

Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 4, NO. 2

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

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Walkersville VFC recognizes excellence

The Walkersville Volunteer Fire Co. (WVFC) held their annual award banquet on Jan. 20 to recognize the volunteers who have served the community of Walkersville so selflessly over the past year.

This year the Honorary Life Membership Award, the most prestigious award that the Company gives, recognizing leadership and an all-encompassing mindset to further the mission of the fire company, was presented to Blaine Smith and posthumously to Beverly Shoemaker. The award was received by her daughter, Carole on her behalf.

“We know her spirit is with us,” Company President Jim Graham said.

The Chief's Award was presented to the entire Staley family for their dedication and personal involvement at the firehouse. Not only do these members give their time and talents running calls, but serve in crucial operational, fundraising and administrative duties as well.

“The Staley family goes above and beyond year after year,” Chief Chad Barrick said.

Alan Staley currently serves as Assistant Chief and a Board Of Director. He can regularly be found leading training. Matt Staley currently serves as Department Captain and Board of Director and continu-

ously ensures company equipment is maintained. Kristi Staley currently serves in numerous capacities, including as a Captain, Assistant Secretary, and fundraising chair, and has been a key component of the Cadet & Junior Membership Program, a program important to the future of the company.

The annual Firefighter of the Year Award, the highest recognition on the line side of the department that is given to a member who is active in all aspects of the department, was presented to Brad Bliven, who currently serves as a line officer and has been instrumental in helping younger members gain their footing within the department.

This year, Logan Boston was recognized as the Most Valuable Responder. This award is presented to a top responder who goes above and beyond for the organization. Boston is a junior at Walkersville High School and has taken advantage of numerous training opportunities to improve his own knowledge.

The WVFC Member of the Year Award was presented to Joanne Baum for her selfless dedication and participation in department activities.

The Community Volunteer of the Year Award was presented to Bill Scheele for a continual tireless com-



Blaine Smith receives his plaque for the Honorary Life Membership Award from President Jim Graham.

mitment to best serving the needs of the department.

The Vaughn Zimmerman Scholarship was given to Ayden Shadle and Chase Tracey, students who exemplify what it means to act as members of the community.

Life Membership Awards were also awarded to James Beard, James Bell, Jean Brooks, Thomas Crum, Mark Denn, Joseph Devilbiss, Debra Fogle, Steve Fogle, Linda Grossnickle, William Lynn, Mary Scheel and Marjorie Shankle.

This year, WVFC Chairman and department historian, Vaughn Zimmerman, also gave a special presentation on the updated history of the

fire company. Extensive research with assistance from the Walkersville Town Office estimated WVFC was incorporated in 1911 as opposed to 1940 as previously assumed, he said. Zimmerman provided decades of history through overviews of records of the department's early formation and fire responses.

Chaplain Chad Weddle gave a moving service for WVFC life members who passed away in 2023 including Robert Brunner, Sr., Beverly Shoemaker, Paul Brunner Jr., and Charles Combs.

Go to page 35 to see photos of of this year's WVFC award banquet.

Woodsboro powers forward with Town Hall plans

It was hard not to be impressed at the January Woodsboro Town Council meeting, as the Council did their due diligence to ensure that the proposed Town Hall was “both affordable and doable.”

Almost the entire meeting was dedicated to discussing how the Town would finance the cost of the Hall.

When the Town began the process several years back to build the Town's first Town Hall, Burgess Heath Barnes and the Town Commissioners were prepared to spend \$800,000. With that sum in mind, Barnes successfully secured a \$400K grant from the State to help cover 50% of the cost of the construction.

The grant was approved in the FY-23 State budget, despite current State budget cutbacks affecting key priorities. Barnes told the Council that the State money was not in jeopardy, as it was the prior's funding. “However,” Barnes said, “we need to spend it by the end of 2029, or we will lose the money for good.”

Commissioner Bill Rittelmeyer pressed Barnes on how ‘sure’ he was that the money was available. “Without the \$400K in State money, we can't

do this, so we need to really nail the availability of the money down.”

Barnes said that he had multiple e-mails and calls from State officials, and everyone has assured him that the money was available. However, Rittelmeyer said that while he believes Barnes, “I would be happier to see that in writing on a piece of paper with State letterhead.”

The \$800,000 estimate, which the grant was based upon, however, was blow out of the water when the initial bids to build the Town Hall came in. With the lowest bid coming in at \$1.6 million, the Council has been forced to reevaluate what they want in the way of a Town Hall and how they could/should fund it.

“Unfortunately,” Barnes said, “we can't ask the State to send us the money until the Town Hall is completed. So, the longer it takes us to find a way to reduce the construction cost to a point we can afford it, the longer it will take to start actual construction, and if we delay it too long, we risk losing the grant outright.”

The original funding plan, when the expected construction cost was \$800K, according to Barnes, was to



As we don't know what the new Town Hall will look like, we figured we might as well run an old winter scene of downtown Woodsboro!

borrow \$400K from Woodsboro Bank to cover half the cost of the construction. The Town planned to dip into its Reserve Fund to pay the remaining construction costs, which would be recovered once the Hall was built and the grant funds sent.

“To make it work given the current

finances of the Town, we need to get the cost of the Hall down to \$1 million, and then decide if we want to increase the loan amount to \$600K or keep the original loan goals and instead dip into our Reserve funds for the extra \$200K.” Barnes said. “If we opt for

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WOODSBORO NEWS

Barnes drops Congressional bid

Burgess Heath Barnes has dropped his bid to represent Maryland's 6th Congressional District in the U.S. House of Representatives six months after announcing his desire to seek the seat.

Barnes' decision did not surprise many who knew him. "Heath is a rather pragmatic individual," said one town resident. "I've been quite impressed about how he has approached his role as Mayor. He tries to get things done, and on the occasional times he is unable to do so, he freely admits it, and will not waste your time. So, if he saw no way

to win the election, I would have fully expected for him to drop out and help someone good who could win."

Which is exactly what Barnes hopes to do.

Barnes said he is endorsing former State Delegate Brenda Thiam of Hagerstown for the seat currently held by Rep. David Trone, whose decision to seek the Senate seat of retiring Senator Ben Cardin has set off a scramble to fill his congressional seat.

Barnes said while he will actively help Thiam win over Republicans in Northern Frederick County, his number one priority will be serving

the Town of Woodsboro by completing the construction of the new Town Hall within budget and on-time.

Barnes said that "the decision to drop out of the campaign was one of the hardest he's had to make, but that a pathway to victory does not seem possible after looking at the numbers."

"From the bottom of my heart, I want to thank each person that believed in the campaign and supported it financially, allowed me to place a sign in their yards, and offered words of encouragement," Barnes wrote in a press release.

Woodsboro powers forward with Town Hall plans

continued from page 2

the latter, while still doable, it would reduce the Town's 'rainy day fund' to less than \$400K until the grant funds are received."

"It will be a tight 12 to 15 months [until the grant funds arrive], but I think we can make it work," Barnes said. "If we opt to use \$600K of Town funds, we can stick with the original loan options. If not, Woodsboro Bank has offered to loan the Town \$600K under two financing options."

The first, a 15-year fix rate loan which will cost the Town \$4,689/month, or a 25-year 5-year adjustable rate which will cost the Town \$3,445/month. The rates are locked in until February 8, at which time the Bank can raise or lower the offered terms Barnes said.

Barnes and Rittelmeyer said they were leaning toward the 25-year adjustable loan. "Anyone listening to the news today knows that the talk is about the Federal Reserve cutting rates next year, not raising them," said Rittelmeyer. "So, we stand a good chance of being able to refinance it at a later date at a lower rate, and even

locking in a long-term rate at a better rate than today's, so the 25-year gives us the most options."

Commissioner Case, however, warned that things could go in the reverse direction and the Town Council could find themselves five years down the road having to refinance at a higher rate and that he would be happier knowing for sure how much the Town would be "on the hook every month until the loan was paid off."

Barnes assured Case that the Town could convert the loan to a fixed rate loan at any time without penalty. Case agreed that given that and given the high potential the rate will be lower next year, the 25-year adjustable loan made the most sense.

While everyone eventually agreed to moving forward with the 25-year adjustable loan option, Commissioner John Cutshall threw a wet blanket on the parade by telling everyone that unless they could get the costs down for the new Town Hall the whole discussion was mute.

"All we know for sure is we can get a loan. Now we need to figure out if we can get the cost of the

hall down to a point where we can afford it." Said Cutshall.

After a closed-door meeting following the December Town Council meeting, the Council signed a Memorandum of Understanding with Sanbower Builders of Myersville that if they could make recommendations for changes in the current design that would get the cost of building the Town Hall down to \$1 million, the Town would sign a contract with them to build it.

Barnes said Sanbower was chosen because they are a commercial builder and turned in the most detailed proposal of all the commercial builders.

Some of the options on the Hall the Town is considering dropping included a basement. "If you eliminate the basement, and instead build the hall on a simple concrete slab you reduce building cost by \$100,000." Local homebuilder Joel Rensberger told the Council last month.

At the January Council meeting, Commissioner Rittelmeyer also offered up the option of looking into purchasing a modular building and then custom enclosing it. "Let's face it, almost

News Briefs...

Council Drops Action To Address Councilmen Absences

After last month's extensive discussion on the need to address the issue of repeated absences of councilmen

at town meetings, the Council went silent on the issue when all four of the town's councilmen showed up for the January council meeting.

In December, on the heels of the

inability of the Town Council to form a quorum at their November meeting, Burgess Heath Barnes suggested that the Council look into modifying the Town Code to address council member absenteeism.

Barnes said at the time, "We all were elected to do the town's business, and while I appreciate that occasionally one of us will miss a meeting or two, but we have one council member who has missed four this year. And if that trend continues, the inability of another member to show up, say because they are sick, will result in the Council not being able to form a quorum, which

happened last month, and without a quorum, we can't conduct important town business."

Commissioner Rittelmeyer agreed with Barnes. "This has been a long-standing, chronic issue for us. When I was Burgess, at one time we went three months without having enough members show up to form a quorum. As a result, a lot of town business had to be put on hold."

Barnes suggested the Council look into changing the Code to address how excused and unexcused absences are handled. "Just like Walkersville and Taneytown, we may need to set a

maximum number of allowable unexcused absences. It's one thing to tell us in advance that you can't make a meeting, it's something [else to] simply not show up, or call two minutes before the meeting to say you're not coming."

While the Town Council agreed to consider discussing any possible changes to the Woodsboro Town Code to address absenteeism in detail at the January Town Council meeting, the presence of all four councilmen at this meeting apparently made the issue a moot point – for now at least.

Finishing Touches Being Place On Skatepark

Woodsboro resident Ben Marshall, the brainchild of the town's new skatepark, provided the Council with an update on the finishing touches being placed on the arena.

The arena, Marshall said, is actively being used every day by the town's youth, and for the most part, the kids have been very respectful. Only one instance of profane graffiti has been noted and the Town was taking care of that.

A 'grind rail' used in tricks by some of the more experienced skateboarders has been installed at no cost to the town, said Marshall. However, the center of the arena still needs to be finished off.

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WALKERSVILLE NEWS

Council considers staggering terms for members

At the January Town Council meeting, Commissioner Betsey Brannen asked the Council to consider modifying the length of terms for Council members to alleviate the issue of a full council turnover due to the current practice of electing all its members on the same date and for the same length of time.

"This has been on my mind since I ran in 2018 when there was a significant amount of turnover of elected officials," she said. The changes proposed would protect the Town from the stress that a situation such as a full

turnover of the Council and the Burgess could have on the town staff. It would also protect the incoming Council members, who although well intentioned to serve, would be unaccustomed to how the Town's government works. "There is a huge learning curve," she said. "I've been here since May and I'm still learning."

Brannon reached out to Thurmont for examples in their Town Code on the subject and from there she adjusted the chapters of the Walkersville Code and Ordinances to accommodate the changes.

The resolution will have the Burgess serve a four-year term, the two Commissioners with the highest vote count will also get four years and the three Commissioners with the lowest votes will serve terms of two years. Currently both the Burgess and the Commissioners serve three-year terms.

"This does mean terms will increase to four years in order to stagger terms every two years," said Brannon. "We just need to do it once to stagger the terms." The Council will also need a special resolution for elections in September in order to get the new Code on track.

Commissioner Gary Baker approved of the changes noting that Middletown as well as Thurmont have the same schedule for terms. Both Emmitsburg, Woodsboro and Taneytown hold an election every year in which at least one Commissioner is put up for re-election so there is always a changeover in their Town Council's makeup.

Baker was also a proponent of limiting each member to two consecutive terms, "It's important to allow for new people to have a chance at being involved in their government," he said.

"You could run again after a break." The addition of term limits would be a separate change to the code for future consideration.

"There would not be a significant increase in election costs," said Brannon. "The positives outweigh the negatives."

Commissioner Mike McNiesh was absent for the meeting, so Brannon asked the Council to consider her suggestion before officially introducing the change at the next meeting. A public hearing will be scheduled before adoption of the changes can be finalized.

Council updated of Discovery water main replacement

Director of Public Works Joseph Birch introduced bids for replacement of the Discovery watermain at the January Town Council meeting. Discovery, a community outside of Walkersville Town proper, utilizes the Town's water services with additional fees even though it is not technically in Town. The pipes in Discovery are old and the last five water line breaks have been within Discovery, thus putting them at the front of the repair list. An estimated 600 homes would be affected by the replacement process.

Replacing a water main is a large project because it first involves installing a temporary bypass that keeps water flowing to residents during the repair period. Machinery is brought in to excavate a trench in the location of the old water main, tear out the old pipes and replace them with new pipes. Everything is then tied back into the water system and finally the residents are put on the new line.

When large projects like the Discovery or Spring Gardens water main replacement are planned, it is cus-

tomary to request bids from competing companies. Having at least three bids allows the Town to choose the best price and service for their needs. In the case of the Discovery replacement, three companies attended the pre-bid meeting but only one company, Daft-McCune-Walker, offered a bid of \$380,000 to draw up plans and to get the relevant permits. The same company also did the Spring Garden Estates water main replacement. The Council asked the bidding contractors to design the project

in phases. The lone bidder gave an estimate of a cost of \$1.5 million over a six-phase process.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert asked, "how do we find out if this is our best option when we only received one bid?" Birch pointed out that the lone bid could be accepted as is or the Town could go through the pre-bid process again to try and get more bids. Town Manager Sean Williams said that Discovery is a substantially larger project than Spring Garden Estates but based on what was done and the cost to do

a water main replacement there, the price is comparable.

Commissioner Gary Baker agreed with Gilbert about the reluctance to accept one bid without having anything to compare it to. The Council decided to wait for their next meeting where they could view and compare the estimates from the Spring Garden Estates project before voting to accept the work bid. In the meantime, they plan to ask other municipalities as well as the Town engineer for additional recommendations for a project of this size.

Domestic animal ownership ordinance under consideration

January's Town Council Meeting brought to light that the Town's animal control code is missing a definitive limit to how many domestic animals a person may own within town limits.

The discussion was sparked by a complaint from a resident who was concerned about how many animals—in this case 12 dogs—a neighbor had on their property.

Commissioner Gary Baker wondered if a sound complaint was the initial issue, as just having 12 dogs does not make them a nuisance, he said; however, 12 loudly barking dogs does. "I think we need to address the nui-

sance not the quantity of animals." Walkersville does have a noise ordinance in their code, but it is not specific to the animal chapter, and thus not enforceable.

Town Manager Sean Williams told the Council that Walkersville follows the 'Animals and Fowl' chapter of Frederick County's Code of Ordinances, which does not quantify a limit on how many domestic animals one may have on a property. Because of this, Walkersville does not limit the number of domestic animals that can be in a home. The Frederick County Code, however, does address the requirement

to license all animals and the prohibition against barking dogs.

"So, what do you want to do?" asked Williams. "There is a gap in what can be enforced and how it can be enforced." He explained that if there is an animal control issue in Town, they do not have enough staff to deal with it, so they call the county's Animal Control. The incident in question required Frederick County's Animal Control Division to be called out to address the situation.

Williams encouraged the Council to also clarify the definition of a domestic animal and whether that would or would not include animals other than

dogs and cats, such as chickens, ducks, etc.

A resident present at the meeting asked the Council to consider including leash laws when the Code is being modified.

Burgess Chad Weddle suggested the next step would be to contact the Town's lawyer for their recommendation on how to continue the process of making changes to the Code. "We can still use Frederick County's standards, but it will at least be written down in

our Code," he said.

Weddle suggested contacting neighboring towns such as Thurmont and Middletown to see what they have in their Code regarding domestic animal ownership to save the Council from "reinventing the wheel."

The Council concurred with Weddle's suggestions and directed Williams to talk to the lawyer and neighboring municipalities to develop a recommended path forward that he can present at the next Council Meeting.

Senior Property tax credit approved

The Town Council unanimously approved a change to the Town Code regarding the eligibility requirement for the Town's property tax credit for seniors, bringing the Town's Code into alignment with the Frederick County ordinance that sponsors the tax credit. The credit will go into effect until July 1.

Seniors who live in Walkersville will be able to apply for the tax credit through Frederick County, as the County is responsible for the bulk of the paperwork filed for the rebate.

The biggest changes to both the Frederick County and now Walkersville Code are the requirements to qualify. The gross household income maximum has been raised from \$80,000 to \$100,000 and the maximum property assessment value to which the credit can be applied has been raised from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Applicants must be 65 years of age or older and meet both the income and property value figures to qualify.


The Council also approved an automatic adjustment to the maximum

income allowable for seniors to qualify. The adjustment will be based on the Consumer Price Index (CPI) and not need to be reviewed every year.

Town Manager, Sean Williams, said that last year approximately 49 residents participated in the program. One resident, speaking in favor of the tax credit, told the Council that the senior tax credit saved them "almost \$500." He was adamant that getting the public

informed of the credit should be a priority as many residents would now qualify with the higher income and property value numbers, but few know about the credit and those that do don't know that the credit is available to them.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert noted that a seminar about the credit is held every year and plans are being made for one this year as well. Details will be made available once the schedule is finalized.



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 Mon., Feb. 19 - Town Office Closed
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 Mon., Feb. 26 - 7 p.m. - EDC Meeting
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 Walkersville:Our Town

FROM THE DESK OF...

Congressman David Trone

For as long as I can remember, one of the defining debates between political parties in the U.S. has been big government versus small government. Democrats consistently advocate for programs that will lift up those who are in the shadows, while Republicans preach about the need to cut essential government programs and let the private sector provide the programs we need. What's been missing has been a persistent argument in favor of efficient and effective programs to help everyone.

As a progressive Democrat, I believe in the power of government to change lives. I believe in it because I've seen how bold, long-term thinking and historic investments impacted my own life. It was the government that invested in the power grid that gave my family farm electricity when I was young. Government provided the school system that gave me an educa-

tion that prepared me for college and for life. It was government investments in the roadways that allowed me to put myself through school brokering eggs. And the federal government that backed the student loans that allowed me to complete my graduate degree. Mine is only one of tens of millions of lives changed for the good by programs like these.

But even those who support these programs must acknowledge the simple truth that our government is inefficient. Too often, bureaucracy and red tape get in the way of our ability to make these investments as meaningful and impactful as they can and should be. Washington is broken. Our system is inefficient. And corporations and special interests put their fingers on the scales, preventing us from changing the status quo.

That's why I ran for public office in the first place: we need more leaders

with the courage and the experience to make a difference.

Reducing inefficiencies in government will lead to better outcomes in the areas that require the most attention. First and foremost, we'll be able to devote more time and resources to our education system. The single greatest investment that we can make is in our students and educators — ensuring that our children and grandchildren have the best opportunities to succeed.

Unfortunately, our schools, educators, and students haven't been given the attention — and the resources — that they deserve. Educators are overworked and underpaid. Students needing the most help don't have access to the resources that ensure their success. And our school infrastructure is crumbling and insufficient.

The same is true of our public transportation and infrastructure. Roads and bridges, including here in Frederick, are

falling apart after decades of use and disrepair. Our public transportation is woefully inadequate when compared with other developed nations, placing an outsized burden on low-income families trying to make ends meet.

There are proposals out there that would make progress on these issues. We can fully fund IDEA at the federal level, providing millions of dollars of support to students with special needs. We can take the Blueprint for Maryland's Future and apply it on the national level, making a once-in-a-generation investment in our schools. We can usher in a new generation of public transportation like Maglev, and expand existing systems like rapid bus transit, MARC Rail, and Amtrak. And we can ensure that our infrastructure is maintained to keep up with demand.

Unfortunately, there is something that gets in the way of these ideas, and consistently stops progress in its tracks: the pervasive influence of corporations and special interests. I am not confi-

dent that any of this can be achieved if we don't slam the door on special interests and put public service over politics.

If elected to the Senate, I'll be the only Senator who doesn't take contributions from PACs and lobbyists. Of the \$1.3 billion given to politicians from special interests last cycle, not a nickel of it went to me. If elected, I'll work to ban these contributions outright — and I'll also ban politicians from ever serving as lobbyists after they leave office.

My background in business taught me that to achieve big things, you need to think long-term. You must reject the status quo. And you must propose bold ideas to make progress. Too often, politicians focus on their next election and not the needs of those they represent. They answer the calls of the lobbyists and not their constituents. And this leads to an inefficient government that ignores the will of the people. We can do better. And with your help, I'll fight to make it happen.

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

After several months of researching, hearing presentations, and meeting with various experts, the Data Centers Workgroup, formed by County Executive Jessica Fitzwater, is nearing completion of the assigned task. I greatly appreciate County Executive Fitzwater appointing me as one of the co-chairs of this workgroup, and for the opportunity to work with each member. Since last summer, members of the workgroup have devoted a lot of time to this effort, understanding the important implications of their possible recommendations. Everyone brought enthusiasm, expertise, and a desire to balance the risks and benefits that data centers can bring. The result has been thoughtful and robust discussions from a balanced group of stakeholders. This is a unique approach compared to surrounding counties that also have opportunities to incorpo-

rate the data center industry into their local economies.

To make this task manageable, three subgroups were formed. One subgroup dealt with issues related to location siting. One of the biggest complaints about data centers in neighboring counties in Northern Virginia is that you can find them near neighborhoods, schools, office buildings, and other areas where industrial buildings interfere with natural landscapes. In Frederick County, we have areas in agricultural preservation, and the intention of adding to the number of acres persevered. The Siting subgroup looked at items such as soil types and different approaches to zoning to make sure any updates to the County's current Critical Data Infrastructure regulation specifically addresses Frederick County's interests, and that they are aligned with the Livable Frederick Master Plan.

Sustainability is an important component of responsibly incorporating the data center industry into the County. Another subgroup was tasked to research today's industry standards and best practices for energy usage, so that reasonable but meaningful sustainability perimeters could be recommended. Data centers use large amounts of water and electricity. Like other types of buildings, appliances, and automobiles, levels of efficiency and greenhouse gas emissions can vary widely. Another concern we heard was the amount of sound produced by data centers. We learned there are ways to address this issue with site and building design and natural barriers of fields and trees. Although the data center industry has made great market-driven strides in energy efficiency and sustainability, reasonable requirements protect residents and natural resources in Frederick County.

Another subgroup explored how the County could best benefit economically from the data center industry. Neighboring counties have realized hundreds of millions of dollars per year in tax revenue. With society's increasing reliance on technology and internet access to live our lives, the data center industry continues to grow every day. New technologies like AI (Artificial Intelligence) will accelerate this growth. Given Frederick County's proximity to "the heart of the internet" in Ashburn, Virginia, through which 70% of the world's internet traffic flows, we remain a desirable location for data center development. We considered different forms of taxation or fees, which could ensure Frederick County derives an appropriate level of value. The County could also utilize "Community Benefit Agreements" to support local technical education, local technical jobs,

and other projects. To successfully integrate data centers into the local economy, a mutually beneficial relationship must be developed. The Community Benefits subgroup has worked to identify ways for that relationship to happen.

The Data Centers Workgroup met on January 25th to discuss the findings of each subgroup. There will be one more meeting in February to determine the final recommendations that will be reported to County Executive Fitzwater in March. I don't have that date at the time I'm writing this month's column. However, you can check the Data Centers Workgroup webpage for this and more information. The address is www.frederickcountymd.gov/8544/Data-Centers-Workgroup.

We are also heading into budget season. Please feel free to contact me with your ideas and budget priorities. Your input is always greatly appreciated. You can reach me at rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov.

Woodsboro Burgess Heath Barnes

BBBBRRRRR it has been a cold new year so far with some actual snow for the first time in 3 years. I hope all have remained safe and if you enjoy the snow have had

a good time in it. Personally, I am ready for Spring, and it cannot get here quickly enough for me.

This last month was quiet in town and with the winter months,

there has not been a lot going on, so it has given us some time to focus on a few projects. I will be attending the annual Maryland Mayors Association conference from Feb-

ruary 29th-March 1st in Annapolis. During this time, I hope to hear about the status of funds availability and different initiatives that may be coming out of this year's state legislative session and budget.

On January 10th the town clerk

and I met with the architect for the town building and the potential construction company representative from Sanbower Construction. We had a very productive meeting and discussed many things that

continued on next page

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GOVERNMENT

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

February is a month of several occasions including Black History Month and Heart Health Month. In celebrating culture and increasing health awareness, we are excited to host our annual Black History Month celebration and launch Frederick County's first ever Heart Health Campaign this month.

We have so much to celebrate in Frederick County and are striving to keep it thriving by creating a sense of belonging not only for residents, but for our businesses. Our annual Black History Month Celebration will be held on February 5 at 6 p.m. in the first-floor hearing room of Winchester Hall and broadcasted through our own FCGTV. In addition, various events and classes will be held for our Heart Health Campaign. I've included more details on this campaign below.

With session underway for The Maryland General Assembly, I'll be traveling to Annapolis advocating

for the needs of our residents and continuing to host town halls alongside our County Council Members, to receive public input in each district to help me carve out our budget priorities for the fiscal year!

With all the new and exciting developments ahead, I encourage you to stay connected through subscribing to my newsletter www.connect.frederickcountymd.gov/hub/Subscriptions/2396.

Heart Healthy Frederick County

Each year, over 805,000 Americans experience a heart attack. Heart disease claims more lives in the United States than any other cause of death – 1 in 5 deaths, according to the CDC, meaning we likely all know someone who has heart disease.

As public servants, we all play a role in raising awareness of heart disease, which is why I called on staff to create a month-long campaign in February called Heart Healthy Frederick County.

Throughout the month of February, there will be CPR classes, educational events, materials, and public service announcements to share with our residents. I encourage you to learn how you can help by reviewing the calendar of events and other materials at FrederickCountyMD.gov/HeartHealthyFC. Together, we can help create a Heart Healthy Frederick County!

Business Survey Results

In November, Frederick County businesses were asked to share their optimism, concerns, and needs regarding their economic outlook in a survey conducted for the Frederick County Office of Economic Development by Salisbury University's Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON). The results from over 350 respondents showed an overall positive sentiment that Frederick County is a good place to operate a business.

The survey asked business leaders, including chief executive officers, owners, and senior executives, to weigh in on a range of topics, from the advantages and challenges businesses face, additional assistance needed and their future economic outlook.

Agriculture Innovation Grants Supporting our farms and our farmers is a priority for my administration. I am proud that the County's grant programs help our agricultural businesses innovate, diversify and generally expand their operations. Seven agriculture-related businesses will receive funding through the competitive grant program, which was designed to encourage diversification and innovation in farm operations. The projects selected for funding are expected to create eight full-time and 27 part-time positions.

Information on the program is available by contacting Becca Tucker, Senior Business Development Manager of Agriculture, at 240-739-2013.

Spanish Language Stroke Awareness Campaign

This spring, alongside county division directors and staff from our Health Department, Division of Aging and Independence, and Frederick Health, we announced the launch of a county-wide project to raise awareness of stroke signs and how to take action within the treatment window.

During our year-long development of this initiative, we recognized how imperative it is to have our PSA video and graphics in Spanish.

With Spanish being the second most common language in our community, having educational materials in the Spanish language is key to ensuring equitable outcomes and that residents feel seen and heard. Not only does this further align with the Livable Frederick Master Plan and my Transition Team Report, it also reaches residents where they are, which is a top priority for my administration. More information on our campaign can be found at <https://health.frederickcountymd.gov/696/Stroke-Awareness>.

County Councilman Brad Young

It is that time of the year when the County needs to adopt a budget for the next fiscal year. Section 503 of the Frederick County Charter titled, "Preparation of the County Budget, states," Not later than April 15 of each year, the County Executive shall prepare and submit a proposed budget to the County council for the ensuing fiscal year."

Article 5 of the County Charter then goes further in explaining the annual county process for the budget and the County Council's role in that process. We ultimately have to approve the final budget.

The County Council has set the fiscal year 2025 budget public hear-

ing for Tuesday, April 23, at 7 p.m. in Winchester Hall. This is your opportunity to come in person and state your budget priorities.

Adoption of the annual County budget is one of the most important actions that the County Council take. This budget document is the County's fiscal and action for the entire year. The County Executive submits a proposed budget on her spending priorities and the Council then weighs in on where to appropriate or spend the money.

This is your money. As the taxpayers of the County, you are the bosses of both the County Executive and

the County Council. We are stewards of your money, and our spending priorities should also be your spending priorities.

It is imperative that you attend, call, write or email the elected leadership of Frederick County to make your concerns heard on how and where your tax dollars are spent! We do want to hear from you.

The County Executive will also hold a public town hall sometime in March to hear from residents on what items you all deem necessary and worthy of funding. The Executive will then finalize the budget and submit to the County for our con-

sideration. We will have our public hearing on the budget then on April 23rd as I mentioned. We will then hold several budget workshops to hear from the various divisions and agencies on the justification and rationale on their budget requests.

The Charter also mandates that this review and any council budget amendments must be acted upon, and the final budget be adopted no later than May 31. Late April and May will be a very busy time for the Council.

But we cannot do this without hearing from you. It has been said, "Don't tell me what you value, show me your budget, and I'll tell you what you value."

The annual budget reflects the values and what we as a community value. This is your budget document. Please make your voices heard. You can call my office at 301-600-1108, email me at BYoung@FrederickCountyMD.gov, email all seven members of the council at: CouncilMembers@FrederickCountyMD.gov, or you can write us at Winchester Hall, 12 East Church Street, Frederick, 21701.

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.

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could be removed from the original plans for the town hall. Several things can be modified, and I feel very optimistic that we will get the total cost down to the amount that we are comfortable with and able to afford to pay. The goal is to have a new number in the hope before March's town meeting to present to the council. I was also able to get numbers for the loan from Woodsboro Bank and the numbers came out in the range of the budget we have so financing options are looking good if we get the total cost in the range with what we can comfortably afford. I also started the paperwork process for the 400k grant promise that we received from the state in 2022. Things are looking very promising and exciting things are coming to our town.

We were able to get the lights as well as the safety and trick rails up around the skatepark. I have also been in conversation with the contractor to get the bathroom started that is being built on the disc golf/stage side of the park. We plan to get that underway this spring and hopefully have it completed sometime in

late summer. As always, I encourage everyone to support Glade Valley Community Services (GVCS) if you have clothes or food donations as they are always in need of items for members of the community. For more information, please contact GVCS by email at gvcs.inc@verizon.net, or call 301-845-0213.

If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, or compliments please feel free to reach out to me at hbarnes@woodsboro.org or by phone at 301-401-7164.

Woodsboro Town meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm. In addition, Planning and Zoning meetings are at 6pm on the First Monday of the month as needed. If you have an item for the agenda, it needs to be submitted 14 days before the P&Z meeting. The current location for meetings is the St. Johns United Church of Christ located at 8 N 2nd Street Woodsboro, MD 21798. The public is always invited to attend.



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COUNTY NOTES

Frederick County Business Sentiment Survey Results

Frederick County businesses shared their optimism, concerns, and needs on their economic outlook in a recent survey conducted for the Frederick County Office of Economic Development by Salisbury University's Business Economic and Community Outreach Network (BEACON). The November 2023 results showed an overall positive sentiment that Frederick County is a good place to operate a business. Respondents rated proximity to customers and a strong local economy as the most significant advantages of locating in the County.

"These positive results attest to the thriving culture we've created here in Frederick County," said County Executive Jessica Fitzwater. "I am proud that businesses not only feel a sense of belonging, but also see a future in our community as they set goals and consider expansion of operations. Thank you to the over 380 respondents—we are committed to using their feedback as we continue to innovate in economic and workforce development."

The survey asked business leaders, including chief executive offi-

cers, owners and senior executives, to weigh in on a range of topics, from the advantages the county has for businesses to challenges they have, additional assistance needed, and the outlook on their economic future.

Results include:

- Almost 60% of respondents agreed that it was easy to find resources and support for their business and agreed that the County is an inclusive place to start or run a business.
- The county scored a 10 on a Net promoter score, indicating a favorable likelihood of recommending the location as a business destination.
- When asked about their feelings about the economic climate in the next year, 47% of respondents were somewhat or strongly optimistic regarding the County, however 46% were strongly or somewhat pessimistic about the national economic climate in the next year. Some of that sentiment may be connected with the fact that businesses have generally performed well in the past two years, with 84% seeing level or improv-

ing sales, with just 16% seeing a sales decline in the past two years.

- Almost 80% of the businesses believe they will still be operating in the county in five years, with just under 8% believing they will not; the balance was unsure. The outlook for expansion showed 45% saying they were considering expanding operations in the next two years.
- The largest drivers of positive impacts on growth in the short term were demand for their product or service, mentioned by 67%, and technological advancements mentioned by 59%. The factors having the largest negative impact were inflation mentioned by 76% and economic conditions cited by 53%.
- The highest request for assistance was financial incentives for expansion (53%) and marketing and promotional support (35%). Mirroring national trends, 68% mentioned encountering challenges related to workforce availability, retention, or recruitment.
- Other areas that businesses expressed challenges with included permitting and regulatory issues. This is reflected in the top two types of support they would request which were workforce training and development, and assistance with permitting and regulations.

"Success in economic development is not just about financial gains, but also about fostering a positive and supportive environment," said Lara Fritts, Director of the Division of Economic Opportunity. "The positive results of our business sentiment survey reflect a thriving culture in Frederick County where businesses feel valued, moti-

Please see page 34 for articles submitted by Congressional Candidates Lesyey Lopez & Brenda Thiam

vated, and empowered to contribute to the region. The survey results are a testament to the collective belief in growth, collaboration, and the pursuit of excellence. I embrace the positivity shared by our businesses and will use respondents' suggestions to continue to fuel our County's economic success."

To contact the Frederick County Office of Economic Development, visit their website at www.discoverfrederickmd.com.

FCPS Superintendent Shares Recommended Operating Budget

FCPS Superintendent Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson shared her recommended Fiscal Year 2025 operating budget Monday with a focus on meeting the demands of students and staff in a growing school system.

"One of the ways in which we achieve our goals is through strategic resource allocation," Dr. Dyson said in her video budget announcement. "This means, we must design a budget that is fiscally sound, meets our expanding needs and provides the resources that are required to sustain our success."

Her recommended budget totals \$991,580,587 and is focused on the following priorities:

- Recruiting and Retaining Talented Employees
- Responding to Significant Growth
- Providing Additional Supports for Students for Special Education students and English Learners
- Addressing Inflationary Pressures
- Advancing Blueprint for Maryland's Future Initiatives

County Announces Agriculture Innovation Grant Recipients

Local farmers are pioneering creative ways to diversify their operations, thanks in part to Frederick County's Agriculture Innovation Grants. Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater awarded \$123,166 in grants for the Fall 2023 grant cycle. Seven agriculture-related businesses will receive funding through the competitive grant program, which is designed to encourage diversification and innovation in farm operations.

"Supporting our farms and our farmers is a priority for my administration," County Executive Fitzwater said. "I am proud that the County's grant programs help our agricultural businesses innovate, diversify and generally expand their operations."

The projects selected for funding are expected to create eight full-time and 27 part-time positions. Grant recipients include:

- Black Ankle Vineyards, LLC, Mount Airy- to implement a keg system for storing and serving high-quality wines.
- Fox Haven Organic Farm and Learning Center, Jefferson- to purchase and construct drying equipment for their organic herb operation.
- Heritage Hills Hops, LLC, Frederick- to purchase hop harvesting equipment to increase efficiency for the expansion of their hopyard.
- Hilltop Blooms & Beef, Ijamsville- to install an irrigation system and service to an existing well for the expansion of their cut flower operation.

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- Kemptown Honey, Monrovia- to purchase equipment expanding apiary bottling and efficiency furthering the creation of value-added products from their honey.
- Loew Vineyards, Mount Airy- to purchase a crusher/de-stemmer for harvesting grapes.
- McClintock Distilling, Frederick- to expand cooling and storage capacity, increasing the production capacity and further supporting local farmers.

In this sixth cycle of Agriculture Innovation Grants, 19 operations applied for funding, with requests totaling over \$630,000. Twice a year, grants are awarded in the amount of \$5,000 or more to help agriculture businesses expand or diversify their operations. Information on the program is available by contacting Becca Tucker, Senior Business Development Manager of Agriculture, at 240-739-2013.

Rogers Appointed as First Housing Division Director

Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announces the appointment of Vincent Rogers as the County's first Director for the Division of Housing. Mr. Rogers brings both professional experience and community connections to this new role. The appointment

will take effect February 10.

"Mr. Rogers is a strategic thinker, which is essential as we stand up our newest division," County Executive Fitzwater said. "His experience managing housing programs and supporting housing policy initiatives will allow him to hit the ground running. I'm particularly excited to see how Vincent's work with the HUD's Moving to Work designation can help Frederick County adapt federal programs into more localized solutions."

Mr. Rogers brings an extensive background in housing policy, having previously served as Director of Policy and Compliance at the Fairfax County, Va., Department of Housing and Community Development and the Fairfax County Redevelopment and Housing Authority. In these roles, Mr. Rogers directed all affordable housing strategic planning for the department. He also oversaw resident services and federal compliance through the PROGRESS Center, the Moving to Work initiative, and the implementation of other federal programs.

Mr. Rogers earned his master's degree in public administration from Syracuse University's Maxwell School of Citizenship and Public Affairs, and his bachelor's degree in public policy from Syracuse. He lives in Frederick County with his wife and three sons.



At the January 18th Glade Valley Lions Club meeting, 1st Vice District Governor, Susan Cox, inducted Jeremy Poling into the Glade Valley Lions Club. Pictured in the photo is GVLC President Jim Corley, Lion Jeremy Poling, Jacob Poling, Lion John Crum, and 1st Vice District Governor Susan Cox.



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COMMENTARY

The Bulwark

Republican hypocrisy on Ukraine

Dalibor Rohac

A common complaint addressed to President Joe Biden is that, notwithstanding his open-ended expressions of support for Ukraine, he lacks a clear vision for ending the war, has an undeveloped notion of the conditions of victory, and can't make a compelling account of what is at stake for the United States. That's the argument of a document released late last year—a "Proposed Plan for Victory in Ukraine" by Reps. Michael McCaul, Mike Rogers, and Mike Turner, who chair respectively the House's Foreign Affairs Committee, Armed Services Committee, and Permanent Select Committee on Intelligence. They write that the president's "mantra of supporting Ukraine 'for as long as it takes' is a losing strategy."

It is a fair criticism, as far as it goes—and to their credit, the three congressmen use it as a starting point for a constructive plan to mobilize further aid to Ukraine. Their recommendations are far more ambitious than the half-hearted assistance extended to Ukraine by the Biden administration.

But any critique along these lines must also be directed at these congressmen's Republican colleagues,

who either oppose helping Ukraine at all or would make U.S. support conditional on meeting other (alleged) priorities. They, too, need to game out what will happen if American military aid to our embattled ally dries up in the coming weeks, and how America's interests in the region will be affected if it does.

In the short term, Ukrainians have no available substitute for the U.S. defense industrial base. Europeans may be scaling up their production of both munitions and essential weapons systems, but the reality of this expressed commitment lags expectations—and, more importantly, Ukraine's needs. The EU, for example, will fail to meet its own goal of producing a million artillery shells for Ukraine by March, a shortcoming openly admitted last fall following months of skepticism expressed in private by European officials. Germany's Rheinmetall is still planning to build a new factory in Ukraine capable of producing 400 tanks a year, but such a project is bound to take many years to complete. The company might begin producing other armored vehicles in the country sooner, but those likely won't start rolling off assembly lines until the latter half of this year at the earliest.

Ukrainians might be in for a long war, but they can't wait years

for Western supplies. An under-resourced, relatively small military may still hold a defensive line, but it cannot be reasonably expected to conduct successful offensive operations. At a minimum, an aid-depleted Ukrainian military will likely be forced to allow the Kremlin to consolidate its existing gains. In the worst case, however, a weakened Ukrainian military could prove unable to prevent Russia from gaining more territory.

What Options Are The Ukrainians Left With? Negotiations? It is possible that we will see a replay of the Minsk agreements in the coming year, but no Ukrainian will be under any illusion that a lasting peace deal with a neighbor that wants to destroy their country is possible. Such proposals should be seen in the context of Russia's long, cynical tradition of bogus "peace offensives." Unless the peace settlement or the ceasefire in question arrives stapled to tangible security guarantees—the most obvious option being Ukraine's accession to NATO membership—it will amount to no more than a pause in hostilities that will enable the Russians to regroup and attack again at a time of their choosing.

Ukraine being forced into a false peace—a result that some Republican policymakers are explicitly pushing for, and that others are tacitly supporting by using Ukraine aid as a bargaining chip—would irreparably scar Ukraine's relations with the

West and possibly derail Ukraine's progress toward becoming a European-style market democracy and member of the EU. Dangerous fissures already exist. One is opening between the current government and the parliamentary opposition; another between President Volodymyr Zelensky and the highly popular commander-in-chief of the armed forces, Valerii Zaluzhnyi.

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Cutting off non-military aid to the country, as some Republicans are also eager to do, is fraught with danger as well. Western financial assistance—disproportionately coming from Europe, where the most recent €50 billion aid package was blocked last month by Hungary's Viktor Orbán—has helped Ukraine to operate as a normal country throughout the war. The \$46 billion of U.S. non-military aid provided so far has helped to protect government operations, keep the country's power grid operational, maintain food security, repair infrastructure, and much else. Take this aid away and Ukrainians may be forced to print money, introduce rationing, and implement the sort of command-and-control system that would make it harder for Kyiv to deliver on the country's European aspirations.

A divided, embittered Ukraine, left with a sense of abandonment from the West, could easily change from a source of hope for liberal

democracies around the world into a major geopolitical liability for Europe and the United States. Anti-Ukrainian Republicans who still believe in a strong American presence in Europe need to grapple with the ramifications of such an outcome for NATO and security along its Eastern flank. And if their true goal is more radical—an outright U.S. exit from Europe, as Donald Trump has reportedly considered—they need to come clean about it now and explain how such a move would strengthen the U.S. position toward China and how it would support our other foreign policy priorities.

It's true that the Biden administration deserves criticism for acting too slowly and for failing to make a more compelling case to the American people for helping Ukraine. But that shortcoming does not protect those on the Republican right from criticism, especially when it comes to those who have seized on the administration's failure to advocate in bad faith for abandoning Ukraine to its own devices. The Republican party must be held to the same standard that Reps. McCaul, Rogers, and Turner want us to hold Biden to. They should articulate their vision and strategy for victory or a sustainable peace—and if they have none, they should say so.

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

The Triad

What Trump officials say about Trump

Sarah Longwell

Take Yourself Back To The Late Fall Of 2016. Donald Trump has just won the election. The nation is reeling. How are we supposed to run a superpower with a game-show host at the helm?

There was an understandable line of thinking at the time: We need to have adults in the room.

If we're really going to hand over the nuclear codes to this guy, the thinking went, it's better for serious people to have at least some input—people with experience, good judgment, and a baseline interest in the country's well-being. Even if that means serving someone manifestly unfit for the job.

Fast-forward eight years: The results are in, and they're not encouraging. We've seen a steady stream of former Trump officials come out, on the record, to talk about the former president's moral depravity, his incompetence, and his basic inability to faithfully execute the duties of his office.

A representative sample from those who worked most closely with the man himself:

- John Kelly took to CNN to say the former president "has nothing but contempt for our democratic institutions, our Constitution, and the rule of law."
- Mark Milley said, in pointed comments generally understood

to be about Trump, "We don't take an oath to a king, or queen, or tyrant, or a dictator. And we don't take an oath to a wannabe dictator."

- Jim Mattis lamented Trump's "use of the presidency to destroy trust in our election and to poison our respect for fellow citizens." Mattis earlier excoriated Trump for the "abuse" of his office, for his unconstitutional actions, and for trying to divide rather than unify the country.
- Mike Pence, once an admirer of Trump's broad-shouldered leadership, said on CBS News that his former boss "asked me to put him over the Constitution."
- Bill Barr told PBS that Trump "failed. He didn't do what the country hoped" after 2020, namely "that he would rise to the occasion and rise to the office."
- John Bolton said flatly, "I think it is a danger for the United States if he gets a second term."

What we have here is a parade of high-level, serious people (whatever you think about their politics) who served the guy and all came to the same conclusion, independently: He's nuts.

If we want to stop a Trump restoration and the promised MAGA dictatorship, it's going to require building a coalition of people who understand the stakes. And there are no messengers better equipped to convey the peril of a Trump presidency than those who lived it firsthand, on the inside.

But wait, haven't they done that already? Mark Milley posed for a front-page spread in the Atlantic. John Kelly gave a statement to CNN. Others have back-channeled their grave misgivings, off the record, to Puck and Politico.

Hard truth: That's not enough. I talk to Republican primary voters every week in focus groups, and you know what they don't read? The Atlantic, Puck, and Politico. Fundamentally, the reason they seem unbothered by Trump's autocratic tendencies is that a lot of them don't know about them.

(Some do, and are perfectly fine with it, but that's a different story.)

You and I may agonize over the state of our politics, but the people I talk to are worried about other things. They don't process the finer nuances of who's giving blind quotes to whom. Even if they did, do a couple of sternly worded rebukes feel adequate to this moment in American history?

The answer is no. Which is why it's time to step up. The people who served Trump directly need to go on the record, as loudly and frequently as possible, about exactly why he should never get near the White House again.

We need John Kelly on primetime TV making the case.

We need Bill Barr speaking plainly in swing state ads, with millions of dollars behind them.

We need Jim Mattis talking straight to camera about what it means to serve the Constitution—and what it means to subvert it.

We need John Bolton on Fox News telling Republicans not to vote for Trump.

And yes, we need Mike Pence saying to all Americans—loudly, over and over again—what he knows to be true about January 6th: that it was a betrayal of America and a disqualifying offense.

Kelly recently made the point that he and others have spoken out about Trump: "I came out and told people the awful things he said about wounded soldiers, and it didn't have half a day's bounce."

"You had his attorney general Bill Barr come out, and not a half a day's bounce. If anything, his numbers go up," he continued. "It might even move the needle in the wrong direction. I think we're in a dangerous zone in our country."

Kelly is right about being in a dangerous zone, but wrong about moving the needle. He and Barr and others haven't been talking to the people who need to hear them. They're talking to legacy media organizations, policymakers, and lots of people who wouldn't ever vote for Trump. These are high-information people who have already made up their minds.

Instead, Kelly and the other former Trump officials need to reach actual swing voters. Which requires a concerted, sustained campaign to meet people where they are and alert them to the danger we face.

I'm just spitballing here, but they could call this project Trump Officials Against Trump.

The thing about leadership is that you have to lead. Especially when the stakes are this high.

Right now a twice-impeached, four-times-indicted wannabe dictator is promising to use the full weight

of the federal government to dismantle our constitutional order. This campaign has been going on for three years and will continue for another ten months.

It will marshal an entire political party, thousands of volunteers, and hundreds of millions of dollars for the sole purpose of returning Trump to office. Of course, a couple of TV hits and quotes to intellectual magazines won't register when arrayed against this force.

For these former Trump officials, telling the truth about Trump can't just be a position they take. It ought to be a cause: a sustained project that they pursue with as much focus and vigor as they applied to the rest of their professional duties.

I don't mean to make this sound easy. It isn't. Some former Trump officials are lifelong conservatives who have a deep institutional attachment to the Republican party and a bone-deep interest in opposing Democrats. Others spent their careers in the military, studiously avoiding partisan politics. It makes all the sense in the world for them to want to stay silent.

But this moment demands more of all of us, as Americans. If ever there were a time for broad-shouldered leadership, this is it.

We need former Trump officials—people of conscience, who have not acquiesced to the authoritarianism of it all—to stand as one and to speak plainly to the American people. Again and again, until every voter has heard their voices.

To read other articles by Sarah Longwell, visit www.thebulwark.com

Words from Winterbult

The news, our perceptions and beliefs

Shannon Bohrer

Our world can seem small in that so much of what occurs is reported daily, sometimes even hourly, and often as an event is happening. The news and other newsie sources feed us information twenty-four hours a day. I remember going to libraries while gathering research for college papers, and today, much of that same information can be found on my phone. We have access to more information than we could ever use, yet a steady firehose of information is sometimes not enough. You would think that having so much information would be satisfactory. However, sometimes, the information we seek is not for the purpose of learning but to confirm what we think we already know.

While experiencing the news, listening, watching, or reading, we are also aware that we have a diversity of news sources and outlets. With the theory of information freedom, one can find facts and opinions from multiple sources. The diversity also allows many to pick and choose the news source(s) they want. The issue with many of the sources is that no matter what you believe, you can find a news site that supports that belief. Conversely, one is also able to find information that contradicts one's beliefs. As an example, if you research the pandemic (COVID), you can find documentation of false and misleading information.

The false and misleading information was not just prevalent but widespread. No matter what you have read or been told, science is real.

Many of the news sources are social sites and not really news sites. Of course, we do have some national news outlets that are really in the entertainment and opinion business. And many of these sites are often disguised as news. Many of these sites are myopic, only reporting their own opinions and views. Trust in these sites is usually limited to individuals who believe what they are hearing. Conversely, the distrust for the same sites is often founded in the distrust of the sources themselves. Even the mainstream media, the primary and historical national news programs, have often been referred to as the Lame Stream Media, inferring they should also not be trusted.

"If Tell me what I want to know, I will believe you."

The diversity in the world of news is reflected in our divisive society, including our politics. Most people understand the differences between the political parties; at least, what they think and believe are the differences. For many people, the differences are so obvious, and not in a good way; they see the other party as the antithesis of immorality. These beliefs add to our divisive views and are often reinforced by news sources that present slanted and or distorted information. So, is the news source responsible for our beliefs, or does the news source reflect our beliefs?

Since we see ourselves as a

divided nation, should we not expect divisive politics? In the past, there were politicians from both parties who worked together on projects that benefited everyone. Of course, to accomplish those tasks, members of both parties had some common beliefs. The belief that government works for the common good of the citizens, which today almost seems nostalgic. Yes, they had differences, as we all do, but they acknowledged the differences and focused on what they could accomplish - together. Today, parties often appear so separate and distinct, and the atmosphere resembles a hostile environment. For some, you must win, even if it requires lying. However, as Franklin Roosevelt said, "Repetition does not transform a lie into a truth,"

While we know that our differences are reflected in society, how do we acknowledge and resolve our differences? Another question we should ask is, do we want to? If we continue in our current direction, what will our future look like? If the past is prolog and nothing changes, what does our future bode?

Mark Twain was reported to have said, "if you don't read the newspaper, you're uninformed. If you read the newspaper, you're mis-informed." If true, when the only news of the day was a paper, no one was informed. His quote could be used today, substituting different news sites and sources. However, which sites and sources would you use? A friend of mine once said that they had a great distrust of the mainstream media. The friend went further, saying they had a distrust of all media. Does



that mean that the friend is uninformed?

Earlier, it was said that some people choose where they receive their news, providing the news fits with their beliefs. In this model, we are not turning to the news to be informed but rather to confirm what we already believe. Of course, a steady diet, from one perspective, does not inform anyone but only reinforces their currently held beliefs. Why are we afraid of hearing another perspective? Are our beliefs so strong that we automatically dismiss any contrary views?

Social psychologists, and they do exist, have studied this behavior. They say that people can have such strong beliefs that even when confronted with facts that discredit their position, they ignore the facts. It is as if the contrary facts do not exist. Social psychologists refer to this as "belief perseverance." One's beliefs can be so strong that people sometimes hold tight to their beliefs, even when confronted with facts that discredit their position. When individuals have firmly held

views, information that challenges those views can be ignored. Political debate is a good example of "Belief Perseverance" since both sides often deal with the same facts, but the information is filtered differently.

While our world seems small because of the fire hoses of news, the world is also large because of the diversity of information available. Our political and social differences appear similar to tribal culture, but that does not mean that we as individuals should remain uninformed.

"You must always be willing to truly consider evidence that contradicts your beliefs and admit the possibility that you could be wrong. Intelligence isn't knowing everything, it's the ability to challenge everything you know."

—Author unknown.

To read prior editions of *Words From Winterbult*, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Good Day, Neighbor

Valentine to educators

A French teacher once said to our class "French is not a translation of English." One of my classmates was trying to say a simple phrase such as "I am excited to go to the movies with you this weekend."

Verbs, adverbs and adjectives run in a different order in different languages, and the student was struggling with the basic grammatical differences between English and French. Each culture on Earth has developed language over centuries, some over millennia. The quote has stuck with me ever since. It is a great reminder that there is so much happening under the surface of our actions.

Educators—teachers, librarians, mentors, original thinkers—know that we are not translations of each other, and that the values of a shared country can have different interpretations in daily life.

Educators are keepers of books, and beautiful words such as freedom. In our current phase of social and political disagreement it is worth noting the complexity of human nature illustrated in the different meanings of a sin-

gle word. We learn the history of freedom in libraries and schools. From the Magna Carta, through the Separatists, to the US Constitution, human societies in the Western Hemisphere have hammered out governing documents that have sought to impose order when balancing the rights of citizens with the demands from, and the responsibilities of government.

We keep definitions of two groups of Americans in big boxes with tight lids, perhaps to avoid cross pollination of thoughts. One set of freedoms for Conservatives and one set of freedoms for Liberals. Independents, Greens, Others don't get a box yet, but the other two certainly want your votes.

Educators know that there is not one set of beliefs to fit the experience of every person, box or no box.

Freedom of religion, of speech, where to live, choose a profession, spend leisure time, travel, love, marriage and family. Everyone wants these.

Educators know that there are infinite ways for people to express themselves in the written word and visual art. Inspiration for expression comes from life experience and experiencing works by others.

Both of these authors were inspired by personal experience. In Orwell's case, there is a new book about him, *Burma Sahib* by Paul Theroux. Described in a Washington Post review by Nick Hilden, "...Paul Theroux imagines the life of young Eric Blair (the future George Orwell) when he was a novice police officer in colonial Burma." Orwell, as a young man, learned the subtle and not so subtle impact the British Empire had on populations around the world. You can reserve a copy of *Burma Sahib* on the Libby app for the Frederick County Public Library. At this moment there is a ten week wait. Twelve after me.

The books 1984 by George Orwell and Fahrenheit 451 by Ray Bradbury are literary classics. They each tell a cautionary tale of what it might be like to live under an authoritarian government. In 1984 the populace is forbidden freedom of thought. In Fahrenheit 451 the populace is forbidden exposure to creative thoughts. Every person doomed to mentally live inside their own boxed mind. Until someone breaks free, at least for a while. Freedom always exists, while elusive to have.

Educators know we don't read books to become the lead character. We read to find more of our own character. We relate to characters in a story so we can be more solid in real life. Fahrenheit 451 is a cautionary tale of destroying literature that someone declares unworthy. Most readers might not see themselves as the lead, the "fireman" Guy Montag, who burns books in his job of keeping order in society. In him we can see the trap of the darker side of human nature, and that human nature is in each of us. Educators know that we have to face our fears to become fearless. Perhaps most of all when the fear is how we might react in our own society.

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Educators know this bounty of human expression exists, and pave our way to discovery. They invite our comparison of ideas, so we can learn from the people who acted on ideas. We learn from literature and history.

The best Valentine gift to any educator would be to ban book bans.

The best educators lay paths for us to discover the meaning of what's going on around us. Banning books, taking full authoritarian control, has never ended well for societies of the world. A banned book is a stolen book, and robs each of us of an opportunity

to understand ourselves, as individuals and as a group.

Our beliefs are not carbon copies of each other. It is why freedoms for everyone is so important. It is why freedom of speech, religion and the press are enshrined in our Constitution and Amendments. For everyone, not just some of the people in one of our boxes.

Teacher, librarians and mentors know that we are not neat and tidy all the time, in every person. Humans are complicated. There are so many facets in our human nature. The conflicting groups into which we put ourselves are not mutually inclusive, exclusive, diametrically opposed, or mirror images of each other. As we find our way out of the current mess of public discourse, thank and support the educators among us.

French is not a translation of English. We Americans are not translations of each other.

True freedom means not being afraid of freedom for other people. What is America's next step? Future educators will teach that lesson, one hopes.

2024 is the year of the vote. Please make it count.

To read past editions of *Good Day Neighbor*, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

PASTOR'S DESK

Love is such an ambiguous word

Pastor Sabrina Slimmer
Keymar Evangelical
Wesleyan Church

Love is such an ambiguous word in the English language; we love our coffee, we love our pets, our kids, our spouses, and friends. There are so many things we use the word love to describe something or someone we like deeply.

How would you describe love? Many of us would say love is a feeling. Something or someone who stirs a certain emotion within us. You hear people say all the time "I feel in love." Or "we're getting a divorce because we just fell out of love." In this sense love is fleeting. Honestly, we are conditioned to think of love this way. Movies, music, plays, and tv programs tell us and show us all the time that "this is" what love is, a feeling.

The great thing about feelings is that they can at times direct us whether something is good or bad for us, but at the same time they are fleeting. One moment we feel good

about someone or something and the next moment we don't. The bad thing about relying on our feelings is they never stay the same, and at times can leave us feeling like we are riding an emotional rollercoaster.

The Greeks understood that love takes on so many different forms and they have six different words to describe the type of love someone is trying to portray. Let me share these with you. Xenia – Hospitality, generosity towards another person. Storge – this is used to describe a love between a parent and child or a child towards a parent. Philautia – This is used to describe the love one may have for themselves.

This word can take on two different meanings either self-obsessed or self-compassion. Philia – should sound familiar as it is the base word for Philadelphia, and yes, it's meaning is "brotherly love" it's a love found between friends, a type of loyalty, a love found in family or for one's community. Eros – is the love we commonly see in movies. It's the passion we see between two lovers.

Best understood as physical attraction, usually what draws us towards another person to ask them out on a date. Then there is agape – this is the unconditional love, it's the type of love the Bible describes God having towards us His creation.

The Bible tells us that God is love. Meaning it is who God is, it's His being, what He is made of. He couldn't stop being love any more than you can stop being you. He created us in love, and He commands us to love one another. But how can God command us to love someone? Is it any different than our parents telling us we have to say sorry when we don't mean it or feel it? He can't command us to have a feeling, can He?

The truth is God isn't commanding a feeling. He's commanding a choice. Remember the Bible tells us that God's love for us is unconditional or as the Greeks call it AGAPE. That is the choice we are faced with each time in any given relationship. Am I going to choose to show love to this person, or am I going to go with how I feel?

God showed us love that He gave. He gave His Son Jesus. Jesus showed us love by saying "Yes, I'll go and die on the cross for these people We created." The Holy Spirit shows us love by dwelling in us when we choose to follow Jesus.

Jesus described love as not a feeling but an action. He told us in John 15:13 "Greater love has no one than this, that someone lay down his life for his friends." I don't see any feelings in this verse, do you? What I do see is someone doing something selflessly for another person.

Did Jesus want to die on the cross, enduring the pain, and suffering that led to the cross and the torture of hanging on the cross till His death? The answer is no. In the garden before His arrest Jesus was praying to the God in Heaven asking "Father, if you are willing, remove this cup from me. Nevertheless, not my will, but yours, be done." (Lk 22:42)

It was in this moment that Jesus chose love. He chooses to turn away from anger, resentment, hurt, bias, and arrogance. He was the Son of God, people were wrongfully lying about Him, and soon they were going to physically hurt Him in the most torturous way, and if anyone could be arrogant why not the Son of God Himself?

Christ showed us love and how to love. We love by laying down and setting aside what I want, what I desire, what's best for me. We start to show love when we start thinking how I can help them, what can I do for them, what is best for them?

God's nature or God's default setting is love, but ours is not. We must actively choose each day to love. Our nature has been damaged by sin. We have no problem loving those who love us. With everyone else we fight feelings of anger, fear, hatred, and indifference. To love like God is not natural for us, it goes against every fiber of our being. We struggle hard to work against those feelings.

In Mike Hillson's book "Coffee with the Pastor The book 1, 2, & 3 John" He quotes Elie Wiesel an Auschwitz survivor and Nobel peace prize winner as once saying "the opposite of love is not hate, it's indifference." (Hilson 2021) To be

indifferent towards someone is to think something along the lines as "I don't really have an opinion on those people, but I don't hate them either." Many would call this tolerance, and technically it is. Our society today pushes the concept of tolerance everywhere we look. Indifference and tolerance go hand in hand. Elie Wiesel as quoted by Mike Hilson in his book goes on to say, "It was indifference that allowed the slaughter of millions of Jews during WWII." Being indifferent or tolerating another is not the love God commands from us. History in the Bible would look very different if God took a stance of indifference, don't you think?

To love isn't to be indifferent towards others. The Bible teaches "10 This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins. 11 Dear friends, since God so loved us, we also ought to love one another." 1John 4:10-11 The Bible also teaches in the verses before these that to know God is to love and whoever does not love does not know God. If we are indifferent to others, then we do not know God.

God's love is active, it's sending, moving, and acting on others behalf. God sent Jesus; Jesus willingly came as a sacrifice for our sins. That is how He showed His love to us. He didn't have to, "but His love for us compelled Him to come to us." (Hilson 2021) Our love like God's needs to be active. It's a choice, a decision to turn away from what we "feel like doing" and choosing to love even when the person is being difficult to love.

To end this, love isn't what we see in movies, or on tv programs. It's not a feeling or even the heat of passion. Love is loving like the Father, loving unconditionally for others around us. Putting their needs above our own. When we can love like the Father, then our love is made complete. We don't do this on our own volition. We can do this because the Holy Spirit dwells in us and helps us to love in a way that is un-natural to us, thus making us more like Christ in love, who is love, and lives in us.

To learn more about Keymar Wesleyan Church visit www.keymar-wesleyan.org or better yet, join them for Sunday service.

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THE BOOK OF DAYS

The Resurrectionist



February 12

The name of Sir Ashley Cooper recalls a traffic in the recent existence of which amongst us young men of our time might hesitate to believe. It is indeed a startling chapter in the history of civilization which is supplied by the methods formerly resorted to by anatomical teachers, for the purpose of obtaining subjects for dissection. From the year 1800 until the alteration of the law in 1832, the Resurrectionists, or 'Body-snatchers,' were almost the only sources of this supply: they were persons generally of the worst character, if we except the watchmen of that time, who were set to guard the burial-grounds, all of whom received a regular percentage on the sum obtained by the Resurrectionists.

The public were for many years aware of church-yards being robbed; it was known to be effected with wonderful rapidity and dexterity; but the modus was never fathomed by the public, and, curiously enough, no accidental circumstance occurred to furnish the explanation; even the members of the medical profession, with very few exceptions, were kept in ignorance of it, so careful were the Resurrectionists to remove all traces of their mode of working after the completion of their task.

It was generally supposed that the body-snatcher, in exhuming a body, first proceeded, as a novice would have done, to remove all the earth with which the grave had been recently filled; and having at length arrived at the coffin, that he then, with proper implements, forced off the lid, and so removed the body. This would have occupied considerable time, and rendered the body-snatch-

ers proportionately more liable to detection. To avoid this, they only cleared away the earth above the head of the coffin, taking care to leave that which covered the other end as far as possible undisturbed. As soon as about one-third of the coffin was thus exposed, they forced a very strong crowbar, made of a peculiar form for the purpose, between the end of the coffin and the lid, which latter, by using the lever as one of the first order, they generally pressed up, without much difficulty.

It usually happened, at this stage of the proceedings, that the superincumbent weight of the earth on the other portion of the coffin-lid caused it to be snapped across at a distance of about one-third of its length from the end. As soon as this had been effected, the body was drawn out, the death-gear removed from it, and replaced in the coffin, and finally the body was tied up and placed in its receptacle, to be conveyed to its destination. By this means, in the case of a shallow grave of loose earth, free from stones, the Resurrectionist would remove a body in a quarter of an hour. Silence was essential for the safety of the Resurrectionists; and in gravelly soils they had a peculiar mode of flinging out the earth, in order to prevent the rattling of the stones against the iron spade.

As soon as the body was raised, it was generally placed in a sack, and then carried to a hackney-coach or spring-cart, usually the latter. When bodies were sent from the country to the metropolis, they were generally packed in hat-crates, or in the casks in which hardwares are sent. Some-times the subject, instead of being deposited in a sack, was laid on a large square green baize cloth, the four

corners of which were tied together, so as to enclose the body. It was not directly conveyed to any dissecting-room, but was generally deposited in some half-built house, or other convenient building, until the following day.

The body-snatcher would then, dressed as a porter, swing the load over his shoulders, and often, even in broad daylight, carry it to its place of destination through the most crowded streets of the metropolis. At other times, the students would receive the bodies at their own houses, and convey them in a hackney-coach to the dissecting-rooms, the coachman being well paid for his job. Sometimes the driver was exorbitant in his demands, and was somewhat ingenious in enforcing them: a pupil who was conveying a body by coach to his hospital was astonished by finding himself in front of the Bow-street police-office, when the coachman, tapping at the front window, said to the affrighted youth, 'Sir, my fare to so-and-so is a guinea, unless you wish to be put down here.' The reply, without any hesitation, was, 'Quite right, my man; drive on.'

At the commencement of a new session at the hospitals, the leading Resurrectionists might be seen looking out for lecturers; and 'fifty pounds down, and nine guineas a body,' was often acceded to; the former being the opening fee from each school promised an exclusive supply. The competition for subjects, which the exhumators pretended to get up between the different schools, sometimes raised the prices so exorbitantly as to leave scarcely any remuneration for the lecturers. In some cases twenty pounds have been given for a single subject, in healthy seasons.

The competition occasionally led to revolting scenes of riot. Mr. Bransby Cooper, in his Life of Sir Ashley Cooper, relates that two Resurrectionists, having gained access to a private burial-ground near Holywell Mount by bribing the gravedigger, sometimes brought away six bodies in one night. Two other exhumators, hearing of this prosperity, threat-cued to expose the gravedigger if he did not admit them to share his plunder; but he was beforehand with them, and pointed them out to a public-house full of labourers, as body-snatchers come to bribe him to let them steal from his ground, when the whole crowd rushed after the Resurrectionists, who narrowly escaped their vengeance. They ran to a police-office, and, in a loud voice, told the sitting magistrate if he sent officers to Holywell Mount burial-ground they would

find every grave robbed of its dead; the rave-digger having sold them to the body-snatchers.' The indignant people rushed to the burial-ground, broke open the gates, dug-up the graves, and finding in them empty coffins, seized the gravedigger, threw him into one of the deepest excavations, began shovelling the earth over him, and would have buried him alive, but for the activity of the constables. The mob then went to his house, broke every article of his furniture, seized his wife and children, and dragged them through a stagnant pool in the neighborhood.

Such outrages as these, and the general indignation which arose from them, having interrupted the supply of bodies, other stratagems were resorted to. The Resurrectionists, by associating with the lower class of undertakers, obtained possession of the bodies of the poor which were taken to their establishments several days before interment, and often a clergyman read the funeral service over a coffin filled with brick-bats, or other substitute for the stolen body.

Nevertheless, so useful were the services of the regular Resurrectionists, that when they got into trouble, the surgeons made great exertions in their favour, and advanced large sums of money to keep them out of gaol, or support them during imprisonment. Sir Ashley Cooper expended hundreds of pounds for this purpose: a single liberation has been known to cost £160; and an anatomical teacher has paid £5 as a weekly allowance, continued for

two years, to a Resurrectionist confined in prison.

Among the papers left by Sir Ashley Cooper was found the following: 'Sir, I have been informed you are in the habit of purchasing bodies, and allowing the person a sum weekly. Knowing a poor woman that is desirous of doing so, I have taken the liberty of calling to know the truth. I remain, your humble servant. Sir Ashley Cooper's answer (copied on the back of the application) was brief: 'The truth is, that you deserve to be hanged for making such an unfeeling offer? A. C.'

The Resurrectionists mostly came to bad ends. There were but few regulars; the others being composed of Spitalfields weavers, or thieves, who found the disguise of this occupation convenient for carrying on their own peculiar avocations.

It is credibly reported of one body-snatcher, that, at his death, he left nearly £6,000 to his family. One, being captured, was tried and found guilty of stealing the clothes in which the bodies were buried, and was transported for seven years. A man who was long superintendent to the dissecting-room at St. Thomas's Hospital, was dismissed for receiving and paying for bodies sent to his employer, he then turned Resurrectionist, was detected and imprisoned, and died in a state of raving madness.

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



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ECOLOGY

Maple Fest: a reimagined twist on an old classic

Anne Gageby
 Director of Environmental
 Education
 Strawberry Hill Foundation

Maple sugaring is a time-honored tradition with roots that go beyond recorded history. Contemporary writers noted that Indigenous populations had been sugaring across North America for as long as the people could remember. It's truly a tale as old as time. Fortunately for us, this practice has not only endured but expanded. Over the centuries, maple sugaring has become a way of life for many, from backyard hobbyists to commercial producers to families who share laughter around a stack of steaming pancakes. Maple sugar is synonymous with life in North America. And what better way to celebrate it than with a festival?

This year, Strawberry Hill is proud to announce our freshly reimagined Maple Fest, a new twist on our old classic Mount Hope Maple Madness on Saturday and Sunday, March 2nd and 3rd from 8 to noon. If you've been to Mount Hope Maple Madness in the past, you'll recognize some familiar activities such as our pancake and sausage breakfast. Fans of our previous celebrations can still expect crowd favorites such as a tree identification walk and a modern sugar processing station. And, of course, an amazing time in the great outdoors. But overall, Maple Fest is so much more.

This year, Maple Fest will be an at-your-own-pace walking festival similar to fall festivals in our area. A ticket grants you admission to the pancake breakfast and our full festival of interac-

tive displays, demonstrations, and more. The entire festival layout includes a walk-through time, starting with our Native American station in which you can dive into the ancient history of maple sugaring and see a variety of genuine Native American artifacts and Native American-made replicas.

Continue through the centuries as you visit our colonial-style sugar bush, a maple sugaring camp complete with reenactors dressed in period clothing who will discuss maple sugaring through the 18th and 19th centuries. The sugar bush demonstrations will explore the processing of maple sugar and its revolutionary cultural influences over the centuries. While you're visiting the reenactment, try your hand at old-fashioned tree-tapping and learn how modern tools impacted the practice. Discover some old and new uses for maple sugar in the kitchen including recipes you can try at home.

Need to warm up? Stop by the campfire and hear new tales from the forest, including some fresh takes on European folktales kids of all ages will enjoy. And while you're walking the grounds, don't miss our updated modern processing station, an old favorite with a fun twist. A full schedule of events is available on our website, www.strawberryhill.org/maplefest.

All that walking can make you hungry. When you purchase a ticket, choose an hour block for your party's breakfast seating. Your party may come to Geigley Lodge and begin your meal anytime during the hour block you choose. The festival grounds will be open for ticket holders to explore at their own pace from 8am-12pm.

Wristbands will be given when you arrive at the check-in station.

Maple sugaring has been an important piece of Strawberry Hill's history for many years. Our annual maple sugaring festival began in 1997 as a small pancake breakfast to raise money for environmental education. Local backyard maple sugarers brought together knowledge and experience to create a community event that would raise money for our small organization.

Over the years Strawberry Hill has developed its maple-sugaring program into a robust and well-rounded experience that focuses on the science, history, and cultural influences of maple sugaring. We've also built a strong connection with Camp Eder and as a result, the pancake breakfast has grown into an event that serves hundreds of visitors each day. Since its inception, our pancake breakfast has alternated between one day, two days, one weekend, and two weekends. This year, we're going back to our roots and hosting Maple Fest for one weekend only. And this year's festival will be like no other.

Why would we switch things up? As any organization can tell you, change is inevitable. Strawberry Hill is constantly growing and adapting. When covid shut everything down, we pivoted, regained our footing, and kept moving forward. As the world reopened, so did we. And through it all, we've framed our future around continuing our mission, to inspire stewardship of our natural world by connecting the community with educational opportunities. With that in mind, we've taken the opportunity to reimagine what our favorite pancake breakfast could be. All while respecting and appreciating where it comes from. Maple sugaring, after all, is a Mount Hope tradition and one that



This year the Maple Fest will include re-enactors dressed in period clothing to discuss maple sugaring through the 18th and 19th centuries.

many of us have loved since we were quite young.

Those of us who remember the first pancake breakfasts will appreciate how far we've come, as an organization and as a community. From the joy of breakfast on Strawberry Hill campus to the move up the road to Fellowship Baptist Church and now down to beautiful Camp Eder, it's been many incredible years of laughter, friendship, and fun. Which is why we're so excited to bring you this year's Maple Fest. Because at its heart, maple sugaring is community. It's a celebration with friends and family, a festive farewell to long winter days, and a look toward the coming spring.

So, join us on Saturday and Sunday, March 2nd and 3rd, as we take a walk back through time and honor the traditions of long ago while learning new and exciting discoveries about the future of this uniquely North American treat. Whether you've attended Mount Hope Maple Madness in the past, or this will be your first time joining in the celebrations, the 2024 Maple Fest will be a fun and immersive experience into the world of maple sugaring.

If you're unable to make it to the fes-

tival or just want to continue the sugaring fun, schedule a private maple sugaring program at Strawberry Hill or check out our public homeschool maple sugaring demonstration on Wednesday, March 6th at Strawberry Hill. There are two program times to choose from: 11 to 2. Each program runs about 90 minutes and is entirely outdoors. To register for this event, please visit our website or call the office. Our homeschool maple sugaring demonstration is \$10 per participant over the age of four. Our maple sugaring program has been redesigned with the Pennsylvania Department of Education's STEELS standards in mind and can be used in a homeschool portfolio.

For more information about Strawberry Hill Foundation, as well as to purchase tickets in advance for Maple Fest, please call 717-642-5840 or visit www.strawberryhill.org. Tickets are \$20 for adults, \$15 for kids ages 4 to 12. Children ages 3 and under are free.

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

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REAL SCIENCE

Science...

Michael Rosenthal

... the word scares many people, but the principles of science dominate every event that occurs. Even when you are not a scientist, or even a follower of science, science consistently affects your life.

I fell in love with science, chemistry in particular, in high school, where I was lucky enough to have a wonderful chemistry teacher. So, I have spent the ensuing years of my life studying and teaching college chemistry, a subject of which I've never tired. In this article I'll touch upon a number of subjects that have been in the news lately, and that often have generated controversy, partly due to misunderstanding of the underlying scientific principles, but also often due to a yet incomplete scientific understanding of the issue. In ensuing articles I'll explore these and other topics and encourage readers to make suggestions for topics, to comment to me on reaction to the things I write, and to develop a protocol of learning that goes beyond the simple publicity headlines. I'll respect opinions that differ from mine, but I'll hope for and encourage opinions based on scientific findings, rather than on emotion. We all (even I!) have emotional reactions, but my hope is to balance them with scientific analyses.

Let's start with something with which I had a personal experience – Unidentified Flying Objects (UFOs). Over the years there has been a romance with UFOs, and the belief that we have been and continue to be visited by those from other parts of the universe. The beliefs were encouraged by the supposed sightings in New Mexico during the Cold War, and the culture built around the town, Roswell, in southern New Mexico. There is no firm evidence that we have ever been visited by aliens! Roswell has become a tourist center around the notion of alien visitors, and all of us are aware of the many science fiction films and science fiction books written about them. But the fact remains that there is no documented evidence that an alien has ever set foot on earth!

I have two personal anecdotes. Crossing the Hudson River once near Kingston, NY (I was a fac-

ulty member in those days at Bard College), I saw a mysterious silver, elliptical object hovering over the wetlands! It was hovering, it was an object, and it was unidentified! It would have been so easy to believe it was piloted by aliens. The second story occurred when visiting Roswell. While leaving the Alien Museum, a man behind us said to the staff member that the museum had absolutely convinced him that aliens had visited us. Believe it or not! Until firmer evidence comes along, I cannot believe it.

Another anecdote from that period involves overhead power lines. To a great extent due to a book and a subsequent three-part series of articles written in 1989 in the reputable and popular (we have subscribed for many years) New Yorker magazine, it became a popular belief that microwave radiation from overhead power lines could cause cancer. This belief led to a period of fear, even of driving one's car under these power lines on a road trip. Electromagnetic radiation must have the energy high enough to do damage to human cells based on the equation: Energy = Planck's constant X frequency, where frequency is inversely proportional to wavelength. Thus high frequency radiation has high energy and can cause cell damage, and low frequency radiation cannot do so. This is why unfiltered sunlight, which has ultraviolet radiation, can tan you and can damage cells, and heat, which does not have such radiation, cannot do so. And why do you get warmed but not get sunburned when sunlight passes through the window? Glass absorbs the high-energy ultraviolet radiation and passes the low energy infrared radiation. We now recognize that there is not enough high energy radiation radiated from power lines to damage human cells.

Sometimes we discover things that do have the potential to harm us. You may have read recently that arsenic in rice, beer, and fruit juices poses a health hazard. It is agreed that inorganic arsenic poses a health hazard, and there are no federal limits for it in juice, rice, or most other food. Of particular concern is arsenic consumption by children. In May 2014 the Food and Drug Administra-

tion (FDA) announced that they are "conducting a risk assessment as the next step in a process to help manage possible risks associated with the consumption of rice and rice products". I believe that this is a matter worth watching, and that eaters of rice should seek rice with the lowest levels of arsenic. Articles in Consumer Reports magazine, the most recent in the January 2015 issue, are useful in learning about this issue.

Can we trust the FDA? The FDA has done much good work to recognize danger to us from food and drugs. It is worth watching their pronouncements. Can we believe that they are totally unbiased and always correct? Well, I am a believer in having skepticism of scientific results. It is well to examine the source of information to be sure the researcher is competent and unbiased, and then it is well to be alert for the confirmation of results, since even the most honest and well-meaning scientist can make a mistake. In our household we are continuing to eat rice, but we seek a product with low arsenic levels, and we limit our consumption.

So how do we tell whose data and results are less likely to be wrong and are not biased? One must always be skeptical of those who are likely to gain from the results. To that end, I have a good deal of faith in Consumer Reports magazine, in articles published in respected scientific journals (for example, Science, the monthly publication of the AAAS, the American Association for the Advancement of Science), a little less faith in government agencies (politics!), and real skepticism of newspaper and magazine articles that only reflect the opinions of the writer. One of the tenets of science is that one person's opinion should be reviewed and verified by others before publication. Even then mistakes are made, some accidentally, and some willfully. (We will talk about Cold Fusion as an example in a later article.)

Finally it is well to take note of the presence of the phrase, "This product has not been evaluated by the Food and Drug Administration". When you see this phrase, beware! The product may not hurt you, but it usually means it has not been proven that



Snake oil is a term used to describe deceptive marketing, healthcare fraud, or a scam. Similarly, snake oil salesman is a common label used to describe someone who sells, promotes, or is a general proponent of some valueless or fraudulent cure, remedy, or solution. The term comes from the 'snake oil' that used to be sold as a cure-all elixir for many kinds of physiological problems.

it will do you any good. Many, many ads on television and even full-page or multi-page advertisements in respected newspapers and magazines for products to improve your health have this phrase on them. It usually means

that it has no proven positive effect, other than to potentially make money for the seller.

To read past editions of Real Science, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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IN THE COUNTRY

The Maple Mafia

Tim Iverson

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



"A sap run is the sweet good-bye of winter. It is the fruit of the equal marriage of the sun and the frosts." - John Burroughs, Signs and Seasons, 1886

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 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 produc-

ers 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, \$18million 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 your 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 9, 10, 16, and 17 from 10 – 2:00. 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 other articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



Maple Syrup Festival

MARCH 9-10 & 16-17 • 10AM-2PM
Cunningham Falls State Park—Houck Area

Welcome spring at Cunningham Falls State Park by learning how maple syrup is made from the sap of trees in the park. Enjoy a traditional pancake and sausage breakfast, stock up on maple syrup products, including syrup, maple cream, and candy. Syrup making demonstrations every hour. The event supports the Friends of Cunningham Falls. For more information, call Cunningham Falls State Park 301-271-7574.

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IN THE COUNTRY

Catoctin Christmas bird count

Kathy Brown
Frederick Bird Club

The idea of a Christmas Bird Count was introduced 124 years ago to counter and document the effects of unregulated hunting. The worst damage was due to “market” hunting, the slaughter of billions (yes, billions) of birds for eastern food markets. Total lack of regulation lead to the extermination of the Passenger Pigeon and dangerous decimation of populations of many duck, goose, and swan populations.

December 16 was the 75th year of the Catoctin Christmas Bird Count. The Bird Count covers a 15-mile diameter circle in north Frederick County with Thurmont as the epicenter. The circle includes a few towns and a lot of open country including state, national and local parks, forests, numerous waterways, fisheries, and endless farm fields. The Frederick Bird Club, a chapter of the Maryland Ornithological Society, has sponsored the Christmas Bird Count for many years. It is a very tangible example of citizen science and an ideal way to enjoy a winter’s day in beautiful northern Frederick County.

Most of the birds seen during winter counts are year-round residents, like chickadees, cardinals, hawks, and woodpeckers. By the time of the count, migrating summer residents have already headed south for warmer territories with open water and plentiful food. We do enjoy a few winter-only visitors that migrate from the colder north primarily due to lack of food. Frederick County’s most common winter visitors are Dark-eyed Juncos and White-throated Sparrows, often seen at the base of bird feeders in the coldest months. Maryland’s rivers, bays and coast also host a variety of ducks, geese and swans during the winter.

The 22 count participants spent the day driving, bicycling and, where possible, walking through their assigned territories. “Counters” count every bird seen and heard, so the ability to ID birds by sound is very important. Some birders are excellent at IDing birds by sound, an invaluable skill when trying to identify a small, dark shadow, buried in a dense thicket.

This year’s results were slightly better than last year, I suspect due to the higher number of experienced counters and improved territory coverage. The species count was 70 vs 66 for last year, and the total number of individual birds seen or heard was 10,373 vs 9,176.

As with prior counts, I compared averages for each species for the most current ten years with averages for the prior ten years. Trends of recent years continue. Many of our common species show significant population declines. A few species like the Bald Eagle and Common Raven continue to show impressive population gains. A recent positive change

is the increase in sightings for the Red-headed Woodpecker in just the last three years. Unfortunately, that increase is possibly due to the many trees in the county recently killed by beetles.

Red-shouldered Hawks continue to do well (up 55%), but Northern Harrier, Red-tailed Hawk and Sharp-shinned Hawk numbers are much lower.

Studies show that grassland bird populations in North America have declined by more than 50%. Habitat loss is a probable factor in these declines, particularly agricultural intensification and development. Grassland birds like Northern Bobwhite and the non-native Ring-neck Pheasant are no longer found in Frederick County. Sightings for one of my favorite birds, the American Kestrel, have decreased by 33%. This iconic grassland bird is in serious trouble.

A look at the long history of the Christmas Bird Count reveals a few amazing – at least to us now – species numbers. During the mid-60s, there were astounding high count numbers of several common birds: 42 thousand Red-winged Blackbirds; 100 thousand Common Grackles; and 52 thousand Brown-headed Cowbirds. This year, the combined total for all three species was less than 100. In the late 60s, 680 American Tree Sparrows were reported; the average for the last ten years has been two. The Field Sparrow high count was 175 in the mid-50s; the average for the last ten years has been eight.

Many things are contributing to bird population declines including habitat loss, window-strikes, pesticides and herbicides, free-roaming cats, and even light pollution. But climate change is now recognized as the biggest ongoing threat to birds – and yes, humans.

Climate change makes extreme weather more likely. The news this year again featured endless stories about record heat, record numbers of tornadoes, devastating wildfires, massive floods, and, less visible but equally dangerous, perma-frost melting. Only concerted action at the national and international level will keep things for getting worse.

Many projects are already underway to achieve the target of a 40% reduction in US greenhouse emission levels by 2030. Meaningful change will take time, but there are seven simple actions Audubon encourages everyone to do now to help birds and our planet: make windows safer; keep cats indoors; reduce lawn and use native plants; avoid pesticides; drink shade grown coffee; avoid single use plastic; and join the Citizen Science Effort.

I want to add two of my own. First and foremost, support national, state, and local officials who have the courage to make the difficult decisions required if the beautiful world we call home can be preserved for future generations. Second, if you can, support the many non-profit organizations that work tirelessly to combat climate change throughout the world.



Red-shouldered Hawks continue to do well in the Catoctin region, showing a 55% increase over last year’s count.

If you are interested in learning more about the birds of Frederick County, the Frederick Bird Club www.frederickbirdclub.org and Audubon Society of Central Maryland www.centralaudubon.org welcome guests and new members. Visit their websites to learn about meetings, bird-focused presentations, bird counts, and bird walks and outings throughout the year.

To read other articles by Kathy Brown, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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THE MASTER GARDENER

Winter pruning

Maritta Perry Grau
Frederick County Master Gardener

“I can see clearly now...all obstacles in my way”: Some Dos and Don'ts of Pruning

As I write this column and look out at the bare trees surrounding our house, I just can't get Johnny Nash's 1972 popular song, "I Can See Clearly Now," out of my head. One of the advantages of this dormant, leafless season is that I can see more clearly than during other seasons where I need to prune trees, shrubs, and vines.

You may be looking out your own windows, itching to get to those broken limbs that hang awkwardly from the trees or that fell during January's snow storms or subsequent heavy rains. Or perhaps you're a little hesitant to grab long pole pruners and saws or your smaller pruning shears and saws, wondering just what to do and where.

Why should you prune? We usually prune to remove diseased or dead limbs, to improve the overall shape, to remove unwanted limbs, or to change the direction in which branches are growing. With young or newly planted trees, you may want to leave the lower branches on for a few years, as they will contribute to nourishing the tree and will help protect the trunk from pests. As the tree grows, these lower branches should be clipped off before they reach one inch in diameter, according to the UMD web site.

Why prune now instead of in warmer months? Pruning now has several advantages. For one, you usually don't have to deal with disease, insects, or sap "bleeding." (Please note that sap "bleeding" usually occurs during the tree's growing season, and the release of sap does not damage the tree.) In addition, you can more easily see where branches rub against each other, where "water sprouts" are growing (vertical branches that are growing straight up from a horizontal branch), and where to thin the canopy to allow better air circulation and light into the interior of deciduous trees.

However, before you start cutting, make sure your pruning tools are sanitized and sharp—sanitized so that you don't spread disease from one tree to another, and sharp so that you make smooth, clean cuts that don't damage the bark of the plants.

Secondly, know how far back on the branch you're going to prune. Before you cut a twig or branch, notice the small collar of wood surrounding the base, where it attaches to a larger branch or to the trunk. Cut close enough to that collar that you don't leave a branch stub sticking out, but do leave that small branch collar.

Ready to start pruning? The Old Farmer's Almanac and the University of Maryland Extension Service websites suggest additional "do's" and "don'ts" of pruning:

Never remove more than one-fourth of a tree's or shrub's branches at one time.

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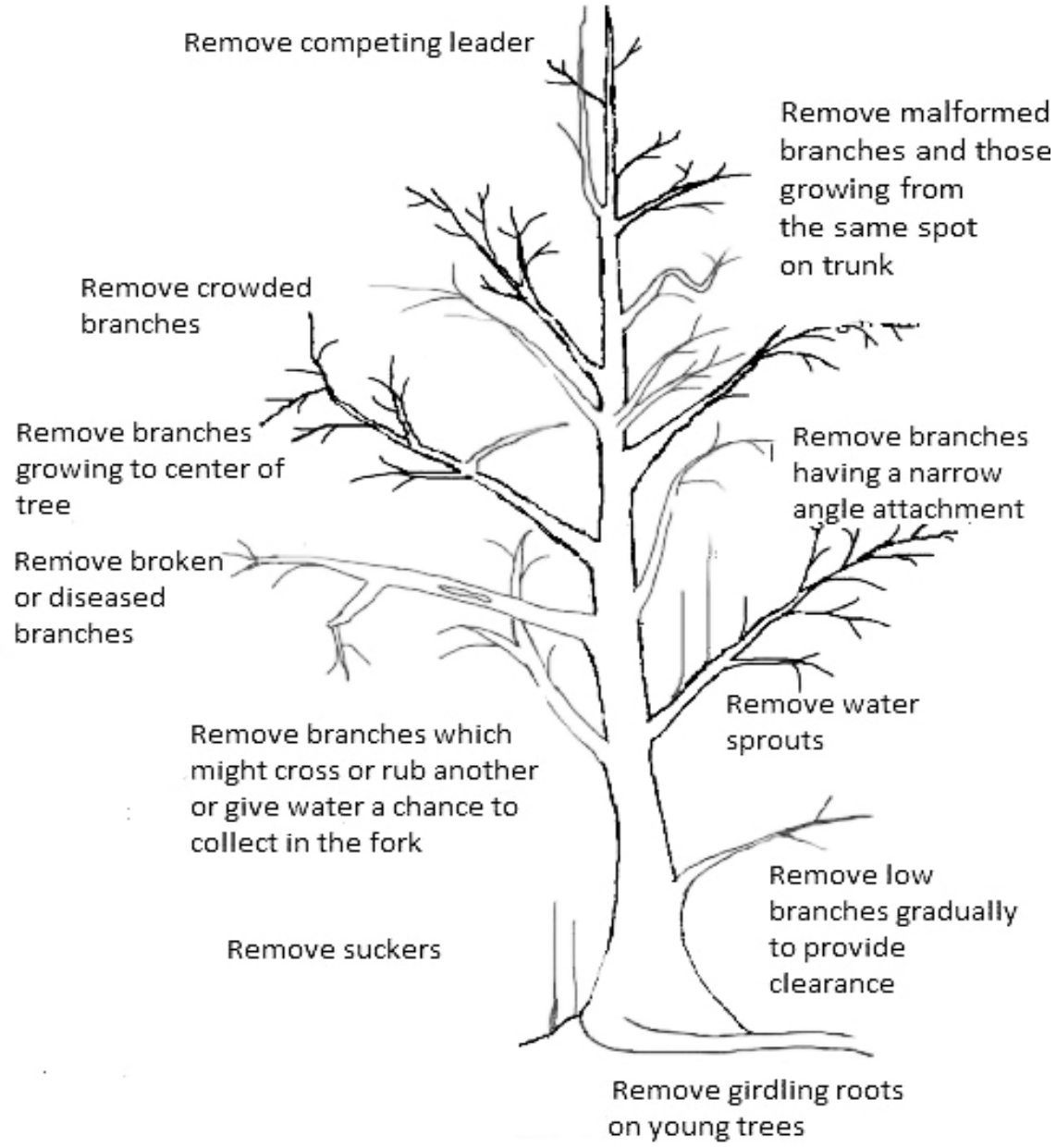


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If you are pruning a large, heavy branch, first, make sure you position yourself so that the branch doesn't fall on you. It's a good idea to have a spotter, if possible. Some experts also suggest that you make three cuts: first, on the lower side of the branch; second, above that cut on the top side of the branch; and finally,

a cut all the way through, just outside the branch collar. For very high branches, you may want to consider hiring professionals rather than trying to do it yourself.

When pruning, first take out dead and diseased branches. You may have quite a few of those after January's snow and ice! Where possible, try to cut back broken

branches to that collar mentioned earlier.

Remove overgrown and smaller branches to increase light and air at the tree's crown.

Where branches cross/rub against each other, cut one of the branches back; keep the branch that seems strongest, that grows in a more outwardly direction.

Another aspect of pruning that's easier to see now is identifying the dominant leader of the tree (this doesn't apply to bushes). The dominant leader "is the tallest, strongest, main branch of the tree," says the UMD site. Sometimes you'll see two dominant leader stems. Choose the straightest and strongest stem, and snip off the other one. Occasionally, too, the dominant leader will break. When that happens, you can take a nearby horizontal branch, gently bend it to a vertical position, and tie it to what's left of the old dominant leader or to a long, vertical stick to train the branch to become the leader.

While much of the advice on pruning remains the same, a couple of long-popular bits have changed.

Frederick County Master Gardeners February Seminars

February 3: "Bay-wise Principles" Encourage wildlife; control stormwater runoff; mow & water efficiently; mulch appropriately & recycle yard waste; fertilize, plant & manage yard pests wisely; and protect the waterfront. These 'best practices' can earn you Bay-Wise certification - and a distinctive yard sign.

January 24: "Indoor Plants & Wellness" Having indoor plants just makes us feel better. Learn about the therapeutic benefits of houseplants.

Identify plants that can make for a healthier indoor environment.

All seminars are free unless otherwise stated. Seminars are held at the University of Maryland Extension office at 330 Montevue Lane, (off Rosemont Avenue) in Frederick, from 10 to noon.

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



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THE MASTER GARDENER

First, if you're pruning a newly planted tree, or considering how to prune one that is stressed, prune only broken or damaged branches. Gardeners used to advise cutting back a lot of the upper branches to balance what was lost in the transfer of the root system with a newly planted tree, but no longer. Now, experts know that "leaves and shoot tips provide food and growth substances that stimulate root production," so we should leave branches in place as much as possible, notes the UMD site.

Second, as a young gardener, I was taught—and read in many gardening books—that when pruning, I should paint the resultant tree wounds with a sealant. And like many of my fellow gardeners, I continued that practice for quite a few years. However, in the last 20 years or so, scientists have determined that trees actually mend their own wounds and suffer fewer attacks of disease and pests without a sealant.

Scientists call the tree's ability to mend its wounds "compartmentalizing"; that is, the tree isolates the place where a branch has been removed, whether through

pruning, through disease, or being broken off in a storm. Slowly, the tree forms a natural scab, or callus, a specialized wood that gradually creeps over the wound from the edges and eventually to the center, until the entire wound has been covered; harmful organisms, as well as internal rot, are repelled by this callus. However, when we paint those wounds with a sealant, we prevent "the oxidative processes from progressing naturally, which slows callus formation..." according to Teo Spengler in "Why You Should Almost Never Use Pruning Sealer" on the Gardening Know How website.

Besides reviewing methods of pruning trees, you may also want to check on the recommendations for pruning shrubs. Pruning shrubs may be a little more complicated than pruning trees. First, you need to determine whether the shrub blooms in the spring or the summer; second, whether it blooms on "new" or "old" wood—new wood being wood that sprouts in the spring, soon followed by flowers; old wood being that which grew last year, with flowers

and leaves sprouting from last year's branches.

Some shrubs that form flowers on "new" wood, wood that will grow in the coming spring, include abelia, beautyberry, butterfly bush, summer- or fall-blooming clematis, smooth hydrangeas, panicle hydrangeas, potentilla, roses, rose of Sharon, dogwoods, Japanese spirea, St. Johnswort, and summersweet. If you aren't sure whether your plant blooms on new or old wood, consult an

-edu web site or call us at 301-600-1596.

Wait until late spring or early summer (after flowers fade) to prune shrubs that bloom on "old" wood (i.e., growth from the previous year). Such shrubs include azalea, bridal wreath spirea, spring-blooming clematis, cotoneaster, deutzia, flowering almond, forsythia, mophead hydrangeas, lilacs, mock orange, mountain laurel, and ninebark, among others. If you cut the branches before the shrub

has bloomed, you'll cut off the buds that would've opened this spring!

As for evergreens, you will probably only prune those for size, shape, or to remove dead/diseased areas. Again, the dormant season is the season of choice for pruning. If you must prune pines, do those in early June or July, according to the University of Maryland website.

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

Small Town Gardener

No interest in 'Winter interest'

Marianne Willburn

I have developed a strong antipathy for the term 'winter interest' in garden writing. Do we truly have nothing better to say about winter gardens or the plants growing in them than to damn them with faint praise? I have been guilty myself, but now repent wholeheartedly.

To term something 'winter interest' is to reject the capacity of the winter garden to charm on its own terms. It is to begin in the premise that the winter garden is markedly inferior to the summer garden; and as such, cannot hope to inspire, energize, or uplift the gardener, but only clinically interest him. As in, "It's a pity everything looks like hell out there. But I did notice a gum-ball-pruned holly while making a beeline for the front door."

By that definition, an abandoned wheelbarrow is winter interest, as is that pile of black pots you meant to stash away but never did. They drew the eye for a moment, disappointed it, then released it in a wash of guilt and/or regret. It is at core a statement of absence and comparison. We do not use or need its equivalent in spring and summer — no one in their right mind terms a tulip "spring interest." Judge Them Differently

Yes there is less to admire. Less in-your-face frippery — less of the cheap and easy thrill. But there is a deeper, more resonant quality to the winter landscape. The superficiality of one's summer play is laid bare, and we are forced to contemplate the underlying structure — or lack thereof — and fix it if we dare. We are faced with our weaknesses as gardeners — the bones that were never planted, the structures unpainted, the winding paths never laid. That pile of pots.

Enough winter interest! Expect more of your garden. Expect more of your plants. How much better to create a scene and name the attributes of a plant or structure in the winter garden for what they are adding to the overall effect, in the same way we effortlessly discuss those characteristics during the growing season?

In summer, grasses soften hard lines and provide movement. In winter, that sexy sway stiffens and morphs into fountains of tawny beige. In summer, an uber-thin 'Taylor's' juniper is a vertical statement, in winter, it becomes a launching point, drawing your gaze upwards to an icy blue sky. The pinkish cast on a 'Silver Lining' pyracantha is something unachievable in the summer garden — revel in that blush! Do not hand it second place in a beauty contest with the too-easy condescension of 'winter interest.'

Big Picture Thinking Is Required
Do we dare move beyond winter

interest and claim our gardens in winter? To build a winter garden, or at least, a garden that continues to enchant and surprise us with strong colors, textures, shapes and views, a layering, patient approach is necessary — especially in smaller gardens where players must assume many parts. That requires more than a quick and casual approach to planting.

For instance, a red or yellow twiggled Cornus (or a bit of both in the cultivars 'Midwinter Fire' or 'Arctic Fire') is a striking beacon in the winter months, but the shrub is dull during the growing season. It must be tucked in where it can bide its time least offensively as a green backdrop in order that it may stun the pants off you the minute it loses its leaves and the temperatures drop.

But that's not enough. It must echo elsewhere — even if it's simply a bunch of pruned whips from the original shrub poked into potting soil in a pot or pots on the porch. One shrub on an arctic tundra qualifies under the insipidity of 'winter interest,' two or more bright fiery displays make it look like you planned it.

Because You Did.

One Thing Leads to Another

And from there perhaps you build on a good thing, underplanting your deciduous shrubs with some resilient hellebores, cheerful snowdrops and winter aconite, Chionodoxa, Puschkinia, etc. — plants and bulbs that will play a huge part at soil level and then either disappear or happily enjoy a summer shading.

Layer follows layer — it takes time to build a garden that holds its own in winter. We commit to that endeavor when we stop talking in terms of 'interest' and start talking in terms of colors, shapes, textures and views.

Right now on Instagram (@marianne.willburn) I'm celebrating the winter garden and the many gifts of this cold but captivating season all the way up to the first day of spring. If you're having trouble moving from 'Winter interest' to 'Winter garden,' join me there and perhaps I can change your mind. - MW.

Marianne is the author of *Big Dreams, Small Garden*. You can read more at www.smalltowngardener.com.

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PETS

Empty nest

Jennifer Vanderau
Cumberland Valley
Animal Shelter

I didn't expect the house to be so quiet. I knew it would be a little strange, but this is almost cacophonous in its silence.

When I helped Lilly move into her dorm room last weekend – I knew my life was going to change. Anna went off to school two years ago and she's doing so well, I couldn't be prouder. I knew Lilly will flourish just like her sister did.

Being a single mom was so tough. There were some days I really didn't think I was going to make it, but somehow the three of us battled through and came out on the other side and I have two very strong, intelligent young women who I am not only proud to call my daughters, but also honored to have as friends.

It's just. What do I do now? Sure, I've got work and it's good and I've got friends there, but for the last 20 years, my true purpose in this life has been to care for my kids and make sure they had what they needed and that they were okay.

Some days I catch myself just standing in one of their bedrooms, looking around. It's kind of skeletal. Nothing of them really remains. Remnants from when they were younger, sure. Stuffed

animals and a few dolls and childhood trappings, but the essence of them, I know, is really somewhere else.

Can you believe I leave the television on that ridiculous Kardashian show just to make it feel like they're still here?

I know it's crazy and yet. Here I am. Just me. Not really sure who to be anymore.

Weeks pass and I'm working myself into what I think may be a serious depression and I try to feel valuable somewhere, somehow, and I absolutely treasure the phone calls I get from my girls when they tell me about their lives and their classes and the friends they're making, but it just doesn't feel the same. It's different from when they were right next to me talking about that kind of thing.

I call in sick for the second day in a row even though I don't have any real symptoms – I just can't seem to get out of bed.

I've managed to turn on the coffee pot when I hear it. This odd sound. It's almost like the cry of a baby, but not really, and I would swear it's coming from my front bushes.

I'm in a horribly stained robe and worn out bedroom slippers when I open the front door. There, under the boxwoods beside my porch is the tiniest little kitten I think I have ever seen. The little thing looks up at the noise of the door and he doesn't run. Not at all. In fact, he takes a hesitant step forward – one little paw on my porch.

I whisper, somewhat reverently I'm afraid, "Hey there, little one. Where did you come from?"

The meow this time is much louder and the steps toward me are far more certain. I can hear the purring already.

When the ball of orange fur gets to my feet, I swear he looks up, right into my eyes and something happens. It's as though I can hear him ask, "Can you help me?"

And in that instant, on that somewhat chilly morning on my porch, I know my house won't be quite so empty anymore.

I get him an appointment at the vet and find out he really is a "him." I name him Oliver and I get him treated for fleas and purchase all sorts of supplies for him and that first night, I kid you not, he sleeps on a pillow by my head.

From that moment on, we're pretty much inseparable.

He greets me at the door when I come home at night and we watch TV together (no more Kardashians for me!) and it all just somehow fits.

I become the lady at work that's always showing pictures of her cat to all the other employees and I know it drives some of them crazy, but I just love little Oliver so much.

The girls say things like, "We were never allowed to have a pet growing up and now you have a cat???" But the first time they meet him, they fall as hard for him as I did.

And this time, when they pull out of the driveway to head back to school, I feel that same pang in my heart I always have, but just as I finish my sigh, Oliver hops up beside me and I know that even though my girls may be growing up and getting on with their lives, I'll always have someone to care for.

Little Oliver, who arrived just when I needed him, seems just fine with it.

Jennifer Vanderau is the Publications and Promotions Consultant 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.



Pickleball is a 3-month-old boy who just loves attention. He also enjoys feather toys and is going to make someone an amazing companion. Pickleball would love to know what a forever home is all about. Could you show him?



Quince came into the shelter after being found abandoned in a house with 20 other cats in July. He was covered in fleas, skinny, and was missing a lot of fur and his left ear was damaged. Since his arrival at the shelter, he has been treated for the fleas, gained some weight and his fur has grown back. Can you show this sweet 3-year-old boy what a forever home is all about?



Forrest is a handsome, smart guy who loves to be with you! He is a 2-year-old terrier mix who knows sit, down and shake. Forrest enjoys going out to the yard to run and play! He would do best in a home without cats because he likes to chase them and will not leave them alone. Due to his size and energy level, Forrest may be too much for small children so an age restriction for children in the home may apply. Can you help this sweet boy out of a kennel and into a forever home?



At the Beginning of December 2023, CVAS had 12 dogs surrendered after their owner had passed away. Trooper was one of them. He was the dirtiest of the group and did very well with several baths since his arrival. He has lived his whole life in a barn stall and has come a long way since that day in December, but as far as we know, Trooper has never lived in a house and will need time to adjust. He will need a home where people have the patience to work with him in new situations and help him blossom. He is a 3-year-old Shepherd mix who is always on the move. He enjoys going to the play yard to smell all the interesting smells and would love to find a home where he can go on walks. Do you have the right spot for Trooper?

For more information about Pickleball, Quince, Forrest, or Trooper 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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Stephani Rickerd & Aslan

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.

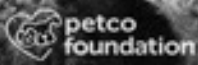
I'd Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

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



Prius

Shawn Snyder

At the Frederick County Division of Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center, kitten season is usually between the months of April through September. “Kitten season” is a term that refers to the timeframe that animal shelters experience what seems like an endless intake of pregnant cats, nursing queens (Mama cats), and kindles of kittens of all ages. However, weather patterns in general will affect the length of kitten season as well as the population of felines it generates. While it is still winter time, we want to be sure to remind potential adopters that we actually still do have young cats available for adoption that arrived last kitten season.

Prius was brought to the shelter on July 14th along with several other kittens from the same person. Recognizing Prius’ quiet nature, we categorized him as a Fraidy Cat. Shelter Fraidy Cats receive special TLC from staff and volunteers who understand that not all felines are created equal. Fraidy Cats are adoptable, but not as resilient or adventuresome as other cats or kittens. They do best in a home that understands the concept of giving them space while incorporating them into the family—an effort in balancing skill and patience. From the shelter perspective, Fraidy Cats are capable of acclimating to new homes just like any other cat. However, potential adopters have overlooked shy Prius for his more outgoing littermates. As

a result, the others have already been adopted.

Prius has now been with the shelter for over six months, placing him in the age category we refer to as “juvenile.” He is current on all vaccines, including rabies prevention. He has been neutered, microchipped, and tested negative for Feline Leukemia and Feline Immunodeficiency Virus. And, like many other shelter felines, has recovered well from an upper respiratory infection. Prius is essentially ready to go.

There are benefits to every age of animal, including our juvenile population. With juveniles, you get the play level and young enthusiasm of a kitten while bypassing the getting-into-everything-possible stage. You have a relatively young cat that will still spend fifteen-plus years as



a family companion. If you think your family would be a good match for Prius, we encourage you to visit her at the shelter. If you have the patience and interest in making a difference for other cats like Prius, consider fostering or contact us to

learn more about our Fraidy Cat program.

To learn more about Prius and the Fraidy Cat Program call 301-600-1546, or better yet, come in and meet Prius

Taco

Shawn Snyder
Frederick County Animal Shelter

Dogs can be incredibly resilient creatures with an amazing capacity to trust and love and at FCAC there’s no better example of this than Taco. There’s a common misconception that shelter animals have been abused and/or neglected. Fortunately, that’s just not the case. Most of our residents have been well cared for and loved for majority of their lives. Sadly, however, Taco falls into the minority. This handsome terrier mix has been abandoned not once, but twice. When we first met him in April of 2023, he was living in an unsanitary, empty house infested with fleas and rats. He had only the trash left behind for toys and a bed and no one to give him the cuddles he adores. But you’d never guess this is where Taco came from when he greets you with a huge pittie smile, friendly tail wag and big, soulful brown eyes.

After going without them for most of his life, Taco really thrives on the simple things...Stability and Consistency. We’ve found that a routine for meals, potty breaks and most importantly exercise allow Taco to be the best version of himself. Training and protocols like the Say Please Program help him understand exactly

what’s expected of him and redirect him when he gets too excited.

While some may view training as work, for Taco it’s game and one of his favorites at that. He loves figuring out how to win all those delicious treats. So far he has mastered sit and paw. He’s also familiar with down, find it and search. He’s incredibly treat motivated and will work for most any food.

Taco’s love of training proves that he’s got brains, but he’s also got brawn. Our boy Taco is a bit of a gym rat. Not only does he think exercise is fun, but it’s an important part of his mental health regimen. He’s definitely a fan of cardio and a fenced yard with plenty of room to run would be great for him, but he also enjoys hikes and long walks in the park. When it comes to toys, he’ll play with them a little but he doesn’t have a favorite and really prefers to zoom back and forth.

Also known for being a social butterfly, Taco is the complete package. He’s friendly with every human he meets and while he’s quite energetic, he loves a cuddle. His go to is to put his front paws on your lap and soak up all the pets while his tail wags with joy. He’s also been known to give you paw for a little hand holding.

What about furry friends? When Taco first came to live with us we were told that he fought with his for-

mer housemate, Champ. However, they were both unneutered males at that time. While Taco can be a bit reactive in the kennel environment, outside he reacts favorably to other dogs. Sometimes he doesn’t even notice them at all and is easily redirected. Taco has done really well at recent meet and greets with potential adopters and their dogs. Meet and greets and slow and proper introductions between dogs are highly recommended.

So with all these great qualities why has Taco been a shelter dog for nearly 250 days? Honestly, we’re not exactly sure why this volunteer favorite hasn’t been adopted. He doesn’t have many challenges. Taco’s biggest issue is that he can get pretty amped up when he doesn’t get enough exercise leading to some jumpiness and mouthiness. He can pull on lead like most dogs of his breed and sometimes bites the leash, but those are both things that can be resolved with a little bit of training. All in all, Taco is a sweet and fun-loving guy who will make a great pet for someone who sets boundaries with him and makes sure he gets enough exercise.

If you think you’re just the right person to give Taco a new life in the new year complete with the loving home and family that he deserves but has never had, call 301-600-1546 to learn more.



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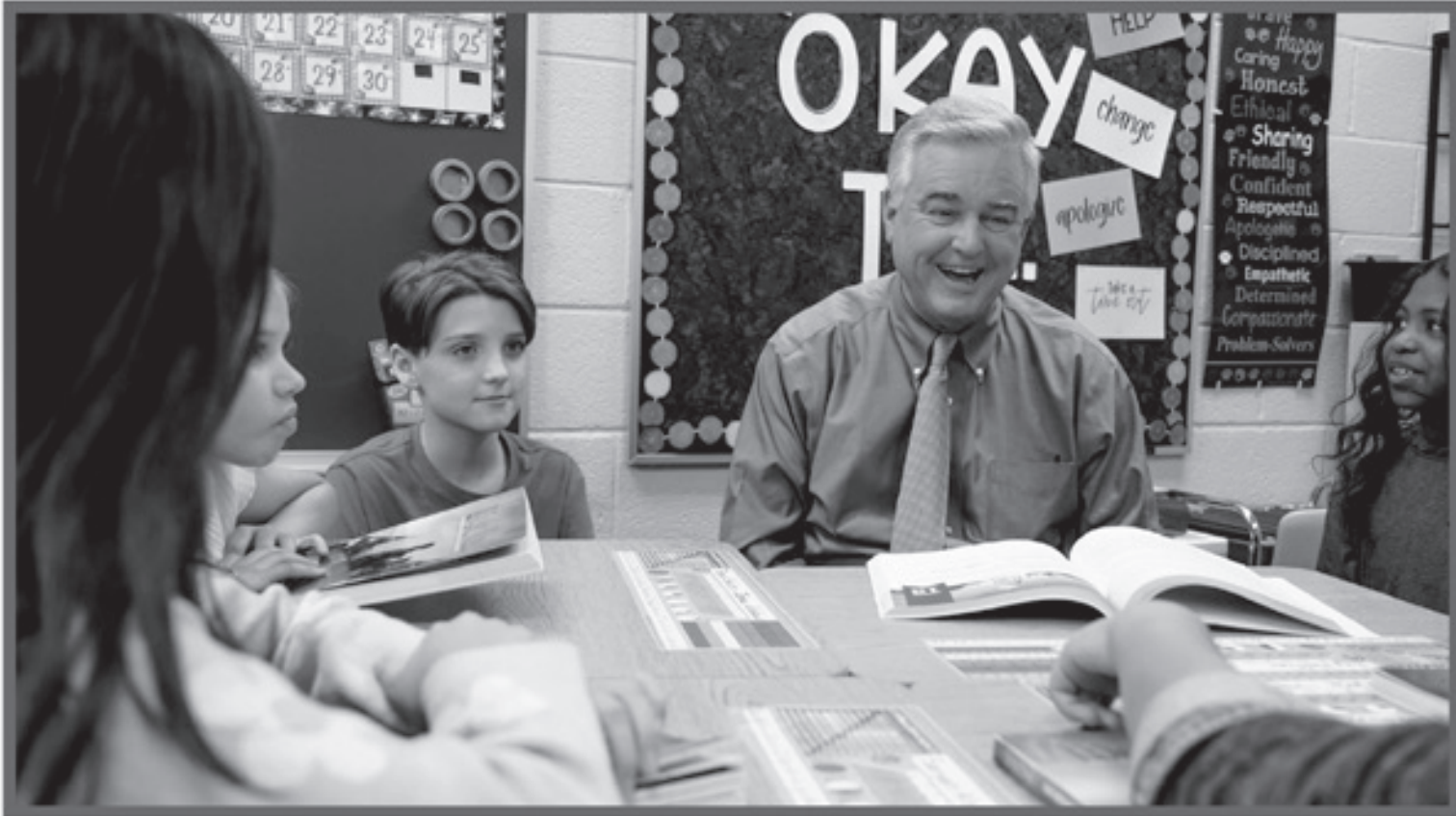


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CONGRESSMAN
DAVID TRONE
FOR U.S. SENATE

Fight Inequality, Invest in Our Schools, and Expand Access to Pre-K

I worked with Sen. Ben Cardin to introduce the True Equity Act to align with our state's Blueprint for Maryland's Future. The Act would add \$1.4 billion in federal grants to address education inequities, expand access to all-day Pre-K, fund additional teacher training, and give all students access to career and college pathways.

No Hungry Kids in Schools Act

Children don't just come to school hungry for knowledge. Many are hungry for food. That's why I cosponsored the Universal School Meals Program Act, the No Hungry Kids in School Act, the Expanding Access to School Meals Act, and the School Meals Expansion Act. In the Senate, I'll fight to expand these programs and ensure no child has to go to school hungry.

Mental Health Care

One of the most important, yet ignored, issues is the mental health of our children. We successfully fought for more than \$3 billion to help fund school-based mental health programs. It is especially important that we help kids who still feel loneliness and isolation because of the pandemic. And I introduced the Comprehensive Mental Health in Schools Pilot Program Act to establish comprehensive mental and behavioral health programs in our schools.

Address Teacher Shortages and Support Special Education

In the Senate, I will lead the charge to address teacher shortages and shortfalls in special education funding. The innovative Four for Four program will provide a cost-free college education for students who commit to being an educator or support staff, with extra incentives for those who work in underserved communities. And I will champion the IDEA Full Funding Act — ensuring that Congress fulfills its commitment to provide 40% of the cost for special education.



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Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

SECTION 2

Mobilize Frederick gears up for 2-day Climate Summit

In response to the pressing climate emergency, Mobilize Frederick, in collaboration with Hood College, is set to host its eagerly awaited 2-Day Climate Summit on February 2nd and 3rd. This annual event, to be held at Hood's Hodson Auditorium in Rosencott Hall and Whitaker Hall in Frederick, promises insightful discussions, innovative solutions, and community collaboration. Find out more about the Summit at www.mobilizefrederick.org/Summit-2024

Reason to Hope — Progress and Solutions to Climate Change: The theme for this year's summit, "Reason to Hope — Progress and Solutions to Climate Change," reflects the dire need for collective efforts. The summit will delve into vital topics such as climate justice, progress on green schools, measuring progress, electrifying homes, ensuring food security, exploring opportunities in a clean economy, addressing agriculture's role in climate change, and more.

Event Schedule and Registration Details: To cater to diverse preferences, the summit features a dynamic schedule. Registration on Friday starts at 9 a.m., with sessions from 10 to 5. An evening reception from 5 to 7 offers a relaxed setting for continued engagement. Saturday's schedule begins with registration at 8 a.m., followed by sessions from 9 to 3. Access the detailed schedule: Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit-2024.

Exhibit Hall Showcasing Local and Regional Innovations: The summit's Exhibit Hall will be a focal point, showcasing the efforts of sponsors and local/regional programs. Attendees will have dedicated times during the morning registration hour and from noon to 1:30 on both days to explore exhibits. This interactive space will feature public and private-sector organizations presenting innovations and solutions, fostering a deeper connection between the community and those actively contributing to climate solutions.

Among the notable exhibitors are: Audubon Society of Central Maryland, Chesapeake Bay Foundation, City of Frederick Sustainability Committee, Food Security Network, Frederick County Food Council, and the Frederick Bird Club.

These organizations represent a snapshot of the diverse and impactful initiatives that will be showcased in the

Exhibit Hall. Participants can engage directly with these exhibitors to learn about their efforts, explore volunteer opportunities, and discover ways to become active contributors to addressing our climate emergency.

Sponsor and Exhibitor Opportunities: For those passionate about contributing to the cause, Mobilize Frederick invites businesses and organizations to become sponsors or exhibitors. This is not just an opportunity to showcase products and services but a chance to demonstrate commitment to equitable solutions addressing the climate emergency.

Various sponsorship levels are available, each offering unique benefits such as prominent logo placement, recognition during panel presentations, and the option to host a booth in the Exhibit Hall. Exhibitor-only options are also available, providing dedicated space for organizational materials and outreach. Learn more about these opportunities at mobilizefrederick.org/summit-2024.

Climate Summit

2024 Highlights

Friday Schedule Highlights:

2:30-3:30: Frederick County Agriculture and Climate Change Facilitator: Belinda Burrier, 2023 Ag Advocate of the Year, Homegrown Frederick

Panelists:

- Katie Stevens, Frederick County Agriculture
- Mary Kathryn Barnet, Open Book Farm
- Rob Schnabel, Restoration Scientist, Chesapeake Bay Foundation

3:45-4:15: Hot Topic — Data Centers and Climate Goals

Facilitator: Eric Annis, Hood College Graduate School

Panelists:

- Karen Cannon, Mobilize Frederick; Data Center Workgroup Co-Chair
- Renee Knapp, Frederick County Council, Data Center Workgroup Co-Chair
- Shannon Moore, Director, Frederick County Division of Energy & Environment

Saturday Schedule Highlights:

10-11: Green Schools Panel

- Mary Westlund, Green Schools Program Director / MAEOE
- Sanjana Ransinghe, Urbana High School Student
- Melissa Hargreaves, Myersville Elementary (Retired)
- Zoey Dimitriou, Frederick High School Green Club President

4:15-5: Closing Keynote Addresses

- Mayor Michael O'Connor, City of Frederick
- County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

Saturday Breakout Sessions: Dive Deeper into Solutions

On Saturday, the Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit offers insightful Breakout Sessions, allowing participants to explore specific topics in-depth. Scheduled throughout the day, these sessions cover diverse areas:

- Feeding Frederick County: Creating a robust local food system.
- Growing Green! Environmental Education & Outdoor Learning.
- Using Resources for Building Efficiency: Federal and local strategies for healthier buildings.
- Bringing Nature Back: Strategies for reintegrating nature into communities.
- Sustainable Careers: Discover opportunities in the green industry.

Additional Summit Features

LEGO Initiative at the Summit: In an exciting addition to this year's Summit, Mobilize Frederick proudly supports a unique initiative led by a team of 5th,



Students active with the international Recycle My Battery Campaign exhibit at the 2023 Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit.

6th, and 7th graders from Urbana, participating in the First Lego League Innovation Challenge. Their project, themed "Masterpiece," creatively uses technology and art to raise awareness about the dangers of global warming. The team has developed a presentation kit to offer an immersive experience, aiming to engage the younger generation in unfiltered conversations about climate change.

Mobilize Frederick extends its support to the team and eagerly awaits their demonstration at the summit. The collaboration between seasoned activists and these young innovators symbolizes the collective effort required to address and combat the global challenges posed by climate change. Together, we can inspire, engage, and empower future generations to be the change-makers our planet desperately needs.

Solo Art Exhibit — REALMS by Ali Syverson: This year's Summit will showcase Ali Syverson's solo art exhibit, REALMS, exploring the

phenomena and art that the ecosystem offers. Learn more about Ali and her art: Ali Syverson Art.

Register Now!

Active participation requires registration. While the summit is free, registering ensures access to dynamic sessions and the Exhibit Hall. Lunch is available for purchase at \$15 per day. Register Here

Acting Today for a Sustainable Tomorrow

As we face the challenges of climate change, the Mobilize Frederick Climate Summit stands as a beacon of hope, rallying the community to actively engage, discuss, and implement solutions. Businesses, organizations, and individuals alike are encouraged to join hands in this crucial endeavor.

For further information, contact Karen Cannon, Executive Director, at 240.344.2961 or karen.cannon@mobilizefrederick.org.

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HISTORY

Woodsboro Remembers

Francis Meehan Smith

Continued from last month

Horses

For two centuries the main source of living in Woodsboro concentrated heavily on farming. The rich soil produced excellent crops, carefully cultivated by the thrifty, industrious Germans settling the area who usually owned about two hundred acres. This was considered the proper acreage for a self-sufficient farm, which had normally a good supply of water, a bottomland for grazing, level fields for plowing and a wood lot, important in the operation of an early farm.

Necessary to the existence of a farm also was the horse, used for travel, work, and pleasure.

Great interest has been shown throughout the area in good horseflesh and many farmers were good judges of fine animals.

One of the early breeders of fine horses was James M. Smith, also owner of the hotel in Woodsboro, conceded to be one of the finest rural hostelrys in the country.

Mr. Smith gave much time and attention to the breeding of stock and the raising of thoroughbred horses.

He owned the noted stallion "Circulator" for which he paid \$3,500. The stud's first colt was sold in Charlestown, W. Va. for \$2,000. He also owned "Lady Stevens" a noted brood mare. Mr. Smith for many years bought and sold thoroughbred Kentucky horses. He was for many years engaged in buying and shipping livestock to Baltimore.

In the days when families were known for their fine horses and carriages, or lack thereof, Mr. Smith was instrumental in supplying the best available to meet current needs.

Huffman Percherons

In the years from 1930 to the late 1950's, the Huffman brothers, Henry and John, owned and bred percheron horses. They owned five horses - Beauty, Polly, Princess, Rose, and Sonny Beauty VIII was the most outstanding mare raised on the spacious and beautiful farm where Lehigh Portland Cement Company is now located. The mare was Reserve Grand Champion at the 1939 Ohio State Fair; in 1938 and 1939 at the Maryland State Fairs at Timonium; the Frederick and Hagerstown Fairs in 1938; and Grand.

Champion at the Frederick Fair in 1939. She was also shown in the International Livestock Exposition at Chicago where she was Reserve Grand Champion, being outclassed by a stud.

The Huffman Percherons were well known and admired throughout the county, state, and nation for their good conformation, hand-someness, and gentleness.

The Offutts of Woodsboro

The Bernard Offutts of Woodsboro started in 1949 and have not since missed a race at the Frederick Fair. Their Standardbred horses compete all over the east coast from Vermont to Florida.

The operation involves the whole family: wife Lillian, four sons, and two daughters. The farm of two hundred and eighty acres was purchased in 1943 from Elsie Dorcus and Ella Whitmore and the Offutts built an all-weather track.

During the past twenty-five years the Offutts have owned over two hundred horses, mainly from the breeding line of Ichabod Crane, for which there has

been much demand in the trotting field.



Lucky D - owned by Bernard Offit

Stein Standardbred Farms

The Stein Standardbred Farm was established in 1964 by Orren F. Stein an attorney from Washington, D.C. All phases of the Standardbred industry are carried on including breeding, boarding, and training on a regulation 1/2 mile all weather training track.

The farm serves as a boarding facility for some of the top standardbred pacers, trotters and broodmares.

The farm is situated on a very fertile limestone ground which is so beneficial to building strong boned horses and is evidenced by the high percentage of race horses raised at the farm each year. A two-year-old seasons champion, raised at this farm was sold this year for \$30,000.

Interestingly, the Stein Standardbred Farms are located on the original James M. Smith horse farm.

Keen interest in horses exists

in the entire Woodsboro community.

Lewis T. Ramsburg operates the Ironstone Pony Farm; Dr. Lee E. Miller (veterinarian) maintains several fine horses, while his wife is an accomplished equestrian.

Mr. and Mrs. John S. Spicer belong to the New Market Riding Club and own several handsome mounts.

The Shriner brothers (Sewing Factory) own several valuable thoroughbreds, also "Doug" Williams.

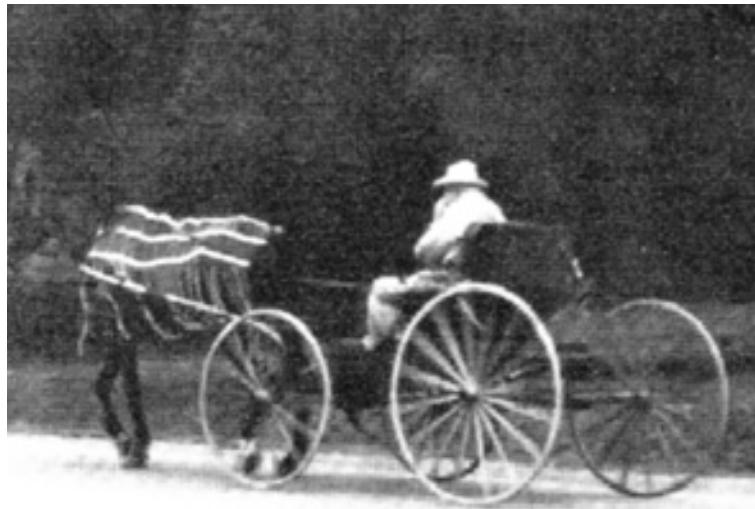
Many other people in the district keep their own horses for pleasure. There has been a rapid increase in the ownership of horses in the area in the past thirty years after a decline following the arrival of the automobile.

DenBrooke Farm

In 1969, Jesse W. Armstrong purchased the Hammond Farm on the Liberty Road east of Woodsboro. On DenBrooke Farm he raises thoroughbred horses for racing. Jesse also brought with him from his native California a desirable bloodline of Appaloosa horses.

His brother, Charles Lew Worley, manages this farm and also maintains a collection of "vintage" Ford panel trucks.

One of the last outfits used in the area strictly for transportation belonged to Cletus Fogle who was a familiar sight on the road until the late 1950's.



One of the last outfits used in the area strictly for transportation belonged to Cletus Fogle who was a familiar sight on the road until the late 1950's.

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HISTORY



The Rosebud Perfume Company

Reminiscences

The Rosebud Perfume Company by Allen R. Smith, Jr.

The Rosebud Perfume Company was founded by my grandfather, George F. Smith, during the year of 1895. Initially the business began in a small drug store located across the street from what is now known as The Rosebud Building. Many years ago friends of my grandfather suggested that he prepare for them a “family type” salve that could be used for various minor skin irritations. With this as a challenge, he formulated a product known as “Smith’s Balsam of Rose Buds” which was later renamed ‘Smith’s Rosebud Salve’. Knowing how popular his product had been received locally he started advertising his product in country tabloids and within a few years he had organized one of the most unique mail order businesses in the United States.

Several years later grandfather

bought the Smith Hotel, sold his drug store, and moved his business into the very imposing looking brick building which has served as the home of Rosebud products ever since.

Today our mail order business offers four major products to agents to be sold on a door-to-door basis, ‘Rosebud Salve’, ‘Tholene Mentholated Salve’, ‘Bouquet No. 3 Perfume’, and ‘Vivian Perfume’, named after the founder’s granddaughter. We also package two lotions for men, ‘Poke of Limes After Shave’ and ‘Tobacco Five Cologne’ which are being sold in specialty shops. Of the approximate 70,000 agents, some have been selling our products continuously for fifty years. Some have made names for themselves in other fields, among them Louis Goldstein who sold Rosebud Products as a youngster. Former White House Press Secretary Liz Carpenter was an

agent in rural Texas. Dumas Milner of Mississippi, now co-owner of National Car Rental System, started his career in selling by distributing Rosebud Salve, according to an article in Time Magazine.

Dr. George F. Smith was born near Woodsboro on the 25th of March, 1865, the son of Solomon and Adeline Locke Smith and the grandson of John and Susan Earnst Smith. He received his preliminary education at public schools in Woodsboro and attended the Shenandoah State Normal School. Harrisonburg, Virginia. He was married to Minnie F. Baer of Utica and subsequently taught school in Frederick County for five years. Later he entered the drug and proprietary medicine business and was registered by the Maryland Board of Pharmacy in 1902. Grandfather and grandmother

had eight children. Mamie Irene, Lillian Mae, Raymond Lee, Henry Ward, Allen Reno, Alta La Rue, Mabel Pauline, and Mildred Naomi. Mamie, Henry, Allen and Alta are now deceased. Dr. Smith was president of the Commercial State Bank, Frederick from 1925 to 1930, and from 1937 until the close of his life in 1952 he held an office in the Woodsboro Savings Bank, of which he was a charter member in 1902. He served as Mayor of Woodsboro for nineteen years and President of the Mt. Hope Cemetery Board for a number of years.

The Woodsboro Concert Band was supported by him for several years and frequently concerts were held on the upper porch of his office building. Grandfather’s principal recreational interests were bicycle riding and automobiles; during his lifetime he owned more than eighty cars

and Packards were his favorite. He thoroughly enjoyed the Miss America Pageants at Atlantic City and seldom missed a judging.

Allen R. Smith, Sr. managed the Rosebud business for more than fifty years until his untimely death in 1971. The firm was then left in trust to Raymond L. Smith, and to Lillian Smith Bair, Mabel P. Smith, Mildred S. Huffman, Douglas Jones, Jr., Vivian S. Clipp, and Allen R. Smith, Jr. as heirs.

It is interesting to note that grandfather’s drug store was one of the first stores in the country to sell fountain-made Coca-Colas and at one time was visited by the originator of the beverage. For several years grandfather was an agent for Columbia Records and frequently gave musicals with an Edison Phonograph, the type with a brass horn and cylinders.

The Rosebud Building, constructed in 1886, is furnished with antiques and the atmosphere is still that of a hotel, however, there is an ever-present fragrance of Perfumes. On the third floor is located a room filled with apothecary bottles and adjacent to it is a room that at one time was used by the Heidelberg Workers, an organization of local women who made quilts to raise funds for the Reformed Church. My grandmother was a member of this group. She also managed to make a quilt for nearly every member of her family.

Many of them were made from discarded cloth that cloth that was worn by the particular child or grandchild to whom the quilt was given. During the Civil War, the Union Hotel, located on the same site as our building’ was host to meetings to resolve the backing of Governor Hicks and to express the citizens’ determination for remaining in the Union.

I am very pleased to be informed that the Rosebud Building is being considered As a Maryland and possibly a National registered landmark.

Continued next month

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

February 1

Proof Drinking & Dynamite Don't Mix

A thoroughly inebriated Will Hoffman met with a bad accident while playing with dynamite caps, one exploded in his hands, injuring his left hand so that three fingers and a thumb had to be amputated. We are told that the tips of the fingers on the right hand were badly torn up, and he had a number of cuts about the face. This is another proof that high explosives are very dangerous, and should always be handled with the greatest care, and never taken up as a dare from fellow boozers to see how long one can hold onto a stick of dynamite after lighting the fuse.

Honey As An Antifreeze

In using honey as an antifreeze mixture in automobile radiators, it should be mixed with water, half-and-half. Engine head gaskets and hose connections should be tightened up before using the solution as the honey water will pass through apparently tight connections, causing stickiness. The solution becomes more efficient with evaporation, whereas an alcohol solution loses strength. A dollar a half worth of dark honey, unfit for table use, should last all winter.

Delinquent Taxes In Frederick

A large number of Frederick County tax bills remain unpaid. About a week ago the number was 808. Following the custom of the County, parcels of real estate on which taxes are due, will be advertised a public sale, beginning this week, and if unpaid will be sold at the courthouse door. This course will be pursued until the whole list is disposed of.

On The Importance Of A Paper's Inside Pages

The average person reads his newspaper by habit, yet carelessly; their main objective is to get through with the job quickly, for but few persons read newspapers for the purpose of passing time enjoyably and as a profitable study. They usually take in the first page at a glance by reading the headlines then go over the articles promising the most interest of a general character.

After the first page comes the more local pages - news from the adjoining counties and towns, and after that, reading up on whatever special feature may interest them.

Thousands of persons, every day, spend less than 15 minutes over their favorite paper, and this is casual reading. With a weekly, the plan is much the same as far as men are concerned. Women are greatly the better readers - not only reading more of the paper, but more thoroughly and intelligently.

This means that aside from the first and last pages, and one or two others, a newspaper might as well be a blank paper as so much as the average reader is concerned. Of course, they would raise a big howl if the editorial page was absent, and would wisely observe that there is "nothing in the papers" - if there were no editorials, and would not read them.

The very features that most people want to read, for their own greater intelligence, and perhaps actual business advantage, are the features that they pass by as being "too busy". Editorials for instance, as a rule, contain more information than news articles, and especially is this true with reference to the greater happenings and questions.

The editorial pages of a paper are apt to contain, also, inside facts and knowledge. They are apt to be written by men of intelligence, carefully thought out, after mature considerations. Outside page articles on the other hand, are apt to be hastily written, of imperfect information, and perhaps colored in order to make a more interesting story. We actually miss greatly more than we think we do, by not reading the inside pages.

February 8

Woodrow Wilson Dead

Former President Wilson died at his home in Washington on Sunday morning. President Coolidge immediately issued a proclamation calling for a display of mourning for a period of 30 days. Coolidge's tribute to Wilson, while few in words, was finer than all others:

"As President of the United States he was moved by an earnest desire to promote the best interest of the Country as he conceived them. His

acts were prompted by high motivation, and his sincerity of purpose cannot be questioned. He led the nation through the terrific struggles of the World War with a lofty idealism, which never failed him.

"He gave utterance to the aspiration of humanity with an eloquence which led the attention of all the Earth and made America a new and enlarged influence in the destiny of mankind."

A state funeral was declined; instead simple services will take place Wednesday, at his home, and another in the Cathedral of Mount St. Albans, where the body will lay until arrangements have been made for his last resting place.

A Radio Experience

Our enterprising bee man, Rockward Nusbaum, of Johnsville, was pleased to hear over his radio, last Wednesday night, part of a letter of his to Captain Eugene McDonal, millionaire radio broadcaster and owner of the Edgewater Beach Hotel, Chicago. Captain McDonal, read part of Mr. Nusbaum's letter in is three hour program broadcast to the Mac-Millian Arctic expedition, now frozen in on the schooner Bowden within 11° of the North Pole. The following was broadcast.

"Rockward Nusbaum, of Honeyhill Farm, Uniontown, Maryland, near the Nation's Capital, sends congratulations and best wishes to you and the crew, and says he is very anxious to present you with a big case of his best honey, but is at a loss to know how to get it to you unless he can persuade a swarm of his best bees to wing their way up there with it. If the bees fail to come across with a honey then Mr. Nusbaum is going to ship it on the dirigible Shenandoah.

This weekly broadcast from the radio station 9XN, Edgewater Beach Hotel Chicago, is eagerly waited for by all who have radio sets. It consists of a weekly summary of the world's news with a lot of music and fun. To the Arctic explorers up there in the dark bleak frozen north it is a god-send, as it is the only mode of communication. These programs have been broadcast every Wednesday since the ship was frozen in last September.

A careful check up by card and letter has shown that over one mil-

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Can Corn 2 cans for 23c		Standards, 60c qt.
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Ginger Snaps, 2 lbs. for 25c		15c lb.
Morton's Salt, 2 boxes 25c		

Cracker Meal **3 lbs. for 25c**

Cabbage 5c lb.	Fresh Tomatoes
Potatoes 50c pk.	20c lb.
Kale 20c 1/2 pk.	Turnips 30c pk.
Lemons 30c doz.	Fresh Lettuce and Celery

Spremit Nut Margarine Oleomargarine
Special **4 lb. 99c**

lion people listen every week to this program. The most distant point so far known to listen is by a radio fan in the Samoan islands, 7,500 miles from the station in Chicago.

February 15

Woman Seeks To Be Postmaster

Mrs. Jane Feiser, wife of Jason Feiser, is a candidate for appointment as Postmaster of Woodsboro, to take the place of the present incumbent, who is a Democrat. Mrs. Feiser is the daughter of James LaGore. Up to this time no other candidate is in the field, and it is considered that Mrs. Feiser will have a strong backing for the office.

Mrs. Feiser is one of the most active Republican women workers in the County. She presided at the dinner at the Francis Scott Key Hotel last fall, given under the auspices of the Republican women of the county, and attended by nearly 100 women identified with party work. She is a member of the Soldiers Memorial Association and a member of the Design Committee which selected the type of memorial that will be erected in the city, as a tribute to the valor and sacrifice of the servicemen and women of this country. She was a war worker ever presented her district in the various wartime activities.

She is a member of the County Central Committee and is identified with party political affairs. Oscar Barrick, Democrat, is the present Postmaster and George Cutshall, a brother of William Cutshall of Woodsboro, is Assistant Postmaster.

Sale Prices Higher

The range of prices in the first farm sale held in Frederick County for the present year was somewhat higher than those prevailing last year. This was indicated at the sale Thursday of Eugene Connor, near Creagerstown.

Especially was this the case with live-stock. The highest cow sold for \$101 while the lowest was \$23. Cows have sold recently at public sale for as low as one dollar. Horses sold for \$150, \$135 \$125, \$120, \$80, \$80 and \$3. A wagon body brought \$68. The receipts for the sale totaled \$3,430. The cattle sale amounted to \$1,550.

Walkersville Bank Robber Granted Parole

Walter Winchave and Norman ogle, who on October 20, 1919, robbed the bank at Walkersville, were granted a parole by the State Board of Pardons after having served four and a half years of a seventeen-year sentence.

Woodsboro Player To Join Parksley Baseball Club

First baseman Roger Crum, of the Woodsboro baseball team, has been



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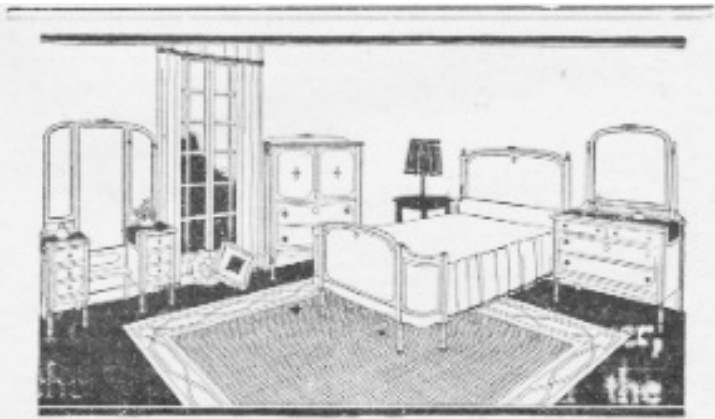


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TANEYTOWN, MD.

instructed to report to the Parksley Virginia club of the Eastern Shore League for a tryout in the spring.

Manager Poke Whelan of Parksley has been negotiating with the young Crum for the past two weeks. They came to an agreement Saturday. Crum played the outfield for Woodsboro in 1921. During the 1922 season he was moved to first base and has played there ever since. He has been a power both with the bat and as an initial sucker.

February 22

Snow Storm

Frederick County is recovering from the most severe snow and sleet storm in recent years. Snow started to fall early Tuesday morning. At 6 o'clock Tuesday evening there were six inches flakes on the ground. The snow then turn to hail, bringing the total for up to 8 1/2 inches. During the night, the temperature rose and there was a steady down-pour of rain that did not end until 8 o'clock Wednesday morning.

Despite the unusual heavy precipitation, no lines were reported out of commission by the telephone company. This is believed to be due to the rising temperature which prevented the sleet and rain from freezing much on the wires, and adding materially to their weight.

Taken as a whole, the present week has been the worst of the winter, in the matter of weather. It has contained snow, rain, blizzard, freezing, thawing, wind, & slush -all in a changing pattern.

Boy Found Dead At LeGore Plant

Leon Carty, age 11 years, was found dead on Sunday morning on top of one of the kilns at the LeGore Lime Company. His death was likely due to asphyxiation. He left home about 7 o'clock and when he failed to return his parents became worried and began a search, the body was found around 9:30.

The body of the boy was slightly burnt and his clothing singed. The burns, said the physician, were not fatal. Dr. Stultz, of Woodsboro announced that the boy had met

death from asphyxiation

It is presumed that he went to the kiln, where the young people have been in the habit of gathering during the cold months, and while waiting for others to assemble laid a plank across one of the kilns and got on it to keep warm. While in that position, it is believed, he was overcome by gas fumes and fell from the board.

Roads For Frederick County

Frederick County Commissioners went to Baltimore on Friday and conferred with the State Road Commission in regard to street road mileage for the county for 1924. The Commissioners were informed that this county's allotment for this year will be five to five and a half miles.

The commissioners were told the county shares of funds for approved road for 1924 would be approximately \$233,000. Of this amount, \$63,000 has been set aside for two miles of State Road now being built between Liberty and New Windsor. This will leave about \$179,000 for the five yet to be built.

To obtain the \$233,000 for state and federal aid the county must contribute \$62,550. The commissioners will shortly recommend a list of roads, embracing about 12 miles from what the county's allotment will be selected.

Auto Light Wedding

Last Saturday evening, Paul Boone of Walkersville and Mrs. Laura Anderson of LeGore, presented themselves for marriage to Reverend Brandy of the Reformed Church in Taneytown. As the couple had provided themselves with a Frederick County license, it was necessary to go into that County for the ceremony. The bridegroom, minister and witnesses therefore proceeded to Bridgeport, where the ceremony was performed on the State Road in the glare of automobile headlights. Mr. and Mrs. Boone, so unusually wed, will make their home in York Pennsylvania.

20th Home Demonstration Club Is Formed In County

The 20th Home Demonstration Club was formed at Woodsboro on

Monday with 22 members signed up. The meeting was held at the home of Mrs. Faiser.

Kinney, of Walkersville, President of the County Federation of Women's Clubs, spoke on the advantages to be gain from Club work and told how the Clubs of the county were conducted. A demonstration was given by Mrs. Elizabeth Thompson, on salad dressing and salads. The members of the new club voted to take on nutritional subjects for the rest of the year.

The other Clubs of the county next month will begin on their long-term programs. The three projects offered were clothing, nutrition and household management. These long-time programs are planned for at least five years ahead, so that at the end of each year, they will have finished one piece of each project. The work will be uniform over the County, and will be planned with the idea of getting away from malicious programs.

Mrs. Bertha Knight, clothing specialist from the University of Maryland, will be here for a few days next month to help start the project. It is hope that this will mean increased interest among the clubs, as well as a greater benefit to the women themselves. There are now 509 women throughout the County who belong to the Clubs.

Walkersville Debate Team Victorious

First honors in the senior high school debating league of Frederick County was taken by Thurmont High School, Wednesday night, while Walkersville High School won the debate championship among the smaller high schools. The debate team representing Thurmont High School defeated Frederick High School in Frederick, and Middletown High School at Thurmont.

The Walkersville High School team triumphed over Emmitsburg

High School at Walkersville, and over the Liberty High School in Liberty. Liberty also lost its debate with Emmitsburg High School at Emmitsburg.

The team Thurmont sent to Frederick, which carried away the debate honors, was composed of Eloise Weant and Grady Finch. Their team at home was Lucille Eby and John Pryor. Both of Walkersville's teams were composed of girls. Elizabeth Cramer and Catherine Hahn composed the team that triumphed for Walkersville at Liberty, while the team that won at home was Blanche Rice and Clara Zimmerman.

All seven of the high schools baited: 'Resolved that the government should own and operated the railroads.' The home team defending the affirmative side in each case.

February 29

Accidents

Harvey Frock fell while helping to unload a gasoline engine, and injured his head. After an examination at Frederick Hospital, he returned home and his believe not to have been seriously hurt. Harvey's wife said she was not worried, as he didn't have much in his head to hurt to start with.

Harry Dern, of Keysville, had his right leg taken off above the knee, at Frederick Hospital, on Thursday. About six months ago he fell into a posthole, the bruise from the fall causing tubercular trouble.

Accused By Two Girls, Found Not Guilty

Maynard Marshall, who was tried on two charges of bastardy, preferred by Norma Ramsburg and Ethel Ramsburg sisters, each of them claimed that Marshall was the father of their child, was found not guilty at a private hearing before the court. Marshall, who lives near Mountindale, was arrested

several weeks ago when the complaint was lodged by the Ramsburg sisters, who live near Walkersville.

A crowded courtroom was on hand to hear the trial. Upon the consent of both the state and the defense, the trial was held in the judge's chamber and only the witnesses were omitted. The defense was that it was impossible to determine who was the father of each of the children in view of the circumstances surrounding the case. The Judge found in favor of Marshall and dismissed the charges.

Snake Found In Snow, Harbinger Of Approaching Spring

A black snake, a foot and a half and length, was found alive Tuesday morning by David Weddle, an employee of the Potomac Edison Company. Weddle was walking along a high-tension line when he saw the snake lying in the snow. After picking the reptile up, he traced its track back and found that the snake had crawled out of a chestnut tree stump. Weddle put the snake back into the trunk.

It is very unusual for a black snake to be out at this time of the year, it is said, and its appearance is considered a harbinger of the coming of spring.

Fined For Selling Wine

Clinton Eaton, of Woodsboro, was fine \$60 and Court costs on a charge of selling intoxicating liquors. Eaton was found guilty of selling 2 quarts of wine to John Topper at two dollars per quart. Eaton, who works at the Hygiene Ice Company, bears a good reputation and it was held that he did not sell the wine for gain. In view of the fact that he was well recommended by his employer, for whom he has worked for 14 years, the sentence was lightened.

To read other articles related to 100 Years Ago this Month, visit the History section of Walkerville.net.

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LIBRARY NEWS

February at the Walkersville Library

If January's weather is any indication for the rest of the winter, expect to spend many days at home being cozy. You won't even need to leave the house to find great audiobooks, e-books, movies, or tv shows since everyone with a library card has free access to Libby, Hoopla, and Kanopy. Find links to these digital resources and more via FCPL.org under the Download tab. If you're feeling restless and have cabin fever, head out to the Walkersville Branch Library for a program or two. There are exercise classes, educational talks, and games to play, all for free!

February is Heart Health Awareness Month. The Walkersville Branch Library has several opportunities for you to learn more or focus on your cardiovascular health. Step into a free exercise program like Freedom BANG, a pre-choreographed fusion of boxing, HIIT, hip hop, world dance, optional weighted gloves and just a touch of attitude. There will be a wide range of intensity options to help you customize your workout to fit your needs. Freedom BANG classes will run on Saturday mornings at 10 a.m. in February. Come to a yoga class on Monday, February 12 or 26 at 6 p.m. Led by instructors from Sol Yoga and designed for all ability levels, this is a great way to improve cardio health without breaking a sweat.

Looking for a new and fun way to exercise? Dance Around the World on Sunday, February 11 from 1-3pm. Four instructors will be at the Walkersville Branch Library to demonstrate various styles of dance and teach steps to anyone who wants to learn! Join us on Tuesday, February 27 at 10 a.m. for a senior fitness class featuring a combination of Zumba Gold and Cardio Drumming for a unique experience.

If you love rocks, crystals and the metaphysical, join us on Sunday, February 18 at 1 to learn more about the meaning and properties of crystals, including the physical and emotional benefits they can provide.

Dungeons and Dragons enthusiasts, unite! Earlier this season, the Walkersville Branch Library hosted an intro to D&D for teen and adult players; continue your journey with Part 2 on Sunday, February 4th from 1:30 to 3:30. Hands on character creation and actual game play will take place!

Senior Café is the place to be for coffee, conversation, friendship, and fun events! On February 8 at 10am, join us for an emergency preparedness program with staff from the Frederick County Division of Emergency Management. On February 22 at 10, Trisha from Sol Yoga will lead a chair yoga class, which is a great way to start the day with some gentle movement.

Frederick Martial Arts will demonstrate their impressive and exciting moves from 10 to 11 on February 14, at the Walkersville Branch Library. This program is designed for adults with intellectual disabilities. Another sensory program will take place on Wednesday, February 28 from 10 to 11.

The Literacy Council of Frederick County will host a guided conversation class for high beginners of ESL from 6:30 to 7:45 on Mondays in February. Students will practice their speaking and listening skills with conversations guided by an instructor. The Literacy Council requests that interested participants register, which can be done via the FCPL Calendar Event for this program, by calling the Walkersville Branch Library at 301-600-8200. Please contact The Literacy Council at info@frederickliteracy.org if you have questions regarding the classes.

Centro Hispano will be here from 5:30 to 7:30 on Wednesday, February 7, to discuss all the great services they have to offer. Including Citizenship classes, Women's Empowerment group, informational health clinics and more! Stop by to ask questions and stay for Bilingual Storytime at 6pm!

Do you need help expunging your record from a past conviction? An attorney from Maryland Legal Aid will be at the Walkersville Branch Library on February 15 from 4 to 7. They will meet with you for free to discuss your options and begin the process.

Kids (and adults!) of all ages are invited to share their favorite story and make a new friend when the Go Team. Therapy Dogs are at the Walk-

ersville Branch Library on Thursday February 8 from 6:30 to 7:30.

If you have a 'tween' and are looking for something to do after school, look no further than Tween Tech at the library! Monday, February 5 and 19 from 6 to 7 is an hour of fun exploring technology and innovating with peers.

Each week at the Walkersville Branch Library, there are after-school programs for teens to connect with peers, learn new skills, and create while being social. Join us on Tuesdays at 3:30pm for Teen Innovation Hour, where you'll explore the world of technology, science and more! The last Tuesday of the month is for the Teen Library Council meeting—if you're looking for ways to volunteer or want to have input on programs for your age group, stop by on February 27th at 3:30.

Teen Connect happens on Fridays at 3:30; this is a great opportunity to engage with friends, peer mentors and learn about teen-oriented community resources. Out of school on February 16th? At 1, stop by the library to meet a Washington Wizard's employee and hear how he followed his dreams to work for the organization he grew up rooting for! On February 23rd at 3:30, learn how to handle emergencies, including controlling bleeding and when to apply a tourniquet. These critical skills could save a life!

"Let's Get Ready for Kindergarten" is a program on Wednesdays from 11 to 11:45 where preschoolers and their caregivers can build school ready skills like counting, literacy and exploring their social-emotional selves with peers.

Our weekly Fri-YAY Program will continue into the winter from 11 to 11:45 on Fridays.

Start the month out on February 2 with a special friend named Bluey; come back the following Friday ready to use your imagination to gear up for a space adventure. On February 16, you can learn more about the helpers in your community as you try to complete different tasks based on the work done by some of our community helpers! Get ready for the Winter Olympics as you navigate various obstacles and try your hand at some physical feats on February 23.

Two special guests will be at the Walkersville Branch Library in February to speak with elementary aged children about career paths and big dreams. Does your child dream of being a doctor someday? Bring them to the library on February 2 at 1 to meet medical students! They will speak on the ins and outs of pursuing a dream in the medical field. If your child loves animals or wants to know how to care for them when they're hurt or sick, join us and our very special guest, Dr. Raymond Ediger, as he shares some stories and all about what it's like to be a veterinarian! This will take place on Friday, February 9 from 1 to 1:45.

Our schedule for storytimes is as follows: Monday: Infants at 10 - It Takes a Village (a caregiver-led discussion) 10:30am; Babies at 11; Tuesday: Toddlers at 11; Wednesday: Family at 6; and, Thursday: Preschool at 11.

On February 8, in honor of Heart Health Awareness Month, a special guest from Frederick County's Emergency Communications will join the Preschool Storytime fun to share 911 safety tips.

Bilingual Storytime will be on Wednesday, February 7 and 21 at 6. This dynamic and engaging storytime is fun for the whole family and will feature songs, rhymes and more in English and other world languages. On February 7, Centro Hispano will be available before and after storytime to discuss services they offer, including Citizenship classes, Women's Empowerment Group, informational health clinics and more!



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SCHOOL NEWS

Frederick County Public Schools

Rae Gallagher
Vice President,
Board of Education

Happy New Year from the Board of Education. During the month of February, our school Board meetings will be held on February 14th and February 28th. The Board and Control Rooms are scheduled to undergo modernization this year, including the installation of new audio and video equipment, to replace dated infrastructure utilized since the building opened in 2010. While construction takes place, the Board Room will not be accessible for meetings. Thus, the Board will meet in a combination of virtual and off-site settings beginning with the Wednesday, February 28 meeting and continuing through the Wednesday, May 1 meeting. More details will be released as they are finalized.

With the new year comes the new budget planning for Frederick County, inclusive of Frederick County Public Schools. Dr. Dyson presented her proposed budget to the Board at the first January meeting – proposing an approximately 8.9% increase and requesting a total of just over \$991 million dollars. Dr. Dyson's request focused on four primary areas: recruiting & retaining staff; responding to enrollment growth across the county; overcoming inflationary increases; and expanding pro-

grams and additional supports for students, with a focus on special education services.

From 2022 to 2023, FCPS enrolled an additional 801 students. In 2024, FCPS anticipates another 1,200+ students enrolling in the system. A significant portion of the FCPS budget request will focus on supporting all of our over 47,000 students as our County's population continues to grow.

At the January 23rd Board meeting, the Board voted unanimously to move the superintendent's budget forward to receive public comment at the budget hearing on January 31st at Urbana High School. At the first scheduled meeting in February, the Board will make any recommended changes before voting on the budget to send forward to the County Executive. Budget comments can be submitted to fcps.budget@fcps.org.

In 2023, the Board passed an updated meeting policy to incorporate three community-based listening sessions to hear directly from students, families, and our broader community. The first session was held in the Board room in October. On February 21st, the Board will hold our 2nd community listening session at Catoctin High School at 6 p.m. The format of the community listening session is less formal than a typical Board meeting and allows our Board members an oppor-

tunity to directly engage with, hear from, and respond to community members.

FCPS continues to focus on the implementation of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, which also has an impact on the Board's budget planning. At the end of January, FCPS released our new Blueprint Unlocked podcast, hosted by Chief of Staff Dr. Sarah Sirgo. The podcast is part of our district's stakeholder resources available to highlight the work to bring the Maryland Blueprint to life. The "Blueprint Unlocked" podcast will be released twice monthly between January and March to unpack, understand, and unlock the work of the Blueprint. It provides an opportunity to hear directly from the experts leading these efforts.

Our first episode looks at our progress on Pillar 1: Early Childhood Education. Dr. Sirgo is joined by the two co-chairs of this pillar, Thurmont Primary principal Dr. Michele Baisey and Early Childhood Education Supervisor Leslie Frei. Look for the next episode on Pillar 5: Governance and Accountability in the coming weeks.

During our February 28th Board meeting Dr. Sirgo will be sharing the status of our Phase 2 Blueprint plan development and areas of focus. Please check out The Blueprint Quarterly newsletter and Milestone Reports at www.fcps.org/Blueprint and click on «Stakeholder Resources» to learn more.

FCPS Middle School music festival is fast approaching

The 2024 Frederick County Public Schools All-Middle School Music Festival is fast approaching.

"Please mark your calendars and encourage family, friends and neighbors to attend this festivals to show support for these extremely talented students and to support music education," said Kimberly Hirschmann, FCPS curriculum specialist for secondary visual and performing arts.

The Middle School Festival will also showcase an all-county student choir, band and orchestra and is scheduled for 4 p.m. Saturday, February 3, at GTJHS and will feature approximately 199 students. Purchase tickets here. The snow date is 7 p.m. Monday, February 5.

Paul Heinemann, Choral

Director at Loiederman Middle School in Montgomery County Public Schools, will lead the chorus. Wesley Thompson, the orchestra director at Clarksville Elementary School in Howard County, will conduct the orchestra. Carolyn Robblee, Director of Bands at Belmont Ridge Middle School in Loudon County, will conduct the band.

Proceeds from admission support these events and the Secondary Visual and Performing Arts Programs.

General seating tickets may be purchased in advance at GOFAN.co and are \$6 for adults and \$2 for students, plus additional fees. Senior citizens 60+ (ID required) and children under school age are free. FCPS employees are admitted free when presenting their FCPS badge.

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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

Given 2024 is a leap year, we asked our writers what they would do with the extra day afforded to them.

Freshman

My Extra Day

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

In all honesty, the idea of having an extra 24 hours every 4 years seems irrelevant to me. While people make these grand plans for leap day, do any of them actually see it through? For instance, this year our leap day is on a Thursday. How can anybody make any plans to do anything when our extra day is in the middle of the week? There is no use taking the day off for a long weekend because then you would have to take Friday off as well, and that's too much. Not to mention, it's pointless skipping classes on Thursday for a long weekend because again, Friday. While realistically speaking may not satisfy our desire for an extra day, that doesn't mean we can't fantasize about the perfect "extra" day.

On my perfect "extra" day, I would do a day trip to Disney World. This seems very controversial compared to what I previously said about leap days being pointless. However, this is fantasy.

Believe it or not, I have constructed the perfect way to have the perfect day in Walt Disney World. Allow me to lay out the itinerary.

First thing is first, waking up at 2 a.m. to get ready, gather our things, and get to the airport by 4:30 a.m. for a flight to Orlando at 6 a.m. Of course, we have to allow ourselves some wiggle room since airports can be so unpredictable. Not only that, but we have to get food before we get on the plane. Also, security is a whole other issue. A flight from BWI to MCO takes approximately 2 hours and 10 minutes if there are no delays and little turbulence. This gives us 2 hours and 10 minutes to, hopefully, sleep and prepare for our magical day.

Landing in MCO at roughly 8:15 a.m., we have to travel from our gate to the baggage claim—not to pick up our luggage but to meet our Uber driver. Once we locate our driver and get in the vehicle, we can estimate around 30-45 minutes to get to Disney's Magic Kingdom. PERFECT! Magic Kingdom opens at 9 a.m., so we'd be right on time.

Arriving at Disney's Magic Kingdom, we can begin to use our mobile app to book rides

for certain times, getting the most out of our visit. Designating roughly three hours to Magic Kingdom, this gives us plenty of time to ride the rides we desire, shop, sightsee, and character meet. Given how many times I have visited Magic Kingdom, I would be in and out, with a dole whip to go, of course.

Leaving the park around noon, we would take a bus to Disney's Animal Kingdom. Due to the irregular bus patterns, we can assume that this would take about an hour to do. Immediately entering Animal Kingdom, we can use our mobile app to start booking some rides while heading over to Flame Tree Barbecue for lunch—easily the best restaurant in that park. In Animal Kingdom, I would designate around 2-2½ hours since there are only three main attractions to ride—Flight of Passage, Expedition Everest, and the Kilimanjaro Safari. With this, we would head off to our next park—Hollywood Studios.

Hollywood Studios is always such a fun park. Similar to Animal Kingdom, this park can be completed rather quickly with help from the mobile app and

booking rides. In this park, there are four main attractions to hit—Rock n' Rollercoaster, Tower of Terror, Slinky-Dog Dash, and Mickey's Runaway Railroad. However, Rock n' Rollercoaster is closed for refurbishment until the summer of 2024, so we can cross this one off our list (unfortunately). I would designate the same amount of time for this park as we did for Animal Kingdom. When leaving Hollywood Studios, we would take advantage of the Skyliner transportation method to travel to Epcot at around 5-6 p.m.

Once in Epcot, we would walk the world showcase enjoying all the food from countries around the world—this is what we would count as our dinner. However, there is one attraction I would say is a must, and that is TestTrack. Saving Epcot as our last park is most desired since it is the park that closes at the latest—typically around 11 p.m. This means that we would have as much time as we wanted in any of the parks, theoretically, and not have to worry about not making every park. However, it is unlikely that we would stay until park closing since we would need to Uber

back to MCO airport to catch our flight back home to BWI.

With all of this being said, that is how I would choose to spend my leap day in a perfect world. It would probably take at least two days to recover from this adventure, but it would be worth it in my opinion. Disney has been a part of my life for as long as I can remember. From my first trip in 2012 to my most recent in 2022, I can say that I have officially become a Disney adult. Over the past ten years, I have visited Disney eight times and am currently planning my next visit for 2025—fingers crossed.

If I were given an extra day to do whatever I pleased, I would go to Disney for a day and leave all my problems here in a heartbeat. Nevertheless, this year our leap day is a Thursday... and that makes it rather impossible to really do anything with it. That's not to say that in other four years, or eight years, or 12 years, it might fall on a Friday, Saturday, or Sunday. When that happens, you can believe I'll be doing my much-needed day trip to Disney.

To read other articles by Gracie Smith, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Sophomore

February 29th: a rare opportunity

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

Every four years, our calendars have gifted us with the rare occurrence of an extra day in February—a bonus 24 hours that disrupts our annual rhythm. But what to do in a day that only occurs every four years? Lucky for me, Mount St. Mary's will be on spring break the week of the leap year for 2024, so from February 24th until March 1st, I will be sitting on a sunny beach in Florida from sunrise to

sunset; with that being said, February 29th will be a day spent soaking in the warm Florida sun and reminiscing on my favorite feelings of home—which typically involve the beach and summer break.

My favorite memories always involve the warm summer sun, time spent with family, and days at the beach in Cape Henlopen State Park; these are memories of home, the ones I hold on to tightly as the cold, winter air hits at the Mount and my seasonal depression kicks in. Instead of going back to the cold air of my hometown this time of year, I'm lucky enough to have planned a vacation with my boyfriend for spring break. And so, to end the month, I'll be spending a week curing this seasonal depres-

sion and enjoying the beauty of warm, sunny days. The 29th will actually be our last 'official' day of vacation; our last day to enjoy the warm sunny days offered to us by the beautiful state of Florida, as we will be headed to the Fort Lauderdale airport around 6 a.m. of March 1st to catch our flight back home. It's all timed so perfectly: the extra day of February is giving us our last day of solitude and relaxation before we head back to reality.

In all honesty, February 29th is a day I forgot about. Technically, I forgot about leap years completely up until we talked about what to write about this month. It really is an interesting phenomenon though. I mean, why do we even have leap years? What is the science behind it? How exactly does it work? Well, I can fill you in with my limited knowledge from high school...and I apologize if I don't do the science justice with my explanation! Leap years occur due to the need to align our calendar with the Earth's orbit around the sun, and because the earth takes about 365 days (give or take a couple decimals) to orbit the sun once, if we allow our calendars to proceed without any adjustments, they will gradually fall out of sync with the astronomical year based on this orbit. From the beginning of time, adjustments have been made to try and fix this idea. For example, I remember growing up being taught about how early civilizations, such as the Egyptians and Romans, were aware of the discrepancy between the solar year and the calendar year and in cases such as

the Romans, a calendar was made with a 355-day year with an occasional intercalary (which means the insertion of extra time) month added to synchronize it with the solar year. The concept for the calendars we follow now, though, is based off of Pope Gregory XIII's introduction of the 'Gregorian Calendar' in 1582, which refined the leap year rule, therefore allowing the calendar year length to be closer to the solar year, and thus reducing the discrepancy brought forth by other calendars of the past. As I said earlier, the current leap year system also follows the rules established by the Gregorian calendar: a year is considered a leap year if it is divisible by 4, except for years divisible by 100. However, years divisible by 400 are still considered leap years; essentially, this concept is based off of multiples of fours—at least that's the easiest way I have found to remember it! This system has provided a close approximation of the solar year and helps to keep our calendar in sync with the Earth's orbit around the sun! This, my friends, is science at its finest!

One of the downsides to this day though, is everyone who has a birthday on February 29th...I mean, they don't get to celebrate their actual birthday on the day except for every four years when it finally comes around again! Fun-nily enough, my best friend is going to be having a baby in late February. She is actually due on my other nephew's birthday, the 24th! Small world, isn't it! There is a chance though that she could have this sweet baby boy on the 29th

instead, and poor Easton won't get to celebrate his birthday on the actual day aside from those years by a multiple of four. While on the topic of birthdays, my dad made a point as I was writing today about how every four years, he has to wait an extra day to celebrate his own birthday. My family really enjoy making a big deal out of birthdays and my dad is the biggest celebration enthusiast of us all. Last year for his 50th, he took a trip to Cancun! I bet he wished it was a leap year for that last year, he would've gotten an extra day to spend on vacation.

It really is so interesting to look at the science behind our daily lives; I mean, we are told that the world works a certain way, and it influences our lives for eternity, or until someone new makes a point that changes our way of viewing the world. I was never one who quite cared for science, but I can't help it but be completely intrigued by the phenomenon here! Frankly, I am excited to see what the year of 2024—the year of the leap year—has in store for me. So far, it is looking pretty good! How I cannot wait to be spending February 29th on the beach, fully embracing the resolutions I made this year to take time to myself and do good by me! I hope everyone else reading this gets to enjoy this extra day as well: by all means make a cake, have a special dinner, do something that makes you feel good, and use this day as an excuse to celebrate life!

To read other articles by Devin Owen, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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LEAP DAY POSSIBILITIES

Junior

Twenty-four hours

Dolores Hans
MSMU class of 2025

It is hard to wrap my brain around the fact that there is an extra day coming up because it is just another Thursday. I will admit that in a world where time passes far too quickly and laughs as we desperately try to find a moment of joyfulness, having an additional twenty-four hours seems daunting. Twenty-four extra hours, but at least eight will be spent sleeping, and many more will be spent doing the seemingly mundane parts of life we spend most other days doing anyway. There is so much I could do with that time. So much I wish I could do. I could write a letter to everyone I have ever loved telling them how much they mean to me. I could lie at the top of a grassy hill, feeling the wind pass through me as if I am nothing but a blade of grass. I could take my siblings out for ice cream and on an adventure, trying to reclaim the wonder I felt as a child. I could read a book at the foot of a weep-

ing willow and weep alongside it as the sun sets, recalling those whom I miss who have passed, because it has been too long since I have allowed them to cross my mind. I could prepare yet another twelve-hour date with my beloved, and we could delight in how awesome it is to be completely in love. Honestly, I could spend twenty-four hours just looking at him, hearing him play guitar, and finding ways to make him smile. I could spend the whole day learning new recipes and perfecting my own, so I can add my own cookbook to the stacks on my desk. I could go out, breathe deep, feel everything, and live.

Alas, my day will likely be spent on my couch, recovering from my appointment at the dentist, probably deleting photos to clear up storage on my phone, and going crazy because I long to be with my dearest friends here in Maryland. It will probably be cold, so I won't be outdoors basking in the sunlight and hearing the birds sing their melodious songs. I will probably clean up after my siblings and fall asleep with the sounds of the television on instead of the faint sound of

the cars on Route 15.

Why must this extra day be at the end of February? When the earth is covered in a delicate layer of snow, wind ripping at the glistening fractals, blowing cold air through the cracks in our windows. When the people of the world are in the middle of the chaos of work and school. It will be just another Thursday. Why do we create such a poor stigma about how we spend our time, adding to the pressure not only to live rightly as we would any other day, but to make this one count? Twenty-four hours. Why are we presented with a blessing, only for it to be revealed that it was just a facade for the ordinary and tiresome, taunting us with the idea of something more.

I will be on spring break prior to and during this leap day. How ironic, no, how cruel is it that every day of my break prior to the extra twenty-four hours, I could be spending with the love of my life, exploring nature, and feeling happiness like never before. But when that leap day comes around, I will be hundreds of miles away from him in a mundane world of appointments and busy work. When people ask

me how I spent my leap day, this rare and supposedly fruitful day, I will simply say that I spent it with my family, because it is too hard to admit without shame that I did not live life to the fullest. I did not seize the day. I did not lay on a grassy hill or watch the sunset or write letters.

Although, I guess that's the way of time. Time teases us with its presence and acts as though it is a victim of neglect, believing we do not appreciate it or see its value. It would have us believe that we are careless and joyless, seeing time as only something to be lost. In actuality though, time is an oppressor. It rears its face towards us, pressuring us to make the most of it and take the gifts it offers us even though they are poisoned. It feeds our minds with images of warmth and jubilation, only to shame us for not taking advantage of the sun that didn't shine and the joy that had no name. It exploits our desires and coerces us to accept the empty promises it provides. It presents itself as an under-appreciated gem, but truly it is a master of despair.

That is, until we change our minds to accepting this truth, and embracing it. Instead of saying "make every

moment count because soon this time will be gone," believing time is a gift and we must appreciate it, ultimately causing pain if we don't, let's say "do what makes you happy as often as you can, and even with time against you, you will thrive."

There will come a day when my life catches up to my dreams. Spending unbroken time with my love, cooking new recipes, writing letters, taking kids on adventures, and all the joys that come from raising kids, teaching, and being married, all things that I see in my future. One day, it won't be so daunting to have a leap day, because I will already be living the life that consists of all the ways I wish I could've been spending extra time. One day, I could spend my leap day at the top of a grassy hill having a picnic with my family while my husband smiles and plays guitar, and the kids eat ice cream while reading. And there I will be, writing them each a letter as the sun sets, feeling the wind pass through me, breathing deep, feeling everything, living.

To read other articles by Dolores Hans, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Senior

Life's Limits

Claire Doll
MSMU Class of 2024

Humans often struggle with the concept of limits. There is limited time to travel, limited time to pursue our careers, and limited time to spend with family and friends. In fact, there's limited time on this earth. We plan for so much because it's all we know. Life is short, so do it all! It's what we hear all the time, and it's a statement filled with pressure. Since when is there the time to "do it all"?

This year, we have been granted an extra 24 hours in 2024. I'll be honest—I've never really thought much of the leap year. I have one friend who was born on February 28th during a leap year, so we laugh about that, but it's never crossed my mind otherwise. In fact, I didn't know that 2024 had one extra day until I was assigned to write about it. But after some research, I realize that it's quite a gift. It's a little loophole in the whole system: extra time. We could always use extra time.

The last leap year was 2020. Anyone who has any memory of that year knows how haunting, eerie, and unbelievable the events of 2020 were. The more I think about it, the beginning and end of my college years are bookended by leap years. The way I see it, this year, I have more time to enjoy my dwindling moments at Mount St. Mary's and await the future. And it's hard, when you're on the brink of a vast change and you can't help but plan for the months and years ahead. It's hard to enjoy the now. But this extra 24 hours, in this transformative year, could help.

I have 122 days until graduation. If this were an ordinary year, I'd only have 121.

February 29th, 2024 falls on a Thursday. I think Thursday might be my favorite day of the week; there's a sense of anticipation for the weekend without the disruption of routine, and you still have Friday to get through, and then the weekend itself. Only, my weekends will be from Thursday to Tuesday, due to having no classes on Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays, giving me probably the most relaxed and flexible schedule I'll ever have. Sometimes, I joke to my friends that I will be living the retired life this spring. I'm able to work out when I want, travel on long weekends, schedule lunch dates in the middle of the day—all on a fixed income, too! On Tuesday and Thursdays, I'll be taking three classes: ethics, personal finance, and ceramics. I haven't decided quite how the structure of my days will go yet, but I intend to give myself time to sleep in, get in some movement, and have free time as well.

I want to truly soak up my last months of college, and I fully believe that this leap year was meant to help me. Although an extra 24 hours is not a lot in the grand scheme of things, it grants me one extra day of the Mount experience, one extra day with my best friends. One extra day to be 22. One extra day in my life, often gone unnoticed—but not this time.

So, let's imagine it's February 29th. I wake up to one more day in February, in one of the most underrated months of the year. If I'm lucky—if we're all lucky—it will snow. Maybe I'll wake up to fresh flakes dancing in the air, or ice painting the roads. Or maybe it'll be an ordinary day with ordinary,

crisp, February weather. It's Thursday, and to my surprise, I'm already on spring break—can you believe the Mount's spring break starts in February and bleeds into the month of March? Last year, I spent spring break at the beach with my friends, and it was freezing. Wind sweeping sand in the air, and icy cold ocean water, not yet warmed by the sun. I had to leave this trip early because my sister and I had also planned a trip to Nashville. I found myself in Delaware one day, and the next day, on a plane to Tennessee. The year before, I was in London with my very best friends, exploring the historic, beautiful city. Now writing this, I realize am so fortunate to have amazing spring breaks that I can reflect upon.

This year, I want to do the same. Go somewhere I've never been.

I'm planning a trip with my boyfriend to Boston because I've always wanted to go, and I've never been that up North before. Or maybe I'll hang out with some friends and travel to another totally new and random spot. What they say about college spring break is true: you need to soak up every last minute of it. Travel and be with friends and enjoy the moment. I think we were meant to have spring break during the leap day, during that extra 24 hours.

I challenge you this leap year to spend February 29th intentionally. What are your favorite, little moments of the day? Making your coffee in the morning and having that first sip? Driving to work and passing scenic views? Your lunch break? Finally getting home and settling on the couch? Reading a book or watching a movie before bed? Or, do you find yourself with some free time this leap year? Who would you be with? What would you do? What spots can you explore nearby, or far

away? I urge you not to waste this extra day. It is a lucky thing to go to bed on February 28th and wake up on February 29th, if only for every four years.

Like I said, life is full of limits. Choose to spend your time wisely. Do not feel pressured to fit everything into this leap day, but rather

take it slow and truly reflect on the fortunate experience of having an extra 24 hours to live. For one day, the limits are stretched just a bit. Enjoy it.

To read other articles by Claire Doll, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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ARTS

Way Off Broadway kicks of 30th season

The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre will begin its 30th Anniversary Season with a classic murder mystery from the Queen of Mysteries, Agatha Christie. The 2024 Season will kick off with *A Murder is Announced* on Friday evening, January 19th. The whodunnit will then run through March 2nd.

In the play, an announcement in the local paper states the time and place when a murder is to occur in Miss Blacklock's home in the English village of Chipping Cleghorn. What follows is a classic Christie puzzle of mixed motives, concealed identities, a second death, and a determined inspector grimly following the case's twists and turns. Fortunately, Miss Marple is on hand to provide the solution – at some risk to herself – in a dramatic final confrontation.

A Murder is Announced was first published in 1950 and was the fourth novel featuring the amateur sleuth Jane Marple. At the time, one reviewer said, "The plot is as ingenious as ever..." while another referred to it as a "brilliantly conducted parlour game."

In 1956, NBC's Goodyear Playhouse presented a television adaptation starring Gracie Fields as Miss Marple, Roger Moore as Patrick Simmons, and Jessica Tandy as Letitia Blacklock. Another television adaptation came in 1984 as part of the popular BBC series *Miss Marple*, starring Joan Hickson as Marple.

The stage version of *A Murder is Announced* first premiered at the Theatre Royal, Brighton in 1977 before transferring to the Vaudeville Theatre in London later that year.

Way Off Broadway's production of *A Murder is Announced* brings together a cast who, in large part, appeared together in the theatre's record-breaking production of another Christie mystery in 2022, *Murder on the Orient Express*.

A Murder is Announced is based on Agatha Christie's novel of the same name and was adapted for the stage by Leslie Darbon. Justin M. Kiska, one of the theatre's owners and a mystery writer himself, directs the production.

A Murder is Announced runs through March 2nd, with performances are every Friday and Sat-

urday evening, and matinees on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month. Tickets on Friday evenings are \$56; Saturday evenings are \$60; and Sunday afternoons are \$59 per person. Tickets may be purchased by calling the theatre's Box Office at 301-662-6600. A specific Performance Calendar can be found on the theatre's website at www.wayoffbroadway.com.

To learn more about *A Murder is Announced*, or any of the shows in Way Off Broadway's upcoming 30th Anniversary Season including *Diana – The Musical*, *Tootsie*, *Anastasia*, or *Christmas Chronicles*, visit www.wayoffbroadway.com.

The Way Off Broadway Dinner Theatre, under the direction of the Kiska family since 2002, will celebrate its 30th Anniversary Season of producing live theatre in 2024. Since it first opened in 1995, the theatre has been a leader in the area's theatre community, proudly bringing both classic musicals, as well as regional and area premieres to the Frederick stage. Way Off Broadway also pres-



ents *Marquee Mysteries* - an interactive murder mystery series where the audience helps solve the case - not only at the theatre, but regularly on

the Walkersville Southern Railroad and other venues through the area for private functions. www.wayoffbroadway.com.

This month at the Weinberg Center

Swan Lake Comes to Weinberg Center

Swan Lake, one of the most beloved ballets of all time, comes to the Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick Maryland on Wednesday, February 14 in an original new production. The one-night-only performance is part of World Ballet Series ongoing 2023-2024 U.S. tour.

Brought to life by an exceptional, multinational ensemble of 50 dancers, Swan Lake features vivid hand-painted sets, detailed hand-crafted costumes, rich storytelling, and Tchaikovsky's unforgettable music. The production features Marius Petipa's original choreography, lovingly retouched

by Nadezhda Kalinina. Sergey Novikov is the scenic and costume designer, with special effects and makeup designed by Irina Strukova. World Ballet Series' Swan Lake is produced by Gorskaya-Hartwick Productions.

Based in Los Angeles, Gorskaya-Hartwick Productions is led by Sasha Gorskaya and Gulya Hartwick, who have created, produced, and toured original productions of some of the world's most cherished ballets as part of World Ballet Series. Through their work, Gorskaya and Hartwick aim to develop the ballet audiences of tomorrow and ensure that the whole country has access to the art form. To date, World

Ballet Series has travelled to more than 280 cities reaching an audience of more than 250,000, many of whom are first time attendees to a ballet.

Tickets start at \$55.

Celtic Fusion Band Scythian to Ignite the Stage at Weinberg

Scythian is set to bring its thunderous energy and eclectic mix of Celtic, Eastern European, and Appalachian roots music to the Weinberg Center on Friday, February 16.

Named after Ukrainian nomads, Scythian, pronounced as "sith-ee-yin," is a Washington, D.C. based quartet, consisting of Alexander Fedoryka (Vocals, Fiddle, Mandolin, Harmonica), Danylo Fedoryka (Vocals, Guitar, Accordion), Ethan Dean (Vocals, Upright and Electric Bass, Percussion, Guitar), and Johnny Rees (Vocals, Drums, Percussion). Described by Nashville's Music City Roots as "what happens when rock star charisma meets Celtic dervish fiddling," Scythian is a fusion of technical

pross and infectious enthusiasm.

The Washington Post attests, "Scythian's enthusiasm is contagious, and shows seem to end with everyone dancing, jumping around, or hoisting glasses." The band's diverse influences, including Ukrainian folk, bluegrass, and 60s & 70s folk-rock, come together in a technically precise and folk tradition-steeped conglomerate. For over 12 years, Scythian has been a headliner on the US Celtic Festival Circuit and a notable name in the Bluegrass/Americana Festival Circuit. The band's success as an independent group, having played over 1,300 shows across the United States, Europe, Canada, and even as far away as Australia, speaks to the universal resonance of their "old time, good time music."

Tickets start at \$25.

Trey Kennedy Brings "Grow Up Comedy Tour"

Get ready for an evening of side-splitting laughter as comedian Trey Kennedy takes the stage at the

Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick Maryland with his Grow Up Comedy Tour on March 2, 2024, at 7:00 PM. The highly anticipated tour promises an unforgettable night filled with humor, wit, and relatable anecdotes.

Trey Kennedy, a born and raised Oklahoman, unexpectedly entered the entertainment industry during his college years at Oklahoma State University. His journey to stardom began on the mobile app Vine, where he quickly amassed more than 2.5 million followers. Trey became a top creator on the app for over three years, igniting his passion for entertainment. Continuing his social media success, Trey has transitioned to platforms such as Instagram and TikTok, where he now boasts a combined following of over 12 million fans.

The multi-talented comedian is also the host of the popular podcast titled "Correct Opinions." Having recently concluded a wildly successful comedy tour, Trey Kennedy sold out venues across the United States, showcasing his comedic prowess and connecting with audiences on a personal level. Trey's self-produced comedy special, "Are You For Real?" is available for streaming on YouTube, providing fans with a front-row seat to his hilarious and relatable content.

Tickets start at \$29

Tickets for all these shows may be purchased online at WeinbergCenter.org, by calling the box office at 301-600-2828, or in person at 20 West Patrick Street.

A complete listing of artists and performers scheduled for the 2023-24 season can be found at WeinbergCenter.org.

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Cupid cooking

Sonya Verlaque

I love pasta, and I think it is romantic. Maybe because Italy seems so fanciful or I watched "Lady and the Tramp" at too young an age. But, pasta is comfortable and cozy and an easy date night food because it is all finished at once. There is no timing of side dishes with the main course and getting everything ready and plated at the same moment. This month there are two sauces to choose from, which I recommend with pappardelle, fettuccini or linguini (maybe it was "Lady and the Tramp") and a desert you can make the day before to have a relaxing but flavorful Valentine's date.

Mushroom Cream sauce

Ingredients:
 1/2 cup unsalted butter divided
 2 cloves fresh minced garlic, or a pinch of garlic salt
 16 ounces fresh sliced mushrooms (more if you love mushrooms!)
 1 cup heavy whipping cream
 1 pound fettuccine
 1/2 cup Parmesan cheese
 1 cup reserved pasta water
 1 tbs salt (more to taste)
 fresh ground black pepper
 parsley for topping

Cooking Instructions: Clean the mushrooms. Add the garlic and mushrooms to a large skillet with 2 tablespoons of the butter. Sauté until the mushrooms are soft with deep brown color – 10-15 minutes. Add the cream and the rest of the butter. Simmer over low heat. Cook your pasta in a large pot according to package directions. Drain, reserving a little bit of the water, and return to pan. Add mushroom sauce to the hot noodles in the pan. Toss with tongs to mix. Add Par-

mesan and up a small amount of pasta water (start with 1/4 cup) to get the consistency creamy and smooth. You may need a little more, but start small because we are not making soup. Season with salt and pepper.

Slow Cooker Beef Ragu

This recipe comes from the Skinnytaste cookbook, Fast and Slow. The great thing about this is at dinner you just have to boil the pasta and you have plenty of time to make the signature cocktail as well. This recipe makes a lot, so if you are having a small casual dinner party its a great idea. You can also freeze the sauce if you don't use it all.

Ingredients:
 1 tbs olive oil
 6 garlic cloves, smashed slightly
 1 1/2 pounds flank steak, cut against the grain into 4 pieces
 salt and pepper
 1 (28 ounce) can crushed tomatoes
 1/4 cup reduced sodium beef broth
 1 carrot, chopped
 2 bay leaves
 2 sprigs fresh thyme
 Parmesan, ricotta, and parsley for topping

Cooking Instructions: In a small skillet, heat the oil over medium high heat. Add the garlic and cook, stirring, until golden and lightly browned, about 2 minutes. Season the beef with 1 tbs salt and pepper to taste. Transfer to a 5- to 6-quart slow cooker. Pour the tomatoes and broth over the beef and add the garlic from step one, plus carrots, bay leaves, and thyme. Cover and cook on high for 6 hours or on low for 8 to 10 hours. Discard the herbs and shred the beef in the pot using 2 forks. Cook the pasta according to package directions. Drain, return to the pot, and add the sauce from the slow cooker. (If you are serv-

ing 2-4 people you will not need all of the sauce), then reheat for a minute and stir to combine. Serve in some beautiful bowls with grated parmesan and parsley.

Winter Rose Cocktail

A romantic and familiar with a drink or two, Ernest Hemingway is the inspiration for romantic cocktail. The Winter Rose is a twist on the Jack Rose, which played a minor role in "The Sun Also Rises." George, the bartender at the Crillon, makes several for Jake Barnes. This cocktail is a bright red color due to the grenadine. The Jack Rose is apple brandy and citrus (usually lime or lemon) with grenadine. Hemingway is believed to have invented the drink 'Death in the Afternoon' sharing the name with another book about bullfighting, is absinthe and champagne, which after drinking you may not make it to desert. So, I will recommend this instead.

Ingredients:
 2 oz. Applejack
 1 oz. Pomegranate Juice
 1/2 oz. Grenadine
 Ice

Cooking Instructions: Shake Applejack, pomegranate juice and grenadine together until chilled. Strain into chilled coupe glass or a martini glass.

Lemon and Raspberry Cheesecake Bars

After such a sweet cocktail, these tart lemon bars provide a not too sweet desert. Make them on the 13th and store in the refrigerator.

Ingredients:
 For the Crust
 1 box Nilla Wafers
 5 tbsp. butter



Beef Ragu

For the Cheesecake
 32 oz. cream cheese
 4 eggs
 4 tbsp. lemon juice
 3/4 cup sugar
 6 tbs whole milk
 1 tsp. vanilla extract

For the Raspberry Marble
 1/2 cup raspberries
 2 tbs. sugar

Cooking Instructions: Preheat oven to 350 F. Grease a pyrex with butter and set aside. Crush the Nilla Wafers into tiny crumbs - use a food processor or put cookies in a baggie and crush with a rolling pin. Melt 5 tbsp. of butter and mix together with the crumbs in a medium sized bowl until fully incorporated. Pour crumb mixture evenly into a 15x10 inch pyrex, then press with a spatula to pat it tightly down.

Bake for 10 minutes, then set aside. Beat together sugar and cream cheese, then add eggs, milk, lemon juice and vanilla. Mix till everything is perfectly smooth. Spread evenly over cooked crust. Blend raspberries in a food processor or blender, then press through a mesh strainer into a bowl to remove any seeds or solids from your puree. Mix the raspberry liquid with 2 tbsp. of sugar. Once sugar is dissolved, dot the cheesecake mixture with little circles of raspberry, then use a toothpick to mix the puree in circles and squiggles until you have a lovely marble pattern. Bake for 40-45 minutes until the edges are slightly brown and the center is a little soft. Cool on a baking rack, then refrigerate for 3-4 hours before cutting into squares.

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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of February

Professor Wayne Wooten

For February 2024, the last quarter moon is on February 2nd. In the morning sky, the waning crescent passes 5 degrees south of Venus on February 7th, then 4 degrees south of Mars on February 8th. The new moon is on February 9th, only two months until the big total solar eclipse of April 8, 2024 runs through Middle America.

Back in the evening sky, the waxing crescent moon passes 2 degrees below Saturn in the SW twilight on February 10th. On the 15th, the almost first quarter moon passes 10 degrees north of Jupiter overhead. The full moon, the Hunger Moon, rises at sunset on February 24th.

Mercury is below Venus and Mars in the dawn on February 1st, but quickly disappears behind the Sun for the rest of the month. Venus too is heading behind the Sun, and passes Mars in the dawn on February 22nd. Mars moves farther away from the Sun in the dawn sky through out the month, but remain on the other side of the Sun. In interesting advantage of this current position is that the rover cameras on Mars' surface can image sunspots on the far side of the Sun, pointed away from us, and give us a week's advance notice that a good one is coming soon over the Sun's eastern limb as seen from earth.

Jupiter rides high overhead in Aries in the sunset sky, and its moons are easy to spot with small telescopes. But Saturn is soon gone, low in the SW as the month begins, and lost in the sun's glare by the end of the month.

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.



The Rosette Nebula lies 5,000 light-years from Earth and measures roughly 130 light years in diameter. The radiation from the young stars excites the atoms in the nebula, causing them to emit radiation themselves, producing the emission nebula we see. The mass of the nebula is estimated to be around 10,000 solar masses.

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; use it (mag. +0.9) as a comparison star to measure the fading of Betelgeuse. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance.

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; they were the first two recruits for the Argonauts of University of West Florida.

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. Betelgeuse is

also known as alpha Orionis, for it has been the brightest star in Orion most of the time. But for much for 2019 it faded due to an expulsion of condensing carbon dust (soot) blown off in our direction, and was only 1/3rd its greatest brightness. Now this cloud has dissipated.

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 is the Rosette Nebula that lies around the cluster. 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 I hope you witness on April 8th 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. So these 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 my shot. This is as Carl Sagan said so well, "us" stuff, the heavier carbon, nitrogen, oxygen, calcium, iron, sulfur, and phosphorus created in supernovae and making our planet and bodies.

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 bright-

est star in the sky. Sirius dominates the SE sky by 7 p.m., 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. 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

"You can fool some of the people all of the time, and all of the people some of the time, but you cannot fool all of the people all of the time"
—Abraham Lincoln (1809-1865)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Seasonable at first with a light wintry mix, then turning mild (1, 2, 3, 4, 5) becoming very warm with rain, then windy, cooler, and more seasonable (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); seasonable and dry at first, then milder (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); a wintry mix, followed by rain and then turning cooler and dry (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); rain at first, colder with light snow or flurries, then dry (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); turning wet with rain, followed by mild and dry weather (26, 27, 28, 29).

Full Moon: February's Full Moon will occur on February 24th, in 2024. It was called 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 breeding 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.

Holidays: Valentine's Day, February 14th, falls on Tuesday in 2024. Show that special someone just how special they are and how much you appreciate them. The birthdays of Presidents Abraham Lincoln (Monday, February 12th) and George Washington (Thursday, the 22nd) are collectively celebrated on President's Day, which falls on Monday, February 19th, providing us with an extended holiday weekend. Enjoy!

The Garden: It's a good time to stroll around and trim back any branches that were damaged by the ravages of Winter. If you haven't yet

applied your dormant spray to your fruit trees, Do it now! Stored summer flowering bulbs may try to start into growth if they are subjected to heat. They should be kept very dry, and stored at 45° F. If they are shriveling, put them into slightly damp peat moss, but keep them cool!

The Farm: Best for planting root crops (1, 7, 8); Best for weeding and stirring the soil (17, 18); Best for planting above-ground crops (11, 12) Best for harvesting all crops (4, 5, 6); Best days to set hens and incubators (1, 2, 3, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29); slaughter and butcher meat (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15); transplant (9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15); harvest and store grains (2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8); wean animals (4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

"You only reap what you sow, so be sure to spread more kindness and consideration for your fellow man than envy or ill will"



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FITNESS & HEALTH

Tips to manage the common cold

Rachel Myers PA-C
Frederick Primary
Care Associates

So, you went to bed thinking about how much fun you had over the holidays and woke up with a little nasal congestion. You think, eh, maybe it's allergies. You go on about your day and other symptoms start to come - sore throat, tired, maybe a bit exhausted. Later your nose is running and you have a little cough or even a fever. Yep, you've got a cold. This is, perhaps, one of the most common complaints around this time of year.

Most colds are predominately caused by viruses - little proteins that enter your system, and then hijack your cells machinery to make copies of themselves to spread to others. Your symptoms are part of an immune response to help combat and get rid of it. Bacteria have their own cells and machinery, they do not have to rely on you. They're just looking for a new home to settle and multiply. Antibiotics target bacterial cell structures to help break them up and then your body can get rid of them. Antibiotics do not work on viruses for this exact reason.

So you most likely have a viral cold, so what do you do? Here's a crash course in what we medical professionals like to call 'symptom management.'

There are some natural ways to combat nasal or sinus congestion and post-nasal drainage (that stuff that runs down the back of your throat). Elevate the head of your bed. You can do this with

pillows or even a fancy triangle shaped pillow. This utilizes gravity to keep things moving instead of stagnating in the upper respiratory system. Utilizing a cool mist humidifier is also helpful. There are even some that can be cleaned in the dishwasher.

Nasal/sinus saline washes are very effective. They can be found in most drug stores as kits and come in multiple forms. Just make sure to use only sterile, distilled or boiled water to avoid implanting unwanted microbes into your sinuses. If sinus rinses are not for you, then nasal saline spray is the next best thing. You can do this as often as you like. Last, but not least, do not disregard the power of hot drinks, water, rest and sleep. Ideally these should all be started almost immediately upon symptom onset for best results.

Now, perhaps you would like a bit more support in the form of medicine. There are many options to be found in the pharmacy aisles - single agents and combination products. Just a note, choosing an appropriate option should be driven by your other health conditions.

Over the counter acetaminophen and ibuprofen can be very useful for fever reduction and pain relief for body aches for most people. Individuals who are of older age or those with high blood pressure or kidney disease should use ibuprofen cautiously due to its negative effect on the kidneys and its ability to raise blood pressure.

Decongestants like pseudoephedrine or phenylephrine can be useful to help dry up that

pesky mucous. Decongestants are known to increase heart rate and blood pressure. So, these should be avoided by individuals with high blood pressure or heart rhythm issues.

Expectorants like guaifenesin help thin mucous making it easier to pass. This is very useful for chest congestion.

Cough suppressants like dextromethorphan can be helpful to keep a cough from being overly bothersome. There are both liquid and pill versions. Honey is also a great natural remedy. You

may need 1-2tsp for a true effect. This is a particularly good option for children older than 1 year of age. Diabetics should use syrups and honey mindfully due to sugar content and blood sugar elevations.

As always, follow the recommended dosing on the package or instructions from your healthcare provider. Remember to be careful using multiple combination medications together to avoid overlapping of ingredients. This is particularly important with acetaminophen because taking more than 4 grams per day can be toxic.

When would be a good time

to seek medical care? It is appropriate to contact your medical provider anytime you are concerned or have questions. Most viral colds last about 7-10 days on average, though some can stretch to 14 days or so. You may wish to schedule with your medical provider if your symptoms are not improving after 5-7 days or symptoms were improving, but then suddenly get worse. Absolutely contact your medical provider or seek urgent care for any high fever that does not come down with acetaminophen or ibuprofen or you develop chest pain or shortness of breath.

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FROM THE DESK OF CONGRESSIONAL CANDIDATE ...

Lesley Lopez (D)

As voters across Western Maryland consider the successor to Congressman Trone, I believe they are looking for someone who can relate to the challenges working families face in our district and has the expertise to get things done even in a dysfunctional Washington.

As a former Congressional staffer and current two-term Delegate who lives in and represents this district, I have a proven record of passing legislation that is already helping Marylanders in their daily lives. Equipped with this perspective and legislative experience, I know that I can hit the

ground running and deliver common sense results for Western Maryland in Congress.

In my time as a Delegate, I've proven myself as someone who delivers for my district and works across the aisle to achieve big wins. After four years of organizing a bipartisan coalition of law enforcement and advocates, I led the fight to ban ghost guns, the untraceable and unserialized gun kits that can be purchased online by criminals without a background check. Even when I didn't need to, I successfully worked with Republicans to earn bipartisan support. As Presi-

dent of the Women's Caucus, I fought for bipartisan bills like ending co-pays on mammograms and increasing childcare funding. Maryland needs someone who is willing to put partisan politics aside and find consensus to pass common-sense legislation. Our district has a diverse set of communities, and representing all of them is important to me.

Our communities can't afford to lose a tireless advocate in Congress fighting for Western Maryland. During my time in Annapolis, I have brought home millions of dollars for district projects, such as a large childcare facility and a community center. These new buildings aren't just brick and mortar— they strengthen our

social fabric. Being able to connect the dots between our community needs and federal grants and other resources should be a major part of our next congressperson's job, and it's one I have a track record of delivering.

But being a skilled lawmaker is only worth so much if you are not focused on the right issues. Families across our district are struggling, and we need someone who understands how hard and expensive raising a family can be. My lived experiences— as the daughter of an active-duty single mom, as a former domestic worker, and now as a working mom — give me a perspective that's unique to the government but shared with every parent who's ever struggled to make ends meet. Right

now only 7% of members of Congress have school-age children. No wonder families like mine feel that no one is looking out for them. I'll bring my life experience to be your voice in Congress to finally address these critical issues.

Our district needs an experienced lawmaker who understands what families are going through. I am the only candidate in the field with a proven record of success as a legislator and the lived experience to know firsthand the struggles families are facing. These are tough times, but I know the people of Western Maryland are stronger. I look forward to earning your vote and together solving problems. Let's get to work.

Brenda Thiam (R)

Allow me the opportunity to introduce myself. My name is Brenda Thiam and I'm running for US Congress in District 6. My mom instilled Christian values in us while growing up. She warned us to never rely on the government; respect the police when they tell you to do something; work to take care of your family; stand up for the pledge of allegiance; respect yourself and your elders; pray and thank God for all things; don't make excuses for what you don't have; and so many more lessons. I follow these lessons today and teach my daughter the same values. Following these values has never steered me wrong and I will

continue to make my mom proud.

Before entering politics, I taught special education, specifically to children with autism and intellectual disabilities. As a special educator, I learned to meet children where they were and worked collaboratively with the parents and the school-based teams to develop an educational plan to help students reach their goals. Children rely on adults to help them become productive citizens in their communities. As adults, we must not take this role lightly. I enjoyed my teaching career with children who have unique learning styles. My teacher's

license is still current, and I will never consider myself a former educator.

With all that's going on in schools today about sexualized books in school libraries; curriculum; and instruction, we must be vigilant regarding our involvement in the educational lives of our children. The stakes are too high to sit on our hands. We must get up, speak up, and be involved. COVID pulled the covers off what instruction looks like in today's classroom. This has compelled parents to ask questions, run for the school board, and work closely with teachers to educate children and prepare them for post-secondary outcomes.

You might ask the question, "how did she end up in politics?" I can assure

you pursuing politics was never a goal. I began to witness a gradual decline in my city, and I found myself complaining to my husband about the challenges of Hagerstown. He encouraged me to consider running for local office to be part of the changes. After several months of campaigning for a seat on the City Council, the State Delegate seat became available, and I decided to apply for the seat and I was appointed by Governor Hogan to it in October 2020.

I was the first African American woman to serve in the Republican caucus in the history of the Maryland General Assembly. I sponsored bills; presented friendly amendments on the floor and debated them on the House floor; stood

up for conservative values in committee hearings. I worked hard for my constituents while in Annapolis and I served them well. What an honor it was!

I didn't realize I'd enjoy being a public servant as much as I did. Helping people solve problems that they saw as a challenge is God's work. Although I didn't win my election to return to Annapolis, I still have the desire to help my community, my district, and my country. Hence, I'm running for Congress in District 6, and I know my legislative experience in Annapolis was good training to prepare me for Congress. I invite you to join me in winning this election and championing conservative values in Washington, DC.



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WALKERSVILLE FIRE COMPANY AWARD BANQUET



Chase Tracey, a student at Frederick County Community College and Ayden Shadle, a student at Shenandoah University, received the Vaughn Zimmerman Scholarship award from Vaughn Zimmerman.



Company President Jim Graham presents the Company's Community Volunteer of the Year award to Bill Scheel.



Joanne Baum was the recipient of this year's Member of the Year award, presented to her President Jim Graham.



Brad Bliven accepted the annual Firefighter of the Year Award from Chief Chad Barrick



Operational Officers: Lt. Dalen Hahn, Captain Chase Tracey, Captain Matt Staley, Assistant Chief Alan Staley, Chief Chad Barrick, Deputy Chief Craig Moore, Captain Kristi Staley, Lt. Brad Bliven, Lt. Blaine Smith, and Sgt. Josh Barrett.



Administrative Officers for 2024: Alan Staley, Matt Staley, Chase Tracey, Dick Gilbert, Blaine Smith, Josh Barrett, Austin Schroyer, Chaplain Chad Weddle, Chief Chad Barrick, Vice President Brian Hilbrand, Secretary Linda Grossnickle, Assistant Secretary Kristi Staley, Treasurer Betsy Graham, President Jim Graham, and Bill Horine (Not Pictured: Assistant Treasurer Andrew Skidmore).



Life Members of the the Walkersville Volunteer Fire Co.: Steve Fogle, Debbie Fogle, Jean Brooks, Tommy Crum, Joe Devilbiss, Margie Shankle, Linda Grossnickle, Mary Scheele, Jimmy Beard, and Company President Jim Graham



Logan Boston accepts the Most Valuable Responder award from Chief Chad Barrick.



The Chief's Award was presented to the entire Staley family for their dedication and personal involvement at the firehouse. Not only do these family members give their time and talents running calls, but serve in crucial operational, fundraising and administrative duties as well.

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