun and reaches about

20-25'. It's not fussy about soil, but don't place it in a really dry location. Well drained soils are best. This is a great selection for a specimen tree or focal point in the garden where the tree bark and color will be visited on a more personal level.

River birch, *Betula nigra*, a native tree to river and creek banks as well as marshy areas, has interesting bark. The cinnamon colored peeling bark is exciting in all four seasons. The leaves on this tree are small; the canopy is not dense, allowing the bark to be visible in and out of leaf. This tree will reach 50' and will thrive in moist soils, but lucky for us, it is very versatile, adapting to drier locations as well. In a grouping of three or five, this selection is outstanding. Use it as a plant grouping in the yard, or as a single tree as a specimen in a foundation planting. Grown in clumps or single stemmed allows for a variety of

design styles, from a more natural look to a formal appearance.

What about sycamores? Much like the river birch, this tree is also native and seen along creek banks. However, the sycamore is a large shade tree, adapting well to wet soils as well as well drained soils. It too has a peeling bark, white and gray in color, making a very interesting addition to your winter landscape. Its heavy branching and course structure makes it an exciting tree in the yard.

The sycamore will reach to 100' if kept healthy. However, this particular tree does have some issues. Diseases like anthracnose and bacterial leaf scorch can cause early defoliation of the tree as early as August. The best defense against these problems is to keep the leaves and twigs that fall to the ground cleaned up as well as cutting out dead and dying limbs. It is a relatively fast growing tree, and may be a selection for quick shade.

In addition to trees, many shrubs also have interesting bark and twigs. Some of these include the oakleaf hydrangea and shrub dogwoods.

Oakleaf hydrangea, *Hydrangea quercifolia*, is a lovely large growing native shrub. The interest in this plant for the winter lies in the bark, much like the paperbark maple. The stems peel, showing a pretty cinnamon color and texture throughout the winter months. This plant likes more shade than sun. These plants have large white panicles of flowers in the summer, and have a lovely red fall color, making this a great choice for any season. As its name suggests, the leaves are shaped like an oak leaf, giving a course texture to your garden. This plant can be successfully used as a specimen plant or in a shrub grouping. Oakleaf hydrangeas will reach 6' - 8'. Since this is a very large shrub, be sure you place this at the right location so you do not have to prune to reduce or maintain the size. It looks best in its natural form.

There are dwarf cultivars available in the industry like 'Pee Wee'. This pretty shrub has all the characteristics of the straight species, but will maintain a size of 3'-4', making this an exciting shrub for foundation plantings for all season interest.

The dogwoods, *Cornus alba*, *Cornus stolonifera*, and *Cornus sericea*, are all species of the red and yellow twig dogwoods. These shrubs are not known for their flowers but for their winter color in the twigs. As their name suggests, the stems are a brilliant red or yellow, giving color in our winter gardens. Many varieties of these plants are available. Typically this group of plants can grow to 10', but some varieties have been selected to remain shorter, closer to the four - five foot range, to fit better into the average landscape. Ask your nurseryman for varieties



Winter landscapes can be beautiful. Shapes and forms come to the forefront in winter design, as well as textures and silhouettes.

ies that are shorter. This plant will adapt well to most soils, but naturally will grow in wetter locations. This plant group will need to be pruned regularly as the colored twigs are the newest growth. The old wood becomes brown. Just cut out the old wood in the spring before the plant comes out into leaf, and your plants will keep their bright twig color.

Often when speaking of berried plants, birds are the source of the discussion. As much as I love watching the birds in the winter and value the food we provide through plantings, I'd like to propose a different perspective on our winter wonderland.

Consider the value of the textures and shapes these winter plants provide through their berries. Some of the plants I'll mention have berries that hang on in clusters at the end of the branches, and some are up and down the branch, held singly. The snow enhances these textures as the lack of leaves enhances the branching structure.

Callicarpa Americana, a native shrub that has purple berries along the stem of the shrub. These purple berries are unique in color. The plants grow relatively quickly, reaching up to six feet. They can create a barrier in short notice. Does best in moist, well-drained soil in part-shade.

Viburnum trilobum, American Cranberry bush, is a native shrub that reaches up to 12 feet tall. It likes sun to part shade, gets a nice

red fall color, white flowers in the spring and red berries. The berries give a great texture to the winter landscape. Great used as a specimen or in a hedgerow.

Symphoricarpos Proud Berry™ is a smaller shrub, that has pink berries. It only gets about 4 feet tall and wide, so a smaller deciduous shrub. Its description boasts that deer don't like it, and so far my experience has proved that to be true. However, the birds aren't crazy about it either, which just means that the berries will be lingering much longer than most berried shrubs! Part shade is best for this plant, but I have it growing in full sun and it's doing quite well.

'Winter Gold' holly, *Ilex verticillata*, is an unusual cultivar as it has golden berries instead of the typical red berries. Very exciting for a winter landscape and more available that ever in the nurseries. This plant likes part shade but will grow in full sun if it has enough moisture. It grows to about 4 - 5 feet.

Check out some of these trees and shrubs in catalogs and on-line. Also look around at the plant life in nature as you take winter walks. Gather the stems and berries that you may see and identify them. They just may be the next best plant for your winter landscape.

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



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THE MASTER GARDENER

Adams County Master Gardeners February Seminars

This winter, the Master Gardeners will be teaching three classes for the experienced gardener. Mark your calendar for Thursday evenings at 6:30, February 6, 13 and 20 for some great conversation about gardening. All three classes take place at the Agricultural and Natural Resources Center, 670 Old Harrisburg Road, Gettysburg. Registration is required for each class.

We start with seed starting on February 6. Many of us have tried starting seeds, and it does sound easy enough. However, when a gardener isn't successful with this project, one might wonder why or get frustrated.

This class will focus on the needs of seeds. We will talk about the medium, the seed preparation, the equipment for best success, as well as seed collection. Join us for a conversation about starting seeds, whether they are vegetables, flowers, trees or shrubs.

We hear so much about how important our soil is to the success of a garden. On February 13, we are offering a class that will focus on just that: soil. Discover how your garden thrives as an interconnected ecosystem in this engaging session. Delve into the vibrant communities within soil and above ground, exploring topics such as garden ecology, soil health, com-

posting, cover cropping, and the role of native plants. Learn practical ways to nurture the living organisms that sustain soil health and make informed choices that shape the balance of your garden's environment. Perfect for anyone passionate about cultivating a thriving, sustainable garden.

Our last class in February happens on the 20th. We will focus on Ecological Gardening Principles. As you choose plants for your yard and garden, think about how your choices affect the critters that live there, the water that moves through your property, and the air in which you breathe. This engaging class explores the importance of gardening differently, with discussions on rain gardens, riparian buffers, meadows, plant communities, and plant choices. Learn how thoughtful landscape design can support local wildlife, improve water and air quality, and reduce long-term costs. Be inspired to reimagine your outdoor space as a thriving ecosystem that benefits both nature and your community. Imagine a garden and landscape that is beautiful to look at and provides clean water, clean air, healthy soil, and a place for us and nature to live around us.

To register for any of these classes visit www.extension.psu.edu or call , 717-334-6271.

Small Town Gardener

Making the most of winter

Marianne Willburn

I'd have a difficult time taking care of my garden if I didn't get out there during the winter months. For the most part, the garden is in a state of suspended animation. There are exceptions of course, but whether they're growing, blooming or trying to set up new headquarters for neighborhood domination, they move slowly – much slower than I do when I'm trying to maintain a decent body temperature. I've got the advantage.

Everything appears so much clearer in the winter; particularly the bones of the garden – the things we can't see when summer is raging and all around is growth and green. We need the winter to help us make careful decisions about pruning and relocation. We need the winter to open our eyes to invasive perennial weeds and micro-climates. We need the winter. Period.

For instance, stripped of leaves, flowers and all dignity, the forsythia hedge gives up her secrets on a frosty morning. I can see which stems are old and need removing. I can see the clever, wiry tendrils of honeysuckle suffocating branches, and exactly where I need to dig to rid them of it. If I cannot do it this morning, I will tie plant ribbon to the branches for later removal.

The vase-like shape of the Stanley plum is easily seen and kept tidy. It is the work of a moment to take off errant branches and pull back stems reaching ever-higher. During the summer, it just looked like a fruit tree with attitude.

Black raspberry and red raspberry canes are more easily worked when they are



To many, this may look like a desolate winter garden, but for the birds, it's a paradise, providing them food, water, and much-needed shelter. This garden is a "must-stop" for the Catocin Winter Bird Count members.

naked, as are grape vines, wisteria, trumpet vine and anything else that grows at a rate of sixty miles per hour in the summer months. I now wait for the winter to tidy these plants for that very reason – more time and more visibility. A messy autumn garden is a decent trade off in my mind.

When it snows, my sight is further magnified. I can observe the areas that retain their white blanket, and for how long – alerting me to the many microclimates that exist in my stream valley. If it snowed two weeks ago and most of the snow is gone, all except that one little spot that coincidentally has not managed to overwinter a single zone 7 plant in ten years – I may have finally figured out why.

The early spring weeds are getting a foothold right now. Bitter cress, dead nettle and chickweed pepper the beds and the pathways. Sadly for them, very little else is

green. They are easily singled out and eliminated with a vicious scrape of my hoe. For every weed I destroy, I feel the joy of having destroyed the potential for hundreds more – particularly the bitter cress, whose seeds are violently catapulted in every direction when the gardener pulls it in May. Those weeds go straight to the chickens, who appreciate their greens more than most humans.

The winter landscape also affords us the luxury of time. There is no grass to mow, no vines to battle, no seedlings to transplant into endless paper pots. The landfill is not teaming with weekend warriors picking up mulch and compost, and lines are non-existent. There is no urgency to this season. We can work for an hour and feel quite proud of ourselves – work for several more and feel as if we have conquered the world. And when one pairs that work ethic with the sweet gift of an occasional warm front – winter loses its sting somehow.

You may be waiting for higher temperatures or the sound of glasses clinking on neighboring decks, but you may also be missing out. I couldn't take care of my garden without winter – and I couldn't face winter without taking care of my garden.

Marianne is a columnist for The American Gardener and GardenRant, and the author of Tropical Plants and How To Love Them and Big Dreams Small Garden. She writes from her home in Lovettsville, VA.

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PETS

Animals can show emotions and thoughts

Jennifer Vanderau

Well, my mother is starting to really figure out this technology stuff.

It's taken her a while, but it's kind of understandable. She was a country girl growing up. In fact, the road in front of our house used to be dirt with grass down the center and that's how vehicles got around when she was a child.

Can you imagine this?

It's always amazing to me how we really aren't that far away from historically significant aspects of life and times when things were a whole lot simpler.

Mom would actually walk that dirt road to visit her grandmother, where she helped on the farm and enjoyed real lemonade. I'm talking just sugar and juice squeezed from actual lemons. Mom says we're going to make some at some point and I can't wait.

Needless to say, teaching her about text messages and the internet was quite a learning curve, but she's getting the hang of it. She recently discovered emojis for texts messages. So that's fun.

She also figured out how to text me any kind of news articles she thinks would interest me and the one she found today, I knew I had to write about.

It's a story from Istanbul and it's security footage of a dog actually dropping off her sick puppy on the doorstep of a veterinary clinic.

We see the pup carry her baby to the front door and place the little one on the porch. We then see the techs come

out and bring both the puppy and the mom into the clinic.

Then the camera switches to the interior of the surgery room, where the techs work to revive the puppy. The mom is still in the room and every once in a while will poke her head up onto the surgery table to check on her little one.

It's really one of the sweetest things I've seen in a long time.

It turns out the puppy had only a faint heartbeat and techs worked to bring the pup around. Thankfully, the mama got her baby there in time and the little one was up and around eventually.

The final photo is a picture of the mama in a box nursing her baby, who looks so much better.

I'm telling you, that dog has a look on her face that says she knew exactly what she was doing and realized the people inside the building would help her.

It's so amazing how animals can show instincts that almost seem beyond them.

I recently listened to a podcast where a woman talked about the concept of telepathy, but it's not like psychics or spoon benders.

She said there is a form of communication that is virtually telepathic. Birds flying in formation will do this. One bird will be out in front and when he falls back in the line, another bird will fly up to take his place.

To us, this looks as though it's totally random, but the birds are doing this one hundred percent on purpose and they communicate the intent telepathically.

I think the mama dog had the same kind of sense when she brought her pup to the vets.

There's a concept in Eastern Philosophy of energetic vibrational frequency. Heck, it's scientific, too. Everything on the planet has a vibrational frequency. Even the paper you're holding right now is vibrating at a certain level. Naturally, it's not enough for us to be able to sense, but it's there.

Emotions and thoughts also have vibrational frequencies.

I wonder if the mama dog sensed the helpful vibrations that were emanating from that vet's office and knew her baby would be safe there. It's really an incredible video to watch.

It was also heartwarming to see humans help animals like that like that.

Sometimes as we go through life, especially in today's world, it can feel like all that surrounds us is gloom and doom. This winter for some reason, I've been out of it more than usual. It might be the insane cold and frigid temperatures, but for whatever reason I've been struggling with feelings of sadness more than usual. I know I get seasonal depression, but I can usually work my way through it.

This video gave me that good feeling I've been looking for. It kind of makes me wonder if I was picking up on the vibrational frequency of the people and animals on my phone.

You can find it on NBC News if you google "mother dog carries her barely alive puppy to a veterinary surgery."

If you, like me, are feeling a little blah this winter, do yourself a favor and check it out and see if you can pick up on the telepathy I saw. It just might be that jolt of serotonin you need to get through the cold nights we've been experiencing recently.

If it works for you, you can thank my technologically gifted "county girl" mom for sharing the article. I know giving other people that kind of joy would make her feel good, too!

Jennifer Vanderau is the Public Relations Coordinator for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter in Chambersburg, PA, and can be reached at cvascomm@cvas-pets.org. The 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. CVAS also operates a thrift store in Chambersburg. Help support the animals at the shelter by donating to or shopping at the store.



Magic came into the shelter as a stray, so we don't know a lot about him, other than he is one sweet boy! He's about a year old and pretty much all black with just a few white hairs here and there. He loves to play and get wet food as a treat.



Auto is a 3-year-old brown tabby boy who came into the shelter as a stray. He is one happy fellow who just loves getting his ears rubbed. Could you show him what a loving, forever home is all about?



Stacey was used for breeding and was surrendered to the shelter when she was no longer useful to her breeder. She is around 9 years old. When she arrived at the shelter, Stacey had a very large mass in her inguinal area that was affecting her walking. The mass was removed and found to be a very large lipoma (fatty tumor). After the mass was removed, Stacey was an all-new pup! She can walk without maneuvering around the mass and can now enjoy playtime in the yard. Stacey can be quite excitable at times but does eventually calm down. She has been around children but may be too much for children not used to large, boisterous dogs. Stacey would love to find her loving forever home where she can be the spoiled girl she deserves!



Mocha was surrendered to the shelter along with her daughter when their owners could no longer care for them. Mocha has made great strides in her recovery and is now ready to find her loving forever home! Mocha is around 7 years old and can be shy at first with new people but, with some treats, she will be your best friend! Mocha did live with other dogs and did well with them. She does show interest in cats but can be distracted. Mocha will need someone with beagle experience and who knows she will follow her nose!



Duke arrived at the shelter as a stray, and we think he's a lab mix who is about 4 years old. He is one loveable guy who would prefer a home without cats. He would also do best in a home with older kids due to his energy level and jumping up. Do you have the right place for this sweet fellow?

For more information about Magic, Auto, Stacey, Mocha, or Duke, 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.

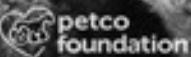
I'd Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

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



PETS

Harley



Bethany Davidson
FCAC Humane Educator

On January 16th we celebrated a special milestone at Frederick County Animal Control, Harley's 365 Day. If you don't follow us on social media, you might not be aware of who Harley is. Well, she's our sweet, spunky and oh so playful three-year-old terrier mix and she is one of FCAC's longest residents. While some may view this as a sad occasion, we choose to be grateful that for the last year, Harley has been safe, healthy, happy, and most importantly, loved as part of the FCAC family.

Looking adorable in her brand-new dress Harley strutted around her party with a happy grin greeting everyone as they arrived. Since no one could resist her cute little face she not only received cake

and presents but enjoyed tons of extra snacks and endless butt scratches. We hope these simple gestures serve to make Harley feel as special as she is and remind the community that she's still looking for her forever family. And because we have spent the last 365 days getting to know Harley we are now better equipped to help her find just the right family.

Harley is a confident and friendly dog who enjoys the company of her human

companions. How does she feel about other animals? Well, let's just say she prefers to be the only four-legged family member in your home and heart. She's a high energy girl who needs time each day for exercise and zoomies, but she also knows how to relax. In fact, sometimes she likes to relax all 60 pounds of her on your lap. She's whip smart and not only enjoys training but catches on very quickly. We think she'd be a great candidate for a canine sport like agility.

Then there's all the little things. Things like how she goes cross-eyed when she sees an especially delicious treat coming her way. Or how she does a little dance when she's happy about receiving butt scratches. She prefers to ride in the front seat on her car rides and loves to show you her favorite toys.

Sometimes it takes a while to find just the right forever home and that's okay. We'll continue to love and care for Harley until her special adoption day arrives. If you think that you might just be that family for Harley, go to visit FCAC.as.me to book an appointment to meet her.



Harper is a petite, one-year-old cat with a beautiful tuxedo coat. She is friendly but, like a lot of cats, she has her limits. She prefers to keep her paws on the ground and during her exam she didn't enjoy being restrained...but who can blame her? Harper does enjoy being pet and a good ear or chin scratching! This beauty adjusted quickly to living at the shelter and will likely transition to her new home with ease.



Martha is a beautiful, four-year-old orange tabby. Originally adopted as a kitten, her owners returned her due to a family member developing allergies to cats. Martha displays average cat behavior. What does that mean? Well, she is shy around new people and in foreign environments, but she is affectionate with people she trusts and is comfortable in a home once she settles in!



Bean is a three-year-old Terrier mix who loves to be active! She has a relationship with the shelter dating back to July of 2023. Her previous family allowed her to run loose, and she was picked up no less than five times by Animal Control Officers or Good Samaritans. Bean's family declined to pick her up the last time and now she hopes to find a new home and family that can keep her home. Her ideal family will give her plenty of love and exercise.



Lightning is a handsome, two-year-old, American Bulldog mix who is up for anything. He likes to play and go for walks but is also happy to sit beside you and soak up any pets and cuddles you are willing to give him. As a bonus, he already knows a few commands and walks somewhat nicely on a leash! Of course, these manners will need to be reinforced to ensure Lightning can be the best version of himself.



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For more information about Harper, Martha, Bean, or Lightning 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!

FIRE & AMBULANCE COMPANY AWARD BANQUETS

Vigilant Hose Company



James (Jim) Click was this year's recipient of the Chief's award for over 37-years of service to the Company.



President Tim Clarke accepts a check for \$60,000 from Auxiliary President Patty Kuykendall.



President Tim Clarke presents the President's Award to Pam Ellison.



James (Jim) Click and Stephan Orndorff were recognized for their 45-years of service to the Company.



County Executive Jessica Fitzwater and National Fire Academy Superintendent Eriks Gablisk.



Matt Boyd, flanked by Chief Joshua Brotherton and President Tim Clarke, was this year's recipient of the Member of the Year Award.



Top Ten Responders: Robert Myers (136), Cliff Shriner (150), Sam Flanary (138), Travis Green (157), Doug Yingling (167), Jen Boxer (175), Matt Legare (199), Matt Boyd (213), Frank Davis (284), and James Click (335).



VHC Auxiliary Officers - seated - Patty Kuykendall, President; Jo Ann Boyd, Treasurer; Joyce Glass, Secretary; Helen Topper, Financial Secretary. Standing - Mary Ann Wivell and Diana Hoover, Co-Historians. Missing from picture—Sharel Boyle, Vice President.



Administrative Officers: seated - Timothy Clarke, President; Doug Wivell, Vice President; Pam Ellison, Secretary; Sharon Keeney, Assistant Secretary; Steve Hollinger, Treasurer; Bill Boyd, Assistant Treasurer; John Talcott, Chaplain; Ed Little, Board of Director. Standing - Board of Director Members: Pam Bolin, Mary Lou Little, Doug Orner, Kenny Clevinger, Scott Maly, Cliff Shriner, Randy Myers.



Operational Officers: seated - Josh Brotherton, Chief; James Click, Captain; Doug Yingling, Assistant Chief; Matt Boyd, Deputy Chief; Dave Zentz, Lieutenant; Frank Davis, EMS Captain. Standing - Fire Police: Steve Orndorff, Lynn Orndorff and Sam Cool.

Administrative Officers for 2025

President: Timothy Clark
 Vice President: Doug Wivell
 Secretary: Pamela Ellison
 Treasurer: Steve Hollinger
 Asst. Treasurer: Bill Boyd
 Chaplain: Rev. John Talcott

Line Officers for 2025

Chief: Joshua Brotherton
 Deputy Chief: Matt Boyd
 Asst. Chief: Doug Yingling
 Captain: James Click
 Lieutenant: Robert Myers
 Lieutenant: David Zentz
 EMS Captain: Frank Davis

Auxiliary Officers for 2025

President: Patricia Kuykendall
 Vice President: Sharel Boyle
 Secretary: Joyce Glass
 Treasurer: Jo Ann Boyd
 Financial Secretary: Helen Topper
 Co-Historians: Diana Hoover & Mary Ann Wivell

Fire Police for 2025

Captain: Steve Orndorff
 1st Lieutenant: Lynn Orndorff
 2nd Lieutenant: Ron Cool

Board of Directors for 2025

Pam Bolin, Jim Barto, Ed Little, Mary Lou Little, Scott Maly, Randy Myers, Douglas Orner, Ross Smith & Vance Click

FIRE & AMBULANCE COMPANY AWARD BANQUETS

Thurmont Volunteer Ambulance Company



Assistant Chief Jenn Frushour presenting Life Membership for 20 years of service to Denny Ott.



Assistant Chief Jenn Frushour presenting a "Thank You" award to Jim Wolf.



President Lowman Keeney and Asst. Chief Jenn Frushour presenting "Thank You" awards to Joyce Stitely (left) and Shirley Stackhouse (right).



President Lowman Keeney, holding Chief Dennis Ott's son Mason, speaking to Tim May.



Administrative Officers: Lowman Keeney, President; Denny Ott, Vice President; Judy White, Treasurer; Joyce Stitely, Secretary; Shirley Stackhouse, Asst. Secretary; Glenn Muth, Asst. Treasurer; and Board of Directors - Becky Coyle, Harry Welch, Tammy Wolf & Diane Kelly.



Pat Black and her niece Kylie Robertson holding Graysen Marshall.



The young - Mandy Holler and her triplets Kate, Abby, Natalie.



Virginia Rogers who celebrated her 89th birthday at the banquet.



Members of the Rocky Ridge Youth Association that catered the banquet - a nicer group of kids would be hard to find.

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Chief: Dennis Ott Jr.
 Asst Chief: Jen Frushour
 Lieutenant: Pete Kefauver
 Lieutenant: Julie Fogle

Board of Directors for 2025

Harry Welch, Tammy Wolf, Becky Coyle,
 Dennis Stitely & Diane Kelly

HEALTH

Frederick Health investing in heart health and awareness

Josh Faust
Frederick Health

The heart is perhaps the most vital organ in the body. It pumps blood to supply nutrients to our cells, organs, tissues, and bones. Every cell, minus those in the cornea, gets life-sustaining blood from the heart. The average heart beats around 100,000 times daily and pumps about 1.5 gallons of blood per minute; the heart is the body's workhorse. But given the work it must do to keep the body running, hearts are susceptible to disease.

Diseases associated with the heart and the blood vessels are commonly referred to as cardiovascular diseases. The risk factors for cardiovascular disease include high blood pressure, obesity, smoking, and high cholesterol levels. Most cardiovascular diseases can be impacted by lifestyle, especially as

a person ages. Genetics also plays a significant factor in heart disease. As there are so many ways in which cardiovascular disease can develop, including displaying differently in certain people, it can make the symptoms difficult to notice or monitor.

According to American Heart Association, cardiovascular diseases are the number one cause of death in the nation, accounting for nearly a million deaths each year and the Frederick County Health Department reports that heart disease is the number one cause of death in the county.

At Frederick Health, the community can take comfort in knowing an expert team of healthcare professionals is on hand to offer excellent heart care. As the leading healthcare provider of cardiac care in the area, especially emergency cardiac care, Frederick Health has worked diligently to

improve access, develop new and innovative facilities to care for cardiac patients, and invest in expert team members and technologies. Ultimately, those investments lead to better patient outcomes and a healthier community.

"Ensuring this community has easy access to cardiac and vascular care is paramount," said Amy Burrier, Director of Cardiac & Vascular Services with Frederick Health.

Frederick Health recently invested in expanding its critical care infrastructure as part of that dedication to improving access. This includes a new Emergency Department with 70 treatment beds and expansions to its cardiac catheterization lab or simply "cath lab." Often cath labs serve as one of the first areas of treatment for cardiac patients. A cath lab is a specialized clinical space where providers perform minimally invasive tests and advanced cardiac procedures

to screen for, diagnose, and treat cardiovascular disease. Experts in the cath lab can also perform minimally invasive procedures to diagnose and treat a wide range of heart conditions, including heart attacks, valve problems, and blockages in coronary arteries, often allowing for faster recovery times and shorter hospital stays compared to a more serious procedure like open heart surgery.

The cath lab at Frederick Health Hospital offers state-of-the-art imaging technology to view the arteries and determine whether blood flows to and from the heart. This technology provides the care team with information to help diagnose and treat blockages and other problems in the arteries and enables providers to assess blood flow, pressures within the heart, and visualize the coronary arteries using specialized imaging technology to

guide treatment procedures like angioplasty and stent placement.

"Frederick is a growing community, and expanding our cath labs helps us provide life-saving care to the growing number of residents who call Frederick County 'home,'" added Burrier. "Heart conditions can be scary, but our team is here to walk patients through the entire journey, listen to their concerns, and provide compassionate and expert care."

The efforts underway at Frederick Health have earned them some national recognition.

For the last several years, Frederick Health has received national awards from the American Heart Association for implementing specific quality care improvement measures for treating cardiac patients. Every year, hundreds of Frederick County residents experience heart attacks or other cardiac-related emergencies, and the team at Frederick Health has proven metrics showing the quality of their care.

"I've been with the heart care team at Frederick Health for over five years and we truly care about the well-being of our patients. Every day, we couple our compassionate approach with proven knowledge to improve the outcomes of heart attack patients in our community," said Burrier.

Like many chronic illnesses, prevention is the best medicine. For most cardiac-related illnesses, such as heart disease, high blood pressure, or coronary artery disease (CAD), routine bloodwork and tests can identify symptoms early. It is also important to note that cardiac symptoms can present differently in men and women. Burrier says one of the best things people can do to take care of their heart health is speak to their primary care provider or cardiologist about the proper screenings and tests. This is especially true if they are experiencing symptoms like chest pain, heart palpitations, severe fatigue, pain in the arms, neck, and back, or unexplained swelling. These can be an early sign of something wrong with your heart.

"Talking to your doctors about getting bloodwork, at least once a year, to check for elevated cholesterol levels and other markers, is really critical. Often, this is the best way to catch cardiovascular disease and its symptoms early. Early detection saves lives," she says.

Frederick Health offers free education classes about heart health, risk factors, preventative screenings, and signs and symptoms of a heart attack. To learn more about how you can take care of your heart health, join our expert team for a free seminar at the Emmitsburg Senior Center on February 24th at 12 PM. The address of the senior center is 300 A South Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD.

To learn more about the expert heart care offered by Frederick Health, visit www.frederickhealth.org/heartcare.

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24/7 care for life-threatening or potentially disabling conditions.

Learn more
frederickhealth.org/EmergencyCare

Use this guide to choose the right level of care. When in doubt, call 911. Learn more | frederickhealth.org/GetCare



YOUR COMMUNITY OF CARE

Catoctin Christmas bird count

Kathy Brown
Frederick Bird Club

December 14, 2024, was the date for the 76th Catoctin Bird Count and we were ready! Our teams were experienced and enthusiastic, and the weather even cooperated.

The day was unexpectedly beautiful: a clear blue sky, no wind, chilly but not too cold. The 15-mile diameter count circle in northern Frederick County covers a lot of open country and back roads for walking, slow driving and, in one case, bicycling. It is a very special part of our state, still rural with a few smaller towns and excellent birding habitat. The territory includes national, state, and local parks, forests, numerous waterways [including miles of the Monocacy River], fisheries and endless farms and open fields.

The Christmas Bird Count was created 125 years ago in response to unregulated hunting and clear declines in many bird populations. The Passenger Pigeon, estimated to once number as high as three billion birds – yes, billion – was now extinct in the wild. Both scientists and sportsmen feared more species would be at risk without immediate intervention.

Today we face similar risks due to human action, specifically, the climate crisis. One in four birds has disappeared across North America in the last 50 years. Increased coastal flooding destroys nests, wildfire destroys habitat, higher temperatures drive birds to new and less desirable territories, and many migrating birds are no longer in-sync with spring leaf and insect emergence resulting in inadequate food for their chicks.

The Christmas Bird Count provides hard evidence of population trends throughout the world. It is an excellent example of the value of citizen science and a great way to enjoy beautiful northern Maryland in the winter.

Results this year were comparable to last year for many species. Eastern Bluebirds and Bald Eagles continue to show healthy gains, but Common Ravens were slightly below recent year numbers. Most forest songbirds, such as Carolina Chickadee, Tufted Titmouse and White-breasted Nuthatch, were stable as were our many woodpecker species. The numbers for Red-tailed and Red-shouldered Hawks were strong and two Merlins made for exciting sightings.

It was the best owl count in many years, but I suspect the success was not due to a true population increase, but to

the dedication of a few talented birders who began the day well before dawn.

Maryland is home to two common alien, invasive species: the European Starling and House Sparrow. Both species continue to show slow, steady declines, which is good news for our native bird populations.

A total of 70 species were found; the same as last year. But the actual number of birds was well below last year and the ten-year average. Only 7,863 birds were counted; last year the number was 9,488. Part of the decline is the decrease in invasive species and much of the remaining deficit is due to low numbers for highly variable species like American Robin and American Pipit. Both Blue Jays and Carolina Wrens also showed large decreases in numbers. Being two of our noisiest bird species, they are easy to find and the drop is surprising.

Birds found included: 6 Red-Headed Woodpeckers and 122 Red-bellied Woodpeckers, 125 Blue Jays, 175 Crows, 1 Horned Larks, 126 Carolina Chickadees, 126 Tufted Titmouses, 95 Nuthatches, 126 Caroline Wrens, 228 Eastern Bluebirds, 29 American Robins, 126 Mockingbirds, 2,563 Starlings, 44 Cedar Waxwings, 436 Canada Geese, 19 Mallards, 12 Wild Turkeys, 185 Vultures, 16 Bald Eagles, 35 Red-shoulder Hawks & 46 Red-tail Hawks, 154 Morning Doves, 842 Juncos, 25 White-crowned Sparrows and 455 White-throated Sparrows, 156 Song Sparrows, 7 Red-winged Blackbirds, 52 Cowbirds, 158 House Finches, 4 Purple Finches, 136 Goldfinches and 174 House Sparrows.

Bird populations with the largest decline in numbers from last year included Blue Jays (125 vs. 339 in 2023), Horned Lark (1 vs. 204), Carolina Wren (126 vs. 248), Northern Flicker (49 vs. 80), The American Robin (29 vs. 566), American Pipit (22 vs. 109), Cedar Waxwing (44 vs. 241), Yellow-rumped Warbler (29 vs. 52), Green-winged Teal (0 vs. 10) and the House Sparrow (174 vs. 344).

Bird Populations with the largest increase from last year include White-breasted Nuthatches (95 vs. 9 from last year), Killdeer (6 vs. 1), Brown-headed Cowbirds (52 vs. 16) and Dark-eyed Juncos (842 vs. 549).

Bird Populations seen in prior years but not seen this year include the Peregrine Falcons, House Wrens, Golden Eagles, Red-breasted Nuthatch, Barn Owls, & Palm Warblers.

A few of our farmland raptors are clearly in trouble. American Kestrels have declined by a third in the last twenty years. Northern Harriers, never common, are now exceedingly rare. Nocturnal owls are difficult to find in a primarily daytime count, but studies indicate populations for Barn and Short-eared Owls are both in serious decline.

I am happy to share with you that something is being done to help these beautiful and important birds: the Maryland Farmland Raptor Program. Founded in 2019, the program is currently focused on significantly increasing nesting sites for American Barn Owls and American Kestrels throughout Maryland. The organization is offering to build, install, and monitor nest boxes for Barn Owls and Kestrels – all at no cost to local farmers, orchardists, viticulturists, and non-profit organizations like land trusts.

Raptors found in agricultural areas – Farmland Raptors – reduce common pests and benefit property owners by preying on destructive mice, voles, and insects including grasshoppers. Farmland raptors can effectively and inexpensively contribute to pest management, especially in agricultural fields and grasslands. Attracting farmland raptors will also reduce the need for pesticides and rodenticides which can kill non-targeted animals, including hawks and family pets. One family of Barn Owls can consume up to 3000 crop destroying rodents annually and studies show that just the proximity of an American Kestrel can deter many birds from raiding orchards and agricultural fields.

As of the end of 2024, over 70 individuals and organizations have requested



Red-shouldered Hawks continue to do well in the Catoctin region, showing an increase of 20 over last year's count.

nest boxes and the 55 state-wide volunteers have already installed many nesting boxes for Kestrels and Barn Owls. In the coming years, the Maryland Farmland Raptor Program, will initiate work on improving nesting habitat for Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls.

If you are interested in participating in this valuable program, contact Mike Spurrier at: mspurrier819@gmail.com

The Frederick County Midwinter Count is scheduled of January 25. If you would like to help, please contact David Smith at 443-995-4108 or e-mail him at lacsmith12@comcast.net.

To learn more about birds in Frederick County, the Frederick Bird Club

at www.frederickbirdclub.org and the Audubon Society of Central Maryland at www.centralaudubon.org welcome guests and new members. Visit their websites to learn about meetings, conservation projects, bird-focused presentations, bird counts and bird walks throughout the year.

Frederick Bird Club meetings are held the first Thursday of each month beginning at 7:00 PM. For the 2024-2025 year, meetings will be hybrid: in person at Hood College (in the Seminar Room located in the basement of Coblenz Hall) and virtually via Zoom. Contact frederickbirdclub@yahoo.com for a link to the meeting.

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HISTORY

The Contralto

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

Chapter 9

Five forty-five the next evening, the Professor was admitted to Mrs. Hopp's house by the lady herself who had donned her best black silk for the festive occasion. Over the skirt of this she wore a dainty white apron with a pocket in it, which gave to her appearance a somewhat youthful touch, while her grey locks were held back by old fashioned tortoise shell combs. She welcomed him, marveling at his handsome figure in frock coat, white waistcoat, and cravat in which sparkled a large solitaire. No one in Emmitsburg ever could afford to wear such clothes, except Mr. Galt and she had never entertained him at tea. The most wonderful thing of all was, he in no way made her feel abashed, despite his grand clothes. She found it as easy to talk to him as when she met him on the street dressed in his riding-jacket, breeches and boots. In the parlor she noticed him looking at a large crayon of a young girl.

"That's my grand-daughter, Esther, she's on the stage. Don't you think she's beautiful?"

"Indeed I do, Mrs. Hopp," though the portrait pictured a type which never made an especial appeal to his aesthetic sense.

"She's in vaudeville, though to tell the truth I don't know what that means. It's all right, isn't it?"

"Most assuredly, what is her line, her act? I mean what does she do in vaudeville?"

"Really, I don't know, but when she's in the city she coaxes me to come and see her. But there, now, you must excuse me as I am busy in the kitchen." She left.

The Professor could not fail to remark that she did not retreat to the back of the house, but mounted the stairs. Sitting in an easy chair he heard voices in whispered conversation. Mrs. Hopp was describing his appearance:

"God Almighty, girls! wait till you see him. Of all the handsome men! He's dressed to knock your eyes out—long coat, white vest, striped pants, patent leather shoes, and a real diamond in his necktie."

"Not in full-dress, Mrs. Hopp?" asked Vinny, in dismay.

"Not one of those open-faced affairs, just a long coat, you know, like Mr. Galt wears, when he has his stove-pipe hat on."

"I am afraid we are not dressed for the occasion," said Marion, surveying her own trim figure in mock alarm.

"Come downstairs, you beauties; do you think he's going to bother about your dresses when he's got your faces to look at?"

They descended the steps in the wake of the old lady and into the parlor where the Professor received them with genuine pleasure; expressing his gratitude to the hostess for the fulfillment of the surprise she had promised him. There was a touch of formality in Miss Seabold's greeting, but Miss Tyson met him on nearer ground. Mrs. Hopp invited them to the dining room to partake of her fried chicken, potato salad, homemade preserves, tea and cake.

She presided with the native grace of a society matron and the young spirits at her table, catching her contagious glee, gave themselves up to the present with the greatest abandon. The women learned more of the Professor's antecedent life than anyone heretofore in Emmitsburg. He told of his experiences in the German universities, through which he had passed without the romance of a duel, of his ranch life to which his powers of word painting added a charm not always inherent in the actual. His descriptions brought many exclamations from the excitable hostess at which the girls shuddered in anticipation of his shock. Time slipped away under the spell of his talking. It was eight o'clock before the tea came to a close. At the finish, Marion asked for an apron, insisting on helping with the dishes while Vinny was to entertain the Professor. It was evident that Miss Dyson



A bird's eye view of Emmitsburg ~ 1910.

was accustomed to have her way from the ready acquiescence of her companion and the half-hearted protests of the Holy Terror.

Seated in an old fashioned fauteuil, having obtained the girl's permission, the Professor lighted a cigarette, she balancing herself nonchalantly on the stool which stood before the ancient square piano. She inquired sympathetically about his health and the length of his indisposition and whether his sojourn in Emmitsburg were benefitting him. As he expressed the hope that a year would find him in perfect condition, she said wistfully:

"Even a year is not long, if you be assured of ultimate recovery."

"I believe, Miss Seabold, you are not over strong yourself, at least the Rector tells me you are not in the best of health."

"Oh! the dear old gentleman and mother are worried because I cough a little. I think he suggested that you give me a regimen, which would make me strong. I was compelled to leave school before graduating."

"He thinks me a paragon of science," smiling, "but really I shall be pleased to assist you in any way; you should live in the open as much as possible."

"I do take long walks but they become monotonous, if one is alone. Marion comes with me frequently. I do not, however, like to bore the dear

girl with a continuous performance of invalid nursing."

"Surely, Miss Tyson's healthy and wholesome disposition must act as a tonic, why not form a party and go mountain climbing these beautiful autumn days?"

"It would be delightful, could we get one up."

"I would deem it a favor to be a member. I also think swinging Indian clubs for stated periods each day is advisable in a case the nature of yours; you learned to do that at school?"

"We had some exercises with them in the gymnasium, but not being interested I cut them as often as possible."

"I believe I could recall the essentials of the manual, had I a pair at present. We shall see what can be done."

Somehow there was a soothing, petting tone in his voice as he talked to the fair young girl, a tone more or less fatherly.

Her culinary department being put, as she said herself, in apple pie order, the hostess and Marion joined the two in the parlor. On their entrance he arose, escorting the old lady to the chair he had been occupying, treating her with the courtly grace of a cavalier of old, she blushing and simpering like a school girl under his gravely sincere attention. He asked permission before lighting another cigarette.

"Law! yes, boy, go ahead, I do love

the smell of those things, but God Almighty! how I hate an old pipe."

There was another catching of breaths at her lack of reverence, but Harry apparently took no notice. She was fidgety until Marion laughingly said:

"The Professor will grant you permission." "What is it she wishes?"

"Nothing at all," declared the old lady.

"She is accustomed to use snuff."

"You bold thing!"

"Help yourself, Mrs. Hopp," he begged, "I know you enjoy it as much as I do smoking."

Thus importuned she extracted a box from the pocket of her apron, indulging in a generous pinch, the while Marion, who had taken the stool, played softly.

"Sing something, child," ordered Mrs. Hopp, "sing that nigger song of yours, did you ever hear it, Professor?"

Marion's rich contralto filled the room and floated out into the night in the soul-stirring strains of the lullaby, this time the mother passion being enunciated in tones that the most uncultivated ear could appreciate. They entered the inmost fibers of the Professor's being, searching out depths of sentiment, which he himself had never sounded, and died on his senses long before they ceased to re-echo in his soul. Vinny applauded generously, the Professor forgetting to second her, the while Mrs. Hopp, having taken her handkerchief from her sleeve, wiped her eyes suspiciously.

"That's grand," she avowed, "when Marion sings it she just makes me good for nothing."

"It is the very quintessence of feeling," added Vinny, "and Marion's rendering of it is perfect; could you not have Mr. Halm interpolate it into the operetta?"

"Nonsense Vinny! Come here and sing this duet." Their voices blended in a harmony, the like of which he had never appreciated before. He was in a receptive mood, thinking of and contrasting this with boring nights at the opera, when he longed for the final curtain. This he felt should never cease. He was forced to sing and rendered some old college favorites in the choruses of which the girls readily joined. At the hostess' special request the three sang "Aunt Dinah's Quilting Party," and it being half past ten, prepared to depart. As they left, Mrs. Hoppe said:

"God love and bless you all, I'm ten

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HISTORY



Ah, those were the days when one could pull into a bar on a horse-drawn sled on a snowy day and get “tanked up.” You didn’t have to worry about getting home as you knew your horse knew his way home!

years younger tonight and I’m going to have you often. Vinny, dear, draw that cloak around you. Goodnight, Professor, God bless you, boy, come again, come again.”

Emmitsburg was wrapped in slumber, off on the mountain a dog barked, while nearby a rooster having had his first sleep announced the fact to all within earshot. The party walked in silence, victims to the lull, which succeeds to pleasant hours. Their footfalls echoed on the rough sidewalks, made of lava cast up by some prehistoric volcano, sleepers could be heard turning in their beds at the unaccustomed noise. In the Square, Vinny said: “My dear mamma is waiting up for me.”

“I hope we have not kept you too late and caused her anxiety.”

“No, mamma is always worried when I am out.”

Mrs. Annie Seabold opened the door and clasped her daughter in a motherly embrace, freeing herself, the girl said:

“Mamma, you must meet the Professor.”

“I am pleased, sir, and ever so grateful that you are kind to Vinny.”

The simple expression of gratitude startled him and the threadbare words of convention were hopelessly stammered. Vinny extended her hand with a cheery adieu and he and Marion were well down the street before he recovered his equipoise. He was about to speak when

the quiet of the night was broken by hideous yells, a mingling of curses and prayers that caused his blood to freeze. He seized the girl’s arm in the first moment of surprise but was relieved to find her laughing almost hysterically. Regaining self-control, she explained that the rout was merely Doctor Brawner in the throes of a nightmare, a periodical happening to which late movers in the village soon became accustomed.

They discussed Miss Seabold’s health, the absence of an hereditary element being noted, her father and mother’s ruggedness and that of a younger sister at school in Washington remarked. Before parting they had made plans for mountain climbing, club swinging, and other health producing exercises. Where sympathy rules, minds are preternaturally quick.

Before retiring, Harry picked up a book in order to quiet his nerves for in some inexplicable way, he felt agitated. The words passed before his eyes but were not for a long time able to penetrate his brain, which was thoroughly occupied with the scenes of the evening. At length, awakening to the import of the printed page, he read, “It is only the man whose intellect is clouded by his sexual impulses that can give the name of fair sex to that under-sized, narrow-shouldered, broad-hipped, and short-legged race, for the whole

beauty of the sex is bound up with this impulse. Instead of calling them beautiful there would be more warrant for describing women as the unaesthetic sex. Neither for music, nor for poetry, nor for fine art, have they really and truly any sense or susceptibility. It is a mere mockery if they make a pretense of it in order to assist their endeavor to please.” Pausing a moment in thought, he flung the book on the floor, gave voice to the eloquent exclamation “Rats!” said his prayers and went to bed. The book was Schopenhauer’s Essays.

At breakfast next morning the Rector inquired how he enjoyed the tea-party.

“Immensely. Mrs. Hopp is quite a character.” “Did she blaspheme any?”

“She emitted her favorite ejaculation several times, though I am sure she was blissfully unconscious of the fact.”

“It is a source of great concern to her young friends, who endeavor to show her the evil of her ways, but she invariably argues back she does

not swear.”

“Two of them were there last night, Miss Seabold and Miss Tyson.”

“Indeed! I am glad Vinny was there.”

There was silence for a while during which both did justice to the substantial meal carefully prepared by Mary, the housekeeper. The Professor noticed that food tasted differently to his palate of late, and that there was a real pleasure in eating, though it was not preceded by the standard appetizer - a cocktail. Looking at the Rector, he quoted, “Condimentum optimum, fames, as we used to write in our Arnold’s Latin Exercise Book.”

“I have not needed an appetizer since I was eight years old. I was a child in New Orleans during ‘Spoony Ben’s rule,’ and learned what hunger meant. The war is long over, we are a united country and all the newspaper stock phrases, but, my boy, I cannot behold the blue uniform of a Union soldier without experiencing a cold shiver. I was walking along the street one day with my dear mother; I was leading my pet dog, a mongrel as I remember, when a sharpshooter fired, cutting the strap, then shot the dog at my feet. It’s over, thank God, but some memories are horrible. By the way, there is another piece of reform work for you.”

“Yes, Governor?”

“There’s a dancing school about to be started in the opera-house, that shack behind the Spangler. You know I don’t object to dancing, but the crowd, which will gather there, will not be conducive to the moral welfare of the village. I want you to nip it in the bud.”

“Don’t you think such action would better come from you?”

“I am a failure, I would only waken antagonism, you are the man for all such work.”

“Just as you say, Governor. Who is the head and front of the movement?”

“That plumber, who works for Mrs. Saddleberg, he is an amateur wrestler or prize-fighter, who came here from the city.”

“I know him, Greavy, he’s a good fellow, I don’t think I shall have any trouble inducing him to give up the project.”

“Don’t be too sure, he is a hard-headed chap.”

“I never yet saw one of those supposed thugs, who wasn’t amenable to kindness. I shall give him the work of installing the footlights and bring him around.”

“I hope so,” rising to leave the room. Harry was following, but before reaching the door was halted by a warning “Hist” from Bob, whose head protruded from the kitchen.

“Professor, do you all want us to keep Jimmy Carrigan on the job?”

“Isn’t he at work this morning?”

“Yes, sir, but you all don’t know when he’s goin’ to make a break,” a warning look on the freckled face.

“What is your method of keeping him to business?”

“I got fellows on the watch; if he makes a break, we all will grab him and fetch him back. We all don’t intend to have him spoil the whole show.”

“Does Jimmy know of this?”

“No, sir.”

“Then go on with your plan.”

“And, Professor, ain’t you all goin’ to need ushers and door tenders?”

“Certainly, why?”

“Got anybody picked?”

“Of course,” seized with an inspiration, “the members of the baseball team are to attend to all that.”

“Gee! whoop!” and Mary was once more convinced that Bobby was going stark mad.

Chapter 10 next month

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

February 6

Brakeman's Leg Cut Off

Howard Petz, a brakeman on the Western Maryland Railroad, had one leg crushed off at the knee, when the switching freight train on which he was working, jumped off the track in Thurmont on Thursday. A boxcar, likely do to the ice jump the track and caught Petz leg between the car and the platform, completely severing the leg and injuring the knee joint.

Doctors were hastily summoned and rendered first aid. A freight engine was attached to the boxcar to free Petz, and the doctors rushed him to Frederick Hospital in a record run of 20 minutes, the road being cleared of all traffic. At the hospital, the leg was amputated above the knee. The patient rallied well from the operation and will get well. Petz is about 25 years old, and married.

Work Of Death

Harry Schreiber, a well-known and highly respected citizen of Harney, died at his home on Monday. For a long time he has been a great sufferer from neuritis and tuberculosis of the spinal column. It was known for sometime that his case was hopeless. The pain and suffering was intense; yet, during all this trying time, he was never known to complain, but always spoke of getting out and around again.

Mr. Schreiber for many years was a thresher man in this community, and when his machinery would break, and some of his customers would get angry, he would go around with his good humor, smile, and say "oh well boys, we will just get at it and fix the old thing up again." There was little that occurred that would cause him to become excited. He was always calm, cheerful and patient.

He was a member of the Mount Joy Lutheran Church all his life, and for many years was the superintendent of the Sunday school. All who knew him and were associated with him in the church work say that he was a model church member, and a true Christian gentleman. He leaves a wife, four children, and an entire community of friends and relatives who will miss him; yet all realize that their loss was his eternal gain. He was buried in Mount Joy cemetery.

Fairfield Signs 40 Chamber Of Commerce Members

The drive of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce for members closed Friday evening, when, at the meeting at the Fairfield schoolhouse, it was reported that 40 members have been secured.

A resolution voicing the opposition of the new Chamber of Commerce to the proposed Child Labor Amendment, which is to come before the Pennsylvania legislature at this session, for approval or disapproval, was passed.

Reverend Ralph Baker, President of the Fairfield Chamber of Commerce, said that the amendment would interfere with the right of parents to force their children to work. "If we allow this to occur, the next thing that the Federal government will try to pass is an amendment preventing you from disciplining a disobedient child. Everyone knows, that if you spare the rod, you spoil the child." Baker quoted several sections of the Bible, which he said, gave the right of parents to discipline their children and force them to work for their meals.

Edmond Thomas, Vice President of the First National Bank of Fairfield was the principal speaker at the meeting. He urged the chamber to first install a spirit of fellowship among its members, then to formulate a program of constructive activities for Fairfield, and lastly, to work out the program in so far as it is applicable to the needs of the community and the ability of the Chamber.

After a general discussion of plans for the new commerce organization, the youngest in the County, refreshments of the 'old style' were liberally served.

Gasoline Advances Two Cents

The fourth advanced this year in the price of gasoline – this time two cents a gallon, was made this week; making the advance for the year of six cents per gallon. The failing off in sales, seems the best reason offered, but it is back by a rise in the price of crude oil.

Warrant Two Years Old Results In Arrest

After a search extending for nearly 2 years, James Spear, about 30, formally a Frederick lunchroom proprietor, was arrested on Saturday by Deputy Sheriff Charles Smith, on a

warrant charging him with assault with intent to kill.

The charge against Spear is the outgrowth of an occurrence in April 1923. Spear is accused of stopping Harry Eyler, a Thurmont butcher, and holding him up on the road between Lewistown and Catocin Furnace at the point of a gun as Spear's companion is alleged to have searched the car for liquor, it was declared. No liquor being found in the machine, Eyler was permitted to depart, but soon afterwards notify the authorities. Eyler knew Spear, it was said, but did not know his companion. Spear disappeared soon after.

On Saturday, Constable Smith noticed Spear traveling in a Cadillac automobile. He placed Spear under arrest. Failing to provide bail, he was remanded to jail to await his trial. Since leaving Frederick, Spear said he had been in Pottstown.

February 13

Troopers Raid Rocky Ridge Home

Swooping down upon the home of Lewis Wegaman, of Rocky Ridge, Sunday afternoon, state police uncovered 30 bottles of high-powered beer and a half-gallon of moonshine liquor. The beer was found in the cellar, while the liquor was found in a room on the first floor of the home. Wegaman was not at home when the officers raided his place, but came in, while the search was in progress. His wife and two men were in the house, when the officers presented their search warrant and ceased the beverages.

To verify that they were in fact intoxicating liquors all the officers sampled the beverages, many doing so twice. Wageman was charged with the illegal possession of intoxicating liquors and posted a bail of \$1,000 and has a preliminary hearing before the magistrate on February 21.

Thievery

A thief – hardly to be called a burglar – entered the railroad office in Taneytown sometime during Saturday night, by unlocking the front door, then unlocking the safe, which contained about \$30 and a check for \$15, then departed leaving things in good shape.

That same evening an attempt was made to force a window at the

OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By Ahern



Grain and Supply Company office, but no entry was made. The Rein-dollar Company warehouse entrance was also forced through the mill in the rear, and a window leading to the front office was open, and the office ransacked, but nothing of value was found, the only items missing being a bicycle and a flashlight belonging to Joe Hill, engineer. The check taken from the railroad office was found torn into pieces, not far from the building. Presumably, it was a one-man job, and the bicycle was used to help in his getaway.

Chicken thieves were scared away from Howard Shoemaker's farm along the State Road, on Wednesday night, by Mr. Shoemaker firing at them with a revolver. They replied by throwing stones, breaking the kitchen's windows. The night was very foggy making it impossible to see far. The best gun, in such cases said the sheriff, is a double barrel shotgun.

The Problem In Radio Service

"In view of a very rapid change in radio technology within the last six months, and to give greater clarity to departmental policies, it seems to me desirable to review the situation." Secretary Hoover of the Commerce Department said.

"There can be made one point of view in the consideration of radio regulation and development. That is to assure increasing service to the listener. The radio is steadily enriching our homes. More practically to our farmer folks, it is bringing more of those contacts that the town populations have alone enjoyed up to this time. The road of progress is to stimulate the

development of the art, to prevent interference with and between broadcasting stations; to secure greater perfection of reception, and increase the number of alternative programs and better programs.

"There are today 563 broadcasting stations either in operations or under construction. Of these 455 are Class A (500 watts power or less) and 108 Class B (over 500 watts).

"It is generally believed that Class A stations have a radius of reception of not more than 25 or 50 miles, while Class B stations with her larger and increasing power, have a much wider radius. By practical reception, I do not include reception which radio listeners are able to secure by playing radio golf, but the effective serviceable, reliable reception program, which must be the real purpose of radio.

"The recent policy of the department of allowing the increase in power towards a possible maximum of 5,000 watts will mean that the radius of service reception will be greatly increased, and the reception itself within the present radius will become more reliable. This is of practical importance to our agricultural people, especially in summer and during daytime. The present plan is to allow advances in power use in stages of 500 watts, resting at each stage to determine if there is interference with other stations. Probably 20 or 30 Class B stations are now increasing or planning to increase their power. It is quite possible, that good service reception will be obtained for a radius of several hundred miles from each station, thus increasing their alternative programs to listeners.



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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

"The most difficult problem in radio regulation and development is the distribution of wavelength use, so as to prevent interference between stations. There are in all 80 different wavelengths available, if we keep the stations 10 kilocycles apart, and stagger the assignment of wavelengths geographically so as to prevent overlap in the area of effective reception. The recent experiment of the department in attempting to increase the number of wavelengths by decreasing the difference to seven kilocycles, proved unsuccessful, with the present development of industry.

"Class A stations were assigned the wavelengths of 278 meters and below, by recommendation of the Radio Conference Board, and there are in this area 30 possible wavelengths. Owing to the limited and the irregular character of their programming - largely churches, educational institutions, &c.. Class A stations have not represented as many difficulties in wavelength assignment as Class B stations although there are 455 of them.

"Class B stations present a far more serious situation because of the radio signal radius and their regular performance. There are 47 wavelengths to be divided over a total of 108 stations now operating or under construction. That is, there is now an average of less than one wavelength for each two stations, which means that they must divide their time of operation. Class B stations are the ones which furnish most of the regular programs, and from which the public receives the most effective service. Most of them naturally desire, and need to operate continuously, as the cost of overhead is much increase by dividing time.

"One of the greatest difficulties in the distribution of wavelengths arises from the concentration of stations in large centers of population. The worst conditions are at Chicago and New York. In Chicago five wavelengths are available for 10 operating Class B stations, and there are several others in the course of construction. For New York, there are six wavelengths available for eight Class B stations, and more under construction.

"It is practically impossible to increase the number of wavelengths available to the cities because they are all in use in other communities, and because it is absolutely necessary to maintain a wide kilocycle separation between stations so close together. Otherwise they will destroy each other's signal."

A Strong Draft

One of the substantial citizens of Thurmont on Thursday, desiring a strong draft, (from his stove), climb to the roof of his home, with a chain tied to the end of a rope, which he intended to use as a kind of rake, or scraper, or swab to open up the chimney. He jingle the chain down, once, then again, and thought he was doing quite well; until he drew up the string and found that the thing had left the chain - where? Who can tell?

"Perhaps we can burn her out from underneath," he said, but no draft, no burn, all smoke in the eyes. Then next, we are told, he got an iron pole, and climb to the top of the chimney. He poked down the hole with the end of the pole, and poof, what a mess.

After that one puff, which is "Afro-Eskimo", for the sudden explosion of everything that was in the chimney, the citizen was in no condition to see much of anything, except where he had made the mistake of poking his head over one end of the flu with a Jimmine knows what between. However, we are taking his word for it when he says that, besides the soot that came up, was the long chain that had been tied to the end of the rope, and the hole he stuck down there on the end of the pole.

Spear Released

James Spear, about 20, who was arrested on January 31 on a two-year-old charge growing out of an alleged holdup of Harry Eyer of Thurmont, in April 1923, on the Lewistown Pike, was dismissed at a hearing before Judge Guyer.

When Spear appeared for the hearing, Eyer said that Spear was not the man who held him up at the point of a gun, while another man searched his car. As Spear could not be identified, he was accordingly dismissed.

February 20

Said He Was Collecting Money For Others

A man, giving his name as Pierce, was arrested last week in Walkersville, and committed to jail on a charge of vagrancy. He claimed to be begging funds for a destitute family near Taneytown named Brendle. He had also been begging in Taneytown, where he said he was collecting money for an Emmitsburg family. Once the Sheriff of Freder-

ick County being communicated with, it was found that Price has served jail there for the same offense. The destitute families seem to be a myth.

3,276 Dogs Are Licensed

George Raffensperger, District Agent for The State Department of Agriculture, Bureau of Animal Industry, announced today that he has made several prosecutions against owners of unlicensed dogs in Adams and Franklin County, and that more will follow unless the animals are properly tagged with a 1925 permits. Mr. Raffensperger, was assisted in rounding up the violators by Leo Bushman, the County Game Warden.

Harry Troxell, the County Treasurer said 3,276 dog licenses have been issued, that number being about the same as last year at this time, although it is several hundred less than the total number of licenses issued up to December 31, 1924. The time limit for procuring a 1925 dog license expired February 15 and prosecutions followed, according to Mr. Raffensperger.

Blood Saturated With Poison

Last week Jones Ohler, of Harney, was taken to the Gettysburg hospital to be treated for a severe case of neuritis. We are informed that he is slightly improved, but that his system is completely saturated with poison that must be gotten rid of before any improvement can be seen.

Meanwhile Harney's Scarlet Fever patients are all out and about again. The quarantine was lifted at Luther Fox's on Tuesday morning, and Luther was a mighty happy boy, after being pinned in for 40 days, to be able to get about with his friends and neighbors again.

Former Garage Man Arrested

Robert Black, the former owner and operator of the Thurmont Motor Company, for whom the State Motor Vehicle Commission has been searching for for the past three months, was arrested last Friday afternoon on warrants of false statement charges in obtaining titles, coming into possession of cars with obliterated serial numbers and selling cars with changed engine numbers.

Black was arranged before magistrate Sherman Bowers, Friday afternoon and released on \$1,000 bail.

Black is charged with having in his possession or having sold, at least a dozen cars with defaced engine numbers. Officers of the state police have been on the trail of such cars for many months, all of which were traced to Black's garage. Investigations which led to the arrest of Black have been in progress for nearly 2 years it is said.

The reasons for Black's alleged effort to deface the engine numbers on the cars and substitute new ones is a mystery. All efforts of the state authorities to learn the identity of the machines have failed, but it was said by them on Friday night that they had some evidence in reserve, that could throw some light on the situation.

Shortly after the investigation was begun by state officers, the Thurmont Motor Company went into the hands of the receivers. Black left the state, it was said, and was not located until several days ago when he returned to Thurmont. He told the officials on Friday that he had been in Tennessee.

Black claim that the engine numbers which had been removed and replaced with new numbers, were put on by him last winter, when a number of his cars became frozen, breaking the engine blocks. By a special process in photography, the officials were able to obtain the original numbers, it is said.

February 27

Arrest Made In Train Station Robbery

A man giving his name as Reinhart, was apprehended in Woodsboro on Wednesday, on suspicion of being implicated in the recent robbery of the railroad station in Taneytown. In being brought to Taneytown he was identified as a man who had been seen there on the date of the robbery. Reinhart denied all knowledge of the robbery, but was held for further examination. Detectives have been working on the case since the robbery.

Mute Couple Faces Starvation

Rather than telling their neighbors of their plight, Mr. and Mrs. Charles Houch, of Emmitsburg, deaf mutes, silently vowed that they would meet death together by starvation, it has

become known.

They have lived on the outskirts of Emmitsburg for several years. They have no children and no near relatives on whom to call for assistance. They have spent their last few dollars, earned through many hours of hard work by Mr. Houch as a shoemaker.

A visit to their home on Saturday revealed that they had no coal, had not eaten solid food for several days, and they both were on the verge of collapse. A public subscription was started which by last night had raised several hundred dollars for the old couple.

Transportation Of School Pupils

Transporting pupils to and from school at public expense has raised some common sense questions that need to be answered, in the opinion of the Assistant Specialist In Rural Education of the Department of the Interior.

All the states and the District of Columbia are transporting some school children. Pupil transport has been the subject of a generous amount of legislation, and back of it lays the fundamental principle that the state must provide means for an education to every resident child, either by causing a school to be placed within his reach, or by transporting him to one.

Where does responsibility of the parent cease and that of the public begin? The question is asked about most school activities. The answer to pupil transport is generally expressed in terms of distance from homes to school, and the range under present law is 1/2 to 4 miles.

Such transportation is not a new item in the expense of education. It is handled in different ways in each state and the cost carefully recorded. 22 states report that 446,226 children were transported in 1924 at the expenditure of \$14,536,000 or an average of \$32.50 per pupil for the year. The costs range from \$9.36 in Georgia to \$73.15 in some sections of Maryland. Costs differ with conditions, but for safe, comfortable transportation, of any considerable number of pupils a state will probably need to expend from \$30-\$40 for each child per year.

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



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TANEYTOWN HISTORY

Taneytown murals celebrating community and history

David Buie

Two murals, installed in 1980 and 2001, once vividly illustrated Taneytown's rich history, offering windows into its past. One depicted a bustling 1903 street scene, while the other recreated a vintage ice cream advertisement, both serving as celebrations of the town's heritage. Unfortunately, time and neglect have taken their toll—one mural has been lost, and the other has deteriorated, challenging efforts to preserve Taneytown's historical narrative.

The first mural, commissioned in 1980, adorned the town meeting room in City Hall. Conceived by city manager Neal Powell (1921–2002) and painted by artist Emily Hahn, it portrayed a lively street scene in Taneytown circa 1903. Figures in period attire—long dresses, high collars, and bonnets—conveyed the era's charm, while details like a man on horseback and a struggling musician added movement and life to the scene.

With the assistance of a local historian, Powell ensured historical accuracy, incorporating landmarks like the Buffington Building and

former locations of a bank, drugstore, and post office. The artist created this mural to connect residents to their past. At its dedication on July 1, 1999, Powell highlighted its significance, calling it "a neat idea" to preserve history visually. Unfortunately, over time, the building underwent renovations that resulted in the mural's removal, with no effort being made to restore or preserve it. This loss marked a significant blow to the town's historical preservation efforts, leaving a void in our shared history that we must strive to fill.

The second mural, commissioned in 2001, revived a vintage advertisement for Zile's Ice Cream, once visible on the side of the building now serving as City Hall. Painted by artist Lewis Schlitt, the mural featured a colorful depiction of a fudge sundae and four classic ice cream cones—vanilla, chocolate, strawberry, and mint—alongside Zile's name. In 1927, Roy Strine (1886-1971) painted the original sign for Burke's Barber Shop. It remained hidden for decades until they rediscovered it in the early 1990s following the demolition of a neighboring building.



The Zile's Ice Cream sign was originally created in the 1920s by Roy Strine and restored in 2002 by Lewis Schlitt.

Zile's Ice Cream, founded in 1880 by Howard M. Zile (1848-1906), became a local favorite. By 1905, Zile's son Arthur (1885-1958) expanded the business to Westminster, eventually merging with Newman Ice Cream and later Borden. In Taneytown, the Central Hotel's owners, John Leister (1891-1945) and William Reindollar "W. Rein" Motter (1886-1945), commissioned the original sign to attract travelers, further embedding Zile's Ice Cream into the town's history.

The 2001 mural restoration, funded by a \$6,000 grant from Maryland's Main Street Improvement Program, symbolized Taneytown's commitment to revitalizing its downtown. The unveiling ceremony in May 2002 celebrated the mural as a tribute to the town's roots. Alice Unger (1925-2020), whose grandfather Roy Strine painted the original advertisement, attended the event and reflected on the project's impor-

ance. "It's wonderful to see this piece of history brought back to life," she said, emphasizing its connection to both her family's legacy and the town's cultural heritage.

Unfortunately, the Zile's mural has since fallen into disrepair, becoming an eyesore. As the Taneytown City Council prepares to meet at the end of January 2025 to discuss Main Street's future, there is hope that the newly formed Main Street Committee might prioritize restoring this mural as part of its efforts.

These murals were more than decorative—they embodied Taneytown's pride and spirit, blending art and history to engage the community and deepen its appreciation of the past. A town official once remarked that "the murals are a testament to the pride of the citizens and the spirit of Taneytown," underscoring their significant role in preserving local

heritage and fostering a sense of belonging and shared identity among us.

The 1903 street scene mural invited residents to step back in time, while the Zile's Ice Cream mural brought a touch of nostalgia to the town's streetscape. Together, they celebrated Taneytown's rich history and highlighted the role of public art in fostering community pride.

As Taneytown grows, losing one mural and the deterioration of the other highlights the challenges of maintaining connections to its past. Restoring and preserving these artworks is not just a desire, but a necessity. It would be a meaningful step toward revitalizing community pride and ensuring that Taneytown's history remains a cherished legacy for generations to come.

To read past articles on Taneytown History, visit the History section of Taneytown.net.

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TEACHER TALK!

Love letter to my most-loved literature

Claire Doll
MSMU Class of 2024

Since before I can even remember, I have loved literature. From the moment my fingertips brushed the crisp pages of a Junie B. Jones book, to this past May when I walked across the stage with a degree in English, I have felt bound to literature. Perhaps this is because ideas are eternal, and books can hold onto ideas longer than people, and in a world of devastation and unknowingness, nothing is more comforting and inspiring than ideas. Or, perhaps this is because words can be cosmetically beautiful, like in poetry, designed rhythmically, by meter or rhyme, tying the tongue when spoken, sticking to the heart. In 2024 I read 45 books, and my goal is even higher for 2025. There is nothing I love more than a book with stunning language that makes me think, think, and think some more.

When I became an English teacher, I realized just how important it is to expose literature to others. We can delve into figurative language, or narrative structure, or let's write an alternate ending to the story! Let's write a letter to the main character, let's illustrate the setting! A love of reading must be fostered slowly, carefully. It takes one book to produce a lifelong reader, but it also takes one book to turn students away.

In honor of February, I decided to write a "love letter" to my favorite pieces of literature that I have read and taught in schools. Books and short stories that have resonated not only with me, but also with my students. I highly encourage you to check out these stories for yourself!

Jane Eyre by Charlotte Bronte

This Victorian-Era novel was a choice for summer reading right before

senior year of high school, and it literally took me the entire summer to read. It was long. However, Jane Eyre is filled with beautiful language, powerful lessons, and a revolutionary romance story. Reminiscent of the fairytale Cinderella, this novel spans the life of Jane Eyre through her orphaned childhood, her adolescence at the Lowood School, and finally her employment as a governess at a manor called Thornfield. There, Jane teaches a French girl Adele and sparks an impassioned relationship with her employer, Mr. Rochester. Jane finds herself falling in love with Rochester, beginning a tumultuous relationship that not only consumes Jane, but also reveals a dark and spiraling secret about Rochester and Thornfield.

I still think about Jane Eyre to this day, although I read it six years ago. It is a story of romance and love, but also intelligence and independence—can Jane have both? You'll find some tropes in this story quite familiar, as several modern books and movies echo the plot twist in Jane Eyre. Thanks to my high school English literature teacher, I have absolutely fallen in love with this novel. When I travelled to London in March 2022, I even bought a Penguin English Library Classic version of this book for my library!

The Outsiders by S.E. Hinton

The Outsiders is the first novel I ever taught, so it will forever hold a special place in my heart. I read this with my eighth-grade students in Thurmont, and it is literally quite impossible to not fall head over heels into this plot. We meet Ponyboy Curtis and his group of greaser friends; we meet the Socs, the greasers' rivals. The story, the characters, and the settings are so beautifully 1960s, from the drive-in

movies to the Mustangs. After Ponyboy witnesses a tragic event with his friend, Johnny, the two flee town and their lives turn unexpectedly. Themes of social class, loyalty, friendship, and identity surface in this stunning novel. The words themselves would give me chills, and the story still resonates with me to this day.

I loved teaching this to my eighth graders because there was so much to do with characterization and theme. My students would ask to read The Outsiders and do nothing else—and when students these days ask this, you must follow. I still remember those dark mornings at 7:30 a.m. when we would read together, and all you could hear was the sound of flipping pages, and breaths drawn, and heart-stopping words being spoken into the air.

The Landlady by Roald Dahl

I just recently taught "The Landlady" to my seventh-grade students! This short story follows seventeen-year-old Billy Weaver as he searches for a place to stay in Bath, England while on business. Looking for a rather cheaper option, he stumbles upon a bed and breakfast where a kind, old lady greets him. Deciding to stay here, Billy settles into his room for the night and chats with the seemingly nice landlady. However, throughout the evening, as he sips his almond-flavored tea, Billy can't help but notice some



Charlotte Bronte

strange details of the Bed and Breakfast: the nearly-still pet dog perched by the fireplace, or the sole two names in the guestbook that he can barely remember. Two names, he recalls, that he saw in the newspaper, where they both had been listed as missing. But before Billy makes these connections, it might be too late.

My students loved this story! It's a mystery that doesn't quite frame itself as one, so students must be very careful while reading. I loved teaching "The Landlady" because there is so much to do with foreshadowing and characterization and figurative language. At the end of this unit, I gave students a choice of summative projects:

Make a "Wanted" poster for the landlady, or create an advertisement for the bed and breakfast, or even write a newspaper article about the criminal landlady. This story was a huge success in my classroom.

These are obviously just a few of my favorite, most loved texts. I am so lucky to have encountered such meaningful pieces of literature in my career as a student (and now a teacher)! This February, write a love letter to your favorite book. There's got to be one story out there that still sticks with you, to this day.

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COOKING

Feeling cold February

Sonya Verlaque
FCC Culinary Program

I'm cold, we are all cold. It's snowing in Florida, there are no rules anymore. This month is offering some warming food that is easy to make and then eat while wrapped up in a blanket.

French-ish Chicken Casserole

Ingredients

- 4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
- 1 tbs olive oil
- 1 onion diced
- 3 cloves garlic minced
- 1 cup heavy cream
- 1 cup chicken broth
- 1 tsp dried thyme
- 1 tsp dried rosemary
- 1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
- 1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
- 1 cup baby spinach

Salt and pepper to taste, also if you like mustard, adding a tablespoon on dijon mustard to the sauce is another great way to add depth of flavor without many additional calories or salt. It also makes it feel more French to me

Instructions: Preheat the oven to 375°F (190°C) and lightly grease a 9x13-inch casserole dish. In a large skillet, heat olive oil over medium heat. Season the chicken breasts with salt and pepper, then cook for 6-7 minutes per side, until golden brown and cooked through. Remove the chicken from the skillet and set it aside. In the same skillet, add diced onion and garlic. Sauté for 2-3 minutes until softened and fragrant. Add heavy cream, chicken broth, thyme, and rosemary. Stir to combine and bring to a simmer. Let the sauce cook for 3-5 minutes until slightly thickened.

Slice the cooked chicken into

strips or bite-sized pieces and place them in the prepared casserole dish. Pour the creamy sauce over the chicken, ensuring everything is covered. Add the spinach (if using) and stir gently. Sprinkle shredded mozzarella and Parmesan cheeses evenly on top of the casserole. Transfer the casserole to the preheated oven and bake for 20-25 minutes, or until the cheese is bubbly and golden brown. Let the casserole rest for 5 minutes before serving. Along with this I would serve a very simple field green salad with a light dressing to balance the heaviness of the cream sauce.

Greek Orzo Chicken Soup

One classic way to fight a cold is with avgolemono, a traditional Greek soup. It's got plenty of lemon juice so you can make sure you're getting your vitamin C. It is also a good sore throat soother that can easily be prepped ahead and frozen. Also high in protein using both egg and chicken.

Ingredients

- 6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
- 1 cup water
- 3/4 cup uncooked orzo
- 4 large eggs
- 1/4 cup lemon juice
- 4 cups shredded cooked chicken
- Chopped fresh dill (if available)

Instructions: In a large saucepot, combine the broth and water. Cover and heat to a boil on high. Add the orzo and cook until al dente according to package directions, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, beat the eggs until smooth. Gradually whisk in the lemon juice until incorporated. Slowly whisk 1/3 cup of the

hot broth into eggs to temper them. You don't want scrambled egg soup. Gradually stir egg mixture into remaining broth. Add the chicken. Cook 2-3 min., until thickened, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with chopped dill.

Cranberry Crumble Bar

Clearly we can't have a February food article without a valentine's treat. These cranberry cookie bars store well in an airtight container for 4 days or you can freeze them (without the glaze) and defrost at a later time and add the glaze then. They are a crumbly shortbread base with tart cranberry, for when you need a break from all the chocolate. They would also be usable for thanksgiving or Christmas too, a very versatile desert

Shortbread Crust ingredients

- 1 cup (226 g) unsalted butter, room temperature
- 1/2 cup (100 g) granulated sugar
- 1/2 cup (100 g) light brown sugar, packed
- 1 large egg, room temperature
- 2 tsp vanilla
- 3 1/4 cups (405 g) all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
- 3/4 tsp. baking powder
- 1 tsp. cinnamon
- 1/4 tsp kosher salt

Cranberry Filling ingredients

- 2 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
- 2/3 cup (133 g) granulated sugar
- 1 tbs. cornstarch
- 1 tbs orange zest
- 1 tbs orange juice
- 1 tsp. vanilla

Vanilla Glaze ingredients

- 3/4 cup powdered sugar, sifted
- 4 tbs. whole milk or heavy cream
- 1/2 tsp vanilla



Avgolemono (greek lemon chicken soup)

Instructions: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugars until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the egg and vanilla, mixing to combine well. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt.

Add the dry ingredients and mix just until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Do not over mix. Set aside roughly 2 cups of the dough (loosely packed) and reserve to use on the top of the crumble. Press the shortbread dough into an 8 x 8 baking pan lined with parchment paper. Use your hands or the flat side of a measuring cup to press it evenly into the corners of the pan.

Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes, or until the edges are slightly golden brown and the center is just set. Do not over bake. Remove the pan from the oven and allow the crust to cool slightly while you make the cranberry filling. In a large bowl, mix together the cranberries, sugar,

cornstarch, orange zest and juice and vanilla.

Pour the cranberry mixture over the pre-baked crust. Use your hands to break up the remaining 2 cups of shortbread dough into smaller, flat pieces. Place them randomly on top of the cranberry filling, leaving space between them for the cranberries to peak through. Bake for about 45 minutes, covering the top of the pan with aluminum foil for the last 10 to 15 minutes of baking time so that the crumble does not turn too dark. Remove the bars from the oven. Place the pan on a wire rack and cool completely before adding the vanilla glaze.

Vanilla Glaze - Whisk together the powdered sugar, milk (or heavy cream) and vanilla. The glaze should be thin enough to run off a fork but not so thin that it's transparent. If the glaze is too thick, add more milk. If too thin, add more powdered sugar. Drizzle over the top of the bars once cooled. Slice into squares.

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MOMS' TIME OUT

Mom is running away from home!



Mary Angel

Before you ask, no, my children are not missing, nor have they run away from home. Just ask your friends and you will find a story of someone who ran away from home. Hopefully that story ended well, but that is not what I am addressing this month. I am talking about the “Real Housewives of Maryland” or something you might see on a nighttime soap opera.

When I was about six or seven years old, I ran away from home. I was mad at my mom about something ridiculous, I am sure. I told her I was going to run away from home and just like an episode of the Cosby Show, she told me she wanted me to be happy as she was helping me pack my little Holly Hobby bag. I walked two houses down to the local grocery store, which my mom had already called ahead and told Mrs. Doris I was coming. When I arrived at the store, she had a hot chocolate waiting for me and told me my mom was very sad so, I cried and asked if she could take me home. This is a cute story, but still not the point.

I am talking about running away from home as an adult. There are different versions of running away depending on your adult circumstances. Running away can be a state of mind or an actual escape. There are times when I am at my wits end as an adult, that I think, “Oh, this is why adults run away from home”. This is when the stress of life is just overwhelming. It can be one big stressor, like a lost job, a totaled car, severe illness, or any number of other large, unexpected stressors. It can be all of the little stresses in life that start piling up until one more stress, like a rotten cherry on top, breaks you. This might look like this: the kids are sick, your husband hurts his back by shoveling the driveway, the washer goes up, then you are at the grocery store and when you come out someone has backed into your car and left without reporting it. That last stressor doesn't have to be a big deal, just the last thing you can take on top of the rest.

month period, followed by a new roof and a costly car repair, I was sure I was having a heart attack. It was just stress, but I was losing it trying to figure out how we were going to pay for all of the repairs that needed to be done. Just as I was trying to calm down and make a plan, we were hit with some unexplained medical issues. I told my husband I was going to run away from home because I couldn't deal with it anymore. He asked that I hold on until we figured it all out and we would run away together. If you haven't guessed, I deal with stress with jokes, so I don't explode. When we took care of all the repairs and health issues, we made a plan to run away.

Our plans to run away can vary greatly. Often times it depends on whether we have had a chance to save some money in our “Escape Fund”. When we run away from home it might be for a day but look different each time. We might go to a National Park and go for a walk, pack lunch, go to an antique mall and look for some baseball cards or crafting supplies, then go out to dinner. We leave first thing in the morning, tell the kids to call only in an emergency, and we are home by bedtime. Our kids are old enough to feed themselves and be home alone. These escapes are a great way to recharge and reconnect with my hubby. These are a Godsend for my sanity. When times have been lean, we have made these escapes in our own house. We will watch a movie, play some games, and then when dinner rolls around we feed the kids and then tell them they cannot come out of their rooms for a certain amount of time. It has worked great!

If it has been a long time since we have run away, we will plan something a little longer. We never fly, so it always has to be within driving distance (up to 6 hours). It is not that we are against flying, but we do not want the added expense. We might start out on a Friday night or early Saturday morning, depending on the distance from home. We

Everyone has a different breaking point when it comes to stress. Luckily most of us just have a good cry, call our mom, or turn to our best friend for some support. That support can be either emotional, time, or sometimes someone to help care for your family. We do not run away, hopefully. This reason for running away never solves anything. Haven't we all been told, since we were very little, you can't run away from your problems. Take a deep breath, ask for help, and pray. This is what has worked for me. My grandma used to say, “This too shall pass” and “It will be better before your married”. That last one no longer applies, but she is spot on with the first one. There is, however, another type of running away.

When stress takes its toll on you and you feel like you are getting ready to lose your mind, there is a type of running away that I have found to be beneficial for me. This running away is temporary and therapeutic. My kids have all heard me say that I should run away from home. My family has heard me say I need to run away so often through the years, that now they immediately ask, “For how long?”. When we had 3 appliances bite the dust in a one-

“It Is Always The Right Time To Do The Right Thing” Essay Contest

Franklin County Visitors Bureau is launching the annual “It Is Always The Right Time To Do The Right Thing Essay Contest.” The contest is inspired by a quote from a speech given by Martin Luther King at Oberlin College on October 22, 1964. The quote was: “The time is always right to do what is right.” Doing the right thing shaped American history; and each year, Franklin County Visitors Bureau launches its annual essay contest to collect and highlight experiences that highlight the importance of doing the right thing.

Franklin County Visitors Bureau invites the public to share what his/her right thing is and the important impact of doing the right thing. The essay can be a personal story or a special influence of family, friends, ancestors, mentors, and heroes. The essay can offer a piece of history that fashioned personal feelings, thoughts, or ideas as long as it highlights that it is always the right time to do the right thing.

The essay contest has five categories: education, human-

ity, respect, liberty, and justice. Within each category, there are elementary, younger teen, older teen, and adult levels. Essays are accepted in both written and oral format. A \$100 top prize will be awarded in each category based on main point, originality, insightfulness, and clarity. Download the entry form here. Essays are due by email, mail, or drop off to Franklin County Visitors Bureau by February 12. Winners will be announced at the Franklin County Tourism Brunch on Tuesday, February 25, 2025.

The 2024 Essay Contest had 21 winners; each winning essay was included in the 2024 Essay Contest Booklet. The public can read the essays online here or request a printed copy of the book by contacting 717-552-2977 or 866-646-8060.

A 2025 Essay Contest Booklet will be produced in print format and online format.

For more information about Franklin County and Franklin County Visitors Bureau, visit www.ExploreFranklinCountyPA.com.

headed to the beach for the weekend, gone north and toured the corning glass museum, or headed to Winchester Virginia for some shopping and a museum visit. We usually stay in a hotel with breakfast included and grab lunch on our way home. We are then home Sunday night for family dinner. Every once in a while, we will make it a long weekend and stay until late Sunday or early Monday.

Although I never want to make lite of someone who actually wants to run away from home, in my

house, it is a sign for the kids that mom and dad need a little break from reality. There have actually been a few times when the kids have suggested we run away, whether because they need a break from reality or they sense we might need one. Anyway, you look at it, running away from home in our house isn't a bad thing. Often times it is therapy and a bargain at that!

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 gave our Four Years At The Mount writers the creative freedom to write a letter to or about a historical figure born in the month of February. Let's dive into our history!

Freshman

Constantine the Great

Cameron Madden
MSMU Class of 2028

A long time ago, born on the 27th of February, 272 AD, one of the most esteemed men in history was born. Constantine the Great, who later became the Roman Emperor from 306-337 AD, is one of the most known Romans in the public consciousness, mostly due to his association and adoption with Christianity; He was the first emperor to adopt such and lead one of the longest reigns of the empire in its history.

Happy Birthday to you Constantine! You were born in one of the most contentious times in Roman History, and despite that you rose from greatness. You were born in the East, where in your early days you were under threat from Palmyrene forces that sought to break away from Rome. Despite the danger of your childhood, you had stood strong, and for many years your early life was marked by trials that would have broken a lesser soul. Being the son of Constantius Chlorus

and Helena, you experienced the political turbulence of the Tetrarchy, where four rulers tried to govern the weakened Roman Empire. You proved your mettle early on, showing that you were not just the son of a co-emperor, but a leader in your own right. Your military prowess was evident in your campaigns in Gaul, Britain, and along the Rhine, where you defended the empire's borders with skill and bravery, making your father and the empire very proud of your actions.

At 32 years old, I wonder where your mind took you in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. It was there that you reportedly saw a vision of the Christian cross, accompanied by the words "In this sign, you will conquer." I wonder if it truly was a prophetic vision, or perhaps was stirred on by thoughts of your mother, who today is known as St. Helena. Either way, it is incredible to think that after so long you were able to conquer those who stood in the way of peace in the Empire.

I also wonder, how after all of your conquests, and when you finally became the full emperor, you were able to keep your vision of prosperity so focused, rather than being blinded by power. After all, during the Edict of Milan in

313, you allowed for religious freedom across the empire, showing no envy or lustful intent in your role as emperor. After a long string of turmoil and corruption in the position, you were able to make it prestigious once more, and became the example, and archetype for what an emperor should be for the rest of the empire's history.

Your reign had significant reforms and achievements, many of which were headed by you in an effort prosper its people. You founded the city of Constantinople, which would become the new capital of the Roman Empire and a beacon of culture and power for centuries, and for a thousand years, it would be the greatest on the continent. Your legal and administrative reforms strengthened the empire which were able to eliminate corruption (in some areas) and influence between military and civilian administration. Not only this, but you also instituted economic reform that helped put value back in Roman currency, and that would stabilize and refine the economy. One of your biggest commitments and personal goals was to build churches and support the Christian community to spread the faith th far and wide. You were a visionary who understood that the unity of the empire could be

achieved through a shared religion, and I mention all of these feats not only to highlight your strengths, but to acknowledge the benefits you had across the people of your empire, and furthermore to the identity of Europe.

We can't exactly ignore your methods of securing the position of emperor though; many rivals were put down, and consolidation of power certainly destroyed the tetrarchy system (honestly for the better.) Yet since the goal was to unify the nation so that it can be stabilized it seemed to be something that was necessary in order for you to achieve what you had. You demonstrated that faith could be a guiding principle for governance, and your example inspired generations of leaders who followed.

As we celebrate your birthday this February, we should remember not only your achievements which shaped the Western world as we know it today, but also the enduring impact of your vision. The world you helped to shape continues to feel the influence of your decisions, from the spread of Christianity to the preservation of Roman law and culture, much of which we see in our own legal systems and ways of governance. Your life is a testament to the power of conviction and the enduring impact of

leadership rooted in faith and purpose and should be an inspiration for all who wish to uphold their nation's prosperity, and all who are fit to lead.

Had you not been born, then many things like the spread of Christianity would have been either prevented, or even snuffed out, and even the survival of the empire was prolonged due to your leadership; long enough where we can still admire the strength and adaptability of the Romans. Rome reached its last golden age under you, and as your legacy continued on, those who were less fit to rule than you ultimately failed where you succeeded.

Happy Birthday, Constantine. Your legacy lives on, and your contributions to history continue to inspire. In this month, we honor the memory of a ruler who dared to dream of a united and peaceful empire, guided by the principles of faith and justice. May your story continue to be told for as long as there are people to tell it, reminding us all of the power of a vision, and the strength of character required to be called: The Great.

To read other articles by Cameron Madden, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Sophomore

Galileo Galilei

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

"Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe."
-Galileo Galilei

The age of modernity is heavily taught at Mount Saint Mary's University. The distinction between ancient and modern science, philosophy, and even theology is discussed to a point that makes you wonder what life would have been like without the Enlightenment. Now, for each of the above topics, their respective enlightenment occurred and even developed over time. Contrary to my typical articles revolving around some sort of American history, I'm going to talk about science.

Galileo Galilei, born February 15th, 1564, is most commonly referred to as the Father of Modern Astronomy, the Father of Modern Physics, and, at this point, the Father of Modern Science. Born in Pisa, Italy, he is recognized for his invention of the telescope. This invention was revolutionary for its time since it disproved the accepted theory that everything in the sky revolved around the Earth; this is known as geocentrism and is still believed in some parts of the world - though not many. Instead, it was discovered that the Earth, and all the other planets, revolved around the sun. This is known as heliocentrism, which was originally proposed by Copernicus and later confirmed by Galileo.

Nevertheless, not everyone was very accepting of this new and confirmed discovery. The theologians of the Catholic Church were always in some sort of disagreement with Galileo, mostly due to his arrogant character but also because his scientific discoveries constantly disproved

their interpretations of scripture. The persistent bickering between the Catholic Church and Galileo was never-ending to the point that the theologians, unwilling to hear Galileo's rebuttals to the interpretations of scripture, sentenced Galileo to house arrest for life.

Galileo wrote to the Grand Duchess Christina, most likely a patron of his discovery, voicing his concerns since the Theologians cast him and his ideas away. I find it very impactful that he said "*I piously and prudently agree that sacred scripture can never lie, but only insofar as the true meanings of its words are understood.*"

Galileo, in response to the theologians' accusations, stated that scripture and the existence of God are true, however, it is misinterpreted by the theologians. In his letter, Galileo then continues to, very assertively and pompously I'll admit, suggest that the theologians reanalyze the Bible and look at it more literally rather than symbolically due to its collision with recent scientific discovery.

This task was something that challenged not only the theologians of the time but *everyone*. That is to say, how can science and religion coexist peacefully when one is constantly contesting the other? Galileo challenged the world to accept heliocentrism and continue the practice of Catholicism. Thinking synchronically, this was a huge task for the average person. Despite the printing press being invented in the early 15th century, not everyone had access to books to obtain the knowledge Galileo and other scholars did. The average person lived off of the words the Catholic Church fed to them during weekly or daily mass. Scripture was printed and distributed to those who could afford it. Galileo asked people to reconsider everything they've understood about Scripture and, as the theologians made it out to be, go against what had already been established. To the average person, you were forced to choose between the Catholic Church and the Enlightenment. One side guaranteed

eternal glory in Heaven for those who worshiped and believed while also declaring eternal damnation for those who chose to go against the Scripture. Meanwhile, the other side offered new ideas, new certainties, and modernity as we know it today. Was there really a correct side?

When most people think of Galileo, they only consider what he invented rather than the lasting impact he left on Europeans, and now us. While a notably ignorant and arrogant man, Galileo stood up for his discovery while jointly encouraging others that scripture was still true. It is one of his greatest accomplishments; the establishment of the peaceful coexistence between science and religion.

Arguably the most interesting thing about Galileo was his ability to reveal the intentions of the Catholic Church in the 16th century. By this, I mean that his discovery and further, persecution, exposed how corrupt the Catholic Church was during that time. Considering the means and advances he had to go through to make his points evident go to show how narrow-minded the theologians were. It is scary to think about how their dismissiveness could have impacted the Enlightenment. That is to say, entertaining the notion that Galileo's discovery would have been rejected altogether would mean perhaps a few more centuries of believing in geocentrism. How could this have impacted our history? I mean we've got the Renaissance, the 30 Years War, the English Civil Wars, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the Haitian Revolution, the American Civil Wars, then it gets interesting with World War I, then World War II because the Treaty of Versailles just wasn't enough to stop the Germans.

The theologians were faced with a harsh reality that they were forced to accept. That doesn't mean that the foundation of what you believe doesn't exist, it

just means you have to change the angle at which you look at it. Initiating this way of thinking from a young age allowed for the adaptability of humans to be more flexible. The acceptance of modernity had begun to be seen positively rather than something that was feared.

This February 15th, in honor of such an incredible scientist, I challenge you all to think of a time in which you rejected change; a time when you were scared to

accept the truth; or a time when you were forced to see things from a different perspective. Change is a part of life, but so is acceptance. Learning to coexist with ideas that make us uncomfortable makes us stronger. Galileo, and all he stood for, proved that science can coexist with religion.

To read other articles by Gracie Smith, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



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HISTORICAL FIGURES BORN IN FEBRUARY

Junior

Langston Hughes

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

So much has happened over the trajectory of life in the world, especially in recent years. I feel as though we are often so swept up in the happenings of our own lives, the present, and even the future, that we often disregard the past. How can we do that though, when the past is what shaped us into who we are now; it has shaped society and the world as we know it. There is a saying between one of my friends and I in regard to change, we frequently say that we are “waiting for a catalyst” in order to make a change in our lives or to make a hard decision. We need a big moment in order to feel like we are making the right choices. Sometimes though, the small moments make all the difference too. Change is simply just part of the life we live; it’s inevitable. However, most of the changes we’ve seen throughout history haven’t occurred without a bit of a fight.

Introducing the birthday boy: Langston Hughes! Born on February 1st, 1902, in Joplin Missouri,

Hughes ended up becoming one of the most well-known poets in the Nation and one of the most recognized leaders of the Harlem Renaissance—the most influential period in African American literary history, lasting from the 1910’s until the mid 1930’s. Hughes was an innovator of the jazz poetry art form, an art form that ended being insanely popular. In addition to his role as a poet and leader of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes was also a playwright, novelist, and an activist; a multi-tasking king if you will. He moved to New York City and flourished in the literary world. Not only did he flourish here, but he also shaped the literary world as we know it, addressing his poetry to people—specifically the African American people—and sharing the importance of making a change and having a dream. Hughes died aged only 66 years old on May 22nd, 1967. Even after his passing though, his name lived on for generations to come.

Dear Mr. Langston Hughes,

I would like to wish you a very happy birthday! The date is February 1st and you are aged approximately 123 years old today. Ironically, you share a birthday with someone else who has shaped my life in cru-

cial ways. My best friend’s mom, my bonus mom, was also born on February 1st but she isn’t nearly as old as you are today (no offense). I have found that different people shape your life in different but equally important ways. Similar to my bonus mom, you have better shaped my understanding of the world. Poetry is a beautiful and complex form of art. Words hold power and we often wield it without thought, at least in today’s society we do. Looking back though, we use words to make the most critical decisions. For example, in order to declare war, our President addresses the Nation and states the intentions: “We declare war on...” Words are powerful in a way we cannot or do not fully comprehend. Mr. Hughes, YOUR words are powerful. They have carried on your legacy for years following your passing 58 years ago.

In my American Literature Survey course from last year here at Mount St. Mary’s University, we read and analyzed your poems as a class. We listened intently and read closely and not only did we hear your words, but we understood them. I believe the first poem we looked at was “The Weary Blues”, which you wrote in 1925. It’s interesting to think about the differences between the world in which you lived and the world that

we are living currently. I myself am an avid poetry lover, and I have even written a few poems myself. It’s a form of expression that I never really understood prior to college. I used to write songs when I was younger, albeit they aren’t the best, but I used this as a way to express how I felt and the dreams I had. Looking back, I hear your words, “a dream deferred is a dream denied”, I apply this to my life anytime I consider pushing my dreams back. If I push them back now then I am denying them and making them to be less important. We should all always follow our dreams and make them important.

As I write this letter to you, I am sitting on the couch in my living room apartment, drinking a cup of coffee, listening to music and grinning like an idiot. Specifically, I am writing this letter while listening to music by Hozier, another idol of mine, who reminds me a bit of you. When I listen to his music I feel good. I find myself getting in the groove of writing, pushing past my writers’ block, and pouring my heart out on paper. For the past few months, I have been completely burnt out. I haven’t been able to find the love for writing in which I have had my whole life. Between school, work, and mentoring I haven’t had the desire to write for myself.

I’ve been writing for work, for a paycheck. But why did I start writing for the paper in the first place? Because I loved writing. It has been a passion of mine; a way to express myself through the power of words! You once said, “Life is for the living. Death is for the dead. Let life be like music. And death a note unsaid.” Sometimes we need to hear it put pretty simply: you’re alive so live your life. You can be dead when you’re dead, there’s no time for it now. Sometimes I need to listen to you more often, I need to live my life and feel the way music makes me feel, and I very obviously need to embrace my love of writing and words and everything else life has to offer.

Langston Hughes. The man that you are. Thank you. Thank you for being so unbelievably talented. Thank you for being an inspiration to not only the African American community and literary community, but also to the young writers, poets, playwrights, and activists around the world. You’re name and legacy is one that will be remembered for eons. You made a difference in the world, and we’re forever grateful for it.

To read other articles by Devin Owen, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

Senior

Laura Ingalls Wilder

Dolores Hans
MSMU Class of 2025

There are historical figures that are renowned by the world, our country, and the textbooks. There’s our history and those who impacted it, and then there is my history. My history, my life, has been impacted by many figures, whether similarly honored by the greater society, or less notable than most textbooks but still well-known. From a young age, I was most heavily impacted by books I read and the show I watched that taught me about family, hard work, and how a simple life can be the most rewarding if it is filled with love. How a little house in a small community can hold a value far greater than any luxury you can name, because of the family that lives within it.

On February 7th, 1867, Laura Ingalls Wilder was born. She lived a life centered on family and she shared that devotion with those who read her stories. She began writing down her childhood memories into stories at the request of her daughter, stories that were published and more than a century later were eventually read by a young Dolores. These stories inspired the creation of a television show, Little House on the Prairie, which is still one of my favorite shows. And so, as her birthday approaches, I write her a birthday letter.

Dear Laura Ingalls Wilder,

Happy 158th birthday! It is an honor to be writing to you. I wish there was a way to explain to you that not only am I, a twenty-two year old woman, writing to you, but so is a 10 year old who just discovered your books, and a 16 year old teenager

who watches the show based on your life every night. On this day, I hope to share with others the significance of your life, and thank you kindly for having the courage to share your story. As a twenty-first century woman, I will never know what it is like to ride in a covered wagon across the country, or walk a mile from my farm to sell eggs to the mercantile for about ten cents. But through your stories, you gave us a window into the life of a pioneer, capturing the beauty of the simple life of those times with such vivid detail and heartfelt emotion. Your books have inspired generations, and just as my mom introduced me to you, I will introduce you to my daughters.

You taught us about resilience, the power of family, and the simple joys of everyday life. Through the ups and downs of your family’s journey across the country, we learned that even in the hardest times, there is always hope, courage, and love. You showed us the good qualities of your own parents through your characters. Charles with his relentless optimism, hard work, and love of his wife and children, and Caroline, with her quiet strength, memorable teachings, and authentic femininity. These characters provided me with role models, and helped me envision the mother I want to be and the marriage I want to build.

You expressed the role of your sister, Mary, as beautiful and intelligent, a do-good girl with maturity. When I was in high school I related to her when my own younger sister became a thorn in my side and yet my favorite person. No matter how I could relate myself to the women in your stories, deep down I will always be comforted by the character you created to represent yourself. Laura, a self-assured, wild, tomboy-ish girl who just wanted

to do right by others.

I always loved the warmth of the home you created in your books, the home you allowed me to be a part of. Though it was unremarkable in features and structure, it never felt cold, even if a blizzard blew through the cracks of the wooden walls. To me, there was always a fire and blankets to keep the warmth from escaping the pages of the story I felt welcomed into.

Even beyond the pages of your books, your own life was just as warm and important. You moved all around the midwest, no doubt facing numerous challenges. What I find astounding is that even though where you resided changed often, the goodness of your family made every single house a home. Every cold winter was faced with a warm hug, every long and rocky road was overcome with the stability of your family’s courage, and every struggle was surmounted on the ideal of hope.

With every word you write I am whisked away from my loud and busy life and I land at the edge of a creek with cold rushing water that’s surrounded by dainty white flowers and tall green grass that reaches up toward the sky as if it is stretching after a long slumber. My dress blows in the spring breeze and life is as simple as it should be for a little girl.

Thank you for the childhood you created for me in your books. Thank you for deciding to write, even later in life. As someone who has many passions and is unsure where my life will lead, your example shows me that it’s never too late to start something new. Thank you for giving me role models and a way to envision my life. Simple and full, adventurous and stable, and grand in a little way.

As I, and all your readers celebrate you on your birthday, we thank you

for showing us that the adventure of life is about much more than the places we go—it’s about the love we share, the memories we make, and the way we learn to appreciate each moment, no matter how small.

Happy Birthday, Laura! I’ll meet

you on the bank of the creek.

With gratitude and admiration,
Dolores Hans

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?

Reboot! Adult Digital Literacy – February 5 & 19 from 2:30 to 5. This month’s topic is Understanding Hyperlinks! Want to learn more about computers and how to navigate them? These lessons are designed to instruct older adults on a wide variety of digital literacy topics! One-on-one tech help will also be provided as time allows.

The Summit Stitchers Quilt Club meets at 5:30 on February 18. 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.

Blue Ridge Summit Book Club – February 24 from 5 to 6. This month, we are reading and discussing the horror short story, *The Grownup* by Gillian Flynn. Copies of the book will be available in the library for you to check out.

For more information on the Blue Ridge Summit Free Library visit www.fcspa.org or call 717-792-2240.

www.fcspa.org or call 717-792-2240.

Frederick County Library

Winter is the perfect time to cozy up with a good book, learn something new at a program or bring the kids to the library to enjoy our enhanced play area! The Emmitsburg Library has something for everyone.

Mark your calendar for the Annual Celtic Concert – Wednesday, March 12 from 7 to 9 at the Mount St. Mary’s Marion Burke Knott Auditorium. The band this year is Gaelic Mishap, and tickets will be available for free two weeks prior.

For Kids – Celebrate the Lunar New Year on Saturday, Feb. 8 from 2 to 3. Ring in the year of the snake with crafts, music and more; Valentines Day is all about friendship at the Taylor Swift Valentine’s Day Party on Wednesday, Feb. 12 from 4 to 5; and a Northern Lights Chalk Art class on Saturday, Feb. 15 at 2 is one you will not want to miss.

For Teens – Tuesday Nights from 6:30 to 7:30 is Teen Time! Feb. 11th will be all about chocolate (tasting included!), Feb. 18th will feature making cinnamon cut outs for decorations; and Feb. 25th the group will make birdseed wreaths to feed our feathered friends in the winter.

For Adults – Mind Care & Games for Seniors, People Experiencing Memory Loss and their Caregivers will take place on Wednesday, Feb. 19 at 11. This is a low-pressure, social opportunity with memory games and a guest speaker for caregivers. On Sat., Feb. 22 at 2 the library will host a Handmade Greeting Card program for beginners.

Visit the library website at FCPL.org to discover so much more. Any questions, call Emmitsburg Library at 301-

600-6329 or Thurmont Regional Library at 301-600-7212.

Emmitsburg Branch Library

Mondays, Family Storytime at 10:30 & Little Adventurers at 11.

Thursdays, Pajama Storytime at 6.

Saturday, Feb. 1: Community Craft Swap from 10 to 4.

Wednesday, Feb. 5: Craft a Critter: Love Bugs, at 4.

Saturday, Feb 8: Lunar New Year Celebration, 2 – 3

Tuesday, Feb. 11: TEENS- Calling all Chocolate Lovers, from 6:30 to 7:30.

Wednesday, Feb. 12: Taylor Swift Valentine’s Day Party, 4 from 5.

Thursday, Feb. 13: WAGS For Hope, Read to a Dog at 6.

Saturday, Feb. 15: Northern Lights Chalk Art for Kids! from 2 to 3.

Monday, Feb. 18: The Magic Tree House Party, 2-3

Tuesday, Feb. 11: TEENS- Cinnamon Cutouts – The Spice of Life, from 6:30 to 7:30.

Wednesday, Feb. 19: Mind Care & Games for Seniors, People Experiencing Memory Loss and their Caregivers, at 11.

Thursday, Feb. 20: Maryland Writer’s Association Teen Writer Club, from 5:30 to 7.

Saturday, Feb. 22: Handmade Greeting Cards for Beginners, from 2 to 3.

Tuesday, Feb. 25: Create a Birdseed Wreath, from 6:30 to 7:30.

Thurmont Regional Library Mondays, Baby Storytime at 10:30.

Tuesdays, Preschool Storytime at 10:30.

Tuesdays, Let’s Get Ready for Kindergarten at 11:15.

Tuesdays, Night Owls at 6.

Thurmont’s ACACIA Lodge #155 scholarships

Since 1995, Thurmont Masons have awarded Scholarships worth over \$100,000.00 to area students! Scholarships are available to all graduating high school level seniors from a Maryland State accredited public, private, and/or home-school program who reside within the Catoctin High School district boundaries as per the Frederick County Public School district map.

The “Mary and Robert Remsberg Memorial Scholarship” is worth up to \$6,000! (Scholarship funds will be distributed at \$1,500 per year, for up to four years of continued education with passing grades from an accredited college or university.)

The “Bernhard Cohen Memorial Scholarship” is a one-time award worth \$3,000!

The “Acacia Lodge #155 Master Mason Scholarship” is a one-time award worth \$3,000!

Applications will be judged upon the following criteria: Participation and leadership roles in community and/or school activities. Content of a personal resume. Academic record and/or special achievements. Need for financial assistance. Evaluation by school official and/or mentor. Organization, appearance, and completeness of the application.

Scholarship application forms are available at the Catoctin High School Guidance Office and the Thurmont Public Library.

Interested students must complete an application and return it to the location where it was obtained, on or before the April 30th deadline.

Wednesdays, Toddler Storytime at 10:30.

Thursdays, Musical Storytime at 10:30.

Thursdays, Elementary Explorers at 4.

Saturdays, Family Storytime at 11.

Saturday, Feb. 1: First Saturday STEM Lab Drop-in at 2.

Sunday, Feb. 2: Donate a Life Maryland: A Community Conversation at 2.

Monday, Feb. 3: Teen Healthy Relationships and Dating Violence Prevention with Hearty House at 4.

Tuesday, Feb. 4, 11, 18, 25: Open Chess Play at 2:30.

Thursday, Feb. 6 – Tuesday, Feb. 11 – Memory Lab by Appointment.

Monday, Feb. 10: Teen Valentine

Gnome Making at 4.

Wednesday, Feb. 12: A Conversation on International Affairs with Shaun Donnelly at 7.

Monday, Feb. 17: Lion King Sing Along at 2.

Monday, Feb. 17: Teen Frame Zentangles at 6.

Wednesday, Feb. 19: Navigating the Real Estate Market at 6.

Thursday, Feb. 20: Hearty House 101 for Adults, at 2 & 6.

Monday, Feb. 24: Teen Scrabble Keychains, at 6.

Wednesday, Feb. 26: Tween Hour! Record Painting (ages 9-13) at 3:30.

Thursday, Feb. 27: Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) from noon to 5.

Fairfield School Board focuses on safety

School safety was at the forefront of the Fairfield Area School Board’s January meeting.

District Superintendent Thomas Haupt presented to the board a new policy that focuses

on school security personnel. The district’s school security officer is a contracted employee from G-Force Security Solutions. The officer does not have arresting power so any charges related to an

incident need to be filed by uniformed police officers.

Pennsylvania law, beginning with the 2024-25 school year, states that all districts must have at least one armed security person on duty during the school day.

The proposed policy states that the school safety officer must complete appropriate training within one year of employment. They must also undergo a law enforcement agency background investigation.

The officer must also report annually on the district’s current safety and security practices, and identify strategies to improve school safety and security. This

report, the proposed policy states, will be conducted at an executive session of the board. Security is allowed to be discussed in a closed executive session per Pennsylvania law.

The officer is responsible for school safety support services, enhanced campus supervision, assistance with disruptive students, monitoring visitors on campus, coordination with law enforcement officials, and security functions which improve and maintain school safety.

Some districts hire sworn law enforcement officers in lieu of school security officers. Haupt said that if Fairfield would ever go that route, they would need to change the policy.

Maintaining positive relationships with neighboring law enforcement departments is important, Haupt said. Another proposed policy outlines the district’s responsibilities to those agencies.

The proposed policy states that Fairfield Area School District will establish a committee tasked with forming a memorandum of understanding with local law enforcement agencies. The district will also ask the agency to review the district’s annual incident report prior to filing it with the Pennsylvania Department of Education. The district will also discuss crime prevention tactics with the local agency, the policy states.

The policy also states the district will report any incidents committed on school property or during a school-sponsored activity to law enforcement officials.

Another policy presented during the meeting dictates that the district will hold emergency preparedness drills, fire drills, school security drills, and bus evacuation drills. It also mandates that the district review its emergency preparedness plan annually.

The board will formally adopt the policies at a future meeting.

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LIBRARY & SCHOOL NEWS

The path ahead

Janie Monier
Frederick County School Board

Continued from last month

Governance and Accountability: This pillar focuses on establishing clear governance structures and accountability measures to ensure that educational reforms are effectively implemented and that schools are held accountable for student outcomes. FCPS publishes a report in June and December of each school year to update the Accountability and Implementation Board under Pillar 5 of Blueprint on our progress in fulfilling our obligations under Blueprint. The most recent report published in June 2024 can be found on this webpage: <https://www.fcps.org/blueprint/blueprint-milestone>.

The Blueprint is set to inject \$16.6 billion more in state funding for education from 2024 through 2029, with expectations of additional funding beyond that period. The mandates under Blueprint are not fully funded by the state and it is expected that the local education agencies and counties

will add to the funding of the mandates, in addition to budgeting for what the mandates do not cover and issues of local concern, such as our sports, arts, humanities programs and our school infrastructure and staffing. Areas of the Blueprint that are funded by the state versus county is determined by a formula that does not account for the explosive growth in our county since 2020, the new schools we need to build to accommodate that growth, and the aging infrastructure which needs renovation or replacement. All of which comes on the heels of increased inflation. This means that a high school built before 2020 would cost approximately \$80 million. Now, that same high school costs \$120 million. And those are just the numbers to build the school and does not include staffing the school and transporting students to and from school.

Lastly, we come to the role and scope of the FCPS Board of Education. Board members collaborate to create policy within the limits of state and federal law, approve budgets, oversee the roll out of the master plan, give final approval on matters and materials

related to the curriculum, staff appointments, purchases related to equipment, land acquisition, and the cost of school renovation, maintenance, and construction.

One of the laws that has a large impact on guiding policy and resources in every school district is the IDEA Act, previously known as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, enacted in 1975 under Gerald Ford. The legislation requires local education agencies to provide a free and appropriate education to all children tailored to their needs. Families typically interact with this through their child's Individual Educational Program (IEP) which provides instructions for the educator and staff on the goals and best practices for educating the individual student. Programs at FCPS that fall under special education include the Expressions program, SUCCESS, and the Rock Creek School. If a public school system can no longer meet the needs of the student through an IEP, then the system will pay for private placement of the student. This law covers the child with learning disabilities and the child who may require a wheelchair or feeding assistance. Our school nurses, as provided through the Department

of Health, assess and assist with medical needs while the Special Education Instructors (SEI) and Instructional Assistants (SEIA) work with our special education students to ensure their IEP goals are met and are socializing as is appropriate with the general education student population. The federal funding promise under the IDEA Act was to provide 40% of a pupil's special education funding. That number is closer to 13% and has never been fully funded by the federal government. The IDEA Act falls under the purview of the U.S. Department of Education along with Pell grants, FAFSA, Title 1 grants, and 504 Plans.

Curriculum is under the oversight of state and local education agencies (LEAs). An example of curriculum as guided by the state are the Science of Reading, evidence-based teaching methods which are being implemented in all our elementary schools. Additionally, under a new policy set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education, all 3rd graders will need to be reading on grade-level before they can advance under the permission of their parent. They can only advance if the parent agrees to reading interventions while they are in 4th grade.

As promised, I will continue to provide the information that is within my discretion to do so and to honestly address the challenges we are facing in the coming years. Each article will dive deeper into the issues summarized above. This will include literacy rates, test scores and standardized testing, attracting and retaining the educators and staff our students need, how our charter schools fit into the overall academic offerings and budget, the RVP program, and more, as our capital and operations budget and each pillar of Blueprint will impact, either directly or indirectly, how we meet these goals.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to serve our families, schools, and community in this capacity. I am committed to fostering an environment of transparency and collaboration. As we navigate the complexities of our educational landscape, I am confident that together, we can create a brighter future for all our students. Thank you for your trust and support, and your unwavering belief in the power of education. I look forward to your continued engagement, until the next article, Janie Monier, Member-Elect of the Board of Education.

PowerSchool data breach impacting FCPS

The following is a communication shared with the FCPS community this afternoon regarding a data breach that affected FCPS as part of a larger incident involving PowerSchool:

Dear Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Community

We are writing to inform you of a data breach that affected FCPS as part of a larger incident involving PowerSchool, a Student Information System (SIS) used by schools nationwide. The breach occurred

between December 19 and 28, when a threat actor gained unauthorized access to data from districts across the country, including FCPS, using stolen credentials. FCPS became aware of the breach on January 7 and was notified by PowerSchool that FCPS was affected on January 8.

FCPS began a multi-year transition to a new SIS last school year as our previous SIS, used for over 10 years, is being phased out. During this migration, some data was transferred to the PowerSchool

platform, and some of this data was affected by the breach.

Here's what we know so far:
Data Affected: The breach impacted two FCPS data tables in the new SIS, including records of both teachers and students. We are actively working with PowerSchool to determine exactly what data was impacted and will share additional information in a follow-up communication.

Mitigation Steps: PowerSchool has confirmed that the breached data file has been deleted and is no longer accessible. They have also

notified the FBI and hired a cybersecurity firm, CrowdStrike, to assist in addressing the breach. CrowdStrike has reported that at this time no data from the breach has been found on the dark web, and they continue to monitor this space.

While this breach has affected many districts across the country and the full scope of the breach is still being investigated, we want to assure you that FCPS stopped collecting social security numbers for students more than 10 years ago so this sensitive data was not exposed.

While PowerSchool is responsible for this incident and its impact, our team acted swiftly once we were notified and is continuing to investigate. FCPS understands the importance of your trust and is diligently committed to protecting our student and staff data.

PowerSchool has informed FCPS that they will provide additional information, including contact information, that community members can use to dialogue directly with the company. We will share that information with you once it is available.

Thank you for your understanding.

FCPS recommended FY-26 operating budget

FCPS Superintendent Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson shared her recommended FY-26 operating budget intended to build on the successes of recent years while providing students with the resources they need.

Dr. Dyson's recommended budget is based on the feedback received at community and employee listening sessions held throughout the fall. The budget focuses on maintaining programs and services for students, including:

Preserving current class size formulas for staffing.

Retaining the technology replacement and refurbishment cycle for technology students use.

Ensuring access of up to 4 dual enrollment courses per year in grades 11 and 12 at no cost to students and families.

Continuing to provide preschool to all 3 and 4 year old students who are income eligible.

Advancing our work for high quality instructional materials with the implementation of comprehensive math and literacy plans grounded in the Science of Reading.

Supporting our ongoing efforts to ensure services and supports for students with disabilities.

Maintaining our Remote Virtual Program for grades 6, 7, and 8 with entrance opportunities for students in grades 4 and 5.

On average, 2% for the salary resource pool pending negotiation.

"The budget I am presenting reflects both realism and hope," Dyson said. "It prioritizes what matters most: keeping our students safe, engaged, and sup-

ported, while ensuring our staff have the tools they need to thrive. It's a budget shaped by your voices—by the dreams, concerns, and questions we've heard from parents, staff, students, and community members."

The release of the superintendent's recommended operating budget request is one of several key steps in the budget process. The full budget calendar is posted online at www.fcps.org/about/fy2026-budget.

ARTS

Majestic presents Blues poet Nat Myers

A poet and guitar picker with a staggering and true voice, Korean American blues troubadour, Nat Myers will make his Gettysburg debut live on stage Thursday, February 6 at the Majestic Theater. Myers comes to Gettysburg after a string of successful concerts in Europe.

Majestic Theater Executive Director Brett Messenger first heard Nat Myers at New Jersey's storied Stone Pony and has been a fan ever since. "Myers is a truly uncommon artist. He has a sound all his own and lends his incredible, and very human voice, to songs that speak to issues of today," said Messenger. "His music is soulful, it is relatable, it is important. I am thrilled to present this artist in Gettysburg at this exciting moment in his skyrocketing career."

Nat Myers' folksy blues and remarkable pickin' are authentic, timeless and enduring. The Kenton County, Kentucky native's delivery harkens to traditional blues giants, but his unique blend of modern roots and Americana continues to make crowds drop their jaws. A poet for the mod-

ern era, Myers' debut album *Yellow Peril* is filled with blues about traveling the rails, running from danger, and running toward something harder to define. It reflects Myers' experience as a Korean American and reflects him coming into harmony with his roots. Described by NPR as "a swagger that leaps out of the speakers," the songs depict his restlessness and wanderlust in fleet riffs, intricate rhythms, and quick tempos to weave a complex tale about life in post-pandemic America.

South Central Pennsylvania native, Virginia Masland will perform an opening set for Myers of her original music as well as some selectively reworked covers ranging from traditional folk to classic country.

The Other Mozart Kicks Off Majestic's Intimate Live Theatre Series

Experience *The Other Mozart*, an intimate, award-winning play telling the true, forgotten story of Mozart's sister Nannerl February 13-15. Each show includes an opportunity to purchase a pre-

show meal served in the Majestic's Patron's Lounge.

The Other Mozart is a work of innovative theatre that sparked an international conversation about women in music. Described by *The New York Times* as "strikingly beautiful," and the *Los Angeles Times* as "hauntingly beautiful," critics and audiences across the globe agree about this compelling work. The one-woman work of theatre is written and performed by Sylvia Milo and tells the forgotten story of Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart's genius older sister. A prodigy, keyboard virtuoso and composer who performed throughout Europe with her brother to equal acclaim, her story and work are lost to history, simply because she was a woman.

"*The Other Mozart* is an invigorating and moving piece of music-theatre that has had a profound impact on audiences around the world. Having the artist who created this theatrical phenomenon here in Gettysburg to perform in such an intimate venue is truly a special opportunity," stated the Majestic The-



Nat Myers

ater's Executive Director, Brett Messenger, who presented this work to great acclaim in his previous theatre and presented the world-premiere of their subsequent work.

The performance will be presented in the Majestic's 136-seat flexible theater, familiar to many patrons as

one of the facility's two cinemas.

Tickets for these shows are available now at the Majestic Theater Box Office, 25 Carlisle St., Gettysburg, by calling 717-337-8200 or online at www.gettysburgmajestic.org. The show is made possible by the Majestic Theater Centennial Endowment.

Jammin' for the ARTS! Music Festival



Musicians from the Bluegrass Hootenanny jam performing at the 2024 Jammin' for the ARTS! festival.

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The Arts Alliance of Greater Waynesboro's Destination ARTS! presents its third annual "Jammin' for the ARTS! Keep the Arts Alive in Waynesboro" event on Sunday, Feb. 23 from 2 to 6 at Trigger's Table & Taproom, located at 118 Walnut Street, Waynesboro.

This music and arts event is a four-hour festival of non-stop and overlapping music, presented simultaneously on two stages featuring six local bands: BBD Trio, Bluegrass Hootenanny, Tresa Day & Joel Newman, G@g, Kin Selection, and West Branch 3.

The featured bands showcase a wide variety of musical styles including jazz, bluegrass, folk, country, blues, and much more.

The festival will also have beer from Hidden Key in Greencastle, food, beverages, artist demonstrations, raffles, and artwork for sale.

Waynesboro Construction is the lead sponsor for the festival. The event is a fundraiser and all proceeds from admissions benefit the nonprofit Arts Alliance of Greater Waynesboro, which has

been revitalizing and bringing the community together through the arts since 2012.

Admission to Jammin' for the

ARTS! is \$25 in advance through February 18 and \$35 beginning February 19. Seating is limited, so it is advised to purchase tickets early. Tickets are available online at www.artsalliancegw.org or at the door on the day of the event.

The GreenSpring Foundations "A Musical Valentine"



The 2025 GreenSpring Spring concert series showcases internationally renowned soloists and award-winning young musicians who represent the future of music. All concerts are free to the public, with a free-will offering collected to support the GreenSpring Foundation's music education programs and performances.

In the spirit of Valentine's Day, join us for an enchanting performance by the Davin-Levin Duo, featuring classical guitarist Colin Davin and Emily Levin, principal harpist of the Dallas Symphony, February 15 at St. Paul's Evangelical Lutheran Church, Utica, 10621 Old Frederick Road, Thurmont.

Their romantic melodies promise to sweep listeners off

their feet and create a memorable experience. A "clearly felicitous combination of two plucked string instruments" (Cleveland Classical), the Davin-Levin Duo is comprised of Emily Levin, Principal Harp of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Colin Davin, Associate Professor of Guitar and Director of Guitar Studio at Shenandoah Conservatory. Since their first performance in 2015, the Davin-Levin Duo has revolutionized the genre, expanding the repertoire through commissions and arrangements and establishing their instrument combination as a dynamic chamber music experience.

For more information about GreenSpring Spring concert series visit greenspringmusic.org.

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MOUNT ARTS

Spring faculty showcase

Emelie Beckman
MSMU Class of 2026

On January 15th at 7 pm, the Mount's Fine Arts Department put on the first campus performance of the spring semester, as well as of 2025. The performance, a faculty recital, consisted of various numbers on the bass and violin accompanied by the piano. Mount Professors, Ravita, Tung, and Wickelgren treated the community to numbers by various composers, including Vivaldi, Bach, Saint-Saëns, Beethoven, and Adler.

Entering Horning Theatre, the stage was fully lit and decorated with only a green background. I sat in the first row accompanying the crowd of a dozen students and faculty members. The crowd was small, but everyone seemed at peak alertness; steadily awaiting the performance they were about to witness. Many were musically interested, and some were students of music themselves. Once the music started, it made up for the quiet, stale, and empty environment by suddenly filling the room to the brim with various beautiful tones and melodies.

Doctor Philip Ravita

First to take the stage during the recital was the Mount's instructor of the bass and electric guitar, Doctor Philip Ravita. Ravita, who is well-known throughout the Mid-Atlantic area, is a great performer of the acoustic and electric bass and he has played in many

jazz and classical performances. Additionally, he leads his own ensemble called "Ravita Jazz" and regularly hosts a weekly radio program called "Jazz on the Record," which airs at 8 pm on WMTB 89.9 FM.

Besides these impressive achievements, Dr. Ravita has also been the President/Principal Bassist for many different orchestras, including the Baltimore Philharmonia Orchestra and the Trinity Chamber Orchestra of Washington, D.C. He also takes pride in being a part of the Musician's Union of New York City, Washington D.C. and Baltimore.

Ravita has played in many big clubs and concert halls. Many of said clubs and concert halls are as follows: Mr. Henry's, Takoma Station and Twins Jazz in D.C, An die Musik Live, Baltimore Museum of Art, Buddy's Jazz Club, The Haven and The Hippodrome in Baltimore, the Count Basie Theatre in New Jersey and Cornelia Street Café in NYC. He has also played multiple festivals like Artscape, the Calvin Jones Big Band Festival, the Frederick Jazz Festival, the Havre de Grace Jazz & Blues Festival, the Mid-Atlantic Jazz Festival and the Art in the Park Jazz Festival.

If one would be unable to see Dr. Ravita perform live, he can also be heard on various recordings; many of which are with the Baltimore Philharmonia Orchestra from 1999-2013. His many achievements have also earned him numerous awards.

Dr. Ravita began as an instructor at the Mount in 2020 and due to the nature of the time during the COVID-19 pandemic, he taught online and wasn't able to see the campus in person until a year later. He also instructs at other campuses including the University of Maryland Eastern Shore, Carroll County Community College, Prince George's Community College and College of Southern Maryland. However, he really appreciates teaching at the Mount because of its small, as well as safe, environment which is very student and faculty oriented.

When asked about when his interest in music started Dr. Ravita said, "I was always interested in music, you know from little up. And when I had the opportunity, I went to college and majored in music and got my Doctorate." After finding his talent in music at an early age, he went to graduate from both Boston University and University of Maryland College Park.

At the recital, Dr. Ravita played three different pieces on the bass, accompanied by Professor Wickelgren on the piano. The pieces varied between slow and somber tunes to quicker and more upbeat ones.

Professor James Tung

Second out was Professor James Tung, the Mount's violin professor and Director for the Mount's Wind Ensemble (which will hold multiple performances this upcoming semes-

ter). Before the Mount, Tung worked as a soloist and Concertmaster with the Frederick Symphony Orchestra and also performed at Frederick Community College and Shippensburg University. He is currently the Assistant Concertmaster of the York Symphony and a Chamber Musician at both McDaniel College and Gettysburg College. Tung also plays alongside the Annapolis Symphony, Gettysburg Chamber Orchestra and Maryland Symphony.

Besides teaching at the Mount, Tung also teaches privately and many of his students have, within the past 10 years, won or been the runner-up for the Frederick Regional Youth Orchestra Concerto Competition.

Tung tells me that he has played the violin for as long as he can remember. He says with a smile that he was told he chose the violin at the age of five, but he has no recollection of it. He enjoyed it greatly, mostly as a hobby until he decided at the age of 14 to pursue it professionally. His career started with his acceptance (and later graduation) from the Eastern School of Music and Art in New York City. Tung also mentioned that he actually quit the violin for a few years in early adulthood, only to pick it back up again six years later.

During the Recital, Professor Tung performed amongst others with two very contrasting pieces, a classical number from the 1700's and a modern piece from 1988, showcasing the great diversity and evolution of the violin. When pre-

paring for the recital, Tung tells me that he brainstormed alongside Professor Wickelgren about what pieces to perform. He wanted diversity in his showcase and after the performance he said, "I think I accomplished that [diversity] with a very modern work, as you probably observed, which was fast and furious and then the very old work that was very grand and intimate."

However, even though not noticeable during the performance, Tung said that the recital came as a bit of a shock for him since he was told two weeks in advance that he would fill in for another professor. Even though he looked for diversity in his performance, due to the lack of rehearsal time he also had to pick pieces that were somewhat familiar to him. "To be honest, it was a little shock for me. I was asked to fill in like two weeks ago, so you know I didn't have that much time to prepare, and these [pieces] happened to be in my fingers already."

Upcoming events on campus

For the month of February, the Mount's Fine Arts Department will hold a Faux Fat Tuesday on the 25th of February between 5 and 8 pm. The performance will include efforts from the Mounts Lab Band, Mount Big Band, Student soloist and Milton J.

To read other articles by Emelie Beckman, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



at the Jennifer and David LeVan Performing Arts Center

On stage this month

Nat Myers: Blues Poet
Thurs., February 6
7:30 p.m.

Myers defies stereotypes and seamlessly melds influences into his music. Drawing inspiration from hardcore, hip-hop, poetry and the blues, he creates a unique sonic experience that transcends traditional boundaries. His storytelling lyrics transport listeners, portraying a way of life that still exists on the fringes.



The Other Mozart
February 13 - 15

The Other Mozart is an award winning play telling the true, forgotten story of Nannerli Mozart, the sister of Amadeus - a prodigy, virtuoso and composer who performed with her brother throughout Europe to equal acclaim, but her work and her story faded away, lost to history. A powerful, one-woman work of music theater, created, written and performed by Sylvia Milo.




The New Orleans Songbook
Wed., February 26
7:30 p.m.

We are proud to bring the soul of New Orleans and spirit of Mardi Gras to this amazing evening celebrating the composers and inspired songs of the historic epicenter of jazz. With world class musicians and infectious energy you'll be immersed in the spirit of New Orleans!




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CATOCTIN SPORTS

Catoctin's athletes are making history!

Richelle Zheng
CHS Class of 2025

From crazy winter storms to games getting postponed, this winter season has been hectic! Although we enjoy the two-hour delays, this winter season has also been great for Catoctin's It's Academic, unified bocce, indoor track and field, and girls' basketball teams, as they have brought home numerous wins already!

It's Academic

The Frederick County Academic Tournament had its opening night on January 10. During the first few rounds of the tournament, Catoctin's Buzzer Team hung even with Middletown High School and Tuscarora High School's teams until the last round. The final score for the match was Catoctin with 21 points, Middletown with eight points, and Tuscarora with three points. This puts Catoctin in second place in the county, two points behind Walkersville High School.

On January 13, Catoctin's It's Academic team took on Tuscarora High School and Oakdale High School. The match started off a bit rocky, with Catoctin down by five points. However, Sam Smith turned the game around in the fourth round, allowing the team to win against Tuscarora and Oakdale's academic teams with a final score of 20-6-15.

Catoctin came home with yet another victory on January 17 against Governor Thomas Johnson High School and Urbana High School. The team won with a score of 16, and the final score was 5-16-9. This win moves Catoctin up as the sole possessor of the first-place spot in the county!

Unified Bocce

On January 8, Catoctin's unified bocce team challenged the Linganore High School Lancers with two teams: four groups of four players on each end of the court. Each team played a total of three games.

On the first court, players Josh Ramos, Josh Deyton, Faly Zimmerman, and Chad Zimmerman were stationed at one end of the court. Grouped on the other end of court one were players CJ Endlich, Tyler McCallion, Lucas Phelan, and Jonas Clausen. This makes up team one, who started the game off strong by rolling a skillful casino. The Cougars held off the Lancers with their incredible defense, resulting in the first game ending with the Cougars with four points and the Lancers with three. Then, as the team continued to roll strategically, they also claimed the second game, 5-1. The third game was a quick one as the Cougars remained on their toes, rolling another casino, and took the win 7-0! Team one showed exceptional skill with their high rollers consisting of: Chad Zimmerman with four points, Josh Ramos with three points, Josh Deyton with three points, Faly Zimmerman with two points, Jonas Clausen with two points, Tyler McCallion with two points, and CJ Endlich with one point.

On the second court, stationed on one end, were Jayden Myers, James Grossnickle, Lucas Bradley, and Shay Johnson. Meanwhile, Ashton Merritt, Maria Perella, Darrin Frey, and Vinny Perella were stationed on the other end of the court. The team started off with a rough start to their first game, resulting in a loss. Still, the team did not let this loss tear up their entire game as they came together to make a new strategic plan for the



Unified bocce team are ready to play!

second game. During the second round, Bradley, Myers, Johnson, and Grossnickle rolled three casinos, holding the Lancers to only one point! For the third game, the Cougars left the Lancers with one point once again! The final scores were 10-1 for the second game and 6-1 for the third. This team's determination paved the way for their success! The high rollers for this team were Jayden Myers with three points, James Grossnickle with three points, Lucas Bradley with three points, Shay Johnson with three points, Maria Perella with two points, and Jayden Worthington with two points.

Indoor Track and Field

The boy's indoor track and field team attended the Warrior Invitational on January 11, held at Hagerstown Community College. Highlights from this meet included senior Shaymus Stull, who ran a lifetime personal record in the men's varsity 55-meter dash category with a time of 6.91 seconds! Junior Mason Ferrel also hit a new personal record in the 300-meter varsity event with a time of 39.61 seconds. Freshman Noah Riling continues to move up the charts as he improves and hits new personal records in the half-mile run and mile run. Furthermore, he is becoming one of the fastest freshmen in Catoctin history! Over on the field, senior Deacon Melvaine placed first in the shot put event by throwing an incredible distance of 14.03 meters!

On the girl's team, freshman Cora Durschmidt's pole vaulting skills are truly unbelievable! On December 20,

at the Hagerstown Community College Dwight Scott Invitational, she competed in the pole vault event. She vaulted 7'6", taking the spot in Catoctin High School's pole vault record as the high record holder! Recently, on January 18, Durschmidt outdid herself at the Frederick County Championship Meet by vaulting a new personal record of 8'2"! Breaking Catoctin's record high once again and placing the bar even higher in Catoctin's history books! Catoctin High School is ecstatic to see what else these amazing freshmen and their talents hold!

Lady Cougars Basketball

The Lady Cougars had a hard-fought match with private school Jackson Reed on December 27. The Cougars started off the game with a strong defense, allowing them to take the lead 9-3 in the first quarter. In the second quarter, Jackson Reed increased the game's intensity by putting great pressure on the Cougars. Jackson Reed gave themselves a slight lead 20-18 at halftime. The Cougars fought hard in the third quarter to put them back in the lead 27-26. Lastly, the lead was inconsistent in the final quarter, with both teams going head to head. But senior Kayden Glotfelty scored six free throws in the last few moments of the game, allowing the Cougars to pull through with a win 50-43! Jackson Reed definitely put up a fight during this game, but the Cougars' determination and rock-solid defense allowed them to win. Highlights from this game included Glotfelty, who led the team with 22

points, and junior Kelsey Troxell, who scored 13 points and nine rebounds. Additionally, junior Brooke Williams chimed in with ten points.

The Lady Cougars had an incredible win on January 10 against Boonsboro High School 57-27! In the first quarter of the game, two of the starters made two fouls early in the game, which sent them to the bench. Still, the girls were able to come back from their foul troubles with Glotfelty's help from shooting many great shots, putting the Cougars in the lead 20-9 at the end of the first quarter. The Cougars' offense continued to be on fire in the second quarter, making great plays and fast breaks and scoring 19 points. Moreover, Glotfelty continued making buckets, putting the Cougars further in the lead at halftime 39-18. The Cougars played shut-down defense in the third and fourth quarters and came out with even more energy than the first half, limiting the Boonsboro Warriors to only six points in the third quarter and three in the fourth quarter, securing the win! Leading the team was Glotfelty, with a career-high 27 points. 10-12 were shot, and 7-9 were shot from the three-point arch! Additionally, Troxell chipped in with 12 points and six rebounds, and Williams with seven rebounds and five assists. Freshman Olivia Hoyt and sophomore Maddie Myers came into clutch with five rebounds each. The Lady Cougars continue to make Catoctin proud each season!

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MOUNT SPORTS

Women's hoops picks up steam to start conference play

Steve Morano
MSMU Class of 2024

At the end of the 2024 Metro Atlantic Athletic Conference playoffs, the Mount St. Mary's women's basketball team suffered a crushing 80-57 loss to Siena in Atlantic City to end their campaign. And at the start of the 2024-25 season, the team got off to a tough start, going 2-6 against their non-conference opponents. But even after their opening day 68-51 loss to South Florida and their 87-52 loss to No. 7 Maryland, the team has found themselves in a good bit of form heading into conference play. With a three-game win streak against the likes of Sacred Heart, Rider, and an overtime win against Quinnipiac, head coach Antoine White and his team have struck a performance vein that has caused them to rise up to sixth place in the conference standings.

To start their MAAC campaign, the team suffered a tough 61-50 overtime loss to Marist in Emmitsburg on December 19. A 14-point game by Madison Ruff and a 10-point and eight rebound performances by Anna LeMaster was thwarted by the fast play of the Red Foxes in the second half. The team suffered another setback in their conference play as they traveled to Fairfield on December 21, eventually losing 76-61. With a 0-2 start to their conference schedule, the team traveled to Baltimore to face Morgan State, losing once again by a close scoreline of 72-68 on December 30.

With the team due to travel on their longest away trip of the year to Niagara, New York on January 4 to face off against the Purple Eagles, a quick win was due to help get their season back on track, and the team delivered. For the first three quarters, the Mount kept things close, accruing a 10-point lead against Niagara heading into the third intermission. But the Mountaineers finally made the switch to a much more aggressive style of offensive play, outscoring their opponents 28-17 in the final quarter and winning 89-68. In her ninth start of the year, Jo Raffo scored her then season high 25-points followed by nine rebounds in her 33 minutes on the court. Jaedyn Jamison also grabbed nine boards followed by Lemaster and Ruff grabbing a further nine rebounds each to give the team 50 rebounds on the night.

Their next meeting in the New Year was with Manhattan and a trip back home to Emmitsburg on January 9. With a four-point advantage heading into the locker room at halftime, the team felt confident about getting rid of their recent losing skid, but a dominant 23-5 third quarter gave the Jaspers a commanding lead against the Mountaineers, eventually ending the game 75-47. A quiet but energetic team bus ride

to Sacred Heart a day later led to an intense build up in the showdown against the team's former Northeast Conference rivals on January 11.

In a pre-game team meeting, Coach White and the rest of his coaching staff emphasized an aggressive style of basketball that at its core, was very technical. Key to this strategy was fast-paced ball movement, touches in the paint under the basket, offensive rebounds, and the winning of contested balls in open court. Another way of overwhelming the Pioneers lay in a high defensive press where a double-coverage defense on the ball handler could lead to more turnovers over the course of the game.

With an emphasis on a system that included overwhelming pressing, the Mountaineers were able to score 22 points off of turnovers in a 75-51 route of the Pioneers. Raffo notched another 20+ point game, putting 22 points past Sacred Heart while going 8-9 from the field and 6-7 from beyond the 3-point line all the while completing three steals. Gabrielle Kennerly scored 15 points while providing four assists her teammates. Giana Hoddinott completed a further three steals and provided six assists from inside the paint. And LeMaster scored 13 points while grabbing six rebounds, with five of them coming in transition heading down the court.

A happy bus ride home was a welcome reprieve to a 72-hour period of 80 minutes of basketball, travel up Route 76, and the constant pressure and strains of practicing and living as Division 1 athletes. With the bus pulling back into the ARCC at 7:30 p.m., the clock began ticking on the rest

and recovery the team would need to face their next opponents in Rider at home on January 16. And to start the game, the team picked up right where they had left off from at Sacred Heart, putting 39 points past the Broncos in the first half to their 31. With clutch shots from the likes of Raffo and Rosa Revueltas Pareja, the team looked poised to continue the offensive form into the second half. But an even 12-12 contest in the third quarter led to a tight runoff for the fourth quarter. And even though the Mount was outscored in the fourth 17-15, the team held on for a close 66-60 win for their second in a row.

The team traveled back to New England for their matchup against Quinnipiac on January 18 with little more than a day's rest from their last physical game of basketball. The Bobcats took a two-point lead into the first intermission as they led 16-14 at the end of the first quarter. A 21-point quarter for the Mount followed in the second as the combination between LeMaster and Raffo flowed to take a 35-29 lead into halftime. Quinnipiac followed up with great offense in the third quarter, scoring 22 points compared to the Mount's nine points in the third. Another shootout ensued as the Mount outscored the Bobcats in the fourth quarter by a scoreline of 16-9, forcing overtime in Hamden. A LeMaster three-pointer came within the first minute of extra-time followed by a layup from Kennerly and a floater from Raffo to start to distance the score. Two made free-throws from LeMaster in the final seconds of overtime to round out a 69-64 victory for the Mountaineers and a third win in a row.

From the beginning of this sea-



Gabrielle Kennerly is one of many top performers on the team this year.

son up until this point, the team has carried an underdog mentality that has been vital to the victories that they have earned across the season. They may not matchup physically with other teams, but they certainly have the talent to grind out wins. One only has to look to their most recent victory against second place Quinnipiac to see. But an overarching message from the coaching staff

seems to flow throughout the team: be grateful for the opportunity that you get to play the game you love at the level that they are at. That mentality is often much greater than any physical or technical advantage that another team could bring to the table.

To read past Mount Sports articles, visit the Author's section of Emmitsburg.net.

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COMPLEMENTARY CORNER

Know your audience

Jefferson Breland

Our brains are working all the time, at least for most of us. Even when we sleep, our brains keep chugging along. The thought that our brains are constantly working, voluntarily or involuntarily, exhausts me.

This constant brain activity means that our bodies are forever generating electrical signals which are then converted into chemical signals. For the sake of simplicity, time, space and my sanity, I am going to lump all of the components and actions (and there are many) of this process into a single word- neurochemistry.

This neurochemistry travels through the body via nerves and blood to reach every nook and cranny of our body. Neurochemistry controls our heartbeat, blood pressure, respiration, muscle function, our thoughts, our memory, how we learn, and what we feel. It controls our digestion, as well as our feelings of hunger and thirst.

Neurochemistry affects our sleep, how we heal, and how we age. It controls our freeze, fight, flight responses, hormone regulation, what we hear, see, feel, touch, and taste.

It is safe to say that neurochemistry is just a wee bit important since it is involved in every mental and physical process of our body.

You might say, "This is all well and good, of what use is this information, and what is this audience thing in the title?"

As I have written before, it is important to pay attention to how our bodies respond to different emotions. Do we experience shallow or rapid breathing? Do we clench our jaw or grind our teeth? Do we raise our shoulders? Do we experience headaches or stomachaches? Do we tighten our muscles in different parts of our body?

Each of our thoughts and the accompanying emotions produce a neurochemical response that moves through the body. These responses to our environment are based on our beliefs. Our beliefs determine how we feel about every moment of every day.

For example, last month's Complementary Corner was about the Chinese Lunar New Year which is associated with the Chinese astrological sign of the Snake.

This sentence alone is loaded with ideas or beliefs which might generate some thoughts and feelings. Is the article is useful or not? What is a lunar new year and why should I care? What do the Chinese know about anything? Did I mention SNAKES?

Each of these thoughts is based on our relationship to each topic. Our beliefs determine our sense of right and wrong, what's stupid or intelligent, frivolous or practical, rational or irrational, safe or dangerous, funny, not funny.

You may have thoughts about my choice of subject, my writing style, my way of thinking, your way of

thinking, my grammar, my sense of humor.

Each of these thoughts will produce a neurochemistry. If you enjoy my writing, there will be one version of the neurochemistry. If you don't enjoy my writing it will produce a different version of neurochemistry. Our neurochemistry is directly related to our emotional association with what we experience.

When we experience an emotional situation, our neurochemistry will contain

hormones such as adrenaline, noradrenaline, cortisol, epinephrine, dopamine, serotonin, oxytocin, dopamine, testosterone, estradiol, and a few others I can't pronounce.

The bigger the emotion, the more hormones in our neurochemistry.

Even if the emotional situation is acute, big and sudden, yet brief, our bodies are usually able to metabolize the hormones and they don't have a lasting effect.

Sometimes we are not able to metabolize the hormones and this may result in a variety of symptoms from digestive issues, fatigue, heart issues, and extended emotional states such as excessive fear, worry, heightened awareness, sadness, or hopelessness.

When we experience chronic emotional situations, i.e. more subtle, yet extended or repeated situations, we may also not be able to metabolize the continuous trickle of barely perceptible releases of emotionally charged neurochemistry in our bodies. Our bodies can adapt to this steady stream of neurochemistry.

We may not even notice the effects on our body's systems until we experience larger, seemingly unrelated symptoms such as autoimmune conditions, for example.

Who is the audience I mentioned earlier? We are.

Now that we have a better understanding of how our thoughts produce messages in the form of neurochemistry that reach every living single cell in our body, it is time to give you some perspective.

This is where the size of the audience comes in. Those of you who fear speaking in front of crowds might want to sit down.

There are approximately 30 trillion human cells in the body. Each of these cells contain 46 pieces of DNA, our genetic building blocks.

30 trillion also written as 30,000,000,000,000 is a big, very big, number. It is too big for me to understand.

For some perspective, let's look at the largest football stadium near us. It is Beaver Stadium in College Park, PA, the home of Penn State's Nittany Lions. Its seating capacity is 106,572. You would have to have over 280 million Beaver Stadiums to place our 30 trillion cells in its own seat.

Even that is too big for me to imagine. Let's try another comparison.

The estimated human population of earth in 2024 is 8.15 billion. We would need over 3.5 thousand planet Earths to hold the equivalent number of cells in our body.

This is still hard for me to wrap my head around the 30 trillion cells in the body.

Now imagine you had a megaphone to tell all 38 trillion inhabitants of your body a message. Imagine your inhabitants believe every word you think or say.

Every time we remember something, even to tell a story about it, our brain will reproduce the neurochemistry associated with it. On the biological level, our brain doesn't know the difference, it simply remembers what neurochemistry it produced the first time and sends the same message to every cell in our body again.

This remembering repeated over time may have an impact on the

function of the 46 pieces of DNA in each of our 30,000,000,000,000 cells. This field of study is called epigenetics. I recommend looking it up to learn more specifics.

I hope I have your attention. Now, please take a nice slow and deep breath, maybe three.

We are not doomed to destroy ourselves with our emotions. Emotions are necessary to experience life fully and that's why we have them. Just as emotions can muck up genetic expression, emotions can help us take advantage of our bodies ability to heal itself. We just need to pay attention. Let's start simply.

While we may have an audience of 30 trillion cells, we have just one of us. We have our spirit and mind and that is enough to work with.

The first and one of the most important ways to help ourselves feel better and be healthier is to pay attention to the messages our bodies send to us daily, if not every minute of every day.

A bodily message as simple as feeling tired is invaluable. Honor your body's request to take better care of yourself. Even sleeping one more hour, heck, even 30 more minutes a day can improve your mood, your digestion, mental concentration, immune systems, creativity, athletic performance, heart health, weight management, memory, and reduce inflammation, to name a few.

When we feel rested, we can feel less overwhelmed. It takes energy to navigate the complex nature of these modern times. When we have more energy we are more able to pay attention to how our bodies react to life's challenges.

When we pay attention to how we react, we can make more appropriate responses to others and ourselves.

When we begin learning to respond more appropriately we can have more peace in ourself. When we have more peace in ourself, there is more peace in the world.

If you have any questions, please contact me.

Jefferson Breland is a board-certified acupuncturist licensed in Pennsylvania and Maryland with offices in Gettysburg. He can be reached at 410-336-5876.



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Sometimes I ask my clients what they would like me to write about in my Journal articles. One of my guys said to write about how we can not do as much as we use to as we get older and explain how important it is to respect those changes. I thought that was a great idea so here we go!

Most people don't like to admit that things they use to do years ago have become a little more difficult. Maybe we can't work as long as before, maybe we can't lift as much as before, maybe we just get tired sooner and more often. That's normal and the sooner we accept it the better for our body, mind and spirit. Slowing down can help your body, of course, but it can also help your mind and spirit. Your attitude can affect how you react to any situation. If you get down on yourself and feel bad about yourself that will affect how you feel both in body and mind. Keep your spirits up and think positively about what you have to do and the task will be finished in not time. You will also feel good about yourself and your abilities. Always keep a positive thought, even though I know that can be difficult at times.

Being positive keeps you happier, healthier and makes the task at hand go a little easier. Negativity just adds to frustration and feeling down on yourself. I'm definitely not saying just give up and don't do anything. You know that's not possible and not good for you. I'm just saying slow down a little, pace yourself and don't get frustrated. When we are younger and work all day, then come home and cook, clean, take care of the kids, the lawn and whatever the day throws at us, we just keep going. That's great and go for it as long as you can but when you start to see yourself becoming tired, just slow down. You'll still get it all finished just maybe not in one day.

Eating healthy, exercise and being mindful of your body are the best ways to keep living your best life. Just because you see minor changes doesn't mean your not living your best life. It just means life is changing and you need to change with it. I don't want anyone to read this and think, oh well, I don't need to do much anymore. On the contrary, I want you to think, how can I appreciate the things that are changing and incorporate ways to complete the daily task at hand while still respecting and taking care of my body, mind and soul.

It's a new year and a great time to figure out what has changed with you and how you are can keep the strength and willpower you have and improve on anything you may notice is becoming more challenging. One thing I want people to realize is I'm not saying don't do anything, I am saying keep exercising and going as strong as you can just don't push yourself too far and overdo it causing injury or permanent harm.

Asking for help from your family, neighbors, friends or whoever is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of intelligence and acceptance. Sometimes moving furniture or other heavy objects may have been easy for you before but having someone to help with that big sofa only makes sense. Actually, it made sense before because it's easier with the more help you have, you just didn't want to admit it before.

I want everyone to realize that as we age things change and admitting and realizing that is better for our health. Keep exercising, eating healthy and taking time for yourself. Start exercising, eating healthy and taking time for yourself if you have not been doing that. No one likes getting older and the changes that come with aging but the sooner you realize and incorporate them in your life the better your quality of life will be. Over exertion and pushing yourself can cause injury that may affect

you for the rest of your life. Strength and conditioning and adapting to challenging yourself but not overdoing it will add to the quality of life for you for years to come.

My motto has always been, keep moving you'll be glad you did. I'm just saying moderate the speed at which you are moving to respect what your body is telling you now and in the future.





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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of February

Professor Wayne Wooten

For February, the waxing crescent moon is two degrees to the lower left of Venus, now near its greatest brightness. This would be a good evening to catch them together before sunset, easily visible in daylight by 4 in the SW. The first quarter moon sits five degrees north of Jupiter at sunset, almost directly overhead at sunset for us. On February 9th, the waxing gibbous moon makes a neat triangle with bright red Mars and Pollux in the Gemini. Farther north in Greenland, observers can see an occultation, which of course hopefully many of you observed last month on January 13. The Full Moon, the Hunger Moon, rises at sunset on February 12th. The last quarter moon rises at midnight on February 20th. The new moon is February 27th.

Mercury is lost in the Sun's glare this month. Venus dominates the western sky, but starts overtaking us and retrograding this month. She appears as a bright crescent, growing larger in size but less lit this month in small telescopes. Mars is at its best. It was closest to us in January, but now well up in the NE at sunset and will reveal its North Polar Cap and some dark lava flows on its deserts with larger scopes, high power, and good seeing. Jupiter is also perfect for observing, almost overhead at sunset, and its four large moons and Great Red Spot visible in telescopes. But Saturn, its rings almost closed edge on, is lost in the glare of the Sun all month. When it emerges again in the dawn next month, we will be seeing the dark underside of the rings for the rest of 2025, and most scopes will only show the disk of the giant planet.

For a detailed map of northern hemisphere skies, about January 31st, visit the



For years, we have been using photos taken from the Hubble or Webb Telescopes, but Professor Wooten sent us this photo of the Rosette Nebula just to give us an idea what an amateur stargazer can do when they pair new phones capable of taking high-resolution photos with telescope stands equipped with tracking motors that allow a telescope to remain focused on a given spot in the sky for an indefinite period.

www.skymaps.com website and download the map for February; 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 a video exploring the current sky, from the HST site at: http://hubblesite.org/explore_astronomy/tonights_sky/. S&T has weekly highlights at: <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/astronomy-podcasts/>.

The constellation Cassiopeia makes a striking W in the NW. She contains many nice star clusters for binocular users in her outer arm of our Milky Way, extending to the NE now.

Cassiopeia's daughter, Andromeda, starts with the NE corner star of Pegasus' Square, and goes NE with two more bright stars in a row. It is from the middle star, beta Andromeda, that we proceed about a quarter the way to the top star in the W of Cassiopeia, and look for a faint blur with the naked eye. M-31, the

Andromeda Galaxy, is the most distant object visible with the naked eye, about 2.5 million light years away.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus. Between him and Cassiopeia is the fine Double Cluster, faintly visible with the naked eye and two fine binocular objects in the same field. Perseus contains the famed eclipsing binary star Algol, where the Arabs imagined the eye of the gorgon Medusa would lie. It fades to a third its normal brightness for six out of every 70 hours, as a larger but cooler orange giant covers about 80% of the smaller but hotter and thus brighter companion as seen from Earth.

At Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Aldebaran is not a member of this cluster, and twice as close as it is.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same

temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead 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 Pollux highlight the Gemini.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern 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. Just east of Betelgeuse is the fine binocular cluster NGC 2244. But the much fainter Rosette Nebula that lies around the cluster shows up nicely in this fine photo of it.

Look closely at this Valentine's Rose for you. The red of the petals is colored by ionized hydrogen, or an H II region. H I is just optically invisible neutral hydrogen, which can be mapped with radio telescope at 21 cm wavelength. II indicates the hydrogen atom is hot enough to ionize, with its single electron kicked up to higher energy orbitals. The particular red color is the emission line created by the electron falling from the third to the second excited state, and is the same red color some of you remember from last April 8th during totality as the bright red prominences extending over the limb of the totally eclipsed sun! The energy to ionize this gas comes from the hot young B class stars, just born in the center. Such clusters are forming from the inside out, with the expanding gases also rolling up the dark tendrils of carbon dust you see well at the top of James' shot. As Carl Sagan noted, we are made of such star stuff, ashes of stars!

In the east rise the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises before Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. Sirius dominates the SE sky by 8, and as it rises, the turbulent winter air causes it to sparkle with shafts of spectral fire. Beautiful as the twinkling appears to the naked eye, for astronomers this means the image is blurry; only in space can we truly see "clearly now". At 8 light years distance, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see with the naked eye from West Florida.

For a sense of stellar distances, consider sunlight is eight minutes old by the time it warms your face. So the light from Sirius has taken the number of minutes in a year (eight minutes versus eight years), or $60 \times 24 \times 365.25 = 525,960$ times; Sirius is more than a half million times distant than our Sun. While it is 21x more luminous than our Sun in reality, no wonder the Sun rules the day! And Sirius is the closest star you can easily see from here. Almost every thing you see in the night sky must be millions of times more distant from us than our home star.

When Sirius is highest, along our southern horizon look for the second brightest star, Canopus, getting just above the horizon and sparkling like an exquisite diamond as the turbulent winter air twists and turns this shaft of starlight, after a trip of about 200 years!

To the northeast, a reminder that spring is coming; look for the bowl of the Big Dipper to rise, with the top two stars, the pointers, giving you a line to find Polaris, the Pole Star. But if you take the pointers south, you are guided instead to the head of Leo the Lion rising in the east, looking much like the profile of the famed Sphinx. The bright star at the Lion's heart is Regulus, the "regal star". Fitting for our cosmic king of beasts, whose rising at the end of this month means March indeed will be coming in "like a lion".

Farmers' Almanac

"Late February days; and now, at last, might you have thought

That winter's woe was past; so fair the sky was and so soft the air.

—William Morris (1834–1896)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Turning milder with occasional showers, perhaps starting as freezing rain, then turning dry, blustery and more seasonable (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); turning milder with a rain/snow mix then turning blustery with flurries; light snow accumulation far west (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); another round of rain, changing to snow then colder, but turning dry (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); dry, then warmest weather of the month followed by rain (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); more rain, then turning more seasonable (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); seasonable and dry (28, 27, 28).

Severe Weather Watch: The Town and Country Almanack sees no severe weather activity in the month of February.

Full Moon: February's Full Moon will occur on February 12th. It is called the Snow Moon, where the snow was deepest, while many other tribes called it Wolf Moon because of all of the howling heard during the month, which just happens to be the middle of their breed-

ing season! And because there is such an extreme scarcity of game to hunt everywhere during this month, it was also aptly referred to as Hunger Moon.

Special Notes: The famous "Punxsutawney Phil" makes his annual and much-anticipated appearance on Sunday, February 2nd when he issues his 'prediction' of the coming of Spring! If it is a sunny day and this little Marmot Monax sees his shadow, he will retreat post haste underground, to remain there for another 6 weeks of Winter! If it is cloudy and he doesn't get scared by his own shadow, Spring will come early in 2025. The Christian Festival of Lights, or Candlemas, is celebrated on the 2nd as well. As part of a long tradition, many churches would display many more candles on this day during their daily services. Not only did it make the service a special one, but it was also believed that the additional light would provide protection from illness and plague in the coming year.

Holidays: Valentine's Day, February 14th, falls on Friday in 2025. Show that special someone just how special they are and how much you appreciate them. The birthdays of Presidents Abraham Lincoln (February 12th) and George Washington (February 11th) are col-

lectively celebrated on President's Day, which falls on Monday, February 17th, providing us with an extended holiday weekend. Enjoy!

The Garden: It's time to turn the compost pile (if it's not too frozen!). Plants that may have been pushed out of the ground by frost heave should be pressed firmly back into place. Deciduous shrubs and trees are still dormant enough to transplant this month. Once the buds have begun to swell, it will be too late. Continue feeding our feathered friends. You will want them to stick around so they will provide natural insect control when the weather warms again.

The Farm: Best for planting root crops (23, 24); Best for weeding and stirring the soil (6, 7); best for planting above-ground crops (1, 8, 9, 10) best for harvesting all crops (21, 22); best days to set hens and incubators (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21); slaughter and butcher meat (1, 2, 3, 4, 27, 28); transplant (1, 2, 3, 4, 27, 28); harvest and store grains (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); wean animals (1, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

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COMPUTER Q&A

Troubleshooting printer issues

Aysë Stenabaugh
Jester's Computer

There are a few things more frustrating than needing to print an important document only to find that your printer is offline or presenting an error message. Whether you're rushing to meet a deadline, preparing for a crucial meeting, or simply trying to get your to-do list under control, printer problems can throw a wrench in your plans and test your patience to its limits. This month, we will explore common printer issues and provide practical solutions to help you get back on track swiftly and to minimize stress!

How is your printer connected?

Before you can troubleshoot your printer issues, you need to know how it's connected. Printers typically connect to devices in one of three ways: USB, Wi-Fi, or Bluetooth. Understanding your printer's connection method is the first step in diagnosing and resolving any problems.

Wired Printers

If your printer is connected via USB, ensure that the cable is securely plugged into both the printer and your computer without using any USB hubs. To eliminate the possibility of an issue with the USB port, try connecting the printer to a different port on the computer and attempt to print again. If the problem persists the underlying cause could be with the printer's USB port, or the printer drivers may be outdated or incorrectly installed. Although it is uncommon, you can consider replacing the USB cable to see if a new cable resolves the issue.

Wireless Printers

For Wi-Fi connections, ensure both the printer and your device are on the same network and that you have set your computer's network to private when printing. If your network location is set up as a public network or if you are using a VPN your wireless printer will not be visible to your computer. If you've changed internet providers or equipment and haven't already done so, you may need to reconfigure your printer to work with the updated settings. For Bluetooth printers, make sure both devices are paired and within the required range to establish a stable connection.

Re-install Printer Drivers

To ensure your printer works correctly, you will need to install the proper drivers on your computer. If you've updated your operating system, replaced your computer or got a new printer, you will likely need to install new drivers. Instead of using a disc, it's best to visit the manufacturer's website for the latest drivers.

Always download software from reputable sources—go directly to sites like hp.com, Epson.com, or Canon.com rather than using web searches. From there, find and download the correct drivers for your printer model.

After downloading and running the printer drivers, you will be prompted to select your connection type. For a wired or USB connection, unplug the USB cable and wait until prompted to reconnect it. For a wireless setup, ensure the printer is on the same wireless network as your computer before completing the installation. If you are unable to connect your device you can reach out to your

printer manufacturer for free support, be cautious about letting any third-parties connect to your device.

If you find yourself struggling to connect your printer to your network your local support specialists at Jester's Computers can help! We offer a variety of services including in-home technology support to help you resolve issues that can only be resolved on-site. You can find Jester's Computers on the web at www.jesterscomputers.com or by visiting us at our new location in Fairfield, at 105 W. Main Street Suite 1, Monday through Friday 9 to 5. You can also reach us by calling or texting us at 717-642-6611.



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COMMUNITY NOTES

A new way to finance affordable housing in Frederick County

By Gary Bennett and Hugh Gordon, members, Frederick County Affordable Housing Council.

In our last affordable housing column, we talked about all the ways developers scramble to fully fund affordable housing projects. This is important because a project is not feasible unless it covers 100% of its funding gap.

That is why Frederick County and the State of Maryland try to be aggressive when helping affordable housing developers. The county and state often step in with funding options such as:

Waivers or deferrals of impact of fees charged to buyers that meet income requirements for affordable housing purchases from a developer.

Loans from Frederick County's Housing Initiative Fund's (HIF) Deferred Loan Program. The purpose of this fund is to provide flexible loans to support affordable housing in Frederick County.

Maryland's Department of Housing and Community Development's (DHCD) nearly \$24 million in federal funding to provide gap financing to affordable housing projects statewide in the form of HUD's HOME Investment Partnerships American Rescue Plan Program (HOME-ARP).

County guidance in using "rental housing works," a fund through DHCD providing \$3.5 million in gap funding.

The use of some county owned-land for affordable housing projects combined with a federal loan for pre-development costs thereby reducing two key costs.

Other funding possibilities in various stages of discussion and could come online in the future include:

Implementing a Frederick County Rental Registration and Inspection Program to mimic the one Frederick city has in place and using the proceeds for rental assistance and affordable housing projects.

Waiving development fees for housing projects meeting certain income requirements.

Increasing the portion of the County Recordation Tax revenue going into the Housing Initiative Fund, which is then used to support affordable housing projects.

IDs and TIFs

Even more creative help may be on the way soon.

The Affordable Housing Council wholeheartedly supports a push for enabling legislation to allow Frederick County to expand the use of funds under the State

of Maryland's Industrial Development Authorities (IDAs) to include affordable housing.

IDAs were created long ago to establish an entity that captures future tax growth for an area slated for development and reinvests it. It has been used mostly for industrial parks. It was never intended for affordable housing but could be used for that purpose in the future. Prince George's County has this authority now.

If enacted, the County Council would create the tax capturing entity, adopt a project area plan and how the funds can be used in that area. The board of the new entity would then approve specific projects like affordable housing.

This would be an important new revenue source for affordable housing projects. It has the possibility to be the gap financing that allows new projects to happen faster.

IDAs are based on well-established tax increment financing (TIF) districts. TIFs have been used in the past as a mechanism to fund public infrastructure improvements in connection with private development projects.

In the affordable housing realm, TIFs could be used for infrastructure needs for site readiness such as water, gas, and sewerage. Items like

these need to be ready and paid for before an affordable housing project kicks off. As we've said before, tax credits are fine but developers need money upfront.

How do TIFs provide financing?

Under the TIF process, special obligation debt would be issued by the county to provide funding for infrastructure improvements benefiting a certain district. The incremental future real property tax revenues are pledged to the repayment of the special obligation debt. There will be incremental real property taxes created because the assessed value of the TIF district properties increases as a result of the planned new infrastructure.

Because only a portion of the future incremental tax revenue is pledged to repay the debt service, the TIF structure allows the county to continue to receive the tax revenue today that existed prior to the new development and to also receive today the future tax benefit of the project to fund the project.

It is important to note that this is not a new tax on citizens. The plan takes the place of issuing bonds.

Currently in Frederick County, commercial entities are responsible for 22% of the tax base. Citizens pay

the rest. We cannot bring in more commercial development unless we have more affordable housing.

The plans for future housing development in the South Frederick Corridor is a specific example where this could work well since developers know the county plans to add value by creating affordable housing there.

Frederick is not alone. Many Maryland counties have expressed interest in this type of affordable housing funding.

A bill has been drafted to allow TIF districts in Frederick County and other counties to be used for more than industrial development. It is before the legislature's Ways and Means Committee right now. Delegate Fair and Senator Lewis-Young are supportive now. Maryland Secretary of Housing Day and Maryland's Affordable Housing Coalition are also supportive of this.

Financing for affordable housing projects is intricate and arcane, but the more you know, the better you can help us advocate for creative financing that gets these critical projects off the ground. If we don't, we'll have few options for our children and parents to live in Frederick County, and economic development will suffer as a result.



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COMMUNITY NOTES

County Notes

County Will Intervene in Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater will petition to intervene in the Maryland Public Service Commission's ("PSC") consideration of PSEG Renewable Transmission's application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPCN") for authority to construct the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project ("MPRP").

"Frederick County totally opposes MPRP, and our decision to intervene should send a clear message that we will use the legal tools at our disposal to protect our community," said County Executive Fitzwater. "While the law is clear that Frederick County does not have the authority to stop MPRP ourselves, we will continue to work with our partners on the County Council to amplify our residents' voices and advocate against the project."

On December 19, 2024, the County Executive's Office asked to brief the County Council on the possibility of

intervening in this matter. The Council scheduled a briefing for tonight's meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. On December 31, PSEG Renewable Transmission filed its CPCN application, and, on January 10, 2025, the PSC set a February 17 deadline to petition to intervene.

On December 9, 2024, the PSC responded to a letter from the County Executive and Council and indicated it will hold a public hearing in Frederick County, which will provide another opportunity for residents to be heard on this matter.

The details of that hearing will be posted to www.frederickcountymd.gov/mprp when they are available. County officials urge residents to check this site regularly for facts related to the potential impact of MPRP to County assets, project timelines and details, letters sent to and received by County officials, and video of the County's October 9, 2024, public meeting. The County will update the page as more information is available.

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