

Emmitsburg NEWS-JOURNAL

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

DECEMBER 2023

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And there were in the same country shepherds abiding in the field, keeping watch over their flocks by night.

And, lo, the angel of the Lord came upon them, and the glory of the Lord shone round about them: and they were sore afraid.

And the angel said unto them, Fear not: for behold, I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour, which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you; Ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes, lying in a manger.

And suddenly there was with the Angel a multitude of the heavenly host praising God and saying,

Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, good will toward men.

—Luke 2:8-14



Merry Christmas from the staff of the Emmitsburg News-Journal: Claire, McKenna, Dolores, Devin, Gracie, Ashley, Shannon, Dorothea, Annie, Tim, Boyce, Jack, Mary Ann, Marianne, Jen, John, David, Sonya, Jefferson, Wayne, Ayse, Andrea, Jamie, Alex, Steve, Sophia, Tara, Mia, Katie, Sharon, Brian & Mike.

Gateway to the Cure celebrates 10th anniversary

Thurmont's Town Council Office became a sea of pink on November 21st as the community celebrated the results of its 10th annual Gateway to the Cure and reflected on how far the project has come since the effort kicked off in 2014.

The highlight of the night, however, was the presentation of a check for \$24,600 to the Hurwitz Breast Cancer Fund at Frederick Health Hospital, the money having been garnered as the result of this year's Gateway to the Cure campaign and events.

Money was raised through the selling of pink light bulbs that allowed residents to turn the town pink with their support, parking of cars at Colorfest, the Golf Classic, the Zumbathan, the 5K run, and of course, outright monetary donations from businesses and residents.

Proving to be a season worth being thankful for, "We give thanks to all who have supported our journey for the last ten years for Gateway to the Cure," said Economic Development Manager Vicki Grinder.

Together, the Town of Thurmont has collected a grand total of \$139,000 since the campaign's inception in 2014, and now with the 2023 campaign closed, that

total is \$163,600 according to Grinder. Grinder marveled in appreciation at the community's dedication and volunteer support to not only keep the campaign running but thriving each year. "At every one of our events there are smiles, smiles, smiles everywhere," she said.

Grinder credited local businesses as, "the heart and soul of Gateway to the Cure," for their continual support, even through the pandemic when many businesses had to shut down and restaurants could only have take-out sales for months on end. "They never let their support for the effort falter," she said.

In 2021, Gateway to the Cure surpassed the \$100,000 mark despite the pandemic forcing some events to cancel and fewer businesses were able to participate. "The fact that this little town has collectively raised \$139,000 in support of life saving research, that's phenomenal, that's no small change," said Grinder.

The Hurwitz Breast Cancer Fund is used to support early cancer detection methods at the Stockman Cancer Institute in Frederick, which provides access for County residents to the diagnostics needed without having to travel far from home.



This year's Gateway to the Cure raised a staggering \$24,600 to cap off its 10 year anniversary.

All funds raised stay local for Frederick County breast cancer research and early dedication. To date, the Hurwitz Fund has collected a total of \$3.2 million of which "\$163,600 is from Thurmont," stated Patty Hurwitz. She congratulated Thurmont for reaching such an outstanding milestone for such a small town. "There's a saying, 'You are as big as your heart is,' so I would say you are a really big town," she said.

Hurwitz said that the need for breast cancer funding grows every year. "You said you could do it, and you did it ... from the bot-

tom of my heart, I thank you all. It takes a lot, this is such a wonderful effort," she said.

Mayor John Kinnaird credited Hurwitz for touching countless lives of local people facing breast cancer; either through themselves or through loved ones. "Patty, you inspire everything that happens up here in Thurmont with breast cancer awareness," he said.

Once again, Gateway to the Cure proved that neighbors helping neighbors and a dedication to cancer awareness is in the spirit of the Town of Thurmont. "It's about the journey," Grinder said.

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EMMITSBURG NEWS

ARPA money flows into water fund

In a concerted effort to refill the Town's water fund without resorting solely to increasing water rates, the Town Council approved a transfer of \$300,000, of the Town's American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) money, from the Town's General Fund to the FY-24 Water Fund Operating Budget.

The Town received a total of \$3,152,038 through the Federal government's ARPA funding to combat COVID-19 revenue loss, according to Town Manager Cathy Willets. Designating \$300,000 toward the Water Fund will adequately address decreases in revenue production that occurred during prior fiscal years due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

An analysis was performed on a building owned by the Federal Emergency Management Agency, one of the town's largest water consumers, and found that roughly \$300,000 was lost in revenue over the three years following the on-set of pandemic travel

restrictions, Willets said.

The \$300,000 would be applied directly to all normal Fiscal Year 2024 water operating funds that are non-payroll in nature, including operating and maintenance costs, she said. Those type of funds account for \$367,160 of the FY-24 Water Fund budget.

"We have large ticket items that will certainly eat up that \$300,000 that will in turn save your utility fees," she said. Such items include operating supplies, chemicals, vehicles, repairs and maintenance.

The \$300,000 of ARPA money had been sitting in the Town's General Fund unallocated. Recently as part of efforts to reduce the Federal deficit, Congress proposed legislation to 'claw back' any unallocated ARPA funds sitting in municipal accounts, like the Town's General Fund. So by officially allocating the money, it can no longer be pulled back.

According to the Department of the

Treasury, the fund can be used to assist local governments in upgrading their water systems. The funding cannot be used to offset net tax revenue deposit pension funds, or debt services, nor for human resources or payroll. ARPA funding cannot be utilized to replenish financial reserves or rainy-day funds.

The Council thanked Town staff for their due diligence in creatively thinking.

Commissioner Valerie Turnquist has adamantly voiced against the Council's recent approval to increase water rates by 36 percent per year for the next five years, and said she would not support a rate increase in next year's budget.

Turnquist acknowledged that the transfer of the ARPA funds would go a long way in supporting the Water Fund. "I know we have a lot more digging to do to find the additional money, but I think this is a fantastic start," she said.

Second cable provider to enter market

At its November 6th meeting, the Town Council heard a presentation to consider a potential second cable franchise provider for Town residents.

Emmitsburg currently has a cable franchise agreement with Comcast to provide residents phone, cable TV, and Internet access. Shentel Communications is looking to gain access to the Emmitsburg market, but to do so, would require them to gain utility right of ways to string their fiber optic wires according to representative Kirk Costco.

Based in Virginia, Shentel offers Fiber To The Home (FTTH) to 182,000

homes through its product name, Glo Fiber, Costco said. Shentel currently has cable franchise agreements with the city of Frederick, Middletown, and has recently signed with Thurmont, he said.

Costco also presented an overview of Shentel's services including internet, video and phone. Shentel offers ultra high-speed bandwidth and symmetrical speeds, meaning downloads and uploads are the same speeds, he said. "That is a lot different than traditional cable company offers," he said.

Shentel is hoping to sign an agreement with the Town that will allow

them to use the public utility right of ways. Their Optic fiber cables would follow the existing utilities, mostly power lines, Costco said. If there was a development with private easements, Shentel would have to negotiate access separately, he said.

Through the agreement, Shentel would make the best effort to serve the majority of the community, Costco said. "Generally, in small communities, it is a large percentage of the community," he said.

Construction would commence 18-24 months after the franchise was

Emmitsburg
NEWS-JOURNAL

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Council reorganizes to reflect election results

The election of Frank Davis to the Mayor's office opened up a can of worms on the Town Council, as Davis's election opened a seat on the Council that the divided Council members struggled to fill.

On October 18th, at a special session of the Town Council, four candidates: Planning Commission member Kevin Hagen, former Commissioner Glenn Blanchard, former Mayor Jim Hoover, and Brookfield resident Scott Frager were questioned on what they hope to accomplish if selected. At the conclusion of the questioning, a thoroughly divided Council retreated to discuss their thoughts in a private 'closed session.'

Newly elected Commissioner Valerie Turnquist objected to the selec-

tion taking place behind closed doors. "I think we need to be transparent with our decision, and the public is entitled to be there for that vote," she said. Turnquist was unsuccessful in having the debate in public. The divided Council eventually agreed on selecting former Mayor Jim Hoover as a consensus candidate to fill out the remaining 10 months of Davis's Council term.

Hoover previously served as a Town Commissioner from 1998 until 2002 and as Mayor from 2002 until 2011. He was also appointed to fill a commissioner appointment in 2013. Hoover said he was excited to return to local government and hoped to make a difference in the community. Hoover said his primary

focus will be on working on the budget, specifically the water fund.

Immediately upon the unanimous vote for Hoover, the Council, per Town Code, elected new officers. However, unlike in past years where the Mayor would recommend candidates for each position on the Council, Davis refused to do so, stating that it was not only inappropriate, but doing so ran contrary to the Town Code which clearly states that the "commissioners shall elect those positions."

Davis's decision was consistent with his goal on forcing the Town Council to cease being a rubber stamp, and instead, become more active in governing the Town.

Commissioner Turnquist, who won election this fall on a platform of bringing more transparency to

awarded, and all construction would go through the Town's permitting process so the Town would be aware of where wires would be strung and when, he said.

Moving forward with the agreement would require a public hearing in which the Council can gauge community input as well as get more project details,

Town Manager Cathy Willets said.

Council President Amy Boehman noted the benefits of competitive company pricing and suggested surveying residents and community to gauge interest, and then moving forward on the request based upon resident input at a future meetings.

solve the Town water funding issues. Boehman was joined by Hoover in support of Turnquist, giving her the primary responsibility for managing Town finances.

Hoover's nomination as Vice President of the Town Council drew unanimous support in a 5-0 vote.

The election of Boehman, Turnquist, and Hoover completed the transition of the Council, putting it in line with the wishes of the voters in the most recent election.

Following the settling of the Council leadership, Council members identified various Town commission liaison roles they felt they could fulfill.

Turnquist, who noted that she had spent the past year as a member of the Town's Planning Commission, offered her services to be liaison to that Commission. Hoover volunteered to be Liaison to the Citizens Advisory Commission, which researches and proposes recommendations related to identifying things the Town can do to improve residents' quality of life.

O'Donnell happily accepted the role as liaison to the Parks and Recreation Commission, which will now incorporate "trails" as part of the commission's responsibility.

Sweeney declined to serve as liaison on any of the Town's commissions, stating that his time was taken up working with other non-government related organizations that he belonged to.

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FAIRFIELD/CARROLL VALLEY NEWS

Carroll Valley to increase property taxes

Carroll Valley Borough Council members present at November's meeting unanimously expressed support for the municipality's first tax increase in more than a decade so it can beef up its police force.

The council voted 5-0 to advertise a 2024 budget that includes a 0.3 mill tax increase, bringing the tax rate to 2.75 mills. The hike, if passed, will cost the average property owner \$75 annually according to Borough Manager Dave Hazlett. Council

members Richard Mathews and Jessica Kraft were absent.

Increasing taxes to add a fourth officer indicates a change in priorities from three years ago. In 2021, the council rejected then-Police Chief Richard Hileman's request for a fourth officer because it did not want to increase taxes. Police officers are paid \$70,000 plus benefits, according to the borough's proposed budget.

The council will vote Dec. 12 to adopt its budget. Citizens can

view the proposed spending plan at www.carrollvalley.org.

Chickens, again

Hazlett's rare absence from October's council meeting led to the council making a decision it had no power to make.

Katlyn Weimer and Adam Colson, 8 Fawn Trail, have been asking the council for months to grant their illegal chickens an official pardon. Carroll Valley law states chickens must reside in the backyard of a property. That's not possible for Weimer

and Colson, whose house at 8 Fawn Trail aligns with the rear of their half-acre lot.

The council has gone back and forth on the issue since July. Numerous citizens have expressed support for the Weimer/Colson fowl through letters and public comment.

In October, the issue seemed to be resolved when the majority of the council voted to grant Weimer and Colson a permit for their chickens. Mathews dissented, expressing concern about violating deed restrictions.

During November's meeting, Hazlett said the council's vote is a moot point since Pennsylvania law forbids the council from granting a zoning waiver. Borough Solicitor Zachary Rice agreed, reiterating points he made last month that were mostly ignored.

Hazlett said he will continue to explore options for Weimer and Colson, including a possible hearing in front of the zoning hearing board or ordinance changes recommended by the planning commission.

The borough does not plan to enforce its chicken laws while it works on the issue.

Hamiltonban to also raise property taxes

Hamiltonban Township's preliminary budget is expecting a quarter million increase in real estate tax. The supervisors noted this is the first increase of its kind in five years. The preliminary budget will be presented at the Hamiltonban Board of Supervisors next meeting Dec. 5 at 7 p.m.

In other business, representative of Destination Gettysburg, Karl Pietrzak, presented information to the Hamiltonban Supervisors about updates on the local Civil War Trail

signage. Pietrzak last presented to the board in March seeking funding for additional trail signage along Carroll Tracts Road.

Pietrzak said funding has now been acquired for the latest sign as part of the Civil War Trail. "Now all that's left is placing it in Fairfield," he said.

The complete cost of the sign, including design, production and installation will be covered by Adams County for a total of \$2,600, he said.

The prospective sign would be located at the Woerner Fruit Farm, which is ideal due to its vicinity of the Battle of Fairfield along Carroll Tracts Road.

The supervisors noted this sign location might fall under PennDOT jurisdiction, as it is accessed by a state highway and suggested ensuring there is the necessary 50 foot right of way.

At its November 21 meeting, the Hamiltonban Township Board of Supervisors also discussed potential

plantings of donation trees in the Hamiltonban Community Park.

Adams County Conservation District is looking to plant donated seedlings all across the county and has its eyes on Hamiltonban Community Park, according to Supervisor Coleen Reamer.

Adams County also noted there is a company that will plant and maintain the trees for the township. "Which takes all the labor off of us," Reamer said.

Potential locations for the seed-

lings include sections by the park's playground area, the trail bend, as well as inside the infiltration pond as these trees and bushes are noted to survive in water, Reamer said. The seedlings will also be spaced in rows and spread out ten feet to allow ease of mowing, she said.

Efforts are expected to continue with the Hamiltonban Township and Fairfield Borough Joint Parks and Recreation Commission. Township Engineer, Erik Vranich, will collect more information about the quantity of plants and what company will be performing the planting.

Liberty plans to hold line on taxes

At its November 8th meeting, Liberty Township Board of Supervisors approved releasing the proposed 2024 budget with no expected tax increase Wednesday.

The 2024 proposed budget is \$561,265, which is approximately \$2,080 more than FY-23, Chairman Walter "Mickey" Barlow noted.

"We're really glad to be able to hold our budget line items," he said.

The Council commended the Township Secretary for her excellent

work in the Treasury Department, ensuring expenditures can be met without going above budget.

Budget adoption is expected at the December meeting.

Township Looks to Equipment Building Grant

Liberty Township plans to apply for a sizable grant for the construction of a new equipment shed.

The Board of Supervisors approved applying for the Statewide Local Share

Assessment Grant in October, Barlow said, and initially thought the grant was for a maximum of \$25,000, when it actually ranges from \$25,000 to \$1 million in project funding.

The Board is now reassessing the amount of the grant requested in their application. The Board's original project would have been to cover a nearby concrete block area to store town materials, but with the eligibility raised, the new project price estimate is \$500,000 for a new

equipment building. The township is currently collecting estimates for the building and will submit them as part of the application process on November 30th when the grant application is due.

Liberty Purchases AEDs

Liberty Township recently purchased Automated External Defibrillator (AED) equipment for a total cost of \$3,000.

"That is nothing in comparison to saving someone's life," Barlow noted.

One AED unit is located in the

township office building, and the other will be installed in a roadway department vehicle.

Township staff have training in CPR and specific training for the equipment will be available for all employees.

Roadwork employees have radios, and in the event of a medical emergency, township staff may be able to make use of precious time before emergency responders arrive, according to Barlow.

"Every second counts when someone is having a heart attack," he said.

Future of 50-acre Borough lot up in air

Carroll Valley Borough Council wants the public's input on the future of a 50-acre borough-owned lot.

At the November meeting of the Council, Borough Manager Dave Hazlett said many community members have inquired about the borough's plans for a property along Route 16, near Frontier Bar BQ.

Hazlett said possibilities are endless and those who have ideas should email him at manager@carrollvalley.org. Council asked Hazlett for his ideas, which he was initially hesitant to share because he preferred every idea be presented at the same time. After some pressing, the manager tossed out a vision that generated much excitement from the Council.

Hazlett said the Fairfield area is in dire need of an indoor recreation facility that serves people of all ages. Hazlett said a multi-purpose facility could include basketball and pickleball courts, a walking track, exercise classrooms, meeting space, and more. Anyone interested in joining a committee to decide the future of the property should email Hazlett.

"Not only will we be brainstorming, but also looking for money to pay for all of this," he said.

The excitement that was generated by the discussion of new possibilities quickly dissipated when the Council turned its attention to an ongoing topic - the sale or trade of other borough-owned lots.

In April, the Council agreed to sell 33 Mason Dixon Trail via public auction with a reserve price of \$3,585. The sale was the result of a request from Bethany Martin, 31 Mason Dixon Trail, and her husband Jordan. The auction never occurred, Martin said, and she wanted an update.

Hazlett said the process is stalled

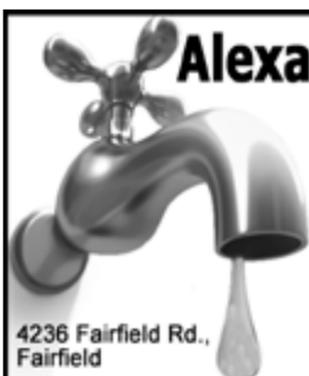
because the borough previously thought the lot would not pass a perc test. The perc test passed, making Hazlett believe the lot is worth more than previously estimated. A perc test determines if a lot's soil will absorb water at the necessary rate. If a perc test fails, a septic system cannot be installed on the property.

The borough discussed the possibility of not selling the lot, which did not please Martin.

"Our point of it was to build a detached garage, so now we are screwed. We can't put a detached garage on a half-acre lot that we already have a home on," she said.

The Council dismissed to executive session to privately discuss the matter,

which is allowed by Pennsylvania law since it deals with real estate. When they returned, they did not announce a solution.



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THURMONT NEWS

Burns and Lookingbill elected Commissioners

Marty Burns and Bob Lookingbill will serve as Thurmont's commissioners after winning the October 31st election. Burns received 482 votes, and Lookingbill 426 votes.

Six candidates ran for the two commissioner seats, including incumbent Bill Buehrer. The second seat was left open by Wes Hamrick, who retired from public office. The results were as follows for the remaining candidates:

- Ed Schildt: 336 votes
- Chris Stouter: 217 votes
- Grant Johnson: 85 votes
- Buehrer: 79 votes

Burns and Lookingbill have supported each other's campaign since they announced their plan for candidacy at a town meeting in August. They both prioritized sustainable growth in their platforms, citing the Simmer's Farm Annexation as a catalyst for their decision to run for office. "The Simmer's Farm Annexation decision clearly shows that the current Board believes that they know what is best for the future of the town than what the large majority of the citizens want," Burns said in a candidate submission article.

Both Burns and Lookingbill believed that the Town did not take residents' opinion into account when approving the

Simmer's Farm Annexation. They both have publicly vowed to take public opinion into account during their four-year terms. "My hope is to work with all the citizens of Thurmont to make our small town continue to be a place we love to call home," Lookingbill said in a Facebook post on November 1st, after the election results were announced.

Burns also is concerned over the Town's fiscal position and says he is committed to crafting a town budget that prioritizes essential services while eliminating unnecessary expenses. "This means scrutinizing every dollar spent and ensuring that it serves the best interests of the entire community,"

Lookingbill concurs with Burns' concerns on spending, and has taken aim at the proposed Thurmont Boulevard project. "They [Council] had proposed obtaining a six-million-dollar bond to pay for the project. The taxpayers would be burdened with repaying this loan. In my opinion, this is reckless spending," he said in his candidate submission.

Neither Burns nor Lookingbill are strangers to sitting on the Thurmont Board of Commissioners. Burns previously served on the board for 22 years, 12 of which he served as town mayor. The town saw Lookingbill and Burns work together on the board in 2007, when Lookingbill served as

commissioner and Burns as mayor. Most recently, Lookingbill had been serving on the Board of Supervisors of Elections before stepping down due to his candidacy in the town elections. Burns retired from public office in 2021 but remained active at town meetings.

"I never imagined just two years ago that I would ever seek public office again," Burns said at the August 1st town meeting, when he and Lookingbill announced their candidacy during public comment. "But I was asked by several residents to run, many of them are here tonight, so run I will."

The newly elected commissioners were sworn in during the November 7th Town Meeting for their four-year term, expiring October 31st, 2025.

Thurmont moves forward with PFAS litigation

The Town of Thurmont is moving forward as part of the lawsuit against 3M and DuPont due to the presence of "aqueous film forming foam" or "AFFF" and/or other products containing perfluoroalkyl substances ("PFAS") (including perfluorooctanoic acid ("PFOA" or "C8"), perfluorooctane sulfonate ("PFOS"), and other related compounds in the Town's water system.

In May, following recommendations from the City's attorney Leslie Powell, Thurmont retained the law firm of Baron & Budd and Poole Law Group for the purpose of investigating legal options and remedies available to the Town due to the presence of the chemicals.

According to a press release issued by Powell, "such investigation may include the initiation of a Complaint in the Multi-District Litigation (MDL) currently pending in Charleston, South Carolina, related to this chemical."

"This action," the press release said, "is a prudent effort to proactively determine whether third parties have legal responsibility for the cost of treatment for its water system; the taxpayers and ratepayers should not bear this financial burden. The Town will continue to exhaust all efforts to protect its citizens and exercise financial prudence in the process."

Unlike Class Action lawsuits, which are filed by one or a few individuals on

behalf of everyone who has suffered the same exact injury, MDL cases are filed by individuals or towns who have suffered similar injuries from the same product (or same type of product), the severity or expense of which may differ from person to person.

While Thurmont could sue the companies as a separate entity, Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird said the costs could be significantly higher than they are as part of the MDL. This is the surest way to get some damages out of 3M and DuPont," Kinnaird said, referring to the MDL.

As in Class Action lawsuits, a settlement is reached when representatives from both parties work together to create a master set-

tlement agreement. The MDL judge will review the agreement and then assign a settlement master, who is a neutral third-party that oversees details of the settlement and resolves points of contention between the parties. Individual plaintiffs can then choose to accept the settlement agreement or pursue their case at trial.

The town has also sought support from the state level through the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE), which has not been officially confirmed but Kinnaird has received positive feedback. "The State of Maryland has, preliminarily, told us we will probably get some support from them in the form of a forgivable loan," he said. CAO Jim Humer-

ick added that this support would forgive the principal of the loan.

Kinnaird said that the town is still in the "design" stages of solving the PFAS problem, because they will need to submit any plans to MDE for approval. "MDE has not given, that I'm aware of, any definitive guidance for the type of mechanism needed to remove the PFAS from the water," he said. "The most logical one is an activated charcoal filtration system, which is what we're working on to get prices for."

Kinnaird expects the town may need to pay any removal expenses upfront before the MDE grant comes through to reimburse. The costs could reach \$6 million, according to Kinnaird.

Police chief hangs up shield after 44 years

Thurmont Police Chief Greg Eyer will retire from law enforcement effective Dec. 1 after 18 years as chief. Current Thurmont Lieutenant David Armstrong will replace Eyer in December.

Eyer graduated from the Montgomery County Police Academy in August 1979 after being recruited to the Thurmont Police Department by the late, then-Thurmont Police Chief Herman Shook. He transferred to the Frederick County Sheriff's Office in late 1980, where he was able to receive specialized training in various areas of law enforcement. While serving for Frederick County, Eyer graduated from the FBI National Academy in Quantico.

He retired from the Frederick County Sheriff's Office as a Major in 2005. In the same year of his first retirement, Eyer was asked to rejoin the

Thurmont Police Department as Chief of Police, where he continued to make his mark for the past 18 years.

"Chief Eyer has served our community and the residents of Thurmont in an exemplary manner. I can't thank Greg enough for his professionalism and dedication to the Town of Thurmont. Our residents' safety has always been his highest priority and for that, we are sincerely thankful and appreciative," Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird said in a press release.

Eyer's influence over the past 18 years doubled the authorized sworn police officers, from 7 to 14 with 6 civilian employees. This includes a detective/investigator position, Narcotics Detection K-9 Program and Code Enforcement Officer Program. He introduced specialized training to the Department training program to advance officers'

skills as he did in Frederick County.

Outside of the police department itself, Eyer's influence led to the implementation of community outreach programs such as National Night Out, Safety Pup, traffic calming initiatives, bicycle safety and child safety seat installations. His efforts led to Thurmont's recognition as one of the safest communities in Maryland numerous times.

Eyer's work in law enforcement has been well-recognized over the years. He has been recognized as CHS Distinguished Graduate for Public Service; Lions Club/Shumaker Roofing Officer of the Year and received the Enforcement Commendation medal presented by The Sons of the American Revolution. He is also a member of the Maryland Chiefs of Police Association, The Maryland Municipal Police Executive League and the FBI National Academy Associates.

"I have thoroughly enjoyed working with Chief Eyer over my past 10 years with the Town of Thurmont. His dedication to public safety and to protecting the citizens of Thurmont has always

been his highest priority. The Thurmont Police Department has made great strides in all levels of police work under Greg's watch and his efforts are truly appreciated," Town Manager Jim Humerick said. "I wish him the best in his well-deserved retirement."

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TANEYTOWN NEWS

Rift between Council and Mayor erupts into open

On a Sunday night in November, Taneytown's Mayor of six months fired the City Attorney of 20 years. The next day, at the Council's monthly meeting the entire City Council publicly chastised Mayor Chris Miller's unilateral action.

Miller's termination of City Attorney Jay Gullo came four days after the City Council asked Gullo to investigate who leaked a confidential email. Also at that meeting, the Council asked Gullo to draft an ordinance clarifying that the Council, not the Mayor alone, can choose to fire the Attorney. Before Gullo had a chance to act upon the Council's wishes, Miller dropped the axe.

Miller claimed his reason for firing Gullo was for a "culture and climate shift" at City hall. He told the Council he was acting upon the wishes of the people who elected him. Council members reminded the Mayor they were also elected by the citizens and said Gullo has done an exceptional job the past two decades and shown nothing but loyalty to the City of Taneytown.

The Attorney is an appointed position which Miller claimed falls under his termination powers. He also said he spoke to Mayors of other Maryland cities and the Maryland Municipal League, both of which supported his interpretation of the law.

Gullo's termination has been on Miller's mind since he was elected Mayor in May, he said. Council members, however, believe the Mayor has undercut the role of the City Council and the firing should have been done with consultation of the Council.

Miller accused Gullo of engaging in personal relationships with Council members and operating in a manner that did not respect City

ordinances and code.

Gullo sent Council a 29-page memo detailing questionable behaviors "conveniently" revolving around Miller before the Mayor chose to terminate him, Councilmember Judy Fuller said. Fuller did not specify any of the "questionable behaviors" allegedly cited in the memo.

"I think it's very important that the public realizes the kind of changes that you're making," she said.

"What you're doing is destroying the town," Mayor Protem James McCarron said, stating that citizens will not reach out to Miller with grievances, "because you're untrustworthy."

The Council chided Miller for his lack of transparency. Miller rebutted the claims by stating he discussed his intentions on Facebook and privately with Council members, but admitted he never mentioned the possibility of Gullo's termination at a public meeting.

Council Surprised by Salary Given New Police Chief

At the Nov. 8 workshop meeting, Miller asked the Council to name Adrian Baker as Taneytown's police chief. He also asked the Council to pay Baker \$130,223 annually, even though the job posting capped the salary at \$105,000. Miller supported his request by pointing out Baker will not be taking the City's retirement benefit, which costs about \$30,000 per year.

The City has been without a police chief since the resignation of former Chief Jason Etzler last November.

Council approved Baker's hiring and requested salary but first pleaded with Miller for more transparency, however Fuller obtained, saying she feared the action could set precedence in pay for future chiefs and short-

changed longstanding employees who are not paid what they deserve.

"Every meeting we have something sprung on us that we were not prepared to deal with, that's the whole issue," McCarron said.

Miller claimed the Council received the information and that no member of Council reached out with questions. The Council refuted Miller's claim, pointing out that they should not have to ask if he wanted to set a salary higher than what was posted.

Fuller also noted she could no longer trust email communication after privileged information was leaked from personal emails and in closed sessions.

Charter Discrepancies Questioned

Later in the Nov. 8 meeting, Fuller questioned discrepancies in the town charter. Miller repeatedly attempted to silence her because the topic was not on the agenda. The rest of the Council shot down the Mayor's challenges, saying the purpose of workshop meetings was to mull around ideas and hear new business.

Finally allowed to speak, Fuller suggested adding verbiage to the City charter to state only the Council can fire the City Attorney, much like the City manager and police chief.

The recommended changes will enhance transparency, she said. Fuller later said her proposal came in reaction to finding out from other Mayors that Miller was planning to fire Gullo.

The Council unanimously voted to advertise the proposed changes at the Nov. 13 meeting, despite Miller's objections. The Mayor claimed the amendment adding the removal power by vote of the City Council conflicts with the City charter.

Gag order

At the Nov. 8 work session, Gullo said Miller directed him not to speak with Council members outside of meetings. Miller claimed there were "a lot of" expenditures made by individual Council members receiving legal opinions from the City Attorney.

Mayor said he believed Council members were abusing Gullo's position and there should be a cap on how much each Council member can contact the Attorney in order to save money.

City legal bills are between \$5,000-\$7,000 a month, averaging between \$48,000-\$60,000 a year, Gullo said.

Miller claimed Gullo is available at meetings. Council members objected, noting information cannot always wait until a meeting night.

McCarron reiterated the Mayor does not get to dictate the free flow of information and receiving legal opinions from the Attorney between meetings has been Council's standard operating procedure for 40 years.

Council Member Christopher Tillman said if someone is abusing the privilege of contacting the Attorney it should be addressed and handled on an individual basis, not by yanking it away from all Council members.

Source of Leaked E-mail Sought

The Council also asked Gullo on Nov. 8 to investigate who leaked a privileged email between the Council and Mayor which had a personal information in it on a specific individual.

In September, the citizen filed a Public Information Act request that included specific information only available to Council members and the Mayor, Gullo said. The Attor-

ney advised the Mayor and City Manager to reject the request citing "discretionary privilege." The Mayor directed the City Manager to act against the Attorney's advice and release the information. However the Council still wanted to know who leaked the original privileged document.

The Council has had limited contact with each other outside of meetings since the leak, McCarron said. The situation requires investigation, he reiterated, as the Council cannot have deliberative email conversations about anything without knowing if it would be secure.

"If we cannot guarantee that, we cannot move forward," Tillman said, pounding the table with emphasis.

Giving out privileged information is no different than opening the City's bank account and giving out money, Gullo said.

At their Nov. 13 meeting, Council members announced their intentions to proceed with the investigation despite Gullo's termination.

At the end of the contentious Nov. 13 meeting, Miller said he plans to move forward with hiring a new City Attorney but did not outline the process or whether he will include Council in the process.

He also chastised Council members for not working with him as he aims to fulfill his election goals.

"Yes, the direction of the town is changing. That is what I ran on, to change it," he said.

Tillman acknowledged Miller's "door is always open" but encouraged him to work closer with Council and share information.

"I am not a mind reader, I don't know what you are looking for," Miller responded.

New Police Chief sworn in

The new Chief of Police, Adrian Baker was sworn in by Mayor Christopher Miller on November 17th. His appointment came after a long search to replace the former chief, Jason Etzler, who resigned last November. Baker's annual salary will be \$130,223 despite the job post salary cap being \$105,000.

Baker began his career on the eastern shore with the Maryland National Resources Police in 1984. He retired after 28 years of service as commander of the Central Region which includes Carroll County. Immediately upon his retirement from NRP he was hired as Chief of Police in Chestertown Maryland where he served for seven years. When the Governor's office asked if he would come back to NRP as superintendent, he took the job and served for three and a half years, leaving when the Governors term ended in January of 2023.

He said he would like to begin his role as Police Chief by spending some time assessing Taneytown's Police Department to see what areas of the department need support or changes. He will then

present a 5-year strategic plan with obtainable goals and objectives to the city council. He said he would also like to spend this time getting to know Taneytown's government employees and its residents.

Baker's immediate concern will be to address retention and recruitment in the police department. In doing so he said, "we can do one thing that won't cost us a thing and that is to express our support for our police department."

He pointed out he was in a similar position in Chestertown where it seemed the police department was always asking for something in terms of funding. "Police departments are expensive but if we make the decision to sup-

port this one it will be money well spent", he commented.

He explained that "the purpose of a police department is to provide value to a community," and he would make sure that is done in a fiscally responsible manner so that all the citizens of Taneytown are safe and property is protected.

Councilwoman Diane Foster asked Baker his view toward community policing, to which Baker replied, "It is extremely important. The police should be involved proactively. I don't want the first time our officers meet someone to be in a crisis situation."

He made it clear that he hopes to attend community functions and to be involved with his new

community however the residents would like him to be, he will do whatever is asked of him. He pointed out that working hard on doing the small things is what builds the foundation for

success in the big things. Baker thanked the Sheriff's department for their assistance during Taneytown's time without a Chief and he thanked Major Mitchell for his role as acting chief.



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FROM THE DESK OF...

Congressman David Trone

Last year, I wrote to you with the good news that our economic recovery from the COVID-19 pandemic was quicker than expected. Unemployment was at a record low, millions of new jobs were being created, and the federal government was making historic investments in our infrastructure and our communities. I'm pleased to report that our recovery has continued since then. Unfortunately, everyday Americans — families, small business owners, and workers — aren't feeling the relief even as the overall data improves.

Earlier this year, our state reached a milestone by reporting a 1.6% unemployment rate — the lowest in American history. Our robust economy, centered around health care and government services, should be a source of pride. We've added tens of thousands of jobs, supported entrepreneurship across the state, and made critical investments in our roads, bridges, and waterways. On a national level, the news is equally positive. Job growth has exceeded expectations, and unemployment

continues to be below 4%.

But another reality is as important as these positive economic statistics. A majority of Americans have a negative opinion of the way the economy is working. 51% of Americans think the economy is getting worse, and 71% think the country is headed in the wrong direction.

One reason for this negative opinion is obvious. Inflation is putting a stranglehold on working families, forcing them to live paycheck to paycheck and crushing their individual economic prosperity. Things people need to survive and rewards for their hard work are maddeningly unaffordable. It is not surprising that most people find evidence from their own lives more believable than government statistics.

Equally obvious is that the economy is unfair and not treating Americans equally. In most every way, the richest Americans are benefitting at the expense of those who need the most help.

Leaders with the right vision need to address the underlying problems and not be blinded by the macroeco-

nomie results. As someone fighting for everyday Marylanders in Congress, I'm determined to be a leader in making the economy work for everyone.

Last year, we passed the Inflation Reduction Act — one of the most influential pieces of legislation in a generation. While most of the publicity focuses on measures that will address our climate crisis, this law will have an immense impact on our economy. Because of the IRA, Marylanders will see lower energy costs, rebates on efficient appliances, and tax incentives to adopt next-generation approaches like solar energy and green building codes. We'll invest over \$6 billion in new jobs and industries. In all of these ways, we will improve our economy while taking climate change seriously. But even this important legislation and the Bipartisan Infrastructure Act should be seen as starting points, not the finish line. One reason I'm running for Senate is because I understand that much remains to be done and I know I have the experience needed to address our many remain-

From the Desk of John Kinnaird

Please go to page 46 to read John Kinnaird's monthly Mayor's article and his tribute to

former Thurmont Commissioner Bill Buehrer who lost his battle to cancer November 22."

ing economic problems.

I came to Congress after running a successful business, growing from one store into 257 stores with over 12,000 men and women on the payroll. I know what it's like to make tough decisions about finances — and I also know what it's like to have thousands of families counting on me to make choices that impact their lives. That's why I've found success in Congress, and why I'm confident we can do more in the Senate.

Ultimately, if we're going to build an economy that works for everyone, we need to build a tax system that is fair for everyone. The most important step to achieve that is raising taxes on the wealthy. I've long said that we need to drastically increase taxes on the wealthiest Americans — myself included. By increasing tax revenue, we can continue to make investments in infrastructure and other key areas that

will create good jobs and give a helping hand to those who need it most. Importantly, households making less than \$400,000 each year would see zero increase in their taxes.

We also need to continue to promote innovation and technology development, something that has been immensely fruitful for our state over the last several decades. If we incentivize businesses to locate in Maryland, as I did with my company, we'll grow our tax base and create even more jobs.

I couldn't be more optimistic about the direction that we're headed. But I know that it will take work to make this vision a reality. The concern that families are feeling about the future is real, and something that I take seriously. The effect of the life-changing legislation will take time to be felt throughout our communities. In the meantime, I won't stop fighting to continue making a difference where it matters most.

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

Right about this time last year, I was sworn in to be a member of the Frederick County Council. To say I have learned a lot this year would definitely be an understatement. As my first year is coming to an end, it's a good time

to reflect, share some experiences, and look ahead to next year.

Although we are all one community in Frederick County in a larger sense, we are also comprised of many smaller and tightly knit communities. Get-

ting to know the people and organizations who make up these communities has been my favorite part of my first year in office. I was invited to attend several awards banquets for volunteer fire and rescue companies, and award ceremonies recognizing members of Frederick County Department of Fire and Rescue Services. I was moved and grateful at every ceremony recognizing the bravery of first responders in our county. Firefighters, EMTs, DFRS leadership, emergency dispatch call takers, fire company auxiliary organizations, and countless volunteers work together every day in Frederick County to keep us safe, and to answer the call in our hour of need. Spending time with this community and understanding their organizational needs and goals has deepened my appreciation of their mission and dedication to public safety.

I grew up in the Middletown Valley. I went to schools surrounded by cornfields. I learned to drive on the county backroads dotted with many farms. However, agriculture wasn't a part of my family's daily life, even though it was all

around us. I'm grateful to every farmer who took the time to speak with me and show me their farm, so I could become more knowledgeable about our local agricultural economy. The Frederick County Farm Bureau and the Catoctin & Frederick Soil Conservation Districts have been generous with their time to talk about issues such as nutrient management plans, cover crops, and agritourism.

I was able to attend the openings of so many Frederick County businesses! Bakeries, clothing stores, restaurants, law firms, entertainment venues, spas, and other businesses. It's exciting to see a business owner realize their dream, and to be welcomed into the vibrant business community in Frederick County. I'm honored every time I'm able to be there for that special day for a business owner.

I had a couple of goals for my first year in office. First, I spent time listening to these communities and others, to understand their goals and challenges, and to understand how I could be of service. Second, I wanted to work on a successful bill to help working fam-

ilies. This month the County Council will vote on my Daycare Provider Tax Credit bill which is co-sponsored by Council President Brad Young. I'm hopeful this bill will pass and provide an incentive for the creation of more home-based daycare businesses. There are fewer daycare centers in the northern part of the county, and there is a dire need for more daycare options. If you would like to provide comments to the Council about this bill, you can send an email to councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov.

Lastly, it's been a pleasure working with the other members of the Frederick County Council this year. It's no secret we are not all in the same political party, and that we have some differing views. However, each member of the Council works every day for all residents with dedication and a willingness to work together whenever possible.

Many thanks to everyone who has taken the time to send me an email or call with your thoughts and ideas this year. You can always reach me at rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov.

Wishing you and your family a Merry Christmas and Happy 2024!



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GOVERNMENT—SOUTH OF THE BORDER

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

Exciting developments are underway for Frederick County! As the year comes to a close, we are gearing up to better serve our residents through community connections that bridge gaps and invest in the rich history of our county!

Hosting the governor and lieutenant governor, honing in on family and child care needs, creating a mobility network and transportation program low-income households, and taking a deeper dive into the historic narrative of Frederick County are just a few of the exciting developments happening in our community. We look forward to ending the year more informed and entering 2024 stronger and equipped with new resources to make change.

Child Care Market Study Results

The Frederick County Office for Children and Families, community members and families attended a Community Information and Input session on November 15th to learn more about the Child Care Market Study and to provide input about their experiences and ideas for potential solutions. The study unveiled that Frederick County families pay for child care in time, money, and stress. Statistically, thirty-eight percent of families in Frederick County say that child care adds 30 minutes or more to their daily

commute, forty-six percent spend \$300 or more on child care every week, and fifty-two percent report the cost of child care being very or extremely stressful—with 82% receiving no financial assistance.

The survey was completed by 1,300 Frederick County families in May by the study's contractor, Public Policy Associates and Solomon Evaluation. The Office for Children and Families continues to seek out ways the County can look at innovative strategies to improve child care access and the child care system. For more information about the project and information on the Community Information and Input Session scheduled for December 6 for employers and businesses, contact the Office for Children and Families or see visit www.publicpolicy.com/FrederickCoStudy.

Mobility Action Learning Network Boosts ALICE Households

Frederick County Government, along with community partners the United Way of Frederick County, Data Driven Frederick and other community leaders, were selected to participate in The Urban Institute's Mobility Action Learning Network. The network provides free technical assistance to teams of community

leaders who are moving people out of poverty and creating equity. It also provides us an opportunity to engage in collaborative problem solving with other communities across the country who are committed to addressing the underlying causes of poverty.

As a member of the network, Frederick County will participate in virtual workshops, peer-learning opportunities, and advisory support calls with Urban Institute experts for 12 months. Over the next year, the team will utilize a data-driven approach to finding solutions by utilizing existing data, such as the Child Care Market Study, the ALICE Report, and other local data to determine where they can make the greatest impact collectively. I am excited that we were selected among 30 teams national to participate in the Mobility Action Learning Network! Breaking down barriers to economic mobility in Frederick County is crucial to our health as a county.

Other noteworthy community initiatives that break down barriers to access in our county, include our local United Way's Internet Access Initiative. United Way of Frederick County is offering free Chromebooks to eligible households through December to help close the dig-

ital divide in Maryland. For more information on eligibility and distribution, the public is encouraged to visit.

Rides for Good Program

You often hear me say that I want everyone in Frederick County to be able to thrive. To thrive, people need food, housing, health care, and a job. Frederick County ranks as one of the healthiest communities in Maryland. Our unemployment rate is an amazing 1.7% - lower than the state's and less than half the national rate. In order to access jobs and health care, really all our basic needs, people must have transportation. Frederick County Government has provided funding to jump-start the Safe Ride Foundation's new program called Rides for Good. Through a strong partnership between the Safe Ride Foundation, the United Way of Frederick County, and Frederick County Government, the program will provide a viable transportation option to our most vulnerable populations.

Lack of transportation options is cited as a major barrier, especially for our ALICE (Asset Limited Income Constrained and Employed). They seek safe, reliable ways to get to doctors' appointments, the supermarket, and job interviews. The ability to connect residents in our community with essential services, and activities adds mean-

ing and value to the lives they live.

This program affirms that Frederick not only recognizes the need but is prepared to implement solutions.

State Investments Help Frederick County

This month, we had the pleasure of hosting Governor Moore and Lt. Governor Miller to see firsthand how State investments are making a difference in our community! Their visit included the Platoon 22's Veterans Service Center, the ribbon cutting of the new Asian American Center of Frederick County office, and the site of the future downtown hotel and conference center. The long-planned Downtown Frederick Hotel and Conference Center is an economic development project of the City and County to bring needed lodging, meeting space and jobs to the second-largest city in Maryland.

Budget Public Hearing and Upcoming Listening Sessions

On December 4, I will be hosting a budget public hearing at Winchester Hall at 7 p.m. The public is invited to either attend in-person or join us virtually via FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublicHearing. To join the meeting by phone, call toll-free 855-925-2801 and enter meeting code 10042. Comments also may be submitted online at FrederickCountyMD.gov/BudgetPublic

Emmitsburg Mayor Frank Davis

My first few months as Mayor have passed quickly; it has been busy and I'm constantly learning something new. The behind-the-scenes operations that keep our town running are impressive. I have gained a new appreciation for the workload and time required to meet the needs of our citizens. Sometimes, it may seem like your concerns are not being heard, but I can assure you that is not the case. Our team, both employees and elected officials, are here to listen, and will do our best to respond to these concerns promptly.

I would like to welcome Jim Hoover to the Emmitsburg Board of Town Commissioners. Mr. Hoover is a former Mayor and Town Commissioner and will bring a wealth of knowledge to the Council. Mr. Hoover will fill the remaining eleven months of my vacated commissioner term. I would also like to thank all the citizens who expressed an interest in the position; it is evident how many people truly care about making a difference.

Over the last month, I attended many meetings and met many new

people, but two events stand out. I was invited to Emmitsburg Elementary School to take part in "Starts with Hello Week". I was able to meet and speak with each student as they arrived to begin their school day. Their smiles and handshakes were a fantastic way to start the day. I also had the opportunity to speak with the 4th grade class of Mother Seton School. I spent time speaking on what it was like to be Mayor. As most of you know, kids of that age keep you on your toes, and

you never know what the next question might be. My time spent interacting with those students gives me hope that the future is bright and there are good things to come.

Be on the lookout for groundbreaking around Creamery Court. Federal Stone (currently located in Thurmont) is scheduled to begin construction of their new building in the first part of December. The construction process should take about six months, with hopes of moving into their new

home in July of 2024. In addition, the remaining building lots on Creamery Court have been sold and are in various phases of pre-construction.

Please check the Town website for Holiday hours as they may change in the month of December. Even with

the reduced hours, know that we have staff on call, and I can be reached if there are emergency situations.

Let us cherish family and friends this holiday season. From my family to yours- best wishes for a wonderful holiday and a very happy New Year!

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FROM THE DESK OF...

Carroll Valley Mayor Ron Harris

The Carroll Valley "Trunk or Treat – Halloween Spooktacular" was a tremendous success with over 400 people in attendance, 100 children participating in the Halloween costume contest, and 30 trunks were elaborately decorated for children to challenge the bizzard dressed proprietor with the words "Trick or Treat"? The Carroll Valley Council, Recreation Committee, Borough staff, and Maintenance crew were involved in planning and managing this special occasion.

The Best Decorated Trunk was Holmes Family & Mrs. Reinecker (The Addams Family); Best Costume: Eli & Byce Leatherman (UPS Truck w/Delivery men); Most Original: Jaxson & Lawson Lease (Little Blue Truck Characters) and Josiah Crouse (White Owl); Scariest: Mia Eyler (Creepy Pumpkin Head); Funniest: CJ Heltmuller (Old Man) and Abby McClain (Princess Peach); Zada & Zoe Thompson (Bluey & Bingo) and Drew & Grayson Kober (Cinderella & Gus-Gus).

The food trucks providing food to those in attendance were Sarah's Creamery, The Mexican Food Truck, Cracken Catering, and What's Poppin Kettle Corn. Thanks to the following sponsors: Deja Brew, El Vista

Orchards, Exeter Supply, Fairfield Auto Service, Feedbag Country Cooking Carryout, Harrington's Equip Company, Main Street Cutique, Taverna 5450, Ventura's, Village Book and Table and the Snyder Family – Stone Ridge Manor. Thank you all. To see the pictures, go to ronspictures.net.

Cliff Weikert, Chief of Carroll Valley Police Department (CVPD), reported that on October 28, 149.5 lbs. of drugs were collected when the Medicine Take Back program was open from 10 to 2. CVPD was assisted by Cumberland Township Police Department and Collaboration for Youth organization.

Thanksgiving is behind us, and now on to December. The start of winter, also known as the "winter solstice," is December 21. Winter solstice is the shortest day of the year. Hanukkah begins on Thursday evening, December 7, and continues through Friday, December 15. National Chocolate Covered Anything Day is celebrated on December 16. I had to include this one for those chocolate lovers (me, me, me) who need an excuse to have a piece of you know what. Christmas is on Monday, December 25; the first day of Kwanzaa falls on December 26 and ends on January 1.

For several years, Neighbors Helping Neighbors has done up a little gift bag with toiletries, etc. They will be doing the same thing again this year. Following is the information for the link for the items for the nursing homes and the students in need at school. If you are willing to donate, click the link for signups and mark your donations. The link is www.signup.com/go/NaCJbvK.

Thank you in advance for your continued support of our neighbors! If you have any questions, please call Robin at 717-642-6578. You have glass bottles you want to get rid of. Then, you might be interested in dumping them off at the new Glass Recycling Center at the Department of Emergency Services building site, 230 Greenamyer Lane, Straban Township. The center is open the first Saturday of each month through the winter.

The Borough of Carroll Valley's Parks and Recreation Committee, along with the Council, Committees, and Staff, are collecting the following items to make Holiday Meal Kits for local families in need: Turkeys, Roasting Chicken, Instant Mashed Potatoes, Canned Yams/Sweet Potatoes, Canned Vegetables (corn, green beans), Canned Cranberry Sauce, Stuffing Mix, Desserts

(non-perishable or mixes), and Dinner Rolls. Drop off donations at the Borough Office, 5685 Fairfield Road, or cash donations are also accepted. Please make checks payable to the Borough of Carroll Valley.

Ruth's Harvest program is about feeding hungry children. It is a volunteer program that provides hungry children with a backpack for food when they are not getting school lunches. They receive individually packed servings of food to cover seven meals and two snacks for Friday evening, Saturday, and Sunday. There are three ways to help: donate food, make a monetary contribution, and/or volunteer your time in distributing the food packages. A Ruth's Harvest collection box in the Borough's lobby contains a brochure that describes all food items needed, where a check can be sent, and the point of contact person for volunteering. If you have any questions, contact Gayle Marthers at 717-752-0063.

On November 25, when our local young residents visit the Carroll Valley Borough building, they will be excited to see a life-size red Santa Mail Postal Box in the lobby. Santa letters dropped in this special mailbox are guaranteed to be delivered directly to Santa. The last day to drop a letter and expect a reply written by Santa is noon, December

15 (Friday). On December 5 at 7 p.m., see the Traveling Santa. The Fairfield Community Fire Company will transport Santa Claus from the Fairfield Post Office parking lot through Main Street – Fairfield to the Carroll Valley parking lot. Also, the Fairfield Community Fire Company will hold Breakfast with Santa Claus on Saturday, December 9. The doors open at 8 a.m. Santa arrives at 9 a.m. All meals (adults & children) are \$5 per person. For more information, call 717-642-8842 – No reservations needed! December 16, at noon, you can have Cookies with Santa at the Liberty Worship Center. Hope to see you there.

Wish you all Happy Holidays. Be careful driving in the evening, especially in our neighborhood. We are not surprised if we see a deer on the trail or standing in our driveway when we get home. Understanding when you're most likely to see deer on the road can help keep you and them – safe. Deer are most active at dawn, dusk, and for a few hours after the sun sets. They are more prevalent during mating season, which runs from October to January. If you see a killed deer on the side of the road, slow down. Deer travel in groups – others could be nearby. If you have any questions, please email MayorRonHarris@comcast.net.

Liberty Township Supervisor Walter Barlow

I hope that everyone is having a great holiday season. Thank you to everyone who turned out to vote on November 7 and congratulations to the newly and re-elected public officials around the area. I also want to thank the Liberty Township residents for re-electing me for another term as Supervisor.

We are once again pleased to report that despite the rising costs of fuel, labor, and materials, we were able to make appropriate adjustments to

balance the proposed 2024 General Fund budget at \$561,265 with no tax increase and less than \$2,000 over last year. The Pennsylvania Department of Transportation has notified us that our estimated Act 44 Liquid Fuels Fund allocation for 2024 is \$76,827. These State Funds combined with our Reserve Funds, make up our proposed budget of \$315,000 for road improvements. This is our maximum budget for road projects for the year. The use of the budgeted amount will

be determined after road project bids are received in the spring.

We applied for a Local Share Account Statewide Grant for \$225,000 for the purchase of a tractor and boom mower. The Township in previous years, including this year, has always rented a tractor with a boom mower attachment to use to cleanup the roadways. Our current mower will soon need to be replaced, and with the cost of equipment at almost half our annual budget it

would be difficult for the township to replace our equipment without such an opportunity.

As a reminder, it is getting much colder out; please be mindful of the winter weather. The Road Department replaced a collapsed crossover pipe on Gladhill Road. The emergency repair was performed successfully in time before the cut off for using black top. We hope to be able to make a more permanent repair in the future. The International truck is currently getting a new clutch plate installed so it is ready to go for the winter season. The road department is planning to attend additional LTAP training during the winter months. We are also scheduling training for everyone to be able to use the new AED devices that we recently received.

Next year, there will be two electronic recycling events for Parks Garage customers in Fairfield. Please check with your municipality to see if your area is included. The first event is scheduled for May 4 at Highland Township. Local events in December include the free horse carriage rides that will be offered at the Outlets at Gettysburg that began on November 24th and go on until December 23rd. See the Destination Gettysburg website for more information. Strawberry Hill will be hosting a Winter Solstice Celebration that is \$30 per child. At this event you can make tree decorations, bird treats, smores, and much more.

Municipal and County Tax second notices went out in early November. Those taxes can be collected until December 31. We are in the penalty phase for school tax collection. Second

continued on next page

Our most sincere wishes for a Merry Christmas, a warm Holiday Season, and a New Year of Peace, Prosperity & Happiness!

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GOVERNMENT—NORTH OF THE BORDER

County Commissioner Jim Martin

Elected officials of Adams County often will affirm that Adams County is always number one. Then, with a smile, add, alphabetically. Yes, figuratively, we are number one, but in other respects we are literally number one. Adams County has the reputation for being the most accurate election office in the state of Pennsylvania. The ladies that operate the election and voter registration office take pride to maintain that distinction and their work shows it. The most recent election was no different. It was 100% accurate. The physical count of ballots that were received by mail plus those that were cast at the polls, exactly matched the vote counts and the unused ballots returned to the elections office. Added to accuracy is the secure transport of ballots to the elections office for counting. All ballot boxes were locked and sealed as they left the polls. The ballot boxes were also accompanied by a chain of custody document that must be signed when passed from one party (transporter) to another

(receiver). This process is the security that verifies that the ballots were properly handled. The bottom line, not one ballot was lost or misplaced.

If you took notice, the three incumbent commissioners were removed from the Board Of Elections for this year's election cycle. Running for commissioner disqualifies us from serving as the Board Of Elections, this being an obvious conflict of interest. We are replaced by a recommended board of elections that must be approved by the county's President Judge. Political parties are represented on the replacement Board equal to the parties on the current Board of County Commissioners (two Republicans and one Democrat). You may then ask the question, "Why were the Democrat candidates listed first on the General Election ballot"? The party that is listed first on the General Election ballot is always the party of the present governor. The present Board of Commissioners will be returning to the board of elections for next year's presidential election pro-

vided none of the commissioners decide to run for another elected office.

Another number 1 status of Adams County was recognized during a recent Veterans' Benefits Program held at the World War II American Experience Museum. Douglas Etter, an official from the Lebanon VA Medical Center said the best county Veterans Office processing claims and assisting Veterans' families in the Lebanon region is Adams County. Director Stan Clark and his assistant Sonny Freeman are "all business" putting forth what it takes to get claims processed. Their office is getting busier than it ever has been as a result of new benefits that address toxic exposure situations. Next year the Commissioners plan to add another staff person to handle the increase in claims. Without this new individual there would be an unmanageable backlog of applicants.

Also, to handle this increased volume, a newly constructed office will be showcased in the coming months. It will be on the first floor of the Adams

County Courthouse in the former location of the Adams County Elections and Voter Registration Office. Veterans and their families need to know that Stan has been a dedicated and strong advocate to bring this need before the Commissioners.

Did you know Adams County has some of the best "pickers" north of the Mason Dixon Line? Our County Court Administrator Don Fennimore got a picker's lead on furniture being left behind in a federal court building being vacated. If we provided the transport, we could have whatever we are able to use for county operations. Using our maintenance crew, we were able to acquire two large truck loads of wonderful quality furniture. Some of this lovely furniture is now on the second floor of the courthouse. The elevator lobby area is now surround with very attractive solid oak court room benches. Our maintenance crew gave the benches a new luster and a fresh look- making this a pick that even the American Pickers couldn't beat!

The opportunity to make this proj-

ect a success was timing. We never would have been able to manage the logistics of this endeavor had it not been for the public auction that emptied the old St. Francis School. With that building emptied of mostly unusable items we could receive and store the treasure from the federal courts. We have often referred to the St. Francis School as an asset in our portfolio of long-term investments; it may take time but it does pay dividends.

I hope all that take time to read this article will accept my recommendation to visit two wonderful museums during your holidays. Personally, experiencing the quality and content of these museums makes the recommendation easy. The two that I am referring to are Beyond the Battle and the World War II American Experience. We are so blessed to have these new venues conveying our local heritage.

Remember, December is one of the greatest months of the year to celebrate the joy of the Christmas season. And may you carry that joy throughout the whole year.

Three for Three

Ralph Serpe
Adams County Community Foundation

For the third year running, the people of Adams County made their generosity known, surpassing \$3 million in donations during the Community Foundation's annual Giving Spree. While the amount of contributions echoed prior years, the 2023 Giving Spree was propelled by a new kind of energy, with a return to the in-person festival style event not seen since 2019.

More than 1,000 people showed up at the Gettysburg Area Middle School to take advantage of the opportunity to browse 100 participating nonprofit displays. They were eager to meet and talk with the staff and volunteers who are on the front lines of service in our community in health and human services, education, historic preservation, the environment, animal welfare, the arts and more. Those nonprofits ended the day richer not only in dollars, but in friends.

On December 15, the Community Foundation will hold the "Big Reveal"

where we distribute the Giving Spree contributions to the nonprofits specified by each donor. While the Giving Spree is officially a one-day event, the incentive pool is still open for contributions until the end of November. The total of the incentive pool will be distributed to the participating nonprofits in proportion to the contributions they received during the Spree.

A very special aspect of the Giving Spree is the option for donors to designate any gift as a "forever gift." Forever gifts are added to designated endowment funds which are invested by the Community Foundation and used to make annual grants to the nonprofit for decades to come. This year, 15% of the dollars contributed during the Spree were designated as forever gifts. These gifts are a vote of confidence, strengthening the nonprofit today by ensuring resources for the future.

While the staff and board of the Community Foundation is proud to organize and manage the annual Giving Spree, this incredible event, filled with inspirational

moments, does not happen without an army of helpers. These include the 75 volunteers who distributed yard signs, set up tables, greeted, assisted, and thanked people dropping off contributions, and everything else the volunteers do.

We can't thank enough the people and businesses who support the Giving Spree with sponsorships, including Presenting Sponsors Brown Advisory, Sharon C. Magraw, Cynthia & David Salisbury; Event Sponsors C.S. Davidson, Destination Gettysburg, FirstEnergy Foundation, Huston-Fox Financial Advisory, Kampstra Wealth Management, Pella

Rolscreen Foundation, John & Kim Phillips, Julie Ramsey & Bruce Bigelow, Rice Fruit Company; Incentive Match Sponsors J. William Warehime Foundation Fund, Thomas E. & Florence B. Metz Fund, Sharon C. Magraw, Cynthia & David Salisbury, Knouse Foods Fund; and Media Sponsors Community Media of South Central PA, FOX43 WPMT, Gettysburg Times.

The annual Giving Spree has the intense energy of a sprint, but the Community Foundation ultimately is running a marathon for Adams County. The donors who have contributed for-

ever gifts, support the Fund for Adams County, or who have have created their own charitable endowments at the Community Foundation understand that. They know that the Community Foundation will stay the course, supporting the nonprofits of this community year after year, decade after decade, and they have chosen to join that race.

What was your favorite Giving Spree moment? I'd like to know. Email me at rserpe@adamscountycf.org or call 717-337-0060. Ralph Serpe is president & CEO of the Adams County Community Foundation.

Walter Barlow
continued from previous page

notices for school taxes will be sent in early January. A drop box is located by the front door of the Township Municipal Building for tax payments and all municipal mail collection.

The Board of Supervisors will hold the Annual Organization meeting on Tuesday, January 2, 2024, at 6 PM with the regular January monthly Board of Supervisors meeting immediately following. The Annual Auditors Organization meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 3, at

6 p.m.. Our monthly public meeting will continue to be held on the 1st Tuesday of each month at 6 PM except November. The November meeting will be held on Wednesday November 6. The Planning Commission meetings will be held as needed on the 3rd Tuesday of each month at 7:30 PM. All meetings will be held in the Township Building, 39 Topper Road, Fairfield.

Thank you to everyone for their continued support of Liberty Township. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

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COMMENTARY

The Bulwark

What the Founders would think about Trump

Charlie Sykes

In case you missed it, America's re-van-chist stable genius shared some of his Deep Thoughts about History the other day. Amidst his usual rant about his various and sundry criminal prosecutions, Donald Trump mused about The Founders and what they might be thinking if they could see us now.

"Our Founding Fathers are looking down at Biden with scorn right now. They're looking down at Biden and this administration with disbelief."

We think not. But he raises an interesting question: What would the Founders make of the Rise and Return of Donald Trump?

On a recent episode of the Bulwarks Trump Trials, Ben Wittes and I were inspired to speculate that there would indeed be high words bandied and fingers pointed among the drafters of the Constitution and the authors of the Federalist Papers.

They were vividly aware of the dangers posed by a man like Trump, and thought that they had erected effective checks and balances against him. So it is interesting to imagine what they might think as they looked down upon our current scene.

Alexander Hamilton had hoped somewhat naively that the Electoral College would afford "a moral certainty"

that the office of the presidency would not "fall to the lot of any man, who is not in an eminent degree endowed with the requisite qualifications."

He imagined that the electors would be a bulwark against men who had a talent "for low intrigue and the little arts of popularity."

"It will not be too strong to say," Hamilton wrote in Federalist No. 68, "that there will be a constant probability of seeing [the presidency] filled by characters preeminent for ability and virtue."

This was, in fact a consistent theme. In Federalist No. 1, Hamilton wrote, "Of those men who have overturned the liberty of republics, the greatest number have begun their career by paying an obsequious court to the people, commencing demagogues and ending tyrants." In Federalist No. 85, Hamilton argued that the Constitutions checks and balances were necessary to protect against the "military despotism of a victorious demagogue."

On our podcast, Ben highlighted the most prophetic of Hamilton's warning. In a note to George Washington in 1792, Hamilton described the proto-Trumpers who endangered the Republic. It is, in fact, so on-the-nose that it was cited twice during Trump's second impeachment trial.

Hamilton wrote:

"When a man unprincipled in private life despatches in his fortune, bold in his temper, [possessed of consider-

able talents, having the advantage of military habits] -

"... despotic in his ordinary demeanor -

"... known to have scoffed in private at the principles of liberty -

"... when such a man is seen to mount the hobby horse of popularity -

"... to join in the cry of danger to liberty -

"... to take every opportunity of embarrassing the General Government & bringing it under suspicion -

"... to flatter and fall in with all the nonsense of the zealots of the day -

"It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may 'ride the storm and direct the whirlwind'."

It may justly be suspected that his object is to throw things into confusion that he may 'ride the storm and direct the whirlwind.'

Imagine what Hamilton might be thinking now.

Technically, Abraham Lincoln was not a Founder, but he also warned about the danger of demagogues and megalomaniacs. And he would undoubtedly also have some thoughts about the man who now controls his party.

The greatest threat to the Republic, Lincoln declared in his Lyceum Address,

did not come from a foreign enemy.

"All the armies of Europe, Asia and Africa combined, with all the treasure of the earth (our own excepted) in their military chest; with a Buonaparte for a commander, could not by force, take a drink from the Ohio, or make a track on the Blue Ridge, in a trial of a thousand years."

The real danger, he said, "must spring up amongst us. It cannot come from abroad."

"If destruction be our lot, we must ourselves be its author and finisher. As a nation of freemen, we must live through all time, or die by suicide. . ."

He sounded the alarm about "men of ambition and talents," who would "seek the gratification of their ruling passion, as others have so done before them."

Take a moment to read his description of a would-be despot who "thirsts and burns for distinction."

"Is it unreasonable then to expect, that some man [possessed of the loftiest genius, coupled with ambition sufficient to push it to its utmost stretch, will at some time, spring up among us?

"And when such a one does, it will require the people to be united with each other, attached to the government and laws, and generally intelligent, to successfully frustrate his designs.

"Distinction will be his paramount object, and although he would as willingly, perhaps more so, acquire it by doing good as harm; yet, that opportunity being past, and nothing left to be done in the way of building up, he would set boldly to the task of pulling down."

One final thought. . .

If the Founders are, in fact, watching all of this, I imagine that George Mason would like to have a word with James Madison. During the Constitutional Convention, Mason warned against giving the president — any president — sweeping pardon powers.

The president, Mason argued:

"Ought not to have the power of pardoning, because he may frequently pardon crimes which were advised by himself. It may happen, at some future day, that he will establish a monarchy, and destroy the republic. If he has the power of granting pardons before indictment, or conviction, may he not stop inquiry and prevent detection? The case of treason ought, at least, to be excepted. This is a weighty objection with me."

James Madison told him not to worry.

"There is one security in this case to which gentlemen may not have adverted: if the President be connected, in any suspicious manner, with any person, and there be grounds to believe he will shelter him, the House of Representatives can impeach him; they can remove him if found guilty."

See if you can spot the flaw.

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

The Triad

It's over Mitch, go rogue

A. B. Stoddard

There are probably plenty of Derby days ahead back home for Sen. Mitch McConnell, but his time as the longest-running Senate party leader in history is coming to an end.

The 81-year-old Kentuckian looks different, and sounds different, than he did a year ago. His aging is pronounced: A fall and concussion, and then moments of freezing up during speech, have called his health into question.

Yet in the last year McConnell's party has actually changed more than he has. And that is likely the bigger threat to his ability to stay in power.

Set aside the defeat in yesterday's off-year elections of a McConnell protégé—his former staffer Daniel Cameron—in Kentucky's governor's race. That loss suggests that McConnell's political strength is flagging in his home state. But step back and look at the bigger picture.

Before the midterm elections of 2022, when Donald Trump's wacko election-denier candidates were winning Republican primaries, McConnell worried aloud about "candidate quality." He was right: Trump's picks lost winnable Senate races that would have made McConnell majority leader again. And McConnell wasn't alone in blaming Trump: The ex-president was criticized broadly for backing extremists who stopped a red

wave. Florida Gov. Ron DeSantis was believed capable of taking on Trump and saving the GOP.

A year ago.

Now the surrender to MAGA is nearly complete.

In the last month alone the election of Rep. Mike Johnson as House speaker proved that the Big Lie is now a litmus test for Republicans in the lower chamber, National Republican Senatorial Committee chairman Sen. Steve Daines called on the party to unite around Donald Trump as the GOP presidential nominee two months before any voters have weighed in, and the NRSC also attacked former GOP Rep. Peter Meijer of Michigan—someone the party would have considered a dream candidate like, yesterday—saying that he has no business announcing a Senate run because he voted to impeach Trump.

"Peter Meijer isn't viable in a primary election, and there's worry that if Meijer were nominated, the base would not be enthused in the general election," an NRSC spokesman told Politico.

There's worry alright.

Michigan turned solidly blue last year and Republicans should pray for a candidate like Meijer in a general election there. That the Michigan Republican Party is one of the most deranged GOP state parties in the nation means Meijer wouldn't likely win the primary, but such an on-the-record statement—from someone on McConnell's leadership team—shows there is no attempt to

hide the capitulation to Trump anymore. This is now business as usual.

What is left of the "establishment" will evaporate by early winter, and McConnell should plan accordingly. The Grand Old Party now has him cornered. And McConnell cannot overcome this with leadership, fundraising, and dedication to the cause.

Keep up with all our coverage of the 2024 campaign—in articles, podcasts, newsletters, and livestreams:

Too many Senate Republicans don't want to follow their leader. Nowhere is this more clear than the fight for democracy abroad, and the defense of Ukraine. As McConnell pushes to pass emergency funds for Israel, Ukraine, and Taiwan together—as President Biden has requested—he is isolated. The three Johns most likely to replace him as leader—Sens. John Thune, John Cornyn, and John Barrasso—have not backed him up publicly. In September McConnell argued for Ukraine funding to be included in a continuing resolution but was rebuffed by his own GOP colleagues.

Instead some Republican senators want McConnell to show solidarity with the newly elected House speaker, who opposes tying security aid for Israel to any funds for Ukraine.

Sen. Rand Paul told reporters last week that McConnell's position is "very, very unpopular," and added "I think ultimately [it] will fail or bring down the speaker, which I don't think is a good idea."

Sen. Cynthia Lummus said she was "hopeful that deference will be paid to the House."

McConnell has met with Johnson and says he plans to do so regularly, but it is not his duty to help the shambolic House GOP conference keep a speaker.

Instead McConnell can work his friend Joe Biden and with Majority Leader Chuck Schumer on a compromise that combines border security provisions with the national security supplemental funds. Perhaps that would help improve Biden's standing against Trump in the general election. But McConnell should support the White House position that Ukraine needs not only materiel but economic assistance in order to prevail against the Russian onslaught that aims to bankrupt the country if it cannot conquer it. And he should not back down from the need to pass security aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan simultaneously.

McConnell cannot hope to be a hero in the history books. For one thing, he stole a Supreme Court seat (and sadly for him, the ultimate partisan, the left gives him more credit for remaking the courts than his fellow Republicans do). For another, he refused to stand up to Trump's coup because he wanted Republicans to win the Georgia Senate runoff elections on January 5, 2021. But Trump told Peach State Republicans to stay home from a "rigged" election—so he cost McConnell the majority twice, in January 2021 and again in November 2022.

But McConnell's greatest failure was his vote on February 13, 2021

to acquit Trump of impeachment for inciting the insurrection. On the same day he said Trump was "practically and morally responsible" for January 6th. McConnell likely could have found 17 votes for conviction, which would have barred Trump from future office. His attempt to have it both ways has landed us here, with Trump well positioned for a second term.

Is McConnell prepared to endorse Trump a third time next spring? If Trump wins next year McConnell is toast. And if Trump loses it is hard to imagine House Republicans won't object to certifying a Biden 2024 victory—and the MAGA caucus in the Senate will follow suit.

McConnell owes himself a better legacy than being run out of town by J.D. Vance, Ron Johnson, and Donald Trump. He can help the country, and democracy, and himself, by abandoning the needs of his party to do what is right.

Just as both Sen. Mitt Romney and former Vice President Mike Pence have, McConnell can choose to liberate himself from the corruption MAGA has in store for Republicans next year. There is no reason not to—like Pence and Romney, McConnell will find no future work in GOP circles once he leaves the Senate.

Twilight can elicit courage. Cocaine Mitch should go out in a blaze of Uni-Party glory.

To read other articles by A.B. Stoddard visit www.thebulwark.com.

The Liberal Patriot

Where have all the Democrats gone?

John Judis and Ruy Teixeira

The Democratic Party has had its greatest success when it sought to represent the common man and woman against the rich and powerful, the people against the elite, and the plebeians against the patricians. Over the last thirty years, the Democrats have continued to claim to represent the average citizen but have steadily lost the allegiance of “everyday Americans”—the working- and middle-class voters that were at the core of the older New Deal coalition.

There are a multitude of factors that have driven working-class voters out of the Democratic Party. Some of these stances have to do directly with economics; others with culture. The differences over them are often taken to distinguish the college-educated professional from those who do not have college degrees, but they equally, if not more accurately, arise from the differences in economic geography—what we call the “Great Divide” in American politics.

On one side of the divide are the great postindustrial metro centers that are heavily populated by college-educated professionals, but also by low-skilled immigrants who clean the buildings, mow the lawns, and take care of the children and the aged. The professionals, who set the political agenda for these areas, welcome legal and illegal immigrants; they want guns off the street; they see trade not as a threat to jobs but as a source of less expensive goods; they worry that climate change will destroy the planet; and, among the young, they are engaged in a quest for new identities

and sexual lifestyles. A majority of them are Democrats.

On the other side of the divide are the small towns and midsize cities that have depended on manufacturing, mining, and farming. The workers and small businesspeople in these towns want the border closed to illegal immigrants, whom they see as a burden to their taxes and a threat to their jobs; they want to keep their guns as a way to protect their homes and family; they fly the American flag in front of their house; they go to or went to church; they oppose abortion; some may be leery of gay marriage; many of them or members of their family served in the military; they have no idea what most of the initials in LGBTQIA+ stand for. A majority of them are now Republicans and many are former working-class Democrats.

In recent years, elections have increasingly been decided by which party can make the other party’s radical extremes (or the politicians who represent those extremes) the main issue.

There is a danger to democracy lurking in this transformation of the parties into cultural warriors. American democracy was originally based on the Jeffersonian idea that roughly equal property ownership would undergird political equality and democracy. That notion was dashed on the rocks of the industrial revolution, which created a society of distinct economic classes. It was then hoped by liberals and progressives in the early twentieth century that the intrinsic economic and political power of the lords of industry and finance would be counterbalanced by the power of labor unions in the workplace and by a party that represents the working and middle classes in the political realm. And that was the democratic pluralism that, with some obvious flaws, New Deal liberalism bequeathed and that dominated

American politics from the 1930s up through the 1960s.

But that hope for democracy has also been shattered. During the last half century, the labor movement, under assault from business and Republicans, has precipitously declined, and the Democratic Party has ceased to be seen and to function as the party of the people in competition with the party of business. The consequences have been profound.

Business and finance, through a plethora of lobbies that began springing up in the 1970s, have gotten their way time and again. The tax code has been dramatically rewritten to favor the wealthy at the expense of working America; trade deals have been signed that have aided multinational corporations but screwed American workers; finance, with its propensity to instability, and its emphasis on short-term returns, has been enhanced at the expense of manufacturing; at the behest of the most retrograde elements, social programs have been sabotaged or rejected that would have provided American workers with the same security in health care, child-care, and employment that European workers simply take for granted.

In our view, one prerequisite for reviving the promise of American democracy is the reemergence of a political party whose primary commitment is to look after the country’s working and middle classes.

We place our hopes for change in the Democratic Party. We see evidence in the Biden administration’s first two years of a reevaluation of the party’s economic priorities on trade, taxes, and labor and on national economic growth that tries to bridge the Great Divide. The Democrats seem to have turned a corner from their deference to free markets and free trade during past administrations.

Most of the stands the party take on issues like race, crime, immigration, climate, sex, and gender are in response to real problems. There has been police



brutality; the country’s eleven million illegal immigrants constitute an exploitable underclass that needs to be integrated into society; transgender people have suffered discrimination; and climate change is a genuine threat to the planet’s future. There are reasonable reforms that address these, but the radical solutions and the censorious outlook advanced by the Democrats’ shadow groups and by some Democratic politicians have been wrong-headed and divisive. Many Democrats simply refuse to recognize this.

The America of today is vastly different from the America of the 1930s, but what the Democrats need today is a general approach to politics that is similar to that of the New Deal liberals. The New Deal liberals were liberal, progressive, and social democratic in their economic views, dedicated to creating a better balance of power between labor and business and security against poverty, unemployment, disease, and old age, but by today’s standards, the New Deal Democrats were moderate and

even small-c conservative in their social outlook.

They extolled “the American way of life” (a term popularized in the 1930s); they used patriotic symbols like the “Blue Eagle” to promote their programs. In 1940, Roosevelt’s official campaign song was Irving Berlin’s “God Bless America.” Under Roosevelt, Thanksgiving, Veterans Day, and Columbus Day were made into federal holidays. Roosevelt turned the annual Christmas tree lighting into a national event. Roosevelt’s politics were those of “the people” and of the “forgotten American.”

The Democrats need to follow this example. They need to press economic reforms that benefit the working and middle classes. But to get a hearing on those promises, they must first declare a truce and find a middle ground in today’s culture war between Democrats and Republicans so that they can once again become the party of the people.

To read other articles from *The Liberal Patriot* visit www.liberalpatriot.com.

Good Day, Neighbor

Family celebrations

Dorothea Mordan

No matter what happens in the world before this edition of the Woodsboro Walkersville News Journal goes to print, the first days of winter are a time many of us pause, reflect, spend time with family, remember our faith and humanity.

Communities goes through changes every year. Some of the best come from meeting new people. Change doesn’t cost traditions. The people who come into our lives create a larger family, with traditions to share.

The new owners of Trout’s, Diya Rajbhandari and her family, live in Walkersville, and are enriching the local traditions of our community. Our family favorites for the holidays can be found there, turkey, potatoes, Cope’s Corn. Local and regional favorites from Langanore and Yuengling mingle with new favorites. A few (new to me) interesting wines, Imagery Cabernet Sauvignon, Bonterra Chardonnay and Specialist Zinfandel, pair nicely with locally sourced produce and meats.

In the winter holidays we pause to share stories of inspiration.

I recently read a short, autobiographical story by Katherine Hepburn. She and her father had been in line to buy tickets to see a show. In front of them was a family, parents and children, just as excited as the Hepburns. When their turn came, the father of that family found he did not have money to pay for their tickets. Nothing was spoken, but the look on those parents’ faces told the story of how devastating it was about to be when their children learned they would not see the show. Hepburn’s father quietly dropped some of his own money to the ground, saying “Sir, I think you dropped this.” Knowing looks were exchanged, and the families parted ways. The family of strangers went in. Then the Hepburns went home.

Hepburn said she and her father felt joy in being able to help that family. I’m sure they did. I also think much of the joy from such experiences is the memory of when we do what is right, when we can. In the moment, we feel relief that tragedy—great or small—was averted. That is what the holidays make me think of. Tragedies great or small I may have helped deflect, and small mercies shown to me. In the world today there are face-offs everywhere. Since the

dawn of time humans have needed to balance the aggressive rhythms of life with times of respite and rest. A holiday.

Human inflicted traumas, as we see happening around the world, lead to generations of damage. The opposing force is the lasting effect of doing the right thing, building generations of strong bonds with neighbors.

Writing about what community means is a universal reflection for this time of year. All people need a sense of self preservation, but a true community holiday is about so much more than “what’s in it for me?”. We stop to renew our faith—in religion, humanity, that the spring days are coming. Faith and church are about community, not separation. It is worth remembering that people who don’t value other people, often don’t know their own value. When the world seems certain to tear itself apart, it is worth remembering the things we do each day to hold it together, and that every religion has a way of phrasing the Golden Rule.

Buddhism - Hurt not others with that which pains yourself. Udanavarga.

Christianity - All things whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them: for this is the law and the prophets. Bible, St. Matthew.

Confucianism - Is there any maxim which ought to be acted upon throughout one’s whole life? Surely the maxim of

loving kindness is such—Do not unto others what you would not they should do unto you. Analects.

Hebraism - What is hateful to you, do not do to your fellow man. That is the whole of the Torah and the remainder is but commentary. Go learn it. Talmud.

Hinduism - This is the sum of duty: do naught to others which if done to thee, would cause thee pain. Mahabharata.

Islam - No one of you is a believer until he loves for his brother what he loves for himself. Traditions.

Jainism - In happiness and suffering, in joy and grief, we should regard all creatures as we regard our own self, and should therefore refrain from inflicting upon others such injury as would appear undesirable to us if inflicted upon ourselves. Yogashastra.

Sikhism - As thou deemest thyself so deem others. Then shalt thou become a partner in heaven. Kabir.

Taoism - Regard your neighbor’s gain as your own gain: and your neighbor’s loss as your own loss. T’ai Shang Kan Ying P’ien.

Unitarianism - The inherent worth and dignity of every person. Justice, equity and compassion in human relations. We affirm and promote respect for the interdependent web of all existence of which we are a part. Unitarian

Universalist Association.

Zoroastrianism - That nature is only good when it shall not do unto another whatever is not good for its own self. Dadistan-i-dinik.

Most of these phrasings of the Golden Rule are as they appear on the Norman Rockwell Museum website. No doubt there are many more phrasings of the Golden Rule to pair with many more religions. They are not missing in this column because of newspaper print space. Their absence simply illustrates that I have so much more to learn.

For over a century Norman Rockwell’s work has celebrated life in America. From the joys of holiday tradition to the depths of fighting for civil rights. It is worth remembering that some of our greatest artists are also some of our greatest humanitarians.

Examples of the Golden Rule are all around us, if only we pay attention.

Hold your family and friends closer, and if you are reading this here at home in Woodsboro or Walkersville, stop by Trout’s and pick up something to share for your holiday meal.

The array of choices at Trout’s pair nicely with gatherings of friends, family, and good conversation.

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

THE PASTOR'S DESK

Good news of great joy!

Pastor John Talcott
Christ Community Church

As we celebrate the coming of Jesus Christ, we want to remember the promise of God and what that means to us. Because the fact that God sent his Son Jesus Christ is a cornerstone belief for all of us who are Christians. The good news of Christmas is that God saw us in our brokenness and sent his only Son Jesus on a rescue mission to save us. Not just to put a Band-Aid on it in an attempt to cover up the offense, but he went right to the heart of the issue when he told Joseph that "Jesus would save his people from their sins" (Matthew 1:21).

In other words, we must acknowledge that the coming of the Lord Jesus Christ is both powerful and personal, but his coming also impacted more than just humanity, because it was universal in its scope. The apostle Paul tells us, "That the whole creation has been groaning as in the pains of childbirth right up to the present time. Not only so, but we ourselves, who have the firstfruits of the Spirit, groan inwardly as we wait eagerly for our adoption as sons, the redemption of our bodies" (Romans 8:22-23). And so, it was because of the first man, Adam's sin that all of creation was subjected to frustration, bondage, and oppression; but through the Lord Jesus Christ all things will be brought into the glorious freedom of God.

Therefore, we praise God saying, "Let the heavens rejoice, let the earth be glad; let the sea resound, and all that is in it; let

the fields be jubilant, and everything in them. Then all the trees of the forest will sing for joy; they will sing before the Lord, for he comes, he comes to judge the earth. He will judge the world in righteousness and the peoples in his truth" (Psalms 96:11-13). And so, we join with all of creation celebrating just how wide, long, high, and deep is the love of Christ; because in his hand is the life of every creature and the breath of all mankind (Job 12:9-10).

That is the miracle of Christmas that we celebrate, that moment in time when God became flesh, that pivotal point in our calendar when the celestial became terrestrial. It's called the incarnation, where we encounter two natures, one spiritual and one physical, both mysteriously joined together as one in Christ who is both fully God and fully man. That is the mystery the apostle John declares, "In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God, and the Word was God. He was with God in the beginning" (John 1:1-2). But now he has appeared once for all to do away with sin by the sacrifice of himself as John tells us, "The Word became flesh and made his dwelling among us" (John 1:14).

It's on Christmas that we celebrate not necessarily a birthdate, but an event, this holy concept of the incarnation, that the Word became flesh. That's what we celebrate, because now a righteousness from God, apart from law, has been made known, to which the Law and the Prophets testify" (Romans 3:21). That is the good

news declared by the prophet Isaiah, "The Lord himself will give you a sign: The virgin will be with child and will give birth to a son, and will call him Immanuel" (Isaiah 7:14). "Which means, "God with us" (Matthew 1:23).

That's the very best news of all, that is the gospel, but honestly this passage of Scripture creates a bit of tension. In other words, an absurdity, an impossibility is presented because virgins don't bear children. And so, what appeared to be a dead end for forty-two generations of Abraham's descendants, to Joseph and Mary, God chose to make known the glorious riches of this mystery, which is Christ in you, the hope of glory (Colossians 1:27). In other words, God was making a public declaration that every dead-end you come face-to-face with is an opportunity for a new beginning. Whatever you might name it, whatever you call your dead end, your impossibility, whether it is guilt, shame, doubt, failure, or an addiction, God sees it as an opportunity for a new beginning.

God picked the most unlikely, the most improbable, the most difficult situation to bring forth his Son, because he is God of the impossible. And so, when he wanted to come into the world, he picked a virgin, he chose a womb that represented an impossibility so that impossibility would give birth to the unlimited, infinite potential of his Son Jesus Christ. Because whosoever would believe, the old is gone and the new has come, and the impossibility presented through the virgin birth was the catalyst to unleash the potential for our salvation.



You see, unlike Jesus, each one of us are born in sin, we have inherited our sin nature from Adam, and it has been passed down to us through the seed of our fathers. Therefore, God said that we have all sinned and fallen short of his glory, we have all gone astray following the path of our first father Adam, but not Jesus. He wasn't born of the seed of a human father, he was conceived by the Holy Spirit, and so he was born without sin. Therefore, Jesus Christ, the Son of God, was the pure, spotless, Lamb of God,

who would take away the sins of the world (John 1:29).

On Christmas morning, we remember that Jesus broke forth from the confines of Mary's virgin womb and was born in the most unlikely of places. The Lamb of God was born in a stable and not in a palace, because no one is beyond the reach of his love. And so, instead of being surrounded by great riches, he was born in the lowliest of places. He was in the world and though the world was made through him, the world didn't recognize him, because he was the stone the builders rejected (Psalms 118:22). He came to that which was his own, but his own did not receive him (John 1:10-11).

He came to give us life, full and abundant life, so that we would be able to say, "The Lord is my shepherd" (Psalms 23:1). Because that is who he is, the good shepherd lays down his life for the sheep" (John 10:11). And that is exactly what he did, he didn't just shout it from heaven, but he demonstrated his love for us in this: "While we were still sinners, Christ died for us" (Romans 5:8).

In other words, he died for you and me. That is the declaration of Christmas given by the Angels to shepherds out in the field. "I bring you good news of great joy that will be for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord" (Luke 2:10-11). And to those who receive him, those who believe in his name, he gives the right to become children of God (John 1:12). May you have a blessed and holy Christmas!

To learn more about Christ Community Church visit them on-line at www.cccaog.org or better yet, join them for Christmas Day service!

Christmas Eve Services
Candlelight
Christmas Eve Services
7 p.m. and 11 p.m.
Every neighbor is welcome!
Join us as we gather for worship to celebrate
the birth of the Christ Child!



Tom's Creek
United Methodist Church
10926 Simmons Road, Emmitsburg
www.tomscreekumc.com

St. John's Lutheran Church
8619 Black's Mill Rd., Creagerstown
St. John's Lutheran Church invites you to join us each
Sunday morning at 9:30 a.m. for our worship service.

Emmitsburg Community Chorus
Christmas Concert
Sat., December 16 - 4 p.m.
in the Union Church followed by an evening meal in the parish
hall and luminaries in the cemetery. All are welcome.

Candlelight Christmas Eve Service
Sun., December 24 - 7 p.m.
in the Union Church sanctuary.
Light refreshments following in the parish hall.

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● Christmas Eve Dec. 24 ●
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Sunday School 9:15 a.m.
8231-A Rocky Ridge Road Thurmont
Phone: 301-271-2379 / www.gracehammoravian.org

Emmitsburg
Community Baptist Church



Pastor Joe Engel

Sunday Worship - 10 a.m.
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THE BOOK OF DAYS

St. Nicholas



Saint Nicholas Day, also called the Feast of Saint Nicholas, is observed on December 6th in Western Christian countries, and on 19 December 20th in Eastern Christian countries.

St. Nicholas belongs to the fourth century of the Christian era, and was a native of the city of Patara, in Lycia, in Asia Minor. So strong were his devotional tendencies, even from infancy, that we are gravely informed that he refused to suck on Wednesdays and Fridays, the fast-days appointed by the church! Having embraced a religious life by entering the monastery of Sion, near Myra, he was in course of time raised to the dignity of abbot, and for many years made himself conspicuous by acts of piety and benevolence. Subsequently he was elected archbishop of the metropolitan church of Myra, and exercised that office with great renown till his death. Though escaping actual martyrdom, he is said to have suffered imprisonment, and otherwise testified to the faith under the persecution of Dioclesian.

The history of St. Nicholas does not end with his death and burial. His relics were preserved

with great honour at Myra, till the end of the eleventh century, when certain merchants of Bari, on the Adriatic, moved by a pious indignation similar to what actuated the Crusaders, made an expedition to the coast of Lycia, and landing there, broke open the coffin containing the bones of the saint, and carried them off to Italy. They landed at Bari on the 9th of May 1087, and the sacred treasure, which they had brought with them, was deposited in the church of St. Stephen. On the day when the latter proceeding took place, we are told that thirty persons were cured of various distempers through imploring the intercession of St. Nicholas, and since that time his tomb at Bari has been famous for pilgrimages.

Perhaps no saint has enjoyed a more extended popularity than St. Nicholas. By the Russian nation, he has been adopted as their patron, and in England no fewer than three hundred and seventy-two churches are named

in his honour. He is regarded as the special guardian of virgins, of children, and of sailors. Scholars were under his protection, and from the circumstance of these being anciently denominated clerks, the fraternity of parish clerks placed themselves likewise under the guardianship of St. Nicholas. He even came to be regarded as the patron of robbers, from an alleged adventure with thieves, whom he compelled to restore some stolen goods to their proper owners.

But there are two specially celebrated legends regarding this saint, one of which bears reference to his protectorship of virgins, and the other to that of children.

The former of these stories is as follows: A nobleman in the town of Patara had three daughters, but was sunk in such poverty, that he was not only unable to provide them with suitable marriage-portions, but was on the point of abandoning them to a sinful course of life from inability to preserve them otherwise from starvation. St. Nicholas, who had inherited a large fortune, and employed it in innumerable acts of charity, no sooner heard of this unfortunate family, than he resolved to save it from the degradation with which it was threatened.

As he proceeded secretly to the nobleman's house at night, debating with himself how he might best accomplish his object, the moon shone out from behind a cloud, and shewed him an open window into which he threw a purse of gold. This fell at the feet of the father of the maidens, and enabled him to portion his eldest daughter.

A second nocturnal visit was paid to the house by the saint, and a similar present bestowed, which procured a dowry for the second daughter of the nobleman. But the latter was now determined to discover his mysterious benefactor, and with that view set himself to watch. On St. Nicholas approaching, and preparing to throw in a purse of money for the third daughter, the nobleman caught hold of the skirt of his robe, and threw himself at his feet, exclaiming: 'O Nicholas! ser-

vant of God! Why seek to hide thyself?' But the saint made him promise that he would inform no one of this seasonable act of munificence.

From this incident in his life is derived apparently the practice formerly, if not still, customary in various parts of the continent, of the elder members and friends of a family placing, on the eve of St. Nicholas's Day, little presents, such as sweetmeats and similar gifts, in the shoes or hose of their younger relatives, who, on discovering them in the morning, are supposed to attribute them to the munificence of St. Nicholas.

In convents, the young lady-boarders used, on the same occasion, to place silk-stockings at the door of the apartment of the abbess, with a paper recommending themselves to 'Great St. Nicholas of her chamber.' The next morning they were summoned together, to witness the results of the liberality of the saint who had bountifully filled the stockings with sweetmeats. From the same instance of munificence recorded of St. Nicholas, he is often represented bearing three purses, or three gold balls; the latter emblem forming the well-known pawnbrokers' sign, which, with considerable probability, has been traced to this origin. It is true, indeed, that this emblem is proximately derived from the Lombard merchants who settled in England at an early period, and were the first to open establishments for the lending of money. The three golden balls were also the sign of the Medici family of Florence, who, by a successful career of merchandise and money-lending, raised themselves to the supreme power in their native state. But the same origin is traceable in both cases—the emblematic device of the charitable St. Nicholas.

The second legend to which we have adverted is even of a more piquant nature. A gentleman of Asia sent his two sons to be educated at Athens, but desired them, in passing through the town of Myra, to call on its archbishop, the holy Nicholas, and receive his benediction.

The young men, arriving at the town late in the evening, resolved

to defer their visit till the morning, and in the meantime took up their abode at an inn. The landlord, in order to obtain possession of their baggage, murdered the unfortunate youths in their sleep; and after cutting their bodies to pieces, and salting them, placed the mutilated remains in a pickling tub along with some pork, under the guise of which he resolved to dispose of the contents of the vessel. But the Archbishop was warned by a vision of this horrid transaction, and proceeded immediately to the inn, where he charged the landlord with the crime.

The man, finding himself discovered, confessed his guilt, with great contrition, to St. Nicholas, who not only implored on his behalf the forgiveness of Heaven, but also proceeded to the tub where the remains of the innocent youths lay in brine, and then made the sign of the cross, and offered up a supplication for their restoration to life.

Scarcely was the saint's prayer finished, when the detached and mangled limbs were miraculously reunited, and the two youths regaining animation, rose up alive in the tub, and threw themselves at the feet of their benefactor. We are further informed, that the archbishop refused their homage, desiring the young men to return thanks to the proper quarter from which this blessing had descended; and then, after giving them his benediction, he dismissed them with great joy to continue their journey to Athens. In accordance with this legend, St. Nicholas is frequently represented, as delineated in the accompanying engraving, standing in full Episcopal costume beside a tub with naked children.

The tradition of Saint Nicholas Day, is a festival for children in many countries in Europe related to legends of the saint, and particularly his reputation as a bringer of gifts. The American Santa Claus, as well as the British Father Christmas, derive from these legends.

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



Come and celebrate the birth of Jesus with us!

Trinity United Methodist Church
313 W. Main St., Emmitsburg



Worship during Advent season
with the lighting of the
Advent candles beginning
on Sunday, December 3rd
at 9 a.m.



Contact
Rev. Richard Baker at
rwb1.pastor@yahoo.com or 443-375-9556

Christmas Eve Service
with Candlelight & Communion
December 24th at 7 p.m.



ECOLOGY

Strawberry Hill's Winter & Spring programs

Anne Gageby
Director of Environmental Education
Strawberry Hill Foundation

Looking back over this past fall, I'm in awe of what we've been able to accomplish here at Strawberry Hill. From the numerous school field trips and homeschool programs to public events such as Trailgating and Halloween on the Hill, it's been a whirlwind of activities, learning, and fun. Most of all, it has me excited for our winter and spring programs.

Yes, the weather is getting colder and hiking the trails becomes trickier as the snow and ice take over. But that doesn't mean the fun stops just because the forest is switching seasons. This month we're hosting a holiday wreath-making class on December 9th from 1 to 3. Make your own beautiful, all-natural wreath while enjoying hot cocoa, treats, and friends. We'll learn about different local evergreens and discover some tips and tricks for making your own holiday showstopper. Strawberry Hill will supply pinecones, wire, and drinks. Please bring ribbon and any decorations you'd like to add such as berries, bells, snowflakes, birds, silk flowers, etc. Please bring gloves, scissors, wire cutters, and hand cutters for plant materials as we will have limited scissors and wire cutters to share. Also, we will be in the pavilion so please dress for the weather. Our wreath-making class is led by Heather Wight, a Pennsylvania Master Gardener and experienced wreath-maker. The price is \$30 per participant, and you can register online at our website, www.strawberryhill.org or by calling the office at 717-642-5840.

I'm proud to announce that Strawberry Hill is bringing back Christmas on the Hill which we be held Saturday, December 16th from 5 to 6:30. Join us in the Nature Classroom for photos and storytime with Santa. Two of our Animal Ambassadors will also be there to greet families and tell you what's happening in our forest this time of year. We'll light up the night with a self-guided stroll along Middle Creek's Christmas light display and a live-music Christmas sing-along by the campfire from 5:15 to -5:40, and again from 6 to 6:30. We will also have hot cocoa in the pavilion and a craft station for you to make your own nature-style Christmas ornaments. Christmas on the Hill is free and open to the public however donations are always appreciated.

Strawberry Hill is also hosting a kids' Winter Solstice Celebration on Thursday, December 21st from 1:30 to 4:30. This is a drop-off program for kids ages 5-12 and is a great way for the kids to start their winter break. We'll enjoy an afternoon hike as we discover what winter means for nature. Later, we'll warm up by the campfire with smores and hot cocoa before returning to the Nature Classroom to make bird treats and tree decorations as we explore the history and science behind the solstice. This is an afternoon the kids won't want to miss! The price is \$30 per child and space is limited. Please register online or by calling the office.

If hiking is more your thing, join us for a full moon hike on Tuesday, December 26th from 7 to 8 p.m. December's full Cold Moon is special because of its high trajectory across the sky. The Cold Moon is opposite

the low sun and because of this, will be above the horizon longer than at other times of the year. It's also a great time to see more of the sky because most of the leaves have fallen from the trees and there are a couple of secret spots around Strawberry Hill's campus with spectacular views. Not to mention that there's something particularly refreshing about a crisp evening hike with friends around the holidays. So, bring someone special and enjoy the beauty of an early winter trek around Strawberry Hill.

If you're a Scout, our Cold Moon hike meets the requirements for the following badges - Senior Sky, Senior Science Expert, and Cadette Night Owl. You will receive a certificate of completion from Strawberry Hill upon request.

Our monthly full moon hikes are free and open to the public but please email education@strawberryhill.org or call the office to register. Space is limited and the hike is weather-dependent. We will have a limited number of flashlights to hand-out so please bring one if you can. Snow and/or ice is likely so please plan and dress accordingly.

The holidays are in full swing right now so it's hard to think beyond New Year's. But if you're anything like me, you're likely already prepping your 2024 calendar because you'd rather be ahead of the curve. If that's the case, get ready because Strawberry Hill's calendar is already looking pretty sweet. And I mean maple-sweet!

Mount Hope Maple Madness is coming back and it's going to be grander than ever. We're hosting our favorite pancake breakfast for one full weekend - Saturday and Sunday, March 2nd and 3rd from 8 to 1 at Camp Eder. This



January Owl Prowl at Strawberry Hill

Join the Strawberry Hill naturalists on January 20th as they venture into the night in search of native owls. You'll discover what makes an owl an excellent hunter and learn of other owls that live and visit our beautiful woods.

year, we're expanding the maple experience with more hands-on activities surrounding the history, culture, and science of maple sugaring, paired with our famous pancake breakfast. More information will be coming soon so stay tuned. This is the winter event you don't want to miss.

Speaking of 2024, add this to your calendar: WILDlife is coming back! WILDlife is a drop-off program designed to connect homeschool children, ages 7-12, to the natural world through hands-on, child-led experiences. It's founded on the principles of Wonder, Imagination, Liberty, and Discovery. WILDlife kids go on hikes, engage in citizen science through on-trail investigations, learn basic survival skills, create nature art, and spend their entire class time outdoors with the exception of inclement weather. Each class is led by knowledgeable and engaging Naturalists in small class sizes (8 students).

WILDlife incorporates multiple areas of learning including math, science, literature, creative arts, physical education, and social studies with special emphasis on local and Pennsylvania history including Native American history. Classes also provide documentation to

aide in homeschool portfolio reviews and offer one make-up class in the event of cancellation.

Our 10-week spring program will take place on Tuesdays from 10 to 2 and will run March 5th through May 7th. WILDlife is an excellent addition to your homeschool curriculum and a howling good time for the kids. After all, whether you're homeschooling, unschooling, or distance-learning, the learning experience should be authentic, memorable, and most of all, fun. For more information, or to register your child, please email or visit our website www.strawberryhill.org/wildlife or call our office.

December is here so give yourself a moment to pause and maybe have a little fun. It's a busy time of year and the holidays can sometimes be stressful. Get outside if you can and take in the fresh air. Our trails and programs are here, so give your loved ones (and yourself!) something memorable: the gift of nature.

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



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Have you seen any Grosbeaks?

Rusty Ryan
South Mountain Audubon Society

Just the other day, I was asked if I had seen any Grosbeaks. Assuming the person was referring to the Evening Grosbeak, my reply was no. To tell the truth, I have never seen an Evening Grosbeak in the Mason-Dixon area.

The Evening Grosbeak does not breed in this area and is considered an “irruptive” species. Irruptive species are those which migrate outside of their normal range. These irruptive species are year round resident in their normal range of Canada and the boreal forests.

Birds irrupt usually due to lack of food in their normal range. Most of the “winter finches” that irrupt have a diet consisting primarily of seeds. Even the predatory birds will seek food south of the border when their food supply of small mammals is lacking.

The irruptive species one could encounter along the Mason Dixon include: Evening Grosbeak, Purple Finch, Common Redpoll, Crossbills (Red and White) and Pine Siskin. The predatory birds that one may encounter are: Snowy Owl and Rough-legged Hawk.

Other irruptive species are: Red-breasted Nuthatch, Blue jays and Bohemian Waxwing.

Purple Finch - Probably the bird species most misidentified along the Mason Dixon would be the Purple Finch. I hate to tell the readers but the “purple finch” that most people encounter is the introduced House Finch. The two can be difficult to distinguish especially the males. The females of the two species are easier to identify.

Evening Grosbeak - Imagine a cardinal sized goldfinch at your feeder. The only real difference between the goldfinch and grosbeak is the bill shape. The grosbeaks have a cardinal type of bill (mandible) which is used to crack open larger seeds such as sunflower. If you're fortunate enough to receive a flock at your feeders, they will literally eat all you have to offer than move onto the next person's feeder.

Crossbills (Red and White-winged) - As the name implies, these unique birds have crossed mandibles which allows this bird to specialize on retrieving the seeds from the cones of conifers. Keep an eye out this winter for these spe-

cialty birds by looking more closely at the conifer trees with abundant cone crops...

Common Redpoll - This finch like bird in size is similar to the Siskin but with more coloration. The Redpoll has a black chin and red forehead. Redpolls also feed on niger but they're very fond of eating catkins from the alders and birch trees.

Pine Siskin - This non-descript bird has a thin bill designed for smaller seeds. For those folks who choose to provide niger (nyger) seed than this bird may just end up spending time at your feeder. Specialty feeders which are for “finches” are usually tube shaped with a perch located below a slit opening. The siskin's thin bill is perfect for retrieving the niger seed. I suggest if you plan to feed niger to the birds that you invest in a proper feeder that allows the specialty birds to eat from because niger seed is quite expensive and you certainly don't want to allow all birds to feed from a feeder full of niger with big openings.

Citizen Scientists Get Involved!

If you enjoy birds and you feed the birds, get involved and help provide valuable data by participating in one or more of several surveys as explained below.

Audubon Christmas Bird Count - This annual event is held each December/January and was started in 1990. It is the world's longest running wildlife survey and it is primarily conducted by everyday citizen volunteers. This count differs from some counts in that the count period is a selected 24 hour period within a pre-determined several week period. Participants are given a designated area by the count compiler. The participant seeks out to locate and count individual birds of each species. The majority of observations are done by identifying the bird species by visual means but the more skilled participants can identify the birds by the sound they make. Data is then given to the count compiler who then logs in the data to the computer where the scientists will look for trends in both population and distribution.

Project Feeder Watch - This particular count occurs all winter-long and surveys the bird species that visit bird feeders. Vol-



The Evening Grosbeak is considered an “irruptive” species. Irruptive species are those which migrate outside of their normal range.

unteers submit the data and scientists review the data to determine species abundance and species distribution over a given time period. Project Feeder Watch is supported almost entirely by participation fees. The top 3 birds observed in the Mason Dixon area over the past few years are the chickadee species, the northern cardinal and the junco.

The Great Backyard Bird Count (GBBC) - This annual count is done over a four-day period every February. Like the Audubon Christmas Bird Count, the GBBC seeks out bird watchers of all ages and skills in seeking out birds in a certain time of year to provide scientists with a snap shot of a bird spe-

cies trends both in populations and in locations.

North American Breeding Bird Survey - This count is similar to the various winter counts except the count is generally held in May or June when the majority of North America bird species begin to breed. If you like a challenge, go out on a weekend in around mid May and see if you can locate 100 species within a 24 hour period. I've done it once and it was tough but rewarding to put my skills to the test. Some luck is also needed.

In closing, please contribute to our feathered friend's survival by supplying a constant clean food supply to help carry them through the winter months. Take it to the next level and

become a citizen scientist and count those birds in one of several surveys. Remember, you can't go wrong if you choose Black Oil Sunflower as your primary food choice.

Useful web sites

The Great backyard Bird Count - www.birdsource.org/gbbc

Audubon Christmas Bird Count - www.birds.audubon.org/christmas-bird-count

Project Feeder Watch - www.feederwatch.org

North American Breeding Bird Survey - www.pwrc.usgs.gov/BBS/index.cfm

To read other articles by Rusty Ryan, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

SCIENCE MATTERS

Mother Seton School Science Fair

Jason Vest

The Grand Champion of the Mother Seton School 2023 Science Fair is at a loss. “Do you know where my pick-axe head is?”

Her tousle-haired-and-bearded grandfather Joe Anelli looks up. “I was just gonna say –”

Another voice interrupts. “It was over here, but I haven’t seen it in awhile,” her father Chuck says. “Maybe in a garage somewhere on the street...?”

“No no no,” come another voice, feminine and considering in tone. “Not there...”

Science fair champion for a nifty Astrophysics project, eighth grader Mackenzie Hager, bright of eyes and red hair, has no doubt as to her future: “I haven’t wanted to be anything but an astrophysicist since I was eight,” she will tell you, matter-of-factly. (And leave you wondering - not unreasonably - if maybe she doesn’t mean that in present, as opposed to aspirational, register.) But she dabbles in other sciences as well.

So as the sun drops behind the mountains on a chilly November afternoon, the archaeology collection is being presented on the Hager family kitchen table in New Market. The array includes spent shells from Assateague. A Civil War bullet from nearabouts. An ancient rusty coffin nail. But the hyperlocal axe head – a find from a nearby creek amidst the 20 acres of woods she routinely explores – remains at large.

Mackenzie disappears in search of the elusive artifact. A visitor remarks to her family that it’s good to know at least some kids still, like, go outside and explore. Her father gestures to the acres of

woods this last rambling house in the Lake Linganore development backs up on to, from its outer rim cul-de-sac perch. (“That’s her playground,” he enthuses.) Awhile later she returns having given up on the axe head, having swapped it out for a LEGO recreation of... the Artemis mission to the moon.

Soon, what seems to be the entire LEGO history of NASA sits redeployed in the kitchen. (There’s more yet to build: “On her Christmas wish list this year,” mom Katie Hager confides, “is the Apollo 11 lander set.”) After a giving rundown on the specs, Mackenzie’s off once again to check on a biology/ag experiment she’s doing for the hell of it. She will next return to the kitchen table to chew over how to apply lessons learned from this year’s science project to next year’s.

At 12 going on 13, Mackenzie – an echo of Anya Taylor-Joy’s Beth Harmon character in *The Queen’s Gambit*, but with leavening dashes of Wednesday’s Wednesday Addams and *Star Trek: Discovery*’s Jett Reno – does, like, normal kid stuff: She’s a fourth generation Girl Scout, working on her Silver Award. She calls out the indignities and inanities of her age bracket and she lets her freak flag fly proudly within it. (Self-described school cohort/status: “Outcasts.”) She has her likes and dislikes, as far as classes go. (She is as hard-wired for STEM as some of us are not.) She goes on adventures with her way-cool family, which includes a veterinarian grandfather, a public health nurse mom, and school bus driver father (who’s got some stories).

But she also has been seriously researching things like geothermic volcanic energy and its applications since she was a tot. Her focus shifted to space several years ago, when her eyes spied, and imagi-

nation was captured, by the sight of an orange streak ascending into the heavens – an International Space Station resupply launch from Wallops Island, whose bright exhaust profile can be seen from this far.

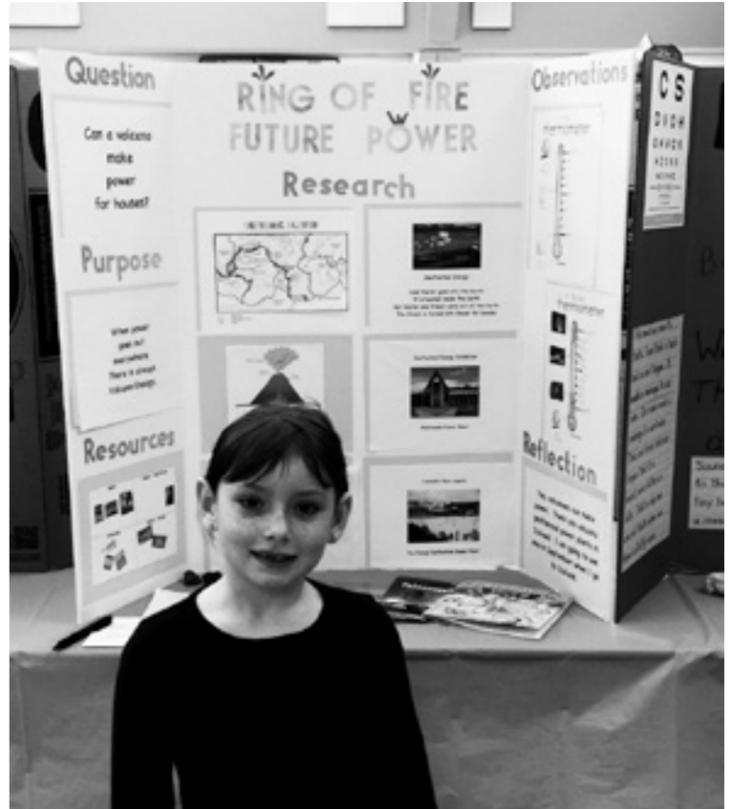
Unlike most kids whose dreams as regards space usually find voice as “I wanna be an astronaut,” Mackenzie has no desire to go into space herself. Her love of astrophysics is also twinned with engineering - “I like actually building things - not just, like, going outside and walking around,” she says. (The absence of outer space ambitions is just fine with her family, all of whom note, in varying ways, just how unforgiving and final space is.)

But she frames those ambitions as simply “wanting to help out” – perhaps not surprising with a nurse mother who’s also in uniform (Commander, US Public Health Service), and an extended family for which mutual aid and assistance are robust. (Mackenzie’s grandfather Joe grew up in a Brooklyn brownstone of extended family and has never known anything but, and Chuck sums up his side of the family thusly: “My sister called one day and said, ‘Mom got brain cancer and she’s moving in with you Saturday,’ and I was like, ‘Going to clean out the room and get it ready right now.’”)

Thus a girl who has no designs to go into space herself is now focused on using the rest of her K-12 years in an attempt to find the right materials and construction for a space suit capable of ensuring humans can survive the unique radiation levels of Mars.

Last year’s experiment was a more general consideration of pesky-to-humans radiation on Mars; this year’s was a first stab at what combinations of materials might show the most promise and feasibility for use in new Mars-specific space suits. Next year’s project: An actual doll-size prototype suit that, along with the doll, she’ll bombard with different types of radiation (and measure with the Geiger counter she built herself to further consider its viability).

Though her family confides she is not the most reliable self-starter, once



When asked: “When did you know your daughter was smarter than you?” Mackenzie’s parents replied: “When we saw her first-grade science fair project.”

kick-started, she is a whirling dervish of activities and experiments, ping-ponging between at least a dozen different projects at any given time, and usually to good effect.

“Unless we happen to walk in and she’s flipping knives or whatever, we just let her do her thing,” says her father Chuck, who describes himself as “crazy” for voluntarily choosing to drive a school bus. But as such, any challenges in parenting a precocious ADHD intellect are small beer, compared

to playing ringmaster to a daily circus-on-wheels. And Mackenzie’s not the only high-maintenance scientist in the family. “My son did an experiment that left me scratching my head – I had to have something he needed for trying to quantify carbon dioxide, I had to have it mailed to the local fire house and only the local fire house,” he says. “So is it any big deal that next year Mackenzie will irradiate a doll in a doll-space suit to see it fit works? Nope.”

The Mother Seton School 2023 Science Fair Winners and Runners-Up:

6th Grade

- 1st - Maggie Slater - Do Equine Tendon Boots Do More Harm Than Good?
- 2nd - Muna Jinadu - Naturally Preserving Grapes
- 3rd - Sam Pollitt - Electromagnets

7th Grade

- 1st - Mia Bussey - Which surface has the most germs?
- 2nd - Phillip Field - Rockets
- 3rd - Madison Williams - Water Filtration
- 3rd - Grace Williams - Greenhouse Gases

8th Grade

- 1st - Grady Abruzzese - Interference of Radio Waves
- 2nd (tie) - Noah Riling - Does Running Reduce Stress?
- 2nd (tie) - Catalina Caretti - Which moisturizer retains the most liquid?
- 3rd - Gabriel Valerio - PSI of soccer balls

Grand Champion - Mackenzie Hager - Radiation Protection Materials

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Eat the bugs!

Jack Deatherage

Every now and again some talking head I follow on the YouTube gets going on a topic I'm skeptical of. One of my favorite guys "complaining on the internet" has warned multiple times, "You'll live in the pod and eat bugs!" Which is not that strange a prediction given the guy is heavily into futuristic, Utopian (Dystopian) video games and science fiction flicks that have humans contentedly, or not, crunching away on meal worms and roaches, or slurping a slurry of mashed bugs. Probably maggots, as I recall one of my French teachers telling us "minds full of mush" that she enjoyed them- mashed. Slow-coach though I am, I did eventually get curious enough to take a quick glance at "eating bugs".

A Google search immediately vomits up a plethora of pro-bug eating articles ranging from international magazines, newspapers and universities studies- all touting the "save the planet" climate change bull stuff, and/or promoting sustainability, onto the nutritional benefits of eatin' the bugs and one NPR article, "How a conspiracy theory about eating bugs made its way to international politics".

Hmmm... if NPR is mocking someone I'm generally well served to take a closer look. But first I have to check out Marina, the library patron's access site to all public libraries in Maryland.

Some of the books I requested: "Man Eating Bugs, the art and science of eating insects" (1998)

"Bugs For Lunch" (1999)

"Bug Stew!" (2003) (Children)

"Diet for a Changing Climate, food for thought" (2019)

"Edible, an adventure into the world of eating insects and the last great hope to save the planet" (2014)

"13 Ways to Eat a Fly" (2021) (Juvenile)

"Project Startup, eat bugs" (2021) (Juvenile)

"Bugs For Breakfast, how eating insects could help save the planet" (2022) (Children)

Jumping back to YouTube, I find a mix of videos either attempting to startle viewers, or convince them to eat bugs. To add to the confusion, A.I. (Artificial Intelligence) computers are now being used to create fake videos so it's quite possible the young, attrac-

tive starlets and celebs aren't really crunching meal worms to entice children and Kool-Aid drinking adults (hat tip to the great propagandist/manipulator Jim Jones) into accepting a diet of insects.

Obviously, the "eat bugs" propaganda effort is well under way. Surprisingly, I'm cool with it. The same way I'm cool with vegetarianism. I try to only eat meat that only ate plants. I'll happily eat bugs via chickens, turkeys and fish. Or, after watching a video about black soldier flies being raised in composting bins, I'll gleefully add the compost- including the flies decomposed bodies -to the garden soil. Yep. I'm all for being an indirect bug eater.

I also stumbled upon a few websites selling processed foods like the old standby I recall hearing about when I was knee high to a grasshopper- chocolate covered ants. Other sites were offering whole dried crickets, meal worms and other critters that can be commercially raised and harvested. Several websites intrigued me with offerings of dried, powdered insects for adding protein to baked goods. While bug powders are being promoted and consumed in Asian countries, England is making headway in the game as is Canada, none of which surprises me. Nor am I surprised that Amazon has a decent selection of cricket powders as well as dried whole crickets.

A deeper dive into Amazon -the commercial site, not the river or region which likely has more things that would eat me than I'd ever consider eating -pukes up scorpions, house crickets, black crickets, grasshoppers, silkworm pupae and sago worm pupae. Not being particularly smart, I dove deeper- earthworm jerky, male rhino beetles and zebra tarantula are also available from American companies.

Yep, the thought of eating bugs sets off alarms- a gut level reaction. However, I once walked out of H-Mart with a can of silkworm pupae to test someone's claim they were willing to eat any "food" at least once. Turns out that food wasn't one they could get past their nose. Perhaps had the critters been dry?

Still, I've eaten crepes made from flour that had weevil "maggots" in it and I once ate a chicken noodle soup one of my grandmothers made from scratch. I can

still see the adult weevils floating among the herbs she seasoned it with. Dad made me eat it anyhow. Miraculously, I didn't die, though one website suggested I might have under certain circumstances.

Apparently people with seafood allergies, specifically shellfish, also react badly to attempting to digest insects whose exoskeletons are made of the same, or similar substance as shrimp, crab and lobster shells. Oddly, that little tidbit turned up way down the list of "eat bugs" websites in a Google search. Digging a bit deeper. Why do I always have to dig deeper to find the pertinent information? I also learned that some bugs need to be made safe by removing those body parts that have hooks, spines and lodge in the intestines causing possible havoc requiring serious medical attention.

Obviously my dad's admonition "Junior! Slow down, you're not going to a fire" applies more to eating bugs than it did to my wolfing down whatever was on my plate so I could escape back to the fields, ditches and cricks. How much weevil infested flour did he consume during the Great Depression, or during the war years when he was a crew member of a bomber over Germany? Did he know to chew each mouthful of food at least fourteen times to crush any insect to a digestible paste?

Other ponderables come to mind. I haven't stumbled upon any vegan website proclaiming the horror of raising and slaughtering tens of millions of lifeforms solely to



They're healthy. They're sustainable. So why don't humans eat more bugs?

feed us monkey-people. Of course I haven't heard vegans lamenting the destruction of entire ecosystems to grow their soybean and kale either. Hypocrisy much?

Am I going to have to take off my glasses to read the fine print ingredients list on everything I buy so when making cookies for the librarians I don't accidentally add flour that's been "enriched" with cricket powder- listed as "acheta protein" or simple "acheta". Given the librarians reactions when I mentioned adding insect powder to my baking experiments I don't think I'll be dumping bread or cookies off at the library after I begin adding that ingredient. Which will happen once the price of the stuff drops to something affordable -when the bulk of Americans are eating bugs.

Back to one of NPR's propagandist, "As far as we know, no government makes anyone eat bugs."

The educated response is, "Yet." History is replete with examples of governments suppressing Natural Rights, enacting unfunded mandates and encouraging their citizens to, or forcing them to, commit horrid atrocities. Eating bugs will be a minor mandate when the time comes.

Fake meat concocted from plants in a factory or grown from animal cells in a laboratory, crunchy crickets, crispy meal worms, dried tarantulas, canned silkworm pupae, oh my!

As the snail eaters say, Bon appétit!

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THE MASTER GARDENER

Holiday chores

Mary Ann Ryan
Adams County Master Gardener

Wow! December already! And what happened to fall? Now that we are in the midst of the holiday season, many chores, sometimes fun chores – sometimes not, live on a list. That list may include things like: shop for friends and family, find a wreath for the door, get a centerpiece for the table, put up the Christmas tree, string lights outside. The chores sometimes may seem burdensome, but what if we made all of them fun?

Let's start at the top...shop for friends and family... If they are gardeners, I might have a few suggestions.

1. Gardeners love plant books, especially with pictures. Garden design books have great pictures and ideas that can be incorporated into your own garden. Books about plant science will also be a hit. Yes, give a gardener a book about botany, and they will love it!

2. Give a houseplant. Most gardeners appreciate house plants. This time of year, there are lots of indoor plants that are flowering. Cyclamen, Christmas cactus and poinsettias are the easiest to find – just about anywhere. And where a non-gardener would throw them away after they are done blooming, a gardener will try to keep it alive all year long. It will become a challenge for them to see if they can get it to re-bloom next year.

Other plants you might choose could include orchids. Phalaenop-

sis, or moth orchid, is very common and easy to grow. Once they are in bloom the flowers can last for a few months! The diversity of flower colors ranges from purple and pink, white, yellow, speckled and striped. It likes an eastern window and does well in temperatures above 60 degrees. Moth orchids typically are planted in either moss or bark. Moss would probably need less water than the bark, but on average, water about once a week. If the house is dry, put the orchid on top of a tray of pebbles to increase humidity.

3. You can't go wrong with an amaryllis or paperwhites! These bulbs are for indoor flowers. Amaryllis typically can be purchased in a box that has the pot, soil and bulb. Easy to give as a gift, and something for the gardener to look forward to after the holiday. These bulbs usually take six to eight weeks to come into bloom, and the larger the bulb, the nicer the flower display.

Amaryllis can also be purchased as an individual bulb. (This is the way I prefer to purchase them.) When you can see the bulb, it's easy to tell the quality and size. It can still be easily given as a gift – just purchase a clay pot and box it yourself!

Paperwhites are often sold in prepackaged bags or sometimes loose in a box. Either way, these are fun gifts to give. They have a strong fragrance when in bloom, so keep that in mind when gifting these bulbs. The gardener can plant them in a pot of potting mix,

or in a shallow dish of pebbles and water, for forcing indoors.

So we've checked off the gift-giving. Now onto a wreath for the door. If you have some evergreens, why not make your own this season? Gather a crate full of 12" – 18" evergreen cuttings of all different textures. Some of the most common evergreens we might use are spruce and pine. However, cypress, yews, junipers, boxwood, and hollies are great to add to a wreath for variation. Get yourself a wire wreath form from a craft store and some wire on a spool. Bundle small groupings of evergreens and begin wiring them onto the form. Before you know it, you'll have a beautiful wreath! After the base is complete, add some berries, ribbon and cones to complete the look.

Our Master Gardeners are very talented, and one in particular taught me how to make a living wreath. Which brings us to our next item on the list: a centerpiece. A living wreath is simply a form that takes the shape of a wreath that plants can live. Typically, moss is used to hold soil in place; wire is used to hold the moss in place; plants are planted through the moss, hence, a living wreath.

This time of year, we would probably use succulents as our plant of choice. There are hardy succulents, like Sedums and Sem-pervirens, and there are succulents that would be grown in the house, like jade plants and echeveria. If you choose to use the hardy succulents, the wreath would need to go outside, and be brought in when ready to use. Other plants that might be used in a living wreath at other times of the year might be pansies in the spring or herbs for the summer. These wreaths are great for the table with a candle in the middle during the holidays. Make it even more fun and invite some friends for a wreath-making party! A little mulled cider



If you have some evergreens, why not make your own wreath this season? Gather a crate full of 12" – 18" evergreen cuttings of all different textures. Get yourself a wire wreath form from a craft store and some wire on a spool. Bundle small groupings of evergreens and begin wiring them onto the form. Before you know it, you'll have a beautiful wreath! After the base is complete, add some berries, ribbon and cones to complete the look.

and holiday cookies would make a great day with friends!

Alright. We have the gifts, the door wreath, the centerpiece, and now onto the Christmas tree! What kind of tree should you get? An artificial tree is the answer if it's up for 4+ weeks. Cut trees, whether cut your own, or pre-cut from a lot, will get very dry after four weeks in the house. And live trees? They last about 7 - 10 days in the house, so if you are looking at a balled and burlapped tree that can be planted in the yard after it's completed its duty inside, be sure to get it back outside in a short period of time.

Here are some tips on pre-cut trees:

If choosing from a lot, be sure to check for freshness of the trees to ensure longevity in the home. Check for fragrance of the tree, as the fresher the tree, the more fragrant it is. Also shake the tree to see how many needles drop. If the tree has been cut for

a while and the weather is warm, it won't hold its needles.

Another way to purchase your Christmas tree is through a 'Cut Your Own' tree farm. This way your tree will be the freshest it can be. Most tree farms have many varieties and sizes and often offer tree baling and loading as well as seasonal foods and drinks.

After getting your tree home, make a fresh cut about one inch above the base. Place your tree into water right away, even if you are not bringing it inside immediately. Don't let it dry out! Treat your cut tree as you would a fresh bouquet of flowers.

Locate the tree by a wall or corner where it will not be knocked over. Keep the tree away from heat sources, such as fire places, wood stoves, and heat ducts. Keep fresh water in the tree stand always and keep the room cool. Following these steps, your cut tree should last up to three weeks!

And what about a live tree?

Balled and burlapped trees are very cumbersome to handle. So knowing how and when to handle these trees is imperative to the life of that tree.

A living Christmas tree should be in the house for no more than 7-10 days. Before entering the house, it should be conditioned first. Keep the tree in an unheated, protected location for a few days before bringing it inside. During this conditioning period, be sure the root ball is watered. If the ball dries out, roots will die, lessening the survival rate of that tree.

When bringing your tree inside, place it in a large bucket or pan to prevent the soil and water from staining the floor. Again, keep the root ball moistened at all times. Locate the tree in the coolest room of your home, away from any heat sources, like a fire place, wood stove, or heat ducts. You don't want the tree to break its dormancy, which will cause tips to



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'Cut Your Own' tree farms trees will always be the freshest. Most tree farms have many varieties and sizes and often offer tree baling and loading.

grow, and then die when exposed to the cold weather again.

After you are finished with the tree indoors - and remember, no more than ten days - you'll need to re-condition it to the outdoors. Place the tree in an unheated, protected location for a few days, and then it should be ready to plant.

Hopefully, the ground won't be frozen when you're ready to plant the tree. You can prepare for this possibility ahead of time by digging the hole before the holidays and storing the soil in an unheated garage or storage shed. That way, when you're ready to plant, the hole is already there, and you won't have frozen ground to use to backfill. If, however, the hole is not dug, and the ground is frozen, place your tree in a sheltered area and mulch the root

ball heavily. Keep the soil ball moist until the ground is workable.

After planting the tree, water it well, and mulch it. This will protect the root ball through the rest of the winter months. The tree should remain dormant until the spring when it will start growing with all other vegetation.

Everything is checked on our list! Except hanging the Christmas lights! If you have any extra greens from that wreath making project, use some as garland and tie it to the string of lights to add a bit of extra interest.

There, all done! Now rest and enjoy the season!

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

Small Town Gardener

Take the fear out of formal

Marianne Willburn

For late fall and winter arrangements, ditch the perfect blooms and celebrate glorious imperfection instead

"There's nothing out there right now!" My mother yelled after me as I threw on a fleece, grabbed some pruners and a plastic lettuce tub off the washing machine, and headed outside to her November garden. A last-minute family gathering demanded something special for the table, but what?

The lilies and zinnia were gone; the lavender, so over; and even in a California climate, the late roses were very late indeed - in fact, fully expired. I was possessed of three identical thrift store vases, two enthusiastic nieces, and forty-five minutes 'till dinner hit the table. Theme: Shock and Awe. Materials: Whatever the hell I could find. Attitude: Confident.

There's Always Something Out There

In fairness, I'd had help with my attitude. Just before I'd left to visit family on the West Coast, I'd had my creative courage fortified by an afternoon's entertaining seminar at Glenstone Gardens, a Virginia events estate set in the rolling hills of Loudoun County, Virginia.

The creation of gorgeous tables exemplifying November gratitude and December joy was very much the point of the afternoon, but there was one major theme running through all - a foraged aesthetic.

That's an aesthetic and attitude I adore, and one that I live by; but it's always wonderful to get a bit of validation by designers who officially know what

they're doing.

As clear autumnal sunshine shimmered off an elegantly laid table of bone china and tag sale finds, top floral stylist Shawn Cossette of Beehive Events and Augusta Cole of Augusta Cole Weddings and Events, empowered attendees with a foraged materials approach based on a central message of self-trust. "Don't think about each element too much, just have fun," said Cossette, as a sophisticated distillation of the surrounding countryside came together under her hands.

Bronze ninebark. Privet berries. Frothy snakeroot and colorful begonia leaves. A single green apple. The aesthetic felt fresh, rustic, and effortlessly authentic.

Of course, in December, the base textures of the palette will change. Ninebark becomes juniper, begonias give way to the clippings off your Leyland cypress, or the scavenged fir branches from Christmas tree lots - and berries, fruits, and seed heads begin to take center stage.

Allow Yourself To Play

A foraged aesthetic is a little terrifying for those who follow the rules of symmetry, perfection and luxury; but as most of us have a hard time competing in that space anyway (either creatively or financially), such rigid parameters are equally terrifying. We are likely to stare at the blank table before us like a 9th grade writing prompt, tempted to play it safe and fall back on a passable grade with traditional elements that say 'formal' but whisper 'predictable.'

Instead, Cossette and Cole urge us to lean into the season's bounty in all its imperfection. Whether it's frost-mottled rose hips or pinecones missing a scale or two, "differences create engagement in a table" says Cole, who enjoys delighting her

clients with the strategic placement of a few hero elements amongst the treasured and the familiar.

That could be brightly colored knife handles to pep up the family silver, the choice of beeswax candles over plain white, or a few purchased floral components to enhance a textured, playful vision straight from the garden.

Re-Crete The Outside, Inside

At the seminar, Cossette worked quickly from a large bucket of materials harvested from her garden and a friend's earlier that morning. She showed us how to strip the bottom leaves of vivid blueberry stems and make fresh, slanted cuts on yellowing hydrangea foliage with a small paring knife to enable more water uptake.

She turned some leaves to face in, some to face out, and added plenty of spill, aided by a grid of floral tape placed over the opening of her green ceramic vessel.

"It's tempting to use your favorite elements first. Don't," she advised. "Give them the best position at the end."

Having trouble seeing the possibilities? Cossette recommends comfortable clothing, a glass of wine and favorite music might be all you need to start visualizing the fabulous in foraged. During the month of December, my favorite way to play with decorations and tablescapes is with a Christmas movie marathon going on in the background.

A Happy Ending, With Little Outlay

Determined to celebrate the often-overlooked in the scrub and wild spaces of my mother's garden, my nieces and I clipped toyon berries and smooth manzanita branches. We cut privet, sagebrush and rosemary, and gathered windfall apples.

The youngest insisted on the foxtails that had once infested my socks as a child, and her sister grabbed the pruners to cut a few sprays of spiny scrub oak foliage and the last of the blanket flowers.

Twenty-five minutes of play later, the table looked miraculous. I can't wait to set up the movie marathon, crack open a bottle of red, and apply the philosophy to December.

Marianne Willburn is the author of *Tropical Plants and How to Love Them*, and *Big Dreams, Small Garden*. She writes from her home in Lovettsville, Virginia. Read more at GardenRant.com.

Master Gardener Seminars

The Adams County Master Gardener Hotline, 717-334-6271, is open Wednesdays from 10 to 2. If you have a question about a specific plant, please send an email (with pictures if possible) to adamsmg@psu.edu with your gardening questions, or stop by Penn State Extension, 670 Old Harrisburg

Road, Gettysburg. Upcoming Master Gardener Floral Design seminars: December 4 at 6:30 p.m. - discover a diverse array of trees and shrubs suitable for crafting wreaths and swags. www.extension.psu.edu/tree-and-shrub-identification-designing-a-wreath-with-winters-palette.

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The Word did not become a philosophy, a theory, or a concept to be discussed, debated, or pondered. The Word became a person to be followed, enjoyed and loved!

 The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory. *John 1:14*
Christmas Blessings to all and a Happy & Prosperous New Year!
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PETS

Gratitude

Jennifer Vandernu
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

This is the time of year that for me, because I'm older, has become about gratitude.

Gratitude is a powerful emotion that I think is somewhat easy to overlook.

We see a lot of catch phrases out there today, like "have an attitude of gratitude" or "count your blessings," but I wonder how much of that can be lip service. It's something that you truly have to feel and it comes from the heart.

That's why the holidays are so important. It gives us time to reflect and remember what is good in our lives – and how much we have to be grateful for.

I am incredibly grateful for my family – which has just grown by one new member, my second niece! – and will always be happy that our crazy little group is still going strong.

At CVAS, there are many people and animals for which I am grateful.

Our adopters come in here and fall in love with one of our babies and they are the reason we are able to keep doing what we do. The photos and stories they share with us are able to mend the toughest of days.

Our supporters, who bring us money and supplies for our animals, are another source of gratitude. I know a lot of folks out there can't adopt right now, but still want to help. They are very generous in

making sure we can continue helping more homeless animals.

I want to thank all those who bring a stray into their home and care for him or her for the rest of his or her life. I've talked to people who tell me, oh my cat just came up on my back porch one night, but I got her spayed and take care of her and she's my best friend.

I only see these folks very rarely because they never come into the shelter. I thank them from the bottom of my heart because they help us by taking care of the strays.

For all the groups – individual and organizations – that are a part of a trap, neuter, release program, I thank you. Spaying and neutering is really the only way to make a difference with the overpopulation in the pet world and many of these folks work tirelessly (and often use their own money) to see that the cats in area neighborhoods are taken care of and can't produce more cats. That's always been amazing to me.

I want to thank all the other shelters and rescues out there that are fighting the same battle we face every day. We are soldiers in a war and I know some days are too overwhelming to talk about, but for me personally, it's good to know you all are out there. I know we could not do this without you.

Our volunteers are a group that I always feel I can't thank enough. Time is the one commodity we all have that is finite. We are only allotted so much while we're here. Anyone who gives their time and/or talents to help our animals is a real inspiration to me. So for those

who walk dogs, play with cats, help with our fundraisers, sort donations at our thrift store, take care of our cats at Petco or Petsmart, help with spaying and neutering our animals or help with maintenance around the building, I say a resounding thank you.

Our board of directors is another group of unsung heroes in the shelter world that need to be appreciated. These are people who get together to work toward maintaining the longevity of CVAS as an organization and many times are not noticed for their efforts.

Our staff are dedicated beyond measure. They come in, every day, sometimes in bad weather, to make sure the animals in our kennels have food, water, clean cages and kennels and a little love. They're the truest of animal-lovers and I'm proud to be in the trenches with them.

The businesses in this community are incredible. I can't tell you how many businesses help us with a variety of different things and in a variety of different ways. From printers, to the media (including the Emmitsburg News Journal), to tree services, to municipalities, to veterinarians, to offsite adoption centers – all these groups have given (sometimes completely free of charge) their time, talents and services. And they do it because they know it ultimately helps our animals.

As always, I have to thank the main reason we are here. The babies all the above people and groups really help. Our animals. I've met some of the sweetest, purest souls during my 22 years at CVAS and the memories are something I will cherish and keep with me for the rest of my life.

Gratitude is more than just a catch phrase. It's a deeply powerful emotion that is so important this time of year.

Take a moment during the hustle and bustle to remember how much you have to be thankful for. So much of life really is a gift – and some of the best ones are not always wrapped under a Christmas tree.

Jennifer Vandernu is the Publications and Promotions Consultant for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter 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.



Prince Harey is a 5 months old American rabbit who is white and gray. He came into the shelter as a stray, so we don't know a lot about him, but he is one cute little bun and will make someone a nice companion. Could that someone be you?



Rickton is a big, happy guy who was dropped off at the shelter as a stray. He's 2 years old and 13 pounds! He loves to play with feather toys and get chin scratches, but mostly he would love to find his forever home! Can you grant Rickton his wish?



Parker is a happy go lucky guy that just wants to be wherever you are! Parker came into the shelter as a stray, so we don't know a lot about him, but we sure found out fast that he loves getting belly rubs! We think he's about 2 years old and a terrier mix. He knows how to sit and is quite food motivated to learn more. Parker is always happy to see you and would love to be someone's best buddy! He does chase cats, so a home without cats would be best for him. Because we have no history with children, an age restriction may apply—please be sure to discuss this with shelter staff. Do you have the right spot for this cute guy?



Tony Pepperoni was running around for a while before he was caught and brought in to the shelter. He is a playful 2-year-old guy who loves to make everything into a game. He enjoys playing keep away, both with his toys and when it's time to come inside from the play yard. We are trying to teach him that keep away isn't always fun for the humans who take care of him. We recommend a fenced-in yard for Tony. He's 72 pounds and doesn't seem to realize how big he is. Because of this, he may be too much for small children and an age restriction could apply. Please talk with shelter staff about that. Tony has that face that is just too cute. He would love to find his forever home soon.

For more information about Prince Harey, Rickton, Parker, or Tony Pepperoni 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.

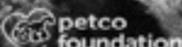
I'd Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human's loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

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



Cats' next step in evolution

Sophi Toth
MSMU Class of 2027

For Sale: Cat.
Breed: Bengal, artificial.
Personality: Judgy and irritable. This is worsened even more by the fact that it is intelligent. It was adopted from the Artificial Intelligence Animals Benevolence Association. I have been calling it 'her', and she seems to accept that, as much as she accepts anything. That is about the only thing she accepts. She does not accept any love or affection except when I am busy doing precisely twenty-five things at once, and then she demands it like she's at the end of her battery life. The only time she cuddles is at two in the morning, and then she covers my face like a frying pan and tries to suffocate me. She is an avid watcher of birds and all other forms of movement, except for my presence, which she avoids like the plague. She is intensely against all forms of green energy: I don't understand how this was approved for her programming. She only accepts gasoline as her main source of energy—I have to beg and plead to convince her to even think about using electricity. She is fully equipped to convert electricity as her power source, but she flat out refuses just to spite me. It's only by chance that I even happened to get the older model that still runs on gas, but I suffer the consequences every day: she releases enough carbon monoxide into the house daily to completely gunk up the air. I've been experiencing flu-like symptoms for weeks because of her energy habits.

Traditionally, cats were used to serve as vermin control. This is not the case with my A.I.C.A.T. Perhaps it is with others, but mine, as I said, has faulty programming. Instead, my computer mice go missing, I find electrical cords coughed up on the floor, and I come into my room to find her curled up on

my monitor, having knocked it over to lie on for its warmth.

"A queen needs a throne." She sniffs at my anger, then hisses when I gently lift her off the computer. Every small machine I own is at risk. The coffee machine that hums while working. The poor Roomba, which has suffered so much mistreatment from her that it deserves a restraining order. Ah, and yet the greatest irony: the house has a squirrel infestation about which she does nothing.

The worst part, I think, is her attitude. She barely has a more complex brain than a biological cat, and yet she feels it is within her right to judge every aspect of my life in excruciating detail. She doesn't have a mate, and yet she critiques my lack of a love life. She doesn't pay any taxes, or pay any bills, and yet she feels she is qualified to judge my salary and job.

"For I am but a stunning animal, and yet I have a servant to wait on my every need and my domain reaches far and wide." She says, gesturing one paw at the yard outside. "You, meanwhile, go outside and toil all day until you come home and sit at your screen, which is the extent of your territory."

She snorts. "No wonder you have not found a mate."

She always speaks in the most snobbish voice possible that a model T 2050 A.I.C.A.T (Artificial Intelligence Cat-like Anatomy Thing) is able to while still achieving the pitiful voice of a rejected Victorian child. She cries out for gasoline and new parts while condemning me for all the ways I have wronged her at the moment.

"Father does not love me!" she laments. "Father gives me no food or comfort in my poor pitiful existence that drags on without end! Oh! Oh! Woe is me!"

Dear reader, I do feed her. I keep

her parts oiled and new, and she wants for nothing. But it is never enough. She walks up to my biological dog's dish, deliberately puts her front paw inside, then screams like a tortured child about the havoc the water is playing with her system.

"The inhumanity!" she howls, writhing on the floor. "My foot, my paw, my wiring, it is all dying! The end is nigh! The dog has finished me!"

She does the same thing when she falls into a trash can, or jumps on things that cannot support her weight: blame me or blame the dog. The dog in question, Couscous, simply looks at her antics and goes back to sleep. I, however, am not as lucky as Couscous. It is up to me to clean up her messes and clean up her metallic surfaces, as she will undoubtedly complain about them later.

I have talked to other customers who bought this model, but they report total satisfaction. Their A.I.C.A.Ts are perfect little angels who do exactly what their programming tells them too. And yet Duchess Fluffy McMittens is a thousand times worse than a biological cat. At least biological cats cannot talk.

When I heard of and bought an A.I. cat, I thought I would be free of all the irritants cats normally provide. I originally was under the impression that this would be a perfect cat: soft, cuddly, and sweet. I knew she could talk, but I thought that feature was for lonely people, not ingrained in the programming. I thought I could turn it off. I thought.

There is no turning off the A.I.C.A.T Model T 2050. No turning off except for bashing Duchess Fluffy over the head, although she would undoubtedly survive and call PETAL. There is no hope left for me and poor Couscous, except for you, dear reader. It was a grave mistake for me to buy this artificial animal, but I hope that someone, somewhere out there, desires for an artificial cat that never perishes, resents you for picking out a perfectly suitable name, and screams daily like a dying hyena.

Contact: Quinn Filbert, 314-159-2653.

To read other articles by Sophi Toth, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.



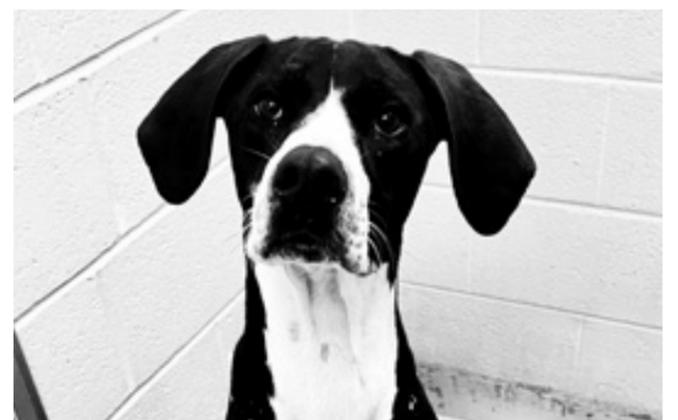
Six-year-old Evan is the perfect combination of "let's play" and "how about we just relax." Staff and volunteers cannot understand why he has not been chosen for adoption. He loves to go on hikes in woods or walks in the park, but by day's end, he is content sitting by your feet or side. Beyond his handsome good looks, he is also smart. He is quick to learn new behaviors and often checks in with his handler to look for cues what might be next.



At over one hundred-fifty plus days it's hard to believe our longest feline resident is a kitten. Bartholomew arrived with his siblings in June, not even old enough to be adopted. He spent some time in a foster home and now has been available for adoption since early August. Bartholomew is five months old and a typical kitten. He is friendly, silly, loves to explore, and enjoys playing with a variety of toys.



Big cat lovers, meet Lucas. At almost fifteen pounds, Lucas is a teddy bear. He is often at the front of his cage, politely asking for attention from anyone who passes by. Visit with him and you will soon see he is very affectionate and offers gentle head butts to encourage you to keep petting him. Lucas' laid-back personality will make him a great fit for families with kids of any age, however, he may prefer to be an only cat.



Mr. Murphy is a handsome, 10-month-old, Great Dane Mix. He was brought to the shelter by a Good Samaritan and was found in Woodsboro, on November 8. Like most dogs his age, he is playful, energetic and still needs to learn some manners to make him the best dog he can be. Murphy currently weighs sixty pounds and will continue to grow. He is a great companion and has endless potential with a little time, patience and consistency.



Sable is a fun, handsome Malamute Mix. At only 1.5 years old, he loves to run and play outside. Sable knows a few basic commands and walks nicely on a leash for such a young, energetic dog. Unfortunately, a hiker found him along a trail with his food and bowls, so we can only assume his owner abandoned him. Sable's easy-going disposition and overall friendliness is sure to make him a great fit for most families.

For more information about Evan, Bartholomew, Lucas, Mr. Murphy, or Sable, call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac.



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PETS

Kit - the 'hard luck horse' luck finally changes

Michael Hillman

Conclusion

Kit's progress was excruciatingly and painfully slow, but it was still progress. When his x-rays began to show fusing in the joint, the conversation once again turned to Kit's long-term rehabilitation.

After our first attempt at taking him on, neither my wife nor I were insane enough to try again, so the hunt began for a suitable facility to send Kit too. Kit needed a place that could provide the supervised stall rest to allow the joint fusion to finish, but also a facility with the equipment and experienced staff to rehabilitate the injured tendons.

Once again, Dr. Barrett came to the rescue.

"I want to send him to Dr. Stephanie Davis, in Warrenton," Barrett said. "Stephanie only takes on a few horses and gives them 100%. Your best chance of getting Kit to a point where you might be able to hack him is with her. The problem is — a spot has to open in her barn. The good thing however is I have a dedicated spot and the horse that she is currently taking care of for me is getting ready to go home. So I told her not to fill it with anyone, that Kit will be coming her way."

Almost two weeks would pass between the conversation above and the phone call from Dr. Barrett that the stall had opened, and Dr. Davis was ready for him.

So once more, I hooked up my trailer and headed to the EMC to pick up Kit. Unlike six weeks prior, Kit walked out of the EMC noticeably lame. At the sight of his gate, my heart sank. This was not going as planned.

An hour and a half later, Kit was being off loaded at Dr. Davis's. Stephanie and her staff greeted me as I was undoing the tail ramp. As they say, first impressions are always lasting impressions, and my first impression of Dr. Davis and her staff was simply 'wow.'

She and her staff were all wearing matching uniforms, something I had not expected from a small operation like hers. The barn where Kit would be spending the next five months was impeccably clean and well organized. Her staff, Marielle & Santiago, took Kit's led shank from me in a way that clearly said, in a very nice and reassuring manner — "he's ours now — we'll take it from here."

I really didn't get a chance to look around the facility, or talk to Dr. Davis, as I myself was going in for a surgery the next day and had to get home. So I pat-tered Kit a farewell, thanked the staff, and



Santiago and Marielle were charged with seeing not only to Kit's medical issues, but also his mental wellbeing, something that had taken a major hit from being stall-bound at the EMC. Kit's ears say it all as to how well they did!

left. Hoping all the way home that Dr. Davis and her staff were as good as every side they were.

As time would tell, they were not only good; they would prove to be the best of the best.

While I was impressed by Dr. Davis's operation, another vet had recommended another rehabilitation facility about an hour north of me. As Dr. Davis was two and a half hours away, the facility closer to me proved it was worth looking into, as it would allow me to visit Kit weekly—not to mention, it was a quarter the cost.

After my surgery, I took an afternoon to see if the 2nd facility was worth considering — it wasn't. Unlike Dr. Davis's, the second facility had over 40 horses being cared for by two people even older than I was. All the horses were in stalls that could best be described as caves and no light made it into their stalls due to 30 years of cobwebs blocking the light from the overheads. As I would later tell my wife, I only had to take four steps into that barn to know I would never send a horse there.

And yes, while Dr. Davis's was in fact more expensive, her price was 'all inclusive.' Where the other barn provided services 'al carte,' Change a bandage? That's \$15, laser treatment of a wound? \$20, Aqua treadmill? \$30. All that, as well as the full suite of rehab treatments, was included in Dr. Davis' single-fee structure.

The next day, I drove down to visit Kit, and as soon as I walked in, any doubt of keeping him there evaporated.

The staff immediately greeted me and brought me up to date on Kit's progress. Yes, he still moved around painfully, but he was well groomed and was beginning to show signs of putting on lost weight.

I sat down with Dr. Davis, who laid out her battle plan—which basically was to keep him as quiet as she could until the joint fused. Unlike the EMC where Kit would get excited by horses coming and going, which resulted in Kit hopping up and down, which put everyone in a panic, Kit was surrounded by horses at Dr. Davis' that, like him, were confined to their stalls. Kit also had the advantage of having an end stall, so he could also look out to see bright green fields.

As I was leaving, my eye caught a large LCD screen with all the horses' names on it and their daily schedule. Dr. Davis pulled up Kit's record on the screen where I could see everything she and her staff had done for him since he had arrived. When I asked if there was any way I could have access to his daily records remotely, I was told yes. She had just had the system installed, and I would be the first owner to try it out.

Not a day goes by that I don't end the day by logging in and reviewing Kit's day. The staff, knowing that I am doing that, often leaves messages to me in the notes section of every activity— from his daily grooming, to his massage treatments, telling me how he did. It was almost as good as being there myself.

But the question that hung over my head, and that no one could answer, was, "Is this worthwhile?" Yes, Kit continued

to make progress, but like at the EMC, it was painfully slow.

"Until the joint fuses," Dr. Davis said, "we are not going to see much progress, and we can't begin to do any rehabilitation of his tendons. All we can do now is work on keeping his spirits up and getting him to put weight on the bad leg—and hope."

Once again, I dared to hope.

As I drove home that day, I found myself reflecting upon an old horseman saying that one can judge the quality of a barn and how the horses are treated by whether the horses hang their heads out their stalls and look around. Do they show interest in their surroundings?

When I walked into Kit's stall that day, I noticed he barely took the time to look at me, even my bag of carrots did little to get his attention—but when he heard the voice of Dr. Davis and her two vet techs, he almost ran me over to see them! I surely didn't matter to Kit, but his caretakers did—and that's the best testimony any horse could give.

Two months later, Kit was shipped to the EMC for a pre-scheduled progress checkup. I was prepared for the worst. To be told the joint was not fusing and work on the tendons would be delayed even more. To once again see Kit once again limp into the EMC treatment barn.

Instead, I was greeted by an almost-sound horse. Yes, if I closed one eye and squinted while tilting my head at a 30-degree angle, I could pick up a lame step every now and then. But I found myself saying, if this is the best I get—then it was worth every dime spent.



For months Kit's leg was supported by a special brace that allowed him to put weight on it, and in doing so, relieving the pressure on his good front leg.

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Dr. Davis was always the 1st person to greet me, and the last to say goodbye. Her care of Kit was impeccable, but more importantly, her care for me made me feel like I had a new - old, old friend.

Kit not only walked great, but he looked great and he was clearly happy.

Dr. Davis told me that the transition to soundness had started to happen the week prior, and she suspected that it was because the joint had finally fused enough to stop moving, and in doing so, removed the principle source of pain.

Dr. Barrett's X-rays confirmed Dr. Davis' suspicion. The ultrasound of his tendons brought even better news—the tendons were well on their way to healing. "I'm not going to do anything to them," Dr. Barrett told me. "Anything I do will only screw his natural healing process up."

Upon the completion of her examination of Kit, Dr. Barrett turned to Dr. Davis and told her he was ready to begin his rehabilitation.

What I got out of the technical, exchange between Kit's two vets was simply—"Kit was going to make it," and for me, it was finally time to write this story, a story I had put off writing for seven months because I didn't know what the last few paragraphs would be.

Today, as I write this, Kit's schedule includes a 15-minute hand walk, hand grazing, a 15-minute massage, grooming, time in an aqua-treadmill, and a host of other things to occupy his mind and body to get him ready to once again run free and play with his buddies.

How soon he would come home was anyone's guess—where months before I was eager to get him home, now I wanted him to stay; for the longer he stayed, the stronger the tendons would be when he did come home, and the sooner he can rejoin his pals in the field.

If he comes home too soon, and the tendons are not fully healed, all the progress over the past seven months could be lost. So to play it safe, I told Stephanie that she, and she alone, would make the call as to when he could come home.

Time was clearly on Kit's side—as was Dr. Barrett, and the EMC nursing staff, and Dr. Davis and her staff. They all worked to make sure Kit would be able to live out a long and happy life. For me, that's a win.

Epilogue

On September 14th, ten months almost to the day, from when he suffered his career ending injury, an injury that sadly few horses would survive, Dr. Davis pronounced him "good to go," and for what I thought would be the last time, I hooked up my trailer and made the long trip to Dr. Davis' facility in Warrenton to pick Kit up.

While I was happy Kit was coming home, it was also a bit sad, as Dr. Davis and her staff were having to say goodbye to an animal they had come to love. So, I gave them time to do just that. As I would soon discover, they had brought out a part of Kit's personality I had never seen before. He has a kindness in his eyes and way of going now, as if he knows something special was done for him. For developing that in him, I will be forever grateful to Dr. Davis and her staff.

Don't ask me how I knew, but it was clear to me that when Kit got off the trailer at home, he knew his long ordeal was finally over. He was greeted with whinnies from his two stablemates and when I closed the door on his stall, he gave me a look that said, "I'm finally home."

Getting Kit home, however, was only the start of what would prove to be a long re-introduction process. While his joint had fused, we needed to keep him stay 'quiet' for as long as we could so the tendons could slowly get used to being back in work again.

To accomplish this, Kit was turned out in a round pen for two hours in the morning, and two hours in the afternoon. All the while being heavily drugged. As he needed companionship while in the barn, my other two horses had to come in with him as well, which made my life a living hell on non-stop stall cleaning.

Everything was going to plan, and just when I thought my vet bill paying days were behind me; ten days after Kit came home, Scotty, my oldest and most talented horse was stricken with septic cellulitis and had to be rushed to the EMC. I had flashbacks of Kit's emergency trip ten months earlier, but in the case of Scotty, they were not sure he would survive – but he did, and as I write this, Dr. Davis is performing her magic on his recovery as well, but that's a story for another time.

Now, one would think having to deal with only two horses would make my workload bearable, it was anything but. Kit and Wesley, my middle-aged horse, became inseparable, and I suddenly found myself trying to manage getting Kit out as much as I could, so Wesley could get out.

I eventually came upon a routine of putting Kit in the round pen in the morning – with Wesley in the pasture surrounding the round pen. Repeating the process in the evening, but with Wes-

ley in the round pen and Kit outside of it. The first time I did that I held my breath, for it was the first time in 10 months that Kit was not constrained. But he stayed by Wesley. Every day I increased Kit's 'out time' by 20 minutes. By the end of the third week home, he was out the better part of the day, still constrained, but out.

As they both had shown a willingness to be quiet, one night I finally decided to allow them both to be out of the round pen at the same time. At first all went well. Then Wesley decided to jump a stone wall between two pastures to see if the grass was "greener on the other side." I held my breath as Kit ran up to the fence but let it out when he opted not to jump it, I relaxed too early!

Wesley, realizing that Kit had not followed him into the adjacent pasture, wheeled about and jumped back into the pasture with Kit, bit him, and then jumped back into the other pasture. This time Kit followed him.

I cringed, thinking all the while I had just blown ten months of hard work on the part of all the vets, but thankfully Kit trotted away from the fence as sound as a dollar.

The next day, I repeated the experiment, but this time Wesley, who by this time was sick and tired of being cooped up in a small pasture, opted to jump the three-board fence into our eight-acre turnout field. Kit followed him without a second thought.

"Well damn," I thought. If Kit was sound enough to jump four-foot fences, then he was sound enough for me to start



Eleven months to the day after Kit blew out his leg, I was back on Kit's back. My hope in undertaking all that was done to save him was that at a minimum, he would be pasture sound. Never in my wildest dreams did I ever think I would see him galloping around my field or jumping fences, let alone my being able to ride him again. Yet that is exactly what all the hard work of Dr. Barrett and Dr. Davis accomplished. Yes, in the end, Kit was a lucky horse.

riding him again. And the next day, I did just that, and I've been doing so every day since then.

Truth be told, had one asked me ten months earlier if I was willing to spend what I eventually had to spend on his recovery, I'm not sure my answer would

be yes. But today, as I sit on Kit and look at the horizon through his happy upright ears, I'm glad I did.

To read other articles by Michael Hillman, visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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In this season of giving, give the gift of yourself

For many here in Frederick County, the lack for transportation is often cited as the leading barrier for those needing to access essential community services.

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HEALTH

Healthcare where you live

Joshua Faust
Frederick Health

Think about what you want in healthcare, especially when it comes to caring for you and your family. Most of us crave a seamless experience, a one-stop destination where there's no need to hop from place to place for appointments, tests, or any other healthcare needs. A full-service healthcare center offers just that - the care you need, when you need it, at a location close to you.

The growing emphasis on convenience in healthcare helps improve access to care. That's why Frederick Health has community sites in Urbana, Frederick City, Emmitsburg, and Brunswick, with additional locations planned for the future. Each location provides five essential services: Primary Care, Urgent Care, Laboratory, Imaging, and Physical Therapy & Sports

Rehab. They are staffed by expert providers that respect you, your background, your individual needs, and treatment goals.

"This is our vision. This is the future of healthcare, and this is definitely the future of Frederick Health," says Amy Arnold, Frederick Health Practice Manager. "Access means a lot to the people of Frederick County. Nobody likes waiting to get the care they need!"

Behind this vision are a team of expert providers who are fully on board with creating easy access to healthcare providers, comprehensive services, and friendly care right in our community. Frederick Health's goal of establishing full-service healthcare centers aligns with Healthy People 2030 which serves as a roadmap for public health efforts and policy development in the U.S. There is a national focus on improving health by helping people get timely, high-quality healthcare services.

"Research points to the fact that more access to primary care and urgent care leads to better overall health," notes Dr. B. Shanes, Board-Certified Family Practice Provider with Frederick Health Medical Group. Dr. B. Shanes now sees patients in Brunswick, the newest location that opened its doors in Fall 2023, having previously seen patients in Urbana. "Brunswick and Urbana are both growing communities, and we're growing alongside them," says Dr. B. Shanes. "Introducing core healthcare services to residents there has had a significant impact."

Urgent care has grown rapidly nationwide because of convenience. It offers same-day appointments for non-severe illnesses or injuries during extended hours, including early mornings, evenings, weekends, and holidays. Urgent care is a cost-effective option for non-life-threatening issues such as moderate cold and flu symptoms,



eye redness, sprains, and strains when you need to be seen immediately and your primary care provider is not available.

By housing primary care and urgent care under one roof, Frederick Health makes care more convenient and connected.

"You can visit urgent care, with or without a primary care provider. If

you don't have a Primary Care provider, we can help you find one, often the very next day," Arnold explains. "You're also able to get your labs, X-rays, and physical therapy, if needed, all at one stop."

This level of connected care is unique in Frederick County, with no other provider or health system offering a similar service. That means building a network of facilities to match the growth of the area.

This expansion extends to the northern part of Frederick County, too. Frederick Health Emmitsburg opened its doors in Summer 2022. Natalie Lowrey, Certified Family Nurse Practitioner (FNP), treats adult and pediatric patients at this new center.

"Expanding treatment options in northern Frederick County is a priority for Frederick Health," she says. "We understand that driving 15-20 minutes can be a significant challenge for our patients. Our Emmitsburg center is our way of bringing healthcare closer to our patients, ensuring their needs are met with ease and convenience."

Lowrey, a Frederick County native, emphasizes her deep connection to the community: "The individuals I'm caring for are my neighbors, and ensuring they have access to the incredible services we provide is a top priority for me."

As Frederick Health continues to look for ways to meet the changing needs of the community, they are expanding the services being offered at these centers. Right now, Dr. David Kowalk, orthopedic expert with Frederick Health Medical Group visits Emmitsburg every Monday, and Dr. Patrick Mansky, cancer expert, is available every other Tuesday.

"Whether it's orthopedics and sports medicine, oncology, ear, nose, and throat (ENT) or gastroenterology services, the goal is to broaden our offerings in these locations. We aim to enhance accessibility and ensure a comprehensive range of healthcare services are available to meet the needs of our community," says Arnold.

Beyond that, Frederick Health is looking to expand with future sites to best serve the well-being of the community they serve.

"Every individual deserves good health and to collaborate with someone who understands their unique health needs," says Lowrey.

To learn more about each location or make an appointment visit frederickhealth.org/GetCare.



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Frederick Health Brunswick
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Learn more | frederickhealth.org/UrgentCare



**Frederick
Health**

YOUR COMMUNITY OF CARE

Studio 24E: a luxurious shopping experience

Mia Ferraro
UMD Class of 2026

Christmas is just around the corner. Luckily, so is Studio 24E. Thurmont's newest gift boutique offers not only luxury Christmas gifts, but an enjoyable holiday shopping experience. Located at 21 E Main Street, Studio 24E brings big-city shopping and services to a small hometown setting.

At the door, the customer is welcomed by stylish clothing from brands like Puppie Love and Simply Southern. Behind this selection is a display of luxury sunglasses from Gucci, Prada, Versace and other high-end brands.

Further back in the shop, the wall is lined with chic purses and handbags to the right of the fine jewelry display cases containing brands like Charriol and even Rodrigo Otazu, which you may recognize as seen on the hit television show "Sex and the City," as well as its spin-off, "And Just Like That..."

Greg Elliott, co-owner and picture framer by trade, opened Studio 24E in Linthicum, Maryland in 2001 as an art gallery with picture framing services. Moving between small towns and big cities in Maryland, the shop expanded into a boutique with makeup services and a diverse selection of jewelry, clothing, gifts and other luxury items. The shop also works with in-house artists to sell artwork and handmade goods.

The custom framing services are also still in the picture. The shop offers in-house consultations to guide customers through the process of finding the right frame and mat to complement their artwork.

As the customer explores past the different corners and sections of the shop, all organized to show-

case the diverse selections, they'll find the elegant and cozy space where co-owner and makeup artist Nina Tate-Elliott performs makeup services for any occasion. She also travels for offsite appointments. Getting your holiday portraits done and looking for a professional to do your makeup? You know where to look.

So what makes this shop unique? Nina says it's about "being able to experience luxury at an attainable level."

Aside from the convenience of having a luxury boutique on the main street of a small town, Studio 24E makes luxury accessible also because of its "safer, less guarded environment," as Greg said. He feels that customers are more comfortable asking to try something on or to take a closer look at something in a display case because of the shop's relaxed atmosphere.

"We kind of find that fine line between being kind of department store-ish and still being small and obtainable," Greg said.

At Studio 24E, experiencing luxury isn't just about inventory.

"It's mostly about environment" that makes the shop unique, Greg said. When a customer enters the store, they are immediately "immersed in the whole experience of the store," he said.

In the shop, there are seats for husbands to relax while their wives shop, and Greg and Nina have been known to offer a glass of wine. Behind the jewelry cases is a large screen that is always playing music videos – mostly of Christmas songs this time of year. And now, the store is fully decked out in the spirit of the holidays with decor and diverse holiday items spanning across the shop.

"And we really make sure that

we're connecting with our customer and listening to what their needs are, and really that then becomes the building point for the relationship," Nina said. "I mean, a lot of our customers have been with us – they follow us from location to location."

After some time in Linthicum when the shop first opened, Nina and Greg moved the shop to Oakland, Maryland with a second location in Deep Creek Lake, before moving back to the city. But after 12 years in the city, they decided to return to the small town scene and landed in Thurmont this past June.

Nina said the shop has a 20-year-long relationship with customers who were residents of Thurmont but also owned a second home in Deep Creek Lake.

"So I think we have that ability to really create that long lasting relationship" she said, "because the customer comes in, they have a good time, they're comfortable, and then they trust us. So that really makes them continue to want to come back to us."

The shop has held several events at their previous locations, including a 2019 fall festival showcasing local small businesses and artisans. Now, Greg and Nina are always thinking of events they can put on for the Thurmont community this season or further down the road, from makeup tutorials to men's shopping nights that tie in services of local breweries or wineries.

On Dec. 15, Studio 24E, along with other businesses downtown, will be hosting "A Small Town Christ-



Not sure what to get that certain someone for Christmas? Stop by Studio 24E in Thurmont and let Nina and Greg find that perfect gift for you! If they can't find it, no one can!

mas on Main Street." Join the community downtown from 6-9 p.m. to enjoy live music, wine tasting, an ugly sweater contest and much more. Studio 24E will be hosting craft beer tasting with Uncle Dirty's Brew Works, a photo opportunity with your pets to benefit Cuddles Cat Rescue, among other festivities.

Holiday shopping can be stress-

ful, from trying to find the perfect gift, to driving to the next town to locate a store that might carry it. With Studio 24E in town, you may just find that perfect gift in a matter of minutes... but you'll probably stay to explore the other items that catch your eye, or even just to enjoy the charming environment and relaxing atmosphere.



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HISTORY

Reminiscing with Bill Meredith

McKenna Snow
MSMU Class of 2023

Part 3

Bill Meredith completed his doctorate after a long cross-country journey to multiple schools with his wife and children. The family then returned to Mount St. Mary's University for Bill to teach science, as he had promised the head of the department. The original agreement with the department was for Bill to teach for the next five years, but an unlikely story that starts with Bill becoming the Department Chairman changed everything.

Upon returning to the Mount, Bill and his wife had their third child. "The three of them have done alright, they all have families," Bill said. "I have three kids, five children and five great-grandchildren."

When Bill returned to teach at the Mount long-term, the Mount only had pre-med courses such as comparative anatomy and microbiology. In the early 1960s, Bill began to teach a course in genetics. "Two years after that, I started a course in ecology, because that's what I was studying, and I was learning a lot. It was new then. So I had genetics and ecology, they were my courses. And I taught them ever since."

Bill continued, "we added other courses as time went by... We got some other people teaching after that, too. It became eventually the department it is now," he said.

"The other thing that happened to me was, I got to be Department Chairman, the year after I got my doctorate degree," Bill said. At that time, the Mount got a new president, who Bill called "Father Phillip."

"He had been in charge of the seminary here, and he wanted another priest to be the Dean, and that guy called me up and said, 'you've got your doctorate now, would you like to be Department Chairman?' And I said, 'Oh, I don't know, I hadn't even thought about it,'" Bill said, laughing. "He said, 'well, I would like to appoint you for chairman next year, we're having a lot of changes here, and we want some new chairmen.'"

"Well, did you talk to the guy who is chairman now? He's a physics professor," Bill replied, noting he had been chairman a long time. The president responded, No, well, I'm just asking you if you want to be."

"Well I wouldn't take the job if he wanted to keep it," Bill replied to the president. So, Bill went to talk to the current chairman about the situation. "He wasn't too enthusiastic about it," Bill said. "But that was the only ques-

tion that I made, so that I didn't make a senior member of the department mad at me." Bill explained that the current chairman, a physics professor, was a good friend to him.

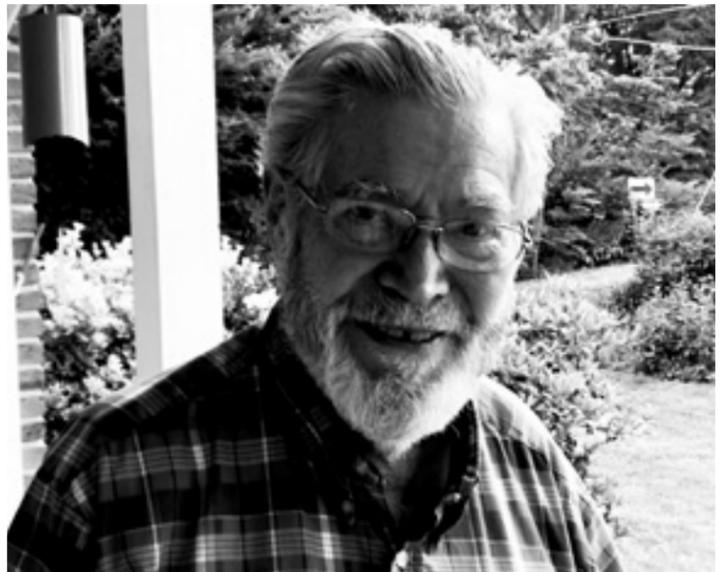
Surprisingly, the physics professor responded to Bill's question, "Well, what do you think? I don't know, do you want the job?"

"Well I wouldn't mind having it, but I don't want to cause you to lose it if you want to keep it," Bill replied. The physics professor "thought for a moment, and he said, 'go ahead and apply for it.' We remained good friends and I was Department Chair for the next ten years."

Around that time, the Mount hired its first teachers who were women, and began requiring a doctorate for anyone applying to teach at the Mount. Before that, a doctorate was recommended but not required.

"So things were changing at the Mount, and I was involved in that, because there were meetings all the time—interview this person, interview that person, talk to him, and eventually talk to her," Bill said, highlighting how busy his days at the Mount became. "The last year of 1970, I thought it would be good to have one of the other people from the science department, I was getting on more and more committees all the time," so Bill stepped down as Department Chairman.

"But I was teaching happily. In '82, I got a call from the dean—he wasn't a priest anymore, he was actually one of my former students," Bill said. "The first year I taught, I had a lot of veterans from World War II, and this guy was just out of the Marines, and he had a wife and a little girl, and I got to know him because he was in my science class. He graduated, went off to graduate school, and



in the mid-seventies, he was hired as a dean." But this changed soon after—the dean was promoted to Vice President.

"So they needed another dean," Bill said. "They got another faculty member, and he just didn't work out. He signed papers, but he didn't do anything else."

He explained that situation was becoming critical, as enrollment in the college was declining. In light of the declines, the current dean called Bill, and said, "I'd like for you to be assistant dean." And I said, "What do you need an assistant for?" He said, "Well we've got to get control of enrollment of the college, we've got to get data on how many students are graduating, how many are having to come an extra semester, how many are graduating in three years... I need an assistant to make a study of the enrollment of the college."

Bill replied as he always did, with an open mind and willingness to help. "Well I can do that, I guess." And so, I was Assistant Dean for a year. In that time, I got sorted out the enrollment of the college and got it on the first computers... The only requirement I made when I became Assistant Dean was that I'd need a computer. So I learned how to use a com-

puter," he said, laughing. "I made out the program for enrollment... I put that into statistics, made plans for it." But after that short year as assistant, Bill was made Department Chairman again! He served in that position the next six years.

Bill explained that his wife was pleased with all the changes he had gone through with the department. His wife had earned a business degree, and worked for five years as a book keeper. Later on, she became a teacher's air at the local school. "She liked that, and the kids loved her, and she stayed in that role until we retired," Bill said. "So she was happy doing something she liked, and I was happy doing something I liked."

Amidst the busy life as Dean, Assistant Dean, and then Dean again, Bill said they still made time for vacations and going back home to visit their parents. "And again—[none of it was] planned, it just happened, and there we were," Bill said, reflecting gratefully on all the happy twists and turns of his career and his life. Stay tuned for part four!

To read other articles related to Emmitsburg's history, visit the History section of Emmitsburg.net.

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Friends in High Places

Bill Meredith

*"... and there is no new thing under the sun."
—Ecclesiastes 1: 9.*

Editor's Note: We had such a great response to running Bill's old Retired Ecologist Column article "Will Rill" that we thought it would be fitting to run one related to on the on set of Winter. This was originally published in 2013.

Autumn slipped in and is slipping by quietly this year. The rainfall graph in my computer climbed at the normal rate all year until September; then the regular showers we had been getting every week or so suddenly stopped, and the graph flattened out. There was one storm in mid-October when we got over seven inches of rain in two days, but aside from that, it's been dry. Technically it isn't a drought, because we've had piddling little showers every couple of weeks, and it hasn't been hot enough to cause much evaporation. If the sun hadn't been slipping farther south so the afternoon shadows reached farther into the yard each day, I hardly would have noticed that it was fall.

The trees did notice it, of course; their lives are attuned to rain. Most of the leaves just shriveled up instead of turning color. Then on November 7 we had a quarter of an inch of rain; the leaves came down, and the mountain west of town turned from orange to gray over-night. But everything else was gradual. Chimney swifts, catbirds and chipping sparrows just drifted away instead of flocking, and you hardly noticed until one day you looked around and they simply weren't here any more. Likewise, the winter birds are wandering in with no apparent sign of urgency; white-throated sparrows and juncos appeared a few at a time at my feeder, but white-crowns, purple finches and fox sparrows haven't got here yet.

Of course, we've always had a year like this every so often, and when you're younger it doesn't bother you. But as you grow older, you get to thinking in metaphors... things like

the autumn of life, for example... and you end up in a blue funk because you're tempted to think you've seen it all and there's nothing new left under the sun. That's what was running through my mind as I walked to the post office a couple of weeks ago, and by the time I got there I had concluded that if Ecclesiastes is right, old age is going to be pretty boring. That was a depressing thought, and my mood was getting progressively darker until I was almost home. But then, I discovered that it isn't true; right before my eyes was a sight I'd never seen before... in fact, never even imagined. Standing on the roof of the Presbyterian church was a great blue heron.

Now, don't get me wrong... I've been a serious birder for over 60 years, and great blue herons are a common sight around here. Many local folks call them "fish storks" because they are often seen around streams and farm ponds, wading in the water on legs nearly two feet long and spearing fish and frogs with a beak the size of a bread knife. If you go out and look, you can find them just about any time except when the weather gets cold enough to freeze the water where they fish. They're interesting to watch... their neck is as long as their legs, but they keep it folded against their shoulders when they're flying, and when they land and straighten it out, it looks like their head has popped out of their shoulders on a spring. I've known them forever, almost like old friends, but I never realized before that they were Presbyterians. But there was proof: my old friend, peering down at me from the highest point in the west end of Emmitsburg, clearly displeased because the church was closed and he couldn't go inside to meditate.

An experience like that plays amazing tricks on your mind. I couldn't stop thinking about it, and it nearly got me in trouble. A couple of days later, I had to go to Baltimore, and I found myself in the middle lane of the beltway, driving eastward at 65 mph in a zone clearly marked 50 mph. Traffic was passing me both sides, and a large truck was about



10 feet behind me, noisily shifting gears and racing its engine, sending a clear message that I should either move it or get out of the way. There was no time to do anything but grip the steering wheel and pray, but then something caught my eye. On the arm of a street-lamp that sticks out over the road, where you expect to see crows or pigeons, were two turkey vultures. They were sitting in their typical hunch-backed posture, gazing down at me through shining red eyes, and grinning in the certain knowledge that disaster was about to happen and I would soon be another lump of roadkill on their menu.

In about a tenth of a millisecond, the idea flashed through my mind that the vultures were in a high place, but they certainly weren't friends... so maybe they were an omen of some kind. The word, "SARKY!" flashed before my eyes, and I instinctively took my foot off the accelerator. The driver of the truck behind me hit his air horn, giving a blast that sounded like all the trumpets of Gabriel, and I

recovered consciousness and resumed speed soon enough to avoid disaster. I got out of the way and let the truck pass, and I guess the rest of the trip was uneventful, though I don't remember any details. It was nice to get back to Emmitsburg.

I figured it all out later. In that microsecond, my memory had conjured up a scene from Walt Kelly's comic strip, "Pogo," which took place 50 years ago in the Okefenokee Swamp. Among the citizens who lived there was a turkey vulture named Sarcophagus MacAwber. Everyone called him "Sarky," and no one liked or trusted him. He always wore a black stove-pipe hat like undertakers used to wear in the old days, and he didn't associate much with the rest of the characters... which was fine with them. Mostly, he just sat in the top of a dead tree with his shoulders hunched over, peering around with red-rimmed eyes and grinning like Snidely Whiplash did in the "Dudley Do-Right" cartoons my kids used to watch on TV, secure in the knowledge that if he just

waited, disaster was bound to happen to someone.

Fall continues to drift along. The leaves on my lawn are damp from a misty drizzle last Sunday, but the drought is still with us and Toms Creek is flowing shallow. The heron is finding it harder to catch fish there, so yesterday he was back on the church roof again; his posture up there suggested that he might be praying for rain, but he was also keeping an eye on the goldfish pond in my neighbor's yard, two lots farther down the road. In the sky above him were two turkey vultures, soaring in circles without moving their wings; they were so high I could only see them in silhouette, but I knew what they are thinking: that which is done is that which will be done, and there is no new thing under the sun. Life goes on, as it always has. Thanksgiving is coming; be grateful for your life, and enjoy it.

To read other articles by Bill Meredith visit the Authors section of Emmitsburg.net.

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 7

Youngsters Began Writing Annual Letters To Santa Claus

Santa has come from the far regions of the North Pole to collect the Christmas letters of little girls and boys. Perhaps some little children have heard the jingling of the bells of the eight tiny reindeer's as it flies through the air like the wind, carrying jolly old Santa along under the twinkling stars.

Some messages have already been received by Santa at his headquarters. One little girl, Helen Wantz, called him up on the telephone to tell him the many things she wanted for Christmas. Old Santa has received letters from one little girl and four little boys.

Dear Santa: I am a little girl seven years old and go to school every day. Please bring me a raincoat and hat, a pair of rubbers, a tricycle, a bookshelf and a fountain pen, with love to you and Mrs. Santa. — Helen Coblentz.

Dear Santa: I want a cowboy suit, a whip, a scooter car, a boat that winds with a key, a tool chest and tools and a game of baseball played with marbles. — Buddy Price

Dear Santa: I want a scooter car, a blackboard, a raincoat, a tool chest full of tools, a game of marbles. I am five years old and have been a good boy. I go to school. — Joseph Delphey

Dear Santa: I am a little boy five years old. Will you please bring me an electric train, an indian suit, some candy and oranges and anything else you like. I will try to be a good boy, your little friend. — Tango Brust

Dear Santa: I am a little boy just three years old. I go to Sunday school every Sunday. Would you please bring me a pony, a pair of shoes, a real police dog and some candy, oranges and ginger snaps. And please do not forget my brothers and sisters. Your little friend. — Casper Letson

Oil Company Machinery Up At Sale

The machinery of the Annie Laura Oil and Gas Company, a short distance west of Thurmont will be sold at a sheriff's sale at Thurmont, next Tuesday. The sale is for the purpose of satisfying judgments of over \$3,000 awarded to creditors of the company

for installing machinery at the oil well. It is understood that a plan is on foot to purchase the outfit, reorganize the company, and resume drilling for oil.

The company was organized sometime ago with Mr. Merritt, President. The company was capitalized at \$100,000 and it is understood that the family of Mr. Merritt holds 51,000 shares, a majority of the stock. The sale is at the instigation of Joseph Gernand, et. al., who stated that they paid for the installation of the machinery, but where never paid.

The company, under the direction of S. E. Haupt, who is said to be a mining expert from Louisiana, began drilling for oil in September 1921. The drilling continued until March 1922, when operations ceased for lack of funds. A depth of about 1,000 feet was reached.

The land on which the well is located is owned by Mr. Merritt and was leased by him to the company. Mr. Haupt has since left Thurmont and the operation has been at a standstill since March 1922.

Canning Factory To Open In Harney

Whaler, Krug and Co. of Littlestown, has purchased the J. T. Lemmon property, and will start a canning factory. They expect to commence building operations about the first of the year, so that everything will be in readiness, when the canning season opens. This is a new enterprise for our town, and we hope our people will get behind the company, and make it a complete success. We expect several more enterprises to start up, in the near future; but at this writing we have no positive information, but prospects look bright.

May Have To Pay License To Go Fishing

A proposition is a foot to require fishermen to pay a license, the funds to be used for propagating of game and freshwater fish.

In brief, the plan, as submitted, is to amend certain sections of, and broaden the scope of, the present game laws so as to include fishing. This will necessitate procuring a license to fish, and also calls for an increase of \$.50 in the price of the hunting license now

required. This license will then permit one to either hunt or fish.

In connection with the preservation of game and fish the plan also calls for the payment of a certain sum of money to each person who is instrumental in the destruction of vermin, this money to come from a fund to be created and which is to be known as the State Game Protection Fund.

Failure to comply with the law concerning either hunting or fishing regulations would be dealt with as prescribed on the statute books. This means a fine of \$15 must be paid or a jail sentence of not more than 15 days being imposed. The plan was proposed and approved at a meeting last spring of the Frederick County Fish and Game Association, and approved.

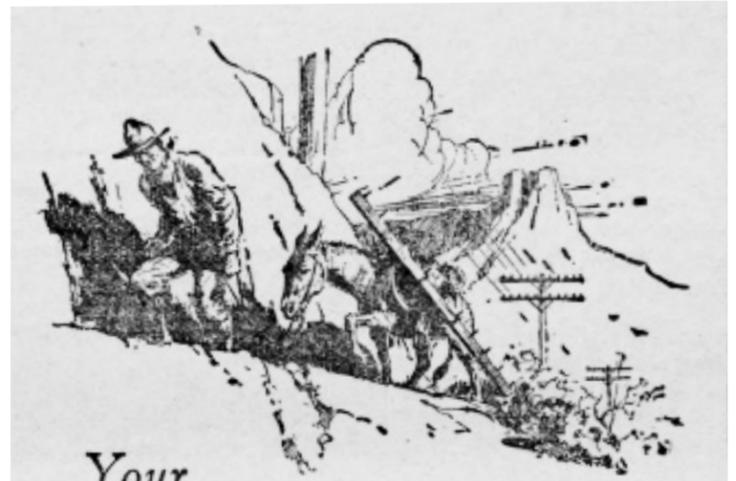
Two Annan-Horner Properties Sold

Two properties were disposed of, and a third withdrawn, at the trustee sale of real estate conducted by the trustees in the bankruptcy of Annan Horner, J. Stewart Annan, and Andrew Horner, owners of the bankrupt Annan-Horner Bank, by virtue of an order of the United States District Court.

The property situated on the North side of West Main St., and improved with a two and a half story brick building, was sold to Elizabeth Annan for \$4,025. This property formally belong to J. Stewart Annan. The property located on what is known as Shield's Addition to Emmitsburg, and which belong to Andrew Horner was sold to Helen Horner, for \$3,025. This property is improved with a two and a half story brick dwelling house, with moderate improvements.

The farm, about 3 miles south east of Emmitsburg on the Emmitsburg-Keysville Road was withdrawn from the sale at \$32 per acre. This property is improved with a dwelling house and out buildings. It consists of more than 234 acres of land.

The sale of Blue Mountain Orchard Company, located in Adams County, 2 miles west of Emmitsburg, also owned by the bank, will take place in the near future, according to information given out Tuesday afternoon by trustees of the bankrupt banking firm.



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The orchard is located directly on the Mason Dixon line, and almost 63 acres of it lies south of the Frederick County line. The most valuable sections of the orchard are included in the portion line in Pennsylvania.

The property, 324 acres in total, consists of four separate but adjacent lots. About 70 acres of land is now planted with apple, peach and other fruit trees. Thirty acres of the same contain approximately 1,500 apple trees of 20 years of age and upwards in bearing condition; about 20 acres containing approximately 760 peach trees of choice varieties, many of which are full bearing. There are 3 acres containing 140 apple trees of seven years; about 12 acres containing 1,000 apple tree's the age of approximately six years of age and of choice varieties, about 95 acres is under cultivation well improved with a large quantity of meadow land.

The land is improved with two sets of farm buildings, well located and situated within the limits of the state of Pennsylvania. One lot has a large two-story brick and log house containing 13 rooms with a large spring-house with never failing water, sheds and other buildings. Another lot has a two-story frame dwelling, a bank

barn, sheds and other outbuildings with good water.

Bridgeport Bridge Breaks - Again

A truck belonging to the Lynden Gas Products Co. broke through two sections of the bridge over the Monocacy at Bridgeport. The front wheels were hanging partially on the bridge, the back of the truck was down almost touching the water.

The bridge had just been reopened two days prior, following repairs by the counties following an accident on November 15, in which the floor of the covered bridge giving way beneath an overloaded truck, which caused the bridge to be closed to all traffic until it was repaired.

The bridge, which is on the Emmitsburg-Taneytown State Road, is maintained by both counties and the delay in its repair was due to both counties feuding over the cost of the repairs, neither wanted to spend anything more than the minimum to get the bridge reopened. The portion of the bridge that collapsed in the most recent mishap occurred on the Carroll County side of the bridge, who's work was performed by a crew paid less than that on the Frederick County side of the bridge.

It isn't a question of if, but a matter of when.

Making funeral arrangements in advance ensures that someone you care about will never have to make all the decisions alone. It's a simple thing to do if you know who to talk to. Please send for our Informative Personal Family Guide to help answer any questions you may have. It's free and you'll learn why making these arrangements is for your family's sake.

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

December 14

Seeks Home For Five Year Old Light Haired Girl

"It never rains here but it pours", is an old adage that would seem to include homeless children of Frederick County around Christmas time in its category.

Going under assumption however that it is possible for even sunshine to be hidden behind clouds at times, we come to the third case of an artificially orphaned child to be brought to the attention of the Children's Aid Society.

Fate seems to be partial towards fair haired youngsters in its meeting out of ironies to the local children of destiny, for the other two cases included a bright blue eyed blonde boy and his equally charming and fair-haired little sister.

This little five-year-old happens to be a girl. Just because the little girl is but five years of age and perhaps too young to be sent to school is no reason for thinking that her Christmas pleas to Santa Claus, are not any different from any other child. All interested in taking charge of the child should contact the Children's Aid Society.

Lose His Teeth And Big Buck He Shot

To lose both the deer he claims to have shot and also two teeth was the misfortune of one hunter in this section of the county on the opening day of deer hunting season.

According to reports from the camp of the mighty huntsmen, Paul Thomas, shot four times at a buck, but had the misfortune of losing his prize in the thicket; the members of the camp hunted for hours, but could not locate the deer or any trace of blood. While shooting at the deer, Thomas fell off his stand and had two teeth knocked out and had to be taken to a doctor to have a cut on his lip dressed.

According to rumors, he, and most of the members of his hunting camp, had been heavily indulging in 'warming spirits' most of the night and well into the morning, and was cross-eyed with double vision when he took his shots – at whatever he shot at, if anything.

Thurmont Man Guilty Of Assaulting Officer

Frank Schaffer, about 40, of Thurmont, was found guilty of assault and battery against Deputy Sheriff Roger Geishert. Schaffer was fined five dollars and costs amounting to more than \$25.

Geishert claimed that he was accosted by Schaffer upon coming out of a restaurant in Thurmont and Schaffer accused him of lying about him. Schaffer said Geishert was spreading rumors about him having whiskey in his car, and that was not so. Geishert said it was true, and after a short argument, Geishert said he turned away and as he did so Schaffer made a pass at him.

Geishert then stated that he grabbed Schaffer about the neck and that Schaffer hit him in the arm, and that he had previously cursed him. Schaffer was put under

arrest by Geishert and the case was eventually brought before the Justice of the Peace.

The defense stated that there have been some animosity existing between Schaffer and Geishert for sometime. Schaffer's attorney admitted that Schaffer called Geishert a name but denied that any blows were exchanged.

Following the verdict of guilty, a new jury was selected to sit in on the resisting arrest charge which grew out of the assault and battery case. Schaffer was found not guilty on this charge.

Christmas Tree Thefts Mark The Season

With Christmas only a little over a week away, and with every indication pointing to a scarcity of evergreen trees this year, owners of land throughout the county are patrolling land on which they have planet trees suitable for Christmas trees.

Reports received by the State Department of Forest and Waters show a large number of Christmas trees are stolen each year from timberland owners. Last year more than 1,000 trees were stolen from a five-mile stretch along a public road west of here during the two weeks before Christmas.

This was done; it was stated in spite of the fact that the owners of the property patrolled the area continuously. It was also said that many persons cut as many as three or four trees before finding one which suited their fancy, leaving the others useless.

The Department is calling attention to the fact that the law makes it a misdemeanor for any person to cut and remove a tree without first obtaining permission from the owner of the land, and upon conviction of the offense, provide a fine of not more than \$500 and imprisonment not exceeding three months, or both.

It should be remembered that every tree growing on the hillside belongs to someone, and persons who desire to cut Christmas trees for home use should first obtain permission from the owner. Landowners should keep a careful watch of their evergreen trees during the month of December to prevent the theft of their valuable trees, and, if so fortunate to catch the guilty persons, they should be prosecuted so as to put it in to this malicious practice.

December 21

December Sets Mild Weather Record

Indian Summer reigns supreme in Frederick County. Daily temperatures have been above freezing since Tuesday, when the minimum was 31°. From the mountain come reports that ants are crawling about in great hordes outside their winter home; that the honeybee is showing restlessness and that swarms of insects are to be seen flying about.

Then from other sections reports have been received that snakes are crawling about outside the dens into which they were believed to have gone for the winter. One snake was discovered in a field and another seen in the

mountains near Deerfield, north of Thurmont.

Temperature is suggestive of spring prevailed all day Sunday. The maximum was just nine points below summer heat, or 61°. And the lowest for the entire day was 43, or 11° above freezing. Even though Christmas is just around the corner, there has been only one flurry of snow this winter so far.

Fall Off Steps Kills Woman

Striking her head on a concrete walk after falling off a short flight of steps at the rear of the home of Miss. Rose Sipes, her niece in Fairfield, Miss. Susan Sample, 81-years old, suffered a fracture of the skull, Tuesday evening, which resulted in her death two hours later.

When found by her nephew, the aged woman was lying unconscious near the concrete sidewalk in such a position as to lead to the belief that she tripped while coming down the short flight of steps from the back porch and struck her head on the hard pavement. Mrs. Staple did not regain consciousness. Dr. Henderson was called in and attended the injured woman, but she was beyond medical assistance.

She was born in Frederick County. About 15 years ago she moved to Fairfield with her nephew and niece. So far as could be learned, Miss Staple has no relative closer than her niece and nephew. She will be buried in the Union Cemetery in Thurmont.

Infant Drowns In Creek Near Home

Charles Hewitt, infant son of Mr. and Mrs. Harry Hewitt, of Thurmont, drowned Saturday afternoon when he fell into a small stream near his home. The child, who was aged one year, four months and 22 days, was playing about on Saturday afternoon. He wandered away and it is supposed that he fell into the stream, which was adjacent to his home.

County Ready To Remove Snow

The County Road Commission is busy with preparations for removing snow from the State highways of Frederick, during the coming winter. Frederick itself has 13 snow plows attached to trucks.

The main highways will be given the right of way and then the branch roads will be cleared in the order of



their importance. The latter being determined by the size of the population supplied by the roads.

In the case of isolated roads where it would be impractical to use the plows, arrangements have been made to take care of the removal of the snow by the use of heavy road machines drawn by horses.

The Road Commission has decided to keep the roads clear of snow, not only for the purpose of giving the people the use of the highways the year around, but as a step towards caring for the highways themselves

December 28

Two Killed At Railroad Crossing

Mrs. Harry Harmony, 40 years old, and her son John, 18 years old, were killed and two other members of the family were injured Christmas morning at the Western Maryland Railroad crossing near Fairfield, when the auto in which they were carrying a quantity of Christmas presents for a celebration with relatives ran into the locomotive. Harry Harmony, the husband, was rendered unconscious. His daughter Helen received a broken collarbone.

Mule Has Christmas Jack

The County Sheriff is searching for the owner of a drunken mule that strayed into their keeping on Christmas Day. The mule not only threatens to eat up their appropriations, but he 'hee-haws' at all hours of the day and night demanding attention. He was found wandering on the State Road apparently suffering from alco-

hol overindulgence. It is believed he found a deposit of corn mash dump from a hidden still.

Thieves Steal Car

On Tuesday evening about 7 o'clock, John Rosensteel's Nash Six automobile was stolen from his garage on Main Street in Emmitsburg. The thieves were two men and they came down the alley at a high rate of speed in the car, which attracted attention at the Emmitsburg Motor Car Company, the employees of which recognized the car and got in touch with Mr. Rosensteel. A party of men quickly traced it and found it about a mile from town on the Taneytown Road with the timing gear broken. No clue has yet been found as to who the thieves are.

Christmas Trade

The Christmas trade, as well as the general businesses, have been good, considering the mild winter. Naturally, business in heavy wear, rubber footwear, and the light, has been below normal, but snow and freezing weather is likely to come along later.

Bridge Over Tom's Creek Opened

The new concrete bridge over Tom's Creek, near Emmitsburg, which has been under construction since September, was opened to traffic on Saturday. Automobilists can now come through with a smile instead of a look of fear, which was the case when the old wooden structure was in existence.

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



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Happy New Year!

FREDERICK COUNTY HISTORY

From John Ashbury's... And All Our Yesterdays: A Chronicle of Frederick County

December 7

When word reached Frederick that the Japanese had attacked Pearl Harbor, shock was quickly replaced with a determination to do whatever it took to protect this nation and defeat its enemies.

In early February 1941, Company A of the Maryland National Guard went onto active service for what the men thought would be one year. Many of them would die in the service of their country. Others would not come home until 1947.

The Japanese attacked Pearl Harbor on Sunday morning December 7. It was already evening here, but radios and telephones quickly spread the word. Civic leaders began early the next morning to organize for the civil defense of Frederick.

Four days later the Frederick County Council of Defense opened a headquarters in the People's Courtroom in the County courthouse. On Thursday morning the 11th, local units of the Maryland State Guard were mobilized.

As the men, outfitted in full uniform, with guns and packs, marched from the Armory to Market Street, down to Patrick, up to Court, then north to Second and back to the

Armory, storekeepers, clerks and others silently watched them pass.

Friday night more than 500 people crowded into the Circuit courtroom to be sworn in as civilian volunteers. They were all resolved "to stand behind the man behind the gun." On Monday, December 13, the first blackout drill was conducted with great success.

The determination that had been displayed so fervently was muted on the 16th when Mr. and Mrs. Roy Baker, of Emmitsburg, received word that their son, George W. Baker, had been killed at Hickham Field near Honolulu, where he was training as an airplane mechanic. His death was noted as the first Frederick County casualty of World War II. However, a week after the announcement of his death, his parents received a call from Baker saying that he was okay.

December 14

Seldom in the history of Frederick County have the citizens been aroused to a fever pitch by the exploits of criminals. Usually the crime was committed and the culprit captured within a short time. Everybody wanted to know as much as possible about the misdeed and the offender. But seldom did the citizens rise up to help law enforcement officials as they did in the fall of 1919.

In the early morning hours of October 18, four Frederick businesses

were burglarized. One of them, Marcell and Ford, was nearly wrecked by explosion as the burglars attempted to blow the safe.

As daylight arrived the two criminals caught the early morning trolley to Lewistown at Montevue Hospital. Upon arrival, they disembarked because they had to wait for the through trolley to Thurmont.

While they were there, word of the burglaries reached Lewistown, and because they were strangers, they aroused suspicion. When the Thurmont trolley left Lewistown, someone called the Sheriff, who in-turn called Deputy Sheriff Lidie in Thurmont.

He told Lidie to meet the trolley and arrest the two men for questioning. Lidie called upon Leo Creager, Samuel Vanhorn, William Foreman, Charles Spaulding, and William Harbaugh, local residents, to help him in the apprehension.

At the station Lidie saw that one of the men had already boarded the Western Maryland train. He told Harbaugh to arrest the man on the train. Shortly Harbaugh emerged with the man in tow and Lidie put handcuffs on him.

While this was happening, the other man stated to run and Lidie drew his pistol and fired several shots at him without effect. The Thurmont men then climbed into Creager's car and took off after the man. Spaulding followed the man on foot. Lidie remained at the train depot to take charge of the other suspect.

The men in the car circled around to get in front of the escaping criminal. At Apples Church road, Spaulding came upon the others in the car and jumped on the running board. Creager attempted to run the man down on the road but missed him and ended up in a ditch.

All of the men jumped out of the car in hot pursuit. Creager, apparently, was faster than the others because he gained on the suspect quickly. He chased him into a peach orchard near Latimer Schildt's barn.

Suddenly the suspect turned and fired directly at Creager. The bullet hit him in the left side just below the heart. When Spaulding's gun failed to fire, the burglar held these men at gun-

point and then started running away again. The men then turned to Creager in an attempt to save his life but were unable to.

With Creager's death, the Sheriff organized a huge manhunt, involving more than 500 men. It went on for three days, but no trace of the suspect was found. The Frederick County commissioners even offered a \$1,000 reward for the capture of the man "dead or alive."

The man who was arrested on the day of Creager's death was identified later as Irwin Mantz of Waynesboro. Information obtained from Mantz eventually identified the other suspect as Clarence Wallace, also of Waynesboro, who had worked in Frederick helping to construct a building at Hood College, and in the construction of a new high school in Thurmont.

On Saturday December 14, 1919, acting on information supplied by Frederick County officials, Santa Barbara, California, police attempted to arrest Wallace at the local post office.

During a shoot-out Wallace received three gunshot wounds. He died the next day. But the story doesn't end there.

Frederick County officials ordered the body shipped back to Frederick so that positive identification could be made. The casket arrived in Frederick December 22 and was taken to the county courthouse the next morning. Hundreds of people went to see the body. Wallace was identified by several witnesses.

December 21

The columns of the Frederick Examiner of December 21, 1881, told the story of an elopement. It wasn't your usual case, however. Other Frederick newspapers had already covered the story of Mrs. John Devilbiss and A. M. Geisbert, both of the Creagerstown area, when it was carried by The Examiner.

The lady was described by its writers as: "a woman of comely appearance and pleasant address, vivacious and all that, but never taught to be 'fast'."

Geisbert was said to be "a man of sober habits, sedate, and gives evi-

dence to the beholder of anything else than a romantic disposition... There is no accounting for taste, for Mrs. D. became enamored of one far from being altogether lovely."

However, both left their homes in early December, leaving spouses and small children behind. Mrs. Devilbiss was the wife of a physician, who, when she abandoned her family, was in Cincinnati on business.

For weeks following the elopement, Frederick County was abuzz with all sorts of rumors concerning the pair. They were tracked to Baltimore, but then all trace of them seems to have disappeared.

Geisbert, a former county school teacher, was the agent for the executor of the estate of Adam Black at the time of his elopement and was suspected of taking some of that estate's assets when he left.

Mrs. Devilbiss was the daughter of William Shank, who had left her more than \$1,300, which she withdrew from a Frederick Bank the day she eloped with Geisbert.

December 28

A little piece of Frederick's history - about 2,000 pounds of it - rests today in the U. S. National Museum of the Smithsonian Institution in Washington, still ticking after nearly 200 years. As most towns in their native Germany had a town clock, so the German settlers of Frederick wanted one also.

The steeple of Trinity Church was already up when the city corporation and the church combined to order a clock to be built by Frederick Heisley, a Frederick artisan. It is believed that Heisley moved to Frederick Town in 1783, shortly after marrying Catherine Hoff, herself the daughter of a clockmaker in Lancaster, Pa.

Heisley quickly became active in the affairs of Frederick, owning several parcels of ground on Market Street and on Church Street. He was also a jeweler and made technical instruments for surveying.

After constructing the clock, Heisley asked another local clock and watch maker - John Fessler - to assist in its installation in the steeple. There are some who believe the clockworks were installed as early as 1791, but it is more likely to have happened in 1807.

The Heisley's had four children while living in Frederick, although all were not born here. The death of daughter Caroline in 1815 apparently led the Heisleys to leave Frederick for Harrisburg Pennsylvania. It was there he died March 18, 1843, as noted in Jacob Englebrecht's diary.

In 1928 the clockworks were removed and stored in the Price Electric warehouse. The Fessler family, which had maintained the clock, including winding it regularly, ended with the removal.

On December 28, 1931, the Heisley clockworks were presented by the city to the Smithsonian, where they were restored and where they remain on display.

To read past editions of Frederick County History, visit the History section of Emmitsburg.net.



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TANEYTOWN HISTORY

Taneytown Legacies: three esteemed mayors

David Buie

Taneytown, a town rich in history and community spirit, has recently drawn attention due to the outspokenness of its current mayor, Christopher Miller, during City Council meetings. Instead of dwelling on this negativity, let's shift our focus to three esteemed former mayors of Taneytown: Neal William Powell, Henry Reindollar, and William Robert "Bob" Flickinger. These three individuals dedicated their lives to the betterment of Taneytown, leaving an enduring impact on the town's growth and prosperity in unique ways.

Neal William Powell: A Life of Service and Commitment

Born on February 1, 1921, in Topeka, Kansas, Neal Powell's journey led him from the heartland to Maryland during World War II. Trained as an aerial photography interpreter at Fort Ritchie, Powell's connection with Taneytown deepened when he met M. Janet Burke. Their marriage in 1943 marked the beginning of a lifelong partnership.

After the war, Powell settled in Maryland, joining the Cambridge Rubber Co. His ascent in local politics mirrored his rise in the corporate world, serving on the City Council for nine years before becoming mayor in 1966.

Powell's commitment to Taneytown extended beyond politics. In 1978, facing a managerial vacancy, he assumed the role of city manager, retiring from his private-sector position to fully dedicate himself to the town's administration. Major projects such as water supply development, park expansion, and sewer system upgrades testify to Powell's collaborative leadership.

Active in various civic organizations, Powell's influence reached beyond Taneytown, demonstrat-

ing his devotion to town and country through participation in the Maryland Municipal League, Carroll Chamber of Commerce, Carroll Board of Education, and the American Legion Post 120.

Upon Powell's retirement, Taneytown honored him with a dinner attended by dignitaries, emphasizing his impact on the community. President George Bush acknowledged his service, and Powell's induction into the Maryland Municipal League Hall of Fame in 2000 solidified his legacy.

Even after passing in 2002, Neal William Powell's legacy lives on through Taneytown's developments, parks, and infrastructure improvements, a testament to his vision and unwavering dedication.

Henry Reindollar: A Lifelong Commitment to Taneytown

Henry Reindollar, a familiar face in Taneytown, passed away at 79, leaving a legacy intertwined with the town's history. A third-generation owner of Reindollar Hardware Store, he retired from both the store and his 16-year tenure as mayor in 1995.

His public service began in 1948 when he became the city's clerk-treasurer, a role he held for an impressive 28 years. Elected as mayor in 1979, Reindollar served four four-year terms, leaving an indelible mark on Taneytown's civic life.

Retiring as mayor in 1995, Reindollar contributed by also serving as acting city manager. Colleagues remember him as a wealth of knowledge, a fantastic person, and a great community worker. His dedication to Taneytown went beyond politics, with involvement in civic organizations and active participation in the town's Economic Development Commission.

A man of diverse talents, Reindollar, a 1938 graduate of Western Maryland College, served in



Mayor Raymond Perry, Chairman Harry Mahony, Raymond Davidson, Merle Baumgardner, James Myers, Carel Frock, and Secretary-Treasurer Henry Reindollar

the Army during World War II as a transportation officer. He was a successful businessman, skilled violinist, and singer with a beautiful baritone voice that graced Trinity Lutheran Church's choir since he was 16.

Henry Reindollar's impact extended beyond his business and political roles. He was a lifelong member of Trinity Lutheran Church, served on the church council, and contributed to various civic organizations, showcasing a commitment to his town and community.

William Robert "Bob" Flickinger: A Heritage of Commitment and Devotion

William Robert "Bob" Flickinger, aged 88, served three terms as Taneytown's mayor and passed away in January 2021. Flickinger's dedicated history of public service left an indelible mark on his family and the Taneytown community.

Born on December 3, 1932, in Tyrone, Maryland, Flickinger

married his wife, Fairy, on June 30, 1957, while serving in the U.S. Army from 1955-58. Their 63-year marriage was a testament to his commitment to family and community. Flickinger worked at Random House, Inc. in Westminster for 26 years before retiring in 1993.

Active in Grace United Church of Christ in Taneytown, Flickinger contributed to the Grace United Learning Center, a non-profit childcare facility serving children aged 2-8. His public service included three terms as mayor (1978-79, 1995-99, and 2003-07) and over 16 years as a Taneytown city councilman, earning induction into the Municipal League Hall of Fame in 1997 after more than two decades in public office.

Flickinger's service extended beyond City Hall, as he served twice as club president of the Taneytown Lions Club and was recognized with the Melvin Jones Fellowship Award and the District 22-W Honor Roll Award for 46 years of perfect attendance. Addi-

tionally, he contributed to various civic organizations, including the Taneytown Jaycees, Carroll County Commission on Aging, Carroll County Parks and Recreation Council, and Carroll County Historical Society.

Contemplating the lasting influence of Neal Powell, Henry Reindollar, and Bob Flickinger, one can discern their impact resonating across Taneytown's streets, parks, and institutions. The community profoundly appreciates their unwavering dedication and service, recognizing their enduring impression on the cherished town. As Mayor Christopher Miller addresses the council in the times ahead, he can find inspiration in the legacy of these individuals and their predecessors, cultivating a sense of commitment and respect that the council members rightfully merit.

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



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COOKING

Taking smaller bites

Sonya Verlaque

Now that we have 3 small kids we are not "New Years Eve" people. We were also shift workers for a long time (he a firefighter and I worked in health-care), so often our holidays were not celebrated on the actual day. I do love getting dressed up once in awhile for a party, and I love appetizers. They are my favorite part of a wedding or party, or at a restaurant - I would always choose tapas. One bite or a small plate of everything on the menu. So, in honor of the kick off of winter party season, here are some appetizers you can serve or bring to holiday parties, before or after new years.

Caprese Bites

I feel like all I eat over the holidays is carbs, at least this has a vegetable in it, where you can feel like you ate some sort of nutrition. If you arrange them on a round platter, you can make a wreath and it's easy to bring to any party. All of these elements can be made ahead of time also and refrigerated until you pull them out.

Ingredients:

Balsamic Glaze (you can also buy this in the store, it is also very good)

- 1 1/2 cups balsamic vinegar
- 3 tbs brown sugar
- 1 tsp of vanilla

Salad:

- 12 ounces grape tomatoes (or cherry tomatoes)
- 10 ounces fresh cherry-sized bocconcini (mozzarella) balls
- 2 tbs olive oil
- Handful fresh basil leaves
- flaked sea salt and ground pepper, to season

Preparation Directions: To make the glaze: Combine the vinegar and sugar in a small saucepan. Cook while stirring over low heat for 4-5 minutes, or until sugar has dissolved. Increase heat to medium setting and bring to a boil. Reduce heat to low and allow to simmer for 8-10 minutes, or until reduced by one-third and thickened like syrup.

For the salad: Wash and dry the tomatoes. Pull basil leaves from stems and wash and dry. Drain the mozzarella balls. Skewer the tomato, then a basil leaf, followed by a mozzarella ball. If the basil leaf is large you may wrap it around a tomato to skewer it, or fold it. Arrange them all on a platter, and you can make a wreath shape with space to put the bowl of balsamic. Drizzle with olive oil and season with salt and pepper. Garnish with any additional basil left over.

To serve, place the bowl of balsamic glaze in the centre of the wreath, or you can drizzle it on top, if you don't make a circular shape.

Mongolian Glazed Meatballs

These are easy to place in a large warmer or crockpot and perfect for toothpicks. They are also not spicy, so child friendly. This is from cafe delites, but I use apple cider vinegar because Shaoxing wine is not always easy to find.

Ingredients:

- Meatballs**
- 2 pounds ground beef
- 3/4 cup Panko or breadcrumbs
- 2 eggs
- 2 tbs low sodium soy sauce
- 1 tbs Shaoxing (Chinese) wine or apple cider vinegar or rice wine vinegar
- 1 tbs minced garlic
- 1 teaspoon minced ginger
- 1 cup thinly-sliced or chopped green onions (4 green onions)
- Kosher salt and pepper, to taste

Mongolian glaze

- 1 teaspoon sesame oil
- 4 cloves (or 1 tbs) garlic, minced
- 1/2 tbs minced ginger
- 1/2 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 2/3 cup water
- 1/2 cup brown sugar
- 2 tbs hoisin sauce
- 1 tbs oyster sauce
- 1 tbs ground white pepper (or 1/2-1 tbs red chilli / powder)

Preparation: Preheat oven to 200°C | 400°F. Make the meatballs: Mix together all of the meatball ingredients in a large bowl until well-combined. Spoon out 1-inch of meat mixture with a cookie scoop (or tbs), shape into balls and place onto 2 large baking sheets or trays lined with baking or parchment paper or foil. It should make about 60 mini meatballs. Bake for 10-12 minutes, or until golden browned and cooked through.

While the meatballs are baking, make your sauce. Heat a non-stick pan or skillet over medium-high heat. Whisk ALL of the sauce ingredients together in the pan until well blended. Bring to a simmer and continue cooking



Caprese Bites

until sauce thickens, while stirring occasionally to prevent burning or sticking on the bottom of the pan (about 8 minutes).

When meatballs have finished cooking, add half of the meatballs into the pan and gently coat each meatball generously and evenly in the sauce. Transfer the glazed meatballs to a serving dish or tray (or keep warm in a small crockpot) with a slotted spoon and add in the remaining non-coated meatballs to the sauce. Coat and transfer to serving dish. Sprinkle with sesame seeds and sliced green onions (if desired), and serve warm with toothpicks or mini forks.

During my time in pastry school, I learned a very important secret. I always wanted to do everything the hard and labor intensive way. And there is a great benefit to learning the process, croissants definitely made me question my life choices, a semester of artisan breads was so inter-

esting and I can make some great bagels now. But here is the secret: the frozen pastries at the grocery store are fine. Are they amazing? No, but they are fine. It is ok to buy a piecrust when you are short on time. Puff pastry? Please, don't spend days folding and chilling butter.

Puff Pastry Cheese Twists

This uses the frozen puff pastry and the only prep is defrosting it. Kids will also be happy to help you twist and bake and then eat this cheesy bread. The main way these wont work, is if your oven isn't fully preheated the pastry wont puff.

Ingredients:

- 1 sheet of puff pastry
- 1/3 cup cheddar cheese, shredded
- 1/4 cup parmesan, shaved
- 2 tsp garlic, crushed
- 1 tsp oregano
- 1 large egg, beaten
- 1/2 tsp salt

Preparation: Preheat an oven to 220°C (430°F). In a bowl, mix the shredded cheese, grated parmesan, garlic, salt, and oregano. Using a pastry brush, brush the beaten egg across the puff pastry. Place the cheese mix over half of the puff pastry sheet. Fold the pastry in half and brush with some beaten egg. Place the rest of the cheese mix over the half. Cut the pastry into 1 cm (1/2 inch) wide strips, use a sharp knife or a pizza cutter. Twist the strips slightly and place onto an oven tray lined with baking paper. Repeat until you have done all the strips. Using a pastry brush, lightly brush the twists with the egg. Place into the preheated oven and cook for about 15 minutes or until golden brown. Once golden browned, remove and allow to cool. Serve & Enjoy.

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MOMS' TIME OUT

The Holidays have already started

Mary Angel

When I say holiday season most people think of Christmas, or other December holidays. What if I told you the holiday season has already started. I view part of fall and the beginning of winter as the holiday season. After all, is there any other time of the year when so many big, fun, family-oriented holidays are in such a short period of time. In a two-month period we have major holidays.

We begin on October 31st with Halloween. My family has always loved Halloween. When the kids were very young, dressing up to go trick-or-treating caused enough excitement to create apoplexies in the kids. Even my mother-in-law who did not buy into this particular holiday, found a new love for seeing how excited the kids were. It didn't hurt that the grand daughters were dressed like Disney Princesses and smiling ear to ear. My own mom would dress up and hand out candy at our house while we were trick-or-treating. As the kids got older, they went from walking around with us to walking around with their friends. My husband even got in on the game, by having a little charcuterie counter for the parents. When they got "too old" for trick-or-treating we would help out at Trunk-or-Treat at our old church. My mom participated in this as well by decorating her trunk and handing out candy. Her trademark was a blinking laughing skeleton necklace.

Not even a month later and it was time for Thanksgiving. This entire holiday is about family. We actually start Thanksgiving the Wednesday night before actual Thanksgiving. It has become a tradition that we have our dear friends over to hang out, eat appetizers, and have a celebratory drink together. Over the years we have lost some family members and Thanksgiving has gotten smaller, but still heart warming and amazing. Whenever you can find an opportunity to get family and friends together for a meal, it is a blessing. Thanksgiving dinner at our house is very traditional, turkey, stuffing, corn, mashed potatoes and gravy, apple and pumpkin pies (alacarte if

you prefer). Oh, I forgot to mention Meme's burnt bottoms. These are the biscuits my mom makes and always burns the bottoms. One time since I have had kids, she did not burn the bottoms and the kids were actually disappointed. Every once in a while, my husband will throw in a new dish or appetizer for everyone to try out, but we still have the family favorites. This is my husband's favorite holiday of the fall season, because he loves when the whole family gets together and shares what each one of us are thankful for. Cliché but awesome!

Next, we have Black Friday, okay it isn't a real holiday. For us it really does seem like one. I guess you can make anything into a holiday, even it is just for your family. Look at Festivus! Black Friday began as a holiday for us as more of an extension of Thanksgiving. The family would get together for Thanksgiving and then on Black Friday all us girls would head off to a shopping destination and the boys would converge on our house to overeat and burp and fart at will (at least that was their joke). My mom and mother-in-law got more time with the grand daughters and completed most, if not all, of their Christmas shopping in that one weekend. Both boys and girls would enjoy some meals out at restaurants and a whole lot of bonding time. My daughters would usually get a trip to Chuck E. Cheese, where Meme would disappear to her favorite video games and then produce a ton of tickets for the girls. It was a win/ win situation.

Next comes the big one in the kids' eyes anyway. Christmas is always an amazing time in our house. Over the years (depending on the layout of the house) we have decorated anywhere from a little to a lot. We always have a cartoon themed Christmas tree (I say it's for the kids, but actually it began long before they were born) There is another smaller tree with White House and fancy hand me down ornaments, and a bowl on the table full of my husband's grandma's ornaments. There are many other decorations that switch places every year, some stay in the tub one year and come out the next, but there are always the steady guaran-



You've got to wonder what they were selling that day to generate this rush.

teed ones. Decorating is a family event. We put Christmas music on, the kids start placing ornaments on the tree, I take pictures, and my husband makes some sort of treat (hot chocolates, or popcorn, etc.). As the ornaments are going up the kids are reminiscing about the year they received each one, yes a new ornament each year (and labeled with initials and date on the bottom). My hope is that when the kids move out, they will each take their ornaments and start their own family traditions. Decorating happens the weekend after Thanksgiving or the following weekend if they the girls trip takes up every waking minute.

The rest of December is filled with tasks to get ready for the big day. I know I sound like one of Santa's elves, but there is a lot to be done. There will be many family and/or friend dinners and gift exchanges to attend. There might even be a white elephant

or two that I will need to take care of. My youngest and I will also have to squeeze in a Christmas Craft Day for her and her friends. Although I had stopped this for a few years thinking everyone had outgrown it, apparently, I was wrong. I simply needed to pivot and make more age-appropriate crafts. Last year when I reinstated this event, the girls went crazy and have been asking for this year's date since July. I will still keep some of the favorites for nostalgia reasons, but I have added crafts like, card making and intricate ornaments. Of course, there will be Christmas movies and cookies!

Before I know it, and when I am still completely unprepared, the day will be upon us. We will get the gifts out the night before, which started as a tradition when Santa was alive and well. In the morning my parents will come sit with us to open gifts and then my brother will come over for fam-

ily breakfast. As the kids get older the breakfast is just as important as the gifts. There will be gift opening, squeals of joy, texts of love and happy holidays to family and friends, and of course Christmas dinner. There will be no lunch, as everyone gorged themselves on the breakfast casseroles and bacon, but there will be dinner. There isn't much difference between Thanksgiving and Christmas except the Thanksgiving turkey turns into a Christmas ham. It seems that these two meals only happen twice a year, even though everyone loves them.

Call it the magic of the holiday season, but everything is a little brighter and family time is a little sweeter. I hope your family has a wonderful and merry holiday season!

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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

This holiday season, we asked our writers to discuss the significance of writing letters to Santa Claus.

Freshman

Letters to Santa

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

The tradition of writing letters to Santa has been around for generations; however, it wasn't always children doing the writing. The practice began quite contrary to what we are accustomed to today. It first began with Santa writing letters to children to encourage them to behave throughout the year. In return for the good behavior, Santa would reward them with gifts on Christmas day. Not only did this establish the idea of the infamous naughty and nice list, but it began a tradition that would be carried out for centuries. Over time, children began writing letters back to Santa describing what they wanted for Christmas as a reward for their good behavior, being the little negotiators they are. With this lovely letter conversing, the tradition was born—Letters to Santa.

Children throughout the years have written, asking for many things. From the latest Barbie doll to the coolest Lego set, children

have never failed to demand their rewards for good behavior. Nevertheless, children are not the only ones to write to Santa. Teenagers, young adults, adults, and seniors also write to Kris Kringle. While this may come off as immature, the idea of expressing what it is you most desire creates the sweetest and most delicate sense of hope. The opportunity to ask for something that can be either realistic or bazaar excites us, and further allows us to feel an innocent sort of greed. Besides, they say there is a childish part in all of us, right?

I believe it's essential that every child has the experience of writing to Santa and receiving the gift they wished for, at least once. While there are thousands of children who are less fortunate than me, I yearn that each one of those children still writes to Santa. Every child has something they want deep down. Whether it be an action figure, a puppy, a bike, or something a little deeper such as to maintain good health, a roof over their head, or simply someone to listen to them. Every child deserves to be heard and every child deserves to experience the same sweet and delicate hope that we feel when we write to Santa.

One thing that I loved seeing as a kid was all the mailboxes dedicated specifically to Santa. As strange as this is, it's socially acceptable because it's Santa. My favorite mailbox to Santa is the one in Macy's in New York City. The way it is displayed like it's the Holy Grail of the store made it more magical, dropping my letter into the box. Though, I was always nervous to put my letter in because part of me felt like I was being too greedy asking for all those things. Every year I told myself the same lie to justify my asking for so much stuff: It's so Santa has options. To this day I am guilty of using this weak line of justification to defend my long list of demands. However, at least I know that Santa does indeed have options.

I remember my little brother and I spending an entire evening writing our letters to Santa. We would only use the colors red and green to try to appeal to him, and we would always send our regards to his reindeer for good measure. My brother, being the biggest Mickey Mouse fan to exist, asked for Mickey Mouse sheets for his bed when he was in preschool. I remember that being a very odd thing for him to

ask for, given he was 4 years old at the time asking for a semi-adult-ish gift. Nevertheless, he received them and was as happy as could be since he could "sleep with Mickey" every night.

Unlike my brother, I guess I never really "matured" in what I would ask for from Santa. Every year I'd still write down the most random items like I was a 5-year-old. My brother, while still asking for Legos and Funko Pops, has always been a bit more rational than I. If I were to write a letter to Santa right now, I would ask for new shoes, books, and a new ring to go with my cross necklace. While the shoes are truly something that I need and should probably invest in myself, the books and the ring just display the childish side of me. In years prior, I have asked for things like American Girl dolls, a typewriter, a Nintendo 3DS (specifically the pink one), and have even been so bold as to ask for a Fender Stratocaster guitar in the luscious light blue. However, as I am growing older, I am finding that I need to ask for necessities, or in other words, things I need but don't want to pay for. For instance, makeup, hair products, jeans, and SHOES.

I do believe this comes with age though; by this I mean, as we grow older, we start to appreciate the little things that we don't have to pay for, and the real gift is the gift of saving money.

Way back in the early 2010s, Sears would do Christmas photo shoots, and my mom was all over it. Each year we would go for our Christmas portraits, and when we were done, we got to visit Santa in the mall to give him our letters. It's upsetting that little traditions like that don't exist anymore since Amazon has put so many companies, like Sears, out of business. Even still, it was how my little brother and I would give our letters to Santa until Sears closed down.

Each year, children all over the world write letters to Santa expressing what it is they want most for Christmas. Not only children, but adults share this tradition too. Christmas is a time to not only be with our family and friends to celebrate the birth of our Lord, but to also be a little selfish and write to Santa sharing our desires.

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

Sophomore

Let's talk to Santa!

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

As the holiday season approaches, we are subconsciously forced to slip into the mindset pertaining to our holiday traditions. Personally, I revert back to the small child excited to wake up early Christmas morning and bug

her parents until they get out of bed, to have her whole family come over to indulge in the Christmas morning breakfast while we open gifts together. Granted, these traditions have changed significantly over the years; no longer am I waking up both parents, but rather waking up one and then driving to the home of the other. No longer are my parents holding the Christmas morning breakfast festivities, and I am no longer a child. However, I will always be a child at heart, which is why my love for Christ-

mas is so strong. No longer am I the small, impressionable 5-year-old, but instead I am the small, impressionable 19-year-old with nieces and nephews to spoil and introduce to the holiday traditions I have always loved.

My niece is finally at the age where she can understand and enjoy the traditions that we have and the new ones we've implemented in recent years: making and decorating Christmas cookies, giving gifts to family members, drinking hot cocoa and watching The Santa Claus, baking homemade cinnamon rolls in addition to Mama Cindie's 'Christmas Morning Breakfast' casserole, spreading reindeer food for Santa's famous helpers, and writing letters to the big man himself.

That was another huge tradition in my family: writing letters to Santa and then mailing them off. I have always found this activity to be extremely beneficial in life. The world we live in is difficult enough, so we should let kids be kids and embrace every depth of their imagination. By that I am tempted to ask: if you wrote letters to Santa as a kid, what did you write in those letters? What did you ask Santa for when you wrote to him? My letters to Santa growing up usually consisted of the usual: 'toys, toys, toys...oh! And a puppy!' There were also some letters that asked for blessings of sorts: "Dear Santa, this year for Christmas I want my parents to get a divorce. A weird ask, really, but I can tell they're not happy anymore." In all honesty, the letters I wrote to Santa each year varied dramatically.

For those who have the tradition of Santa in their lives, writing him letters could implement a stronger belief as it provides a physical representation of their belief—the presents help with that as well. Every kid who writes to Santa gets to prove to themselves that their belief is strong, it exists, and they

are fully aware. However, writing these letters is not the only part of the process that helps to strengthen the belief in the physical embodiment of the holiday spirit. Many places have holiday workshops set up for kids to write their letters and decorate them, then they get to mail them off to the North Pole through the fancily decorated Santa mailboxes. Giving the kids the opportunity to interact with their belief only adds strength and health to their own imagination, a beautiful form of positive creativity.

Not only does this activity provide benefits to the children in forms of imagination, but it also offers benefits to intelligence. If you start having children write their letters to Santa at a young age, their writing skills begin to improve or develop. The act of writing letters requires many various language skills such as spelling, grammar, organization, list making, etc. Having the ability to write letters in a fun, exciting, and magical way adds fun and enjoyment to a learning process; it provides an opportunity for children to practice and enhance their writing and organizational skills while still having fun and embracing their imagination. Intelligence though isn't just directed towards cognitive functions in an educational way, but rather it targets multiple concepts such as emotional/mental activity as well. Writing letters allows for the kids participating to build emotional responses and empathy, as they can ask to help others rather than just themselves; such asks reinforce the spirit behind what is known as 'the season of giving.' Kids are much more thoughtful than we give them credit for; it is one of the many beauties of childhood.

Writing letters to Santa was always one of my favorite traditions growing up—a tradition which I hope to

pass on to my own children when that time does come. I never enjoyed it because I got to ask for things for myself though, I think that the joy and love I felt from it came from getting to spend time with my family in an exciting manner. Each year my mom, dad, grandmother, and siblings would trade off who we wrote our letters with; it was a super fun and inclusive way to start off our holiday season because we all got to write our letters together. I feel as though since entering my teenage and adult years we haven't given a second thought to the traditions we once had, writing these letters being the main focal point with that. Maybe it's a part of growing up; maybe we just forget the childlike joys we once had. Either way, I often find myself wishing I could go back and embrace these joys and traditions without the hinderance of doubt that has now been placed; adulting is hard and I miss being a kid.

Traditions are the building blocks of our life; our daily lives are built around them and they have shaped us into who we are. I think that the best part of them though, is when they begin to change as we grow up. No longer am I writing letters to Santa myself, but instead I am encouraging my niece and nephew—who are the brightest lights in my life—to write their letters each December and mail them off to the North Pole. I get to see their faces light up as they decorate their letters and then tell me what they want to write; the kitchen table covered in glitter and stickers, the kids shrieking in excitement, the pure joy written all over their face. Who wouldn't want to write a letter to Santa after seeing that?

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

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LETTERS TO SANTA CLAUS

Junior

My wish

Dolores Hans
MSMU Class of 2025

When we were kids, everything we needed was provided to us by our parents. All our needs for basic survival, but also for happiness and enjoyment of life. If we needed something more, like sports shoes or money for a field trip, they provided that too. But if we saw something on TV that we wanted, or there was a trending video game, or we suddenly wanted to pick up the hobby of crocheting, more often than not our parents said to put it on our letters to Santa. There was a special time during the year, Christmas time, when we had a chance to ask for the unreasonable wants on our hearts, the things we wouldn't normally ask our parents for because they were already providing us with the necessities of life. But with the prospect of Santa and magic, we believed we could ask for the things we wanted without it costing too much or being told we couldn't

have it. My parents provided a lot for me when I was young, even when it seemed like we had nothing. I still feel weird about splurging money on the things I want because I am used to only having the necessities. Christmas was the one time a year I could ask for something outrageously awesome and not worry about it coming from my parents. Then I got older, and once I knew the truth about Santa, I never again asked for my heart's desires because I didn't want to inconvenience my parents.

My wants and desires have changed though. I no longer want to possess material things. Well, I do, but my reliance on them has changed. Christmas now, as an adult, is a time full of playfulness and beauty, romance and tradition. I find myself daydreaming about spending the holidays with the love of my life, my beloved, and all that we could experience together. Dancing in the snowfall under the streetlights, getting cozy by the fireplace, baking cookies and listening to jazz, laughing while watching Christmas movies, decorating our tree, building snowmen, getting together

with our families, and starting our own traditions. When I am asked what I want for Christmas, my first thought is to say that I want an engagement ring. But I don't want a ring, I want a proposal. I want him to ask me to spend my life with him. Then I think to say that I want a wedding. But I don't want a wedding, I want a marriage. All the things I desire can be had without physical material possessions. Santa provided us with the idea that anything is possible, and that magic can create the things we wish for, if we simply ask. How I wish that were as true for me now as it was for me then, back when I was young.

If I still had the opportunity to make a secret letter, listed with my biggest hopes and dreams, and hand it to my mother to be sent to the North Pole, and in a couple weeks I would wake up with those hopes fulfilled, what would I ask for? If I were to write to Santa today, assuming he can fulfill my wishes with ease and magic, as we all assumed when we were kids, I know I would ask for gifts that are more like assurances than physical presents.

Dear Santa. Merry Christmas! I

am excited to write to you again. It's been a while. This year, I am asking for things that I have never asked for. I am not asking for the typical things that I ask for every year. I am not asking for jewelry or clothes, nor am I asking for cookbooks and painting supplies. I have no need for rings or sweaters, or canvases or vintage recipes. Not when I have my beloved. His arms provide more warmth than a million sweaters. His body, a canvas I paint with my kisses. Our love is more timeless than old fashioned sweets, and I don't need a ring on my finger to symbolize the love we share. I do ask, however, that you gift me a sign. A sign that the future I dream of is coming my way. A simple house that I can make a home for us, a secure job for him that aligns with his passions, healthy and happy children that I can nurture and provide for. I ask that you gift me the ability to keep Christmas joy in my heart year-round, so I can joyously and ceaselessly grant my family's every wish. So that I can show my children how to care for others and share their laughter generously and have pride in their goofy qualities. I ask that

you gift me a stronger heart, to bear more suffering and sacrifice so that I can still be grateful and present in the tough times. I ask that the one whom I hold in my heart be the one I spend my life with. In partnership, in love, and in happiness. I ask that you gift me as many opportunities as possible in this life to be by his side through every up and down, every adventure, every new experience, every laughter, smile, tear, hug, morning, evening, night, thunderstorm, first snowfall, summer vacation, and everything in between. This year, the only thing I want, the only thing I truly long for, is a life with him. So, Santa, just a recap in case you didn't get it: I want the picket fence and a house I can make a home. I want constant joy so I can spread joy to others. I want a sign that the future I want is coming to me. I want endless opportunities to share this life with the man I love, and for him to be the one that builds a future with me. Thanks! Merry Christmas! P.S. Don't fall off the roof.

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

Senior

Thank you notes

Claire Doll
MSMU Class of 2024

Hi Santa! I've been wondering if I have been a good girl. I want a lot of things for Christmas. First, I want Cecile the American Girl Doll. I also want a dress for my doll. Also, I want some good books. I would really like them to be mysteries, like Nancy Drew. Also, I want pretty clothes and jewelry. I hope I'm on your nice list! Write back!

I hope I never forget how writing these letters felt. Picking your best pen and adorning a blank page with the words, "Dear Santa." Flipping through magazines, or window-shopping at your favorite store, and listing everything you ever wanted. Oh, and the latest American Girl Doll. I just had to have her, whoever she was.

Christmas is a feeling. I can't describe it well, because I only felt the true weight of its magic as a child. The red velvet dress, the cookies.

The letters to Santa, and thinking they'll reach the North Pole.

I would write them religiously, every year. To me, the letters to Santa held power. I could slip it into the mailbox, and magically, it would make Christmases perfect. Like a transaction, almost.

(Hopefully, you're by yourself reading this, and there's no kids around. If there are, read this next part to yourself—don't show them the page).

My first heartbreak was learn-

ing the truth about Santa. I still remember that Christmas Eve. We spent it at my Mommom and Poppop's house with all my mom's family. In the kitchen, there would be plenty food set out: cheese and crackers, pepperoni, vegetables and ranch, all kinds of cookies, and the beloved eggnog that still sends me back to these kinds of nights. In the living room, wrapping paper. Twinking lights from the tree. Music swirling in the background. Crisp, frozen air seeping in from the windows, unmatched to the warmth of inside, of the crackling fire. My aunt Colleen's laughter, a sound I only heard every so often, and my cousin Colton's high-pitched, precious voice.

But because I had found out about Santa just days before, I spent that Christmas Eve crying. I had younger cousins, so I watched them open gifts from Mommom and Poppop and go on about their letters to Santa. My older sister Margaret had already known years before, and it was just plain fact to the rest of my family. I was so heartbroken, so hurt and withered, that I ran upstairs to the bathroom. Locking the door, I cried, hot tears streaming down my face. Me, in my red velvet dress, hair curled, ten-year-old makeup (yes, I was ten when I found out). Me, shattered at what felt like the worst feeling there was.

Some view it as another layer of innocence being peeled off. Some think of Santa as pointless (why would you want your child to feel this way after it all, anyways?). I simply felt angry, almost as if I were grieving. But, grieving what? Santa Claus, someone who I had never met? Or the idea behind it all?

I'll tell you how the follow-

ing Christmas morning went. I still woke up, flutters in my stomach. Golden light still seeping through the windows. Mom's makeup-less face, Dad's trash bag. The gifts were still there. Cecelia, and all her dresses (because I had an obsession over American Girl Dolls), and Nancy Drew books, and so much more. It was all the same, with the giant glaring difference, but it was all there. And for all the years after that, it was still there. The magical Christmas Eves, that morning feeling.

There's only two people I can thank for this, really. My parents. My mom and dad have spent years making Christmas the most perfect holiday.

My father is a paramedic for Baltimore City and could have spent so many Christmases at work, but in my twenty-one years of life, he has never missed a single December 25th with me (and he won't be missing my twenty-second Christmas, either). He works tirelessly and effortlessly to afford such amazing gifts and time with us. He is the hardest worker I know, and I never appreciated this as a child. I wrote to Santa; I thanked Santa.

And my mother. She works tirelessly, too—making Christmas cookies, decorating our entire house, moving the coffee table in the living room so we have more space for presents. For twelve years she has still been playing Santa; she crafts each Christmas so it is perfect, like I am seven again, even though I am well over that age, even though that's not how life is anymore. But it's beautiful, the way she created a childhood that I am eternally thankful for. The way she replicates it every year. She is the

reason I have my American Girl Dolls. She is the reason I think of magic when I drink eggnog or smell the Christmas tree. But as a child, I wrote to Santa, and thanked Santa, too.

I don't think the idea of Santa is bad. In fact, I think it is important that children have this very first heartbreak, so they feel an even greater love and thankfulness for their parents. To make Christmas magical is difficult. There are so many challenges and hardships in the world, that creating magic seems pointless.

I know that when I'm old, I would give anything to be where I am, right now. To still have Christmases with my parents and sister, to still spend it with my family. To write thank-you notes

to Mom and Dad, rather than Santa—because even though I'll never get back those years where I believed in a flying sleigh and reindeer and presents through the chimney, I'll also never get back the years of consciousness and gratefulness and having everyone right here, right now. That is the beauty of Christmas.

So thank you, Mom and Dad, for all the Christmases of the past and present. I hope to make the ones of the future just as special. Thank you for moving the living room coffee table, for baking extra cookies, for Cecile the American Girl Doll.

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

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LIBRARY NEWS

Blue Ridge Summit Free Library

The Blue Ridge Summit Free Library will hold its annual Yuletide Celebration from 4 to 6:30 p.m. on Saturday, Dec. 9, on the library grounds. Admission is free and all are welcome. Activities during the family-friendly event include fire truck rides by the Blue Ridge Summit Volunteer Fire Company; an appearance by Santa, who will hand out candy canes; and a children's craft to create a bird feeder to take home.

"In addition, we'll have live music by Rich Fehle, and holiday goodies including cookies and hot or cold cider," said Paul Pinkerton, president of the library's board. The library will be open during the event and decorated for Christmas.

"A special highlight is a tree decorated with Brandywine Critters ornaments, created by Blue Ridge Summit resident, the late Roberta (Bert) Domenick," Pinkerton said. "Mrs. Domenick helped begin the 'Critters Workshop' program at the Brandywine River Museum in Chadds Ford, Pa., and the whimsical ornaments are still a big attraction at that museum."

Brandywine Critter ornaments are made of natural materials such as seeds, pods, grasses and leaves. Some of them have been displayed on a Christmas tree in the White House. The ornaments featured on the library's tree are from Domenick's personal collection.

There will be a memorial tree lighting at 6:30 p.m. in memory of Bill Coyle, Steve O'Philips, Bill

Stanley and John VanDerCruysen, all long-time supporters of the library. Just in time for the holidays, the Blue Ridge Summit Stitchers will draw the winner for their annual quilt raffle. Parking is available in the plaza lot across from the library, off Monterey Lane and in other adjacent lots. For more information, email to: brsmtboard@gmail.com.

Mondays – Children's Story Time 4-5 p.m., Children and parents can join us for a weekly story, craft or coloring sheet, or play time. We will be running two identical 30 - minute sessions in an attempt to accommodate busy schedules.

Wednesdays – Coffee Club from 3 - 4 p.m. Mingle with the gang for coffee, tea, puzzles, board games, coloring books, &c.

Thursdays – Teen's Night. The community room is reserved for teen use from 4:30 - 6 p.m.. just hang out or play Wii, play board games, do puzzles, eat snacks, watch movies, make movies, etc.!

Saturdays - Join us at 10:30 a.m., for an hour of Story Time and all of its festivities! What could be better than a great book and a fun craft?

Scherenschnitte Night at the Library – Dec. 12 at 6:30 p.m.. Learn the German art of paper cutting design.

The Summit Stitchers Quilt Club meets at 5:30 p.m. on Dec. 19. New members and new projects are always welcome! Any skill level may attend. If you have always wanted to learn how

to quilt, now is the perfect time to start! The group is currently working on this year's gorgeous raffle quilt.

The BRS Book Club will meet Dec. 18 at 5 p.m.

For more information on the Blue Ridge Summit Free Library visit www.fclspa.org or call 717-792-2240.

Frederick County Library

Celebrate the Holidays with a few very special events throughout the month of December at both our Emmitsburg Branch and Thurmont Branch Libraries.

To set the stage for the Emmitsburg Annual Tree Lighting event on Monday, Dec. 4, the Emmitsburg Library invites the community to "Open Holiday House" from 4:30-5:30 p.m. Enjoy live music provided by AJ's Jazz Band and create a festive holiday craft to celebrate the season. All ages welcome.

Other holiday events at Emmitsburg include the "DIY Holiday Gift" program for teens on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 1 p.m. and on Saturday, Dec. 16, everyone is invited to the "Hello Holidays Party" from 1-2 p.m. for holiday fun including bingo, crafts, cocoa, and cookies. All ages welcome. Free gift-wrapping will be provided by Emmitsburg community teen volunteers from 1-3 p.m.

Adults are invited to take a step back in time during this special program on the "Historical Eyler's Valley Chapel" on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 11:30 a.m. Discover how this candlelight building, built in 1857, has maintained its historical significance in Frederick County's 275th history.

Holiday celebrations begin at our Thurmont Library branch with "Holidays at the Library!" and "Santa Visits the Library!" on Saturday, Dec. 2. Beginning at 11 a.m. the community is invited to enjoy music with the Frederick Ensemble, students from Dr. Serrano's violin studio from Freder-

ick Community College followed by crafts and activities based on different traditional holidays including Christmas, Diwali, Hanukkah, Kwanzaa, and Winter Solstice. All in anticipation of a very special visit with Santa at 1 p.m.

In celebration of the "Christmas in Thurmont" event, Santa makes his annual visit to the library. Hear a favorite holiday story and as a special treat this year, children from Thurmont Primary School will sing holiday songs after his reading.

Other notable events in December include "The History and Art of Kombucha with The Kombucha Lady" on Saturday, Dec. 9 at 12:30 p.m. This adult program provides an opportunity to learn a little history while enjoying a special tasting of her delicious blends. Other tasty programs include "Teen Cookie Decorating" on Thursday, Dec. 14 and "Hot Cocoa Ornaments" on Tuesday, Dec. 19, both programs from 4-5 p.m.

Wrapping up the year, there will be two movie events to wile away the time during the holiday break. Families can enjoy "Let it Go: Frozen 2" on Wednesday, Dec. 27 and Teens are in for a special treat at "Teen Movie Afternoon" on Thursday, Dec. 28 beginning at 4 p.m.

A gentle reminder, that Frederick County Public Libraries will be closed on Sunday, December 24 to December 27 for the Holidays and on Sunday, December 31.

The Emmitsburg Library and Thurmont Regional Library staff wish everyone a very Happy Holidays!

Visit the library website at Month Calendar | Frederick County Public Libraries (library-calendar.com) to discover so much more. Any questions, call Emmitsburg Library at 301 600-6329 or Thurmont Regional Library at 301 600-7212.

Emmitsburg Branch Library:

Dec. 4: Open Holiday House (All Ages), 4:30-5:30 p.m.

Dec. 7, 14, 21, 28: STEAM Discovery (Elementary), 3:30-4:30 p.m.

Dec. 14: Read to a Therapy Dog with Wags for Hope (Birth to 5, Elementary), 6-7 p.m.

Dec. 16: Hello Holidays Party (Elementary, All Ages), 1-2 p.m.

Dec. 5, 12: RPG Game Night (Teens), 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 9: DIY Holiday Gifts (Teens), 1-3 p.m.

Dec. 16: Holiday Wrap Up (Teens, All Ages), 1-3 p.m.

Dec. 19: Holiday Movie Party (Teens), 4:30-6:30 p.m.

Dec. 9: Frederick County 275th: Historical Eyler's Valley Chapel (Adults), 10:30 - 11:30 a.m.

Thurmont Regional Library

Dec. 2: Holidays at the Library! (Birth-5, Elementary, All Ages) 11-1 p.m.

Dec. 2: Santa Visits the Library! (Birth-5, Elementary, All Ages), 1-2 p.m.

Dec. 4, 12 & 20: STEAM On! (Elementary), 6-7 p.m.

Dec. 9, 16, 23, 30: Family Storytime (Birth-5, Elementary, All Ages), 11-11:30 p.m.

Dec. 17: Gingerbread House Making (Birth-5, Elementary, All Ages), 2-3:30 p.m.

Dec. 27: Let It Go: Frozen 2 Movie and Craft (Elementary, All Ages), 2-4 p.m.

Dec. 14: Teen Cookie Decorating (Teens), 6-7 p.m.

Dec. 19: Teen Hot Cocoa Ornaments (Teens), 4-5 p.m.

Dec. 28: Teen Movie Afternoon (Teens), 4-6 p.m.

Dec. 6: Criminal Record Expungement (Adults), 6-7 p.m.

Dec. 9: The History and Art of Kombucha with The Kombucha Lady (Adults), 12:30-1:30 p.m.

Dec. 14: Digital Learning (Adults), 10-Noon.

Dec. 20: Senior Center Library Day (Adults), 10-12:30 p.m.

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SCHOOL NEWS

Student membership on the Board of Education

Karen Yohoo
Frederick County
Board of Education

At the November 8 meeting, our Board discussed the topic of Student Member of the Board voting rights and the possible legislation it would take to make this happen. School boards do not have the ability to alter legal aspects on their own, such as the amount of compensation members receive (if any), how a member who resigns will be replaced, or the position of Student Member and the level of voting rights they have. That must be done at the state level through legislation, even when the effects are specific to an individual county.

After a lengthy discussion, our board was still not able to come to a consensus on exactly which specific subjects our SMOB would be able to vote on and decided

to form a subcommittee of three members and the current SMOB to bring a report back to the full Board. We then became aware of a statewide bill sponsored by Sen. Karen Lewis Young and Del. Kris Fair. At our November 20 meeting, we tabled our discussion in order to follow the bill as it makes its way through the legislature.

For those unfamiliar with Student Member of the Board (SMOB), this position varies from county to county in Maryland, including Baltimore City and the State Board of Education Student Member. It ranges from the Anne Arundel SMOB having the same full voting rights as any other member of their Board to Somerset and Wicomico counties having no official student member, but rather student representatives. Five of the counties on the Eastern Shore have a student mem-

ber from each of their two or three high schools. The remaining sixteen counties and Baltimore City each have one student member.

Most of the Local Education Agencies (LEAs) have SMOBs with nonvoting status, eight have limited voting rights, and as mentioned above, Anne Arundel's has full voting rights. Most SMOBs may not vote on issues such as capital and operating budgets, school openings, closings, and boundary changes (redistricting), collective bargaining, or appeals dealing with personnel or student discipline. The State Board SMOB has full voting rights except for appeals, however, the State Board itself does not vote on capital or operating budgets and since they do not build any schools there are no votes on openings, closings, and boundary changes other than appeals that are submitted from

decisions made around the state.

The majority of Maryland LEAs conduct their Student Member elections through their Student Government Association (SGA). The process takes time, and the students must follow a rigorous procedure. FCPS's nominations opened on October 3 and continued through the month. A selection panel including members of the Frederick County Association of Student Councils' (FCASC) Board, SGA advisors, and other district personnel reviewed the applications, conducted in-person interviews on November 7, and narrowed the field to five candidates. An orientation was held on November 15 and those selected will present speeches at the December 11 FCASC General Assembly, followed by a Candidate Town Hall on January 4, 4:30 to 7 at the FCPS Central

Office. Online voting takes place throughout the month of January for all students in middle and high school in the county. And, much like the electoral college, voting will determine who each school's SGA representatives support at the February 6 General Assembly. Student enrollment determines how many representative delegates a school receives. The candidate receiving the majority of votes will become the new Student Member of the Board in July.

In 2022, House Bill 797 was submitted that would have required each county board of education to have a student member who would have "certain voting rights". This bill did not pass out of committee. While the bill being submitted this year is yet to have a number assigned, the basic premise is to bring all student members to the level of the State Board SMOB.

Fairfield students ask for outdoor learning space

A group of Fairfield Area High School juniors wants the district to expand its outdoor learning spaces.

At their November meeting, the district school board heard from a group of students asking the district to build a gazebo or pavilion. The students cited several benefits of such a structure, including outdoor study space and an opportunity for students to work on a greenhouse. The students said the project could incorporate hands-on learning opportunities for students. The students estimated the project would cost \$7,000. The board and administrators supported the students' idea and said they would work with them to make it a reality.

"I want something done this year so the people who have the idea get to enjoy it," Board Vice President Jack Liller said.

Board member Lashay Kalathas agreed, and said her business, Taverna 5450, will donate \$2,000 to the project.

The board charged the administration to work with the group on their proposal and return with a request for funds.

"We are doing some really good things at the elementary level," he said.

Taylor told the board he plans to give a more in-depth presentation on the results at a future meeting.

Taylor also plans to inform

the board soon on how the district will update its science curriculum to meet new state standards. In 2022, the Pennsylvania Department of Education adopted Science, Technology & Engineering, Environmental Literacy &

Sustainability standards that every district must meet. The new standards prioritize a shift away from memorization of facts to having students productively participate in scientific discourse and practices, involve students in sustained

investigation to support deeper understanding, and recognize that even young children are capable of more sophisticated scientific reasoning than originally thought, according to the Pennsylvania Department of Education website.

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At A Night In Bethlehem, kids and their families will explore the city at the time of Jesus' birth. Through hands-on experience they'll find out about the most important baby ever - and that Jesus came to save us.



Curriculum update

Aaron D. Taylor, assistant to the superintendent for curriculum, special education, and student services, told the board that an initial review of the district's Future Ready PA Index, also known as the district's report card, shows positive results.

In 2021, 44 percent of Fairfield students were below or well below grade level, Taylor said. This year, that figure reduced to 29 percent. Taylor also told the board that Fairfield Area Elementary School's third grade class had the highest score compared to peers throughout Adams County.

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ARTS

A Christmas Carol returns to the Majestic Theater

The beloved Totem Pole Playhouse production continues its holiday family tradition! The Caledonia Theatre Company, in association with Gettysburg Community Theatre, will present the Totem pole playhouse original adaptation of A Christmas Carol by Carl Schurr & Wil Love opening December 8, at 7:30 pm at Gettysburg's Majestic Theater.

First produced at Chambersburg Central School in 1987, this beautiful adaptation is celebrating its 35th Anniversary. The production will run with limited performances through Dec. 17th. Over 30 performers, young and old, will grace the stage as a myriad of characters. The production will be directed by Producing Artistic Director, David Hemsley Caldwell.

Returning in the coveted role of Ebenezer Scrooge is William Eissler. Richard Sautter of Gettysburg will portray Jacob Marley, Scrooge's deceased business partner and the three spirits taking Scrooge on his journey of redemption will be portrayed by Ariabella Dimino (The Ghost of Christmas Past), Sam Little (The Ghost of Christmas Present) and Lute Lyman (The Ghost of Christmas Future).

Bob Cratchit, Scrooge's kind, underpaid and under-appreciated employee, is portrayed by Gettysburg University professor Christopher Kauffman. His real-life daughters, Mia and Phoebe Kauffman will join each other on stage as Belinda and Martha Cratchit. Also taking their places around Cratchit's sparsely laid but abundantly loving Christmas table are Donovan Ohler (Matthew), Jasper Wakefield (Peter) and their beloved Tiny Tim shared by Larkin Bucher and Liam Spang. Taylor Whidden once again serves as Bob's loving & protective wife, Mrs. Cratchit. Adam Wrennick will take on the role of Fred, Scrooge's faithful and patient nephew, Catherine Blaine of Gettysburg will play Mrs. Fezziwig and Belle will be portrayed by Bailey Hovermale.

Once again the show will be a family affair with siblings and multiple generations joining each other on the stage. McConnellsbury brothers, Elliott and Jasper Wakefield, both appear in this year's production. This will mark Elliott's 8th annual performance in A Christmas Carol as a Caroler and Dick Wilkins. Jasper will once again play Peter Cratchit. Emily Windover joins husband Chris



Totem Pole Playhouse continues its holiday family tradition with its original adaptation of A Christmas Carol at Gettysburg's Majestic Theater. First produced in 1987, this beautiful adaptation is celebrating its 35th Anniversary.

Kauffman and daughters Phoebe and Mia onstage as the Charity Woman and the Laundress.

Chambersburg natives, brother and sister Liam and Alice Spang, mother and daughter Laura and Emmeline Sponseller and brothers Thomas and Michael Barra

will also grace the stage this year.

The show will be performed December 8, 9, 15, 16 & 17 at 7:30 p.m. December 10 & 16th at 2 p.m. Student Matinees also available by calling the Totem Pole Box Office at 717 -352-2164.

To purchase tickets call the Majestic Theater Box Office at 717 -337-8200 or purchase online at the Majestic Theater website www.gettysburgmajestic.org.

Student Matinees also available by calling the Totem Pole Box Office @T1T-352-2164.

Emmitsburg Community Chorus Christmas concerts

The Emmitsburg Community Chorus kicks off its fall season with a free performance at the historic Basilica of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton at 4 p.m. on Sunday, Dec. 3. Under the direction of Peggy Flickinger, the 32-voice group includes members from Maryland, Pennsylvania and Vir-

ginia. They are accompanied by pianist Lisa Mattia.

The concert features holiday favorites from the screen, including: "Have Yourself a Merry Little Christmas" from Meet Me in St. Louis; "Christmas Time Is Here" from A Charlie Brown Christmas; "Almost Christmas" from A Lit-

tle Princess; "Silver Bells" from The Lemon Drop Kid; "Believe" from The Polar Express; "Snow" and "White Christmas" from White Christmas; "My Favorite Things" from The Sound of Music; "Somewhere in My Memory" from Home Alone; "The Shepherds' Chorus" from Amahl and the Night Visitors; "Walking in the Air" from The Snowman; "Noel: Christmas Eve, 1913" from John Denver and the

Muppets: A Christmas Together; "Mary, Did You Know?" from the musical of the same name; "Breath of Heaven (Mary's Song)"; and "A Bach Merry Christmas." Additional small group selections also will be performed at each concert.

The remaining concert schedule includes: Dec. 10 - 3 p.m. Lewistown United Methodist Church, 11032 Hessong Bridge Road; Dec. 16 - 4 p.m. St. John's Lutheran

Church, 8619 Blacks Mill Road, Creagerstown; and Dec. 17 - 7 p.m. Homewood at Cruiland Farms, 7407 Willow Road, Frederick.

The nonprofit Emmitsburg Community Chorus was founded in 1966. Their concerts are made possible in part through a grant from the Frederick Arts Council. Freewill offerings will be accepted at the Basilica, Creagerstown and Lewistown concerts.

Celebrates the holiday season with Way Off Broadway

Every year Way Off Broadway brings a brand new Christmas production to the stage, making it the perfect place to celebrate the holidays with family and friends. The most joyous time of the year, the magic of the season makes anything possible.

Always the most popular of the year, blending songs and music from Christmases past and present, the show is perfect for the entire family.

Taking to the stage in this season's holiday offering are Lizzie Bartlett, Betsey Whitmore

Brannen, Paul M. Cabell, Jarod Glou, Bob Gudauskas, Becca Mills, Wil Spaeth, and Megan Elizabeth West.

Jingle Jingle All the Way runs November 25th through December 23rd, with performances are every Friday and Saturday evening, and matinees on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month. Tickets on a Friday evening or Sunday afternoon are \$55 per person; on Saturday evening, tickets are \$59. Tickets may be purchased by calling the theatre's Box Office at 301-662-6600.

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

'Tis the season of The Nutcracker

Ashley Walczyk
MSMU Class of 2024

*'Twas the night before Christmas,
when all through the town, not a
creature was stirring, not even the
Mount...*

The fall 2023 semester is ending, and with that, we all look forward to winter break and Christmas! It has been a tough semester, but we managed it well. With that, many of us are looking forward to returning home with a cup of hot cocoa and cozying up with family for the holiday season. Some of us plan to look at Christmas lights, and others wish to go ice skating. However, if you want a treat for this holiday season, you should go to a local performance of The Nutcracker.

What exactly is The Nutcracker? It is a Russian ballet, composed by Pyotr Ilyich Tchaikovsky, adapted by the E. T. A. Hoffmann's 1816 short story The Nutcracker and the Mouse King. Tchaikovsky also composed the famous Swan Lake. This ballet, composing of two acts, is set on the night before Christmas, making it the perfect story to tell around Christmas-time. If you do have time, please watch this spectacular performance at least once in your lifetime.

Story of The Nutcracker

Although it is an adaptation from the short story, "The Nutcracker and the Mouse King," the ballet does not follow the details of the original story, but it does follow the same plotline of the short story.

The story opens with a grand Christmas tree. The scene is Christmas Eve night, with Clara Stahlbaum playing with Fritz, at a beautiful Christmas Party. The Godfather or Uncle, depending on variation of the story, Drosselmeyer, is a toymaker and a clock maker, bringing along two life-size dolls to the party to be admired by the guests and dance with the children. He provides presents for the children at the party, and

Clara's gift from him is the beautiful Nutcracker, adored by the partygoers. Fritz, out of jealousy, grabs the Nutcracker from Clara, breaking it. Drosselmeyer, seeing how upset Clara is, takes a handkerchief from his pocket and magically repairs the Nutcracker. Later that night, once the guests have all quitted the party, Clara sneaks back to the tree to check on the Nutcracker. She falls asleep when the Nutcracker is safely in her arms.

The next scene is known as the Fight Scene, a scene everyone knows and loves. It begins with the clock striking midnight, indicating Christmas had come. The clock striking midnight was also the catalyst for strange beginnings to happen. The toys come to life, and here is when we meet the mice army and the Mouse King. The Nutcracker, who is also brought to life by the strike of midnight, leads the army of toys to fight against the Mouse King and his army. Meanwhile, Clara is still asleep, and she wakes during this fight.

During this scene, the Nutcracker and the Mouse King goes head-to-head against each other. However, the Nutcracker does not seem to be able to fight against the Mouse King. Both the Nutcracker and the army of toys gets captured by the Mouse King and his mice army. Clara, now awake during this, throws her slipper, in a last-minute attempt to save the Nutcracker. She effectively hits the Mouse King on the head. During the final part of this scene, the Mouse King falls to the floor, unconscious, and we watch the mice army scurry off stage, carrying the Mouse King.

During the transition, the Nutcracker turns into a Prince, and from then on, the ballet focuses on the journey he takes Clara on in this wonderful place. The Land of Snow, as it is called, is an enchanted forest wonderland. Clara and the Prince are welcomed by dancing snowflakes, which are girls dancing in beautiful costumes, acting as the welcoming snowflakes.

The next part of this journey focuses on the Land of Sweets,

which has another iconic dance and character, the Sugar Plum Fairy. The Prince escorts Clara to the Land of Sweets, meeting the fairy herself. During this time, the Prince tells the fairy of his battle with the Mouse King and the mice army. After hearing of his heroic battle, the fairy rewards the two with several dances. These dances include the Spanish Dance, the Arabian Dance, the Russian Dance, the Chinese Dance, the Mirliton Dance, and the Waltz of Flowers. For the finale, the Sugar Plum Fairy, and the Cavalier dance the Pas de Deux, or the "step of two" in French.

In some renditions of this ballet, the Sugar Plum Fairy shows resemblance to Clara's older sister, while other renditions cast the roles separate.

Finally, the conclusion of the ballet is Clara awaking under the Christmas tree with the Nutcracker in arms. It is Christmas day, and Clara realizes that her adventures with the Nutcracker were all a dream.

The entirety of the ballet lasts anywhere from one hour and fifty minutes to as long as two hours and thirty minutes, allowing an intermission between the two acts. With costuming and stage sets being extravagant, you cannot help but feel the sense of enchantment during the show.

Why is it so popular?

Although the ballet originated in 1892, there was an increase in performances around the world since the late 1960s, especially in America. Majority of the American ballet companies perform this spectacular ballet,



Here we see the battle between the Nutcracker and the Mouse King from New York City Ballet's "George Balanchine's The Nutcracker."

including your local ballet companies. This beautiful story has been told across generations, making it the perfect and timeless ballet for the season.

Following the beautiful sets and costuming, the talent to play each one of these characters is also phenomenal. We regard it as a Christmas ballet, and one of the

There is also another version of The Nutcracker ballet, which is called The Nutcracker Suite. In the Suite, however, is more composed and choreographed for adults than children. It is also more expensive to perform, as the grandeur of the show is much more elaborate. For an understanding, about fifty-seven people are hired alone to work backstage. This does not include the orchestra or the cast.

Each rendition of this ballet is also significant to diverse cultures globally. In America, we celebrate it around Christmas, while in China, the ballet is performed around the New Year, with some variation to the Sugar Plum Fairy character and dragons in exchange for mice. Each culture adapts the classic to fit within their customs and traditions.

Local Performances

The Maryland Regional Ballet is performing The Nutcracker at the Weinberg Center for the Arts down in Frederick City. Performances start on December 8th at 8 p.m., and go the throughout the weekend, with December 9th having two shows, one at 2 and one at 7 p.m., and the last performance on December 10th at 2 p.m..

If you do not wish to travel this season, you can also purchase The Nutcracker on Amazon, which is performed by the Bolshio Ballet in 2010. This version is the most traditional compared to other renditions of the Christmas story. There is also another version on Amazon to purchase, which is The Nutcracker produced in 1977. There are also many other renditions you can find online that only feature the storyline.

You can also watch renditions found on YouTube, as well as any other ballet and musical.

In the words of Nicholas Clarke Moore: "Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!"

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CATOCTIN SPORTS

Sports teaches us life lessons

Gina Lin CHS Class of 2024

Richelle Zheng CHS Class of 2025

In a blink of an eye, the fall sports season has come to a close. The track teams continue conquering competitions effortlessly, with the boys winning the MPSSAA 1A West Region Championship and the girls following in second. Although not all Catoctin sports teams reached their expectations on the field, the lessons learned from those games are what remains the most important at the end of the day.

This year was the first year of the pilot flag football program. Even though the Cougars didn't do the best this season, the coaches have a lot to say of the girls' efforts. The assistant coach, Rebecca Hurley commented, "I enjoyed watching the girls learn the sport and grow as a team while having fun." Hurley will be coaching flag football again next year.

"Hopefully, we'll learn new flag skills and participate in team building. Due to a combination of factors, Cougars flag football fell behind this season. Hurley pointed out, "There were some schools, such as Oakdale and Urbana, who had unofficial flag programs." But Catoctin's players didn't have previous exposure to flag football. Moreover, Catoctin had such a small team compared to bigger schools with twice the number of members. Since the game requires seven players on the field at once, they struggled with player rotation.

Hurley also discussed some of her struggles with coaching.

"I learned a lot about myself by finding a balance in coaching skills and making it fun for the girls." She described times where she would encourage the girls after games, as they tried their best during games, even being disadvantaged. The girls should be commended for learning a new sport and participating in something outside of their comfort zone. The coaches also made suggestions to the pilot flag football program, such as better promotion to increase interest in the sport.

There have been notable moments in Cougars football. For example, they won the playoffs for the first time since 2019! The Cougars played Loch Raven High School on November 2 and won 33-12. Then the Cougars advanced to the regional second bracket on November 9th against Patterson Mill High School Huskies. Although the Cougars slipped in the 4th quarter by falling behind by two touchdowns, they recovered. In the end they were able to squeeze past the Huskies with a 20-19 victory. Catoctin will face Mountain Ridge High School in the 1A State Quarterfinals.

This season, the team also learned to bridge a language gap between their kicker, Jorge Diaz-Nichols, a Spanish foreign exchange student, and the rest of the team. Diaz-Nichols had never played football before but the team saw potential in him and the more they invested in him, the more he

improved – it's almost like a positive feedback loop. This season proved to be a successful one as the Cougars made significant improvement on the field.

Field hockey has experienced a roller coaster of events this season as they had a pretty even distribution of wins and losses. Catoctin field hockey prevailed over Brunswick High School, 6-1 on October 26 and proceeded to regional finals. The regional finals took place on October 31 against the Middletown High School Knights. The Cougars fell to the Knights, 0-2, effectively concluding the 2023 season. Senior Grace Williams participated in the FCPS senior all-star game alongside players from Urbana, Middletown, and Thomas Johnson High School. Williams played on the White team which won the game 5-0 against the Dark team.

Although the Catoctin boys soccer team didn't make it to the playoffs, they performed significantly better than last year. This year the team won five games in total, and lost seven. Their final season home game took place on October 19 against Boonsboro High School. The Cougars won 3-1. The final game of the season took place on October 27 and was played against Brunswick High School Railroaders. The Cougars lost the game 2-6 against the Railroaders.

The Catoctin cross-country team has also been extremely successful this season and continues to be a formidable force on the field. The cross-country team participated in the Frank Keyser Invitational on October 7th at Boonsboro High School and had a great meet! The boys team placed fourth overall, with Gabe Riling placing 5th, with a time of 16:07 minutes and Santiago Canadas Fraga's time of 16:57.5 placed him in 11th place. In the end, the boys team placed fourth overall



Jenna Conley, Aniston Casne, and Keira Taylor led the girls track team at the 1A State Championship.

with a score of 119. From the Girls' team, Keria Taylor placed 15th with a time of 20:52.6. The boys team continued their success by taking first place in the CMC Championships on October 20, which was held at Boonsboro High School. Later, they participated at the Frederick County Championships on October 26, at Utica District Park, where they placed second.

Both the girls and boys cross-country teams qualified for states at the 1A West Regional Championships, which was held on November 2 at the Allegany College Course. The boys team placed first at 1A West. The teams completed a 5,000 meters trail, with Gabe Riling securing first overall at this meet and becoming the regional champion with a time of 16:09. Riling, Canadas, Daniel Hoyle, and Dennis Lease all finished in the top 15! On the girls team, Conley, Casne, and Taylor, placed in the top 15 as well. The girls team completed the competition second place overall, which qualified them for states as well. This is a huge milestone, as the girls CHS cross-country team has not been to the states since 2015.

Both teams ran at the 1A State Championships on November 11, at Hereford High School, where the boys fought hard and brought home second place, with 134 points. At states, Riling placed second overall, with a time of 17:01.16. Gabe Riling and Dan-

iel Hoyle also qualified for the all-state team as they placed in the top 25. As a result of Riling's successful season, the Frederick News-Post named him as an Athlete of the Week.

Moreover, the Girl's team has worked extremely hard this season and conquered fourth at states with a score of 95. From the girls' team, Jenna Conley placed 6th with 21:05.10. Aniston Casne followed with a time of 21:43.06, ultimately placing her in 15th. Although they weren't state finalists, their team has potential and will continue to conquer the obstacles. Additionally, Riling competed in the 5,000 meters open invitational NXR Southeast Regional Championships at WakeMed Soccer Park in South Carolina on November 19. Riling did a great job and placed 97th out of 640 runners, finishing in 16:31.2. Ultimately, the Catoctin cross-country teams sure had a great season this year and has made Catoctin proud!

For closing remarks, all of the Catoctin sports teams put forth their best efforts. They tried their best to adjust to the abrupt changes in roster and the relative skill levels of their players. Even though not all of CHS sports teams received recognition, we hope this article provided some insight into the experiences of Catoctin players.

To read past Catoctin Sports articles, visit the Current Events section of Emmitsburg.net.



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Was Babe Ruth Discovered at Mount St. Mary's?

Steve Morano
MSMU Class of 2024

Throughout the nearly two centuries of America's pastime, baseball history has reached every single corner of the country. From the Major Leagues all the way to the days of townball, the game has had a profound impact on every community. Even in western Maryland, baseball history has been made in every corner. In places like Hagerstown, where the great Willie Mays made his debut in white baseball with the minor league Trenton Giants at the old Municipal Stadium in 1950 before his career with the New York/San Francisco Giants took off. In Gettysburg, where the three-time World Series and Hall of Famer Eddie Plank was born, raised, and taught the game. And, by happenstance, in Emmitsburg.

On the campus of Mount Saint Mary's University, an information plaque lies between Echo Field, the spiritual home of Mount Athletics, and the Chapel of the Immaculate Conception. A picture of an unnamed priest and the legendary baseball player, George Herman "Babe" Ruth takes up the information display. Along with facts about his career, the plaque describes Ruth's visit to the Mount in May of 1921. This was a token to the place where Ruth was supposedly discovered by a scout of Jack Dunn, the owner of the minor league Baltimore Orioles of the International League in 1913. This, like many things in the history of the game and the legend of Babe Ruth, is heavily debated.

Born in Baltimore to German American parents, Ruth grew up in an industrious time for the city that, at the time, was considered a baseball Mecca. The National League Baltimore Orioles of the pre-MLB era won back-to-back-to-back pennants from 1894-1896, with Ruth coming into the world right before their second pennant push in 1895. But that is only on the side of white baseball. The Baltimore Weldon-Giants, the preeminent Negro League team in the city were a successful brainstorming team of the pre-league era of black baseball. Ruth would have grown up with baseball as his life blood.

But the young Ruth was a troublemaker, perhaps because he was around his father's saloon too much. The man that would become one of the greatest baseball players of all time started drinking, chewing tobacco, and stealing money from the registers of his father's business by the age of six. His parents were unable to control him, so they sent him to west Baltimore to attend St. Mary's Industrial School for Boys in 1904 at the age of nine. The young Ruth, scared from the bullying of his fellow classmates and exhausted from the manual labor required of the boys in the schools' factories pushed him to run away

several times before settling down. But this was the place that baseball truly became a part of his life.

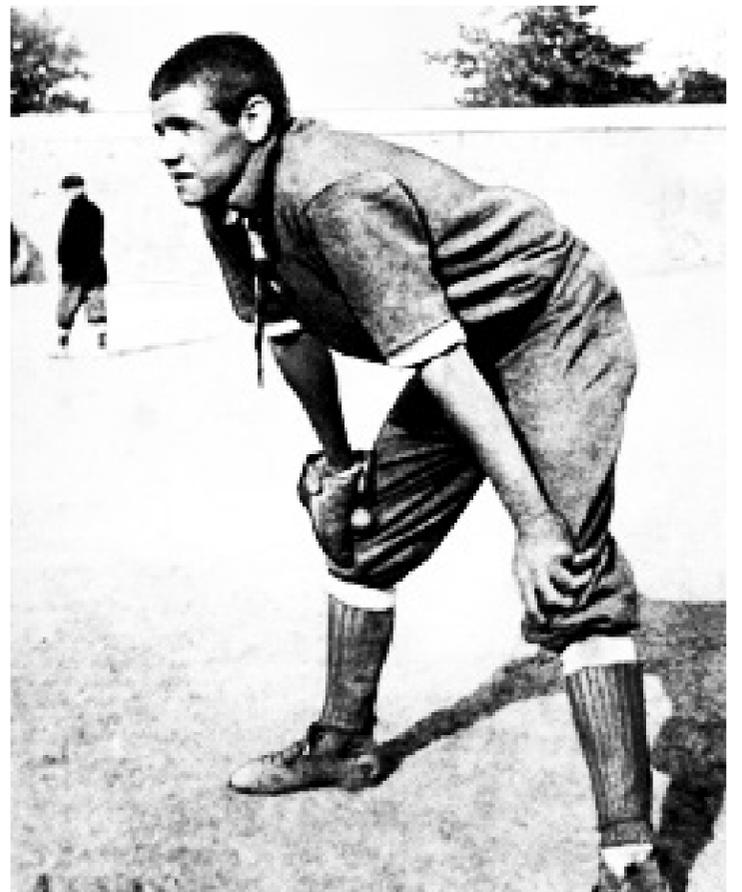
The Canadian-born Xaverian Brother Mathias, a tall religious man of Irish ancestry was the school's baseball coach. Imitating his swing, Ruth learned to belt baseballs from Mathias swing and quickly rose through the ranks of the inter-school league to be on the team that played other boarding schools like St. Mary's. This was the situation that Ruth found himself in when St. Mary's Industrial School played the Mount's prep school baseball team. At the turn of the century, Mount Saint Mary's had a prep school were boys under the age of 18 could attend. Not much is known of the meeting between the Mount's Prep school and St. Mary's in 1913, but it is thought that this is where a scout for Jack Dunn's Baltimore Orioles discovered the young Ruth and signed him to a contract. The rest is history, or so the story goes.

Ruth's trip back to the Mount in 1921, nearly a year and a half into his tenure with the New York Yankees, was a show of appreciation to the institution where he was discovered. Giving a "batting exhibition," students of the Mount and citizenry from across the area flocked to echo field to watch the Maharajah of Mash swing the bat. But this was not the only batting exhibition or game that Ruth played at places where he was "discovered." In fact,

Mount St. Mary's isn't even the place where the Society of American Baseball Research or SABR claims Ruth was discovered.

The place that SABR recognizes the place that Ruth was discovered was Mount Saint Joseph College in west Baltimore, the rival institution to St. Mary's. It is their reasoning that Brother Gilbert, the athletic director of Mount Saint Joseph at the time used Ruth as a diversion. This was done to take Dunn's attention away from Gilbert's star southpaw Ford Meadows. This is the preeminent historical society of Baseball's view of the Ruth discovery narrative, not the one the Mount recognizes. Ruth even went back to Mount Saint Joseph in 1922 and 1923 to give a batting exhibition and to play an exhibition game in front of crowds just like the ones at the Mount.

Giving the same treatment to his rival high school as he did with Mount Saint Mary's, Ruth has become a conundrum for those wishing to discover the truth of his legend, but the man is exactly that—a legend. A person where mystique often trumps reality and where the stories of an American legend are often told by the newspaper writers of the 1920s could be a hard case to dissect, but there are often many truths to one's tale. It is not impossible to think that Ruth, in some way, may have been scouted at the Mount by Dunn, as he did with many other stars at that time. And it is also not impos-



Babe Ruth was supposedly discovered at Mount St. Mary's in 1913.

sible to think that Brother Gilbert told Dunn about Ruth as a diversion to keep Meadows. These are all things that can be factored into the aura of Babe Ruth.

Whether the story of Ruth's discovery at either Mount Saint Mary's or Mount Saint Joseph's are real is out of the question. There are some discrepancies with both stories, but there are also some truths. The fact of the matter is that Babe Ruth visited both places

at the height of his career to pay tribute to two institutions that he believed made him in some way. That alone gives credence to both places being in some way responsible for his discovery. But with many things regarding the Bambino, the story may be far from the truth.

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COMPLEMENTARY CORNER

Health and responsibility

Jefferson Breland

This past month as I sat in the “Quiet Room” of the Clarence M. Mitchell, Jr. Courthouse in Baltimore, MD waiting for my juror number to be called, I began to quietly muse on the word “responsibility.”

Since you asked, “Yes, I live in Baltimore, MD. And yes, I have an acupuncture office in Gettysburg, PA and yes, I also have an office in Baltimore.”

Also, since you asked, my home is approximately 65 miles from Gettysburg and it takes me about an hour and a half to drive that distance. My Baltimore office is not quite 7 miles from my home and takes me a whopping 25-30 minutes to drive there. Ah, city life.

Any-who, responsibility. The reason “responsibility” came to mind was the thought, “Would I do this voluntarily?” Would I donate my time to participate in our system of justice if I wasn’t summoned under threat of legal action from the Jury Commissioner of Baltimore City?

Jury duty is just that, a duty. According to the Oxford English Dictionary (OED), duty has two primary meanings. One definition is “a task or action that someone is required to perform.” A second definition is “a moral or legal obligation; a responsibility.”

Aha! There it is again, “responsibility.”

A practice I use to look at words

afresh, is to break it into its parts and think like a child. The word, responsibility, seems pretty straight forward. It looks like a mashup of the words, response and ability. Turn it around and one might say it simply means the “ability to respond.”

Put like that, we all have the “ability to respond.”

According to the OED, there are a variety of definitions of responsibility which seem more complicated. They use words such as duty to, control over, job, legal obligation, required, moral obligation, respect, and blame.

So what does this have to do with our health?

I’ll put it to you this way.. Would you rather voluntarily take responsibility for your health or wait to be summoned under threat of disease to help yourself?

If we apply the ideas in the OED definition of responsibility we can look at health from a number of different angles.

Is our health a duty? To others? To oneself? Is it like a vow? Something we promise as in traditional wedding vows such as the classic lines, “... in sickness and in health, to love and to cherish, till death do us part....”

Is our health a matter of control? A means of taking control of our life or using our health-related issues to control others? Examples range from feigning illness to get out of a test in school or to not go to work to something as extreme as

serious as Munchausen syndrome.

Do we give over control of our health to others? Do we blindly rely on experts such as medical professionals to make observations about us and make decisions for us?

Some people view their health as if it were a full-time job. They do background checks (DNA testing) and track their family history of illness. They join affiliated clubs and communities like gyms, Peloton, CrossFit, or yoga studios. They plan meals and design their life schedules as if they were business plans to submit to a bank for a loan.

Is one’s health a legal obligation?

“Health” is an important conversation. It is a complex issue that is influenced by many, many factors.”

Or perhaps a moral obligation? To whom? Ourselves? Our loved ones? Our community?

Can we blame our health on something or someone? Yes, there are occasions where accidents happen and there is a someone or

something to blame. Most often, however, we look outside of ourselves for the condition of our health. It’s easy to blame DNA, allergies, the events or choices of our life, or our healthcare professionals for our health problems. Some of us even blame God for our ill health.

To state the obvious, “Health” is an important conversation. It is a complex issue that is influenced by many, many factors. The conversation is influenced by our religious beliefs, our societal and personal beliefs around death and dying, by the language we use to describe health and disease, the structure of our healthcare and health insurance systems, and even our definition of the word, “health.”

Let’s start with a definition of health. It is simply the state or condition of our body at any given moment. Health is health. Now, we can say there is a continuum of health from “good” health or “good function” to “bad” health or “bad function” in which symptoms present themselves. These symptoms indicate an imbalance or function issue in your body.

When we look at health in relationship to the function of our body, we can then apply the concept of our “ability to respond”, to take action to improve our body’s function.

I believe health is a personal responsibility. I believe it is our responsibility to pay attention to the symptoms, the messages our body sends us. I believe it is our responsibility to make necessary shifts in our life whether it be diet, sleep, activities, or work when our body says, “Hey, look over here! Stop that!”

Too often we ignore these messages and take over-the-counter drugs to continue life as normal. We often continue doing the same things that led to the initial symptoms. When we do this, our body will send us more powerful messages and up the ante of the symptoms. Something like a simple tension headache may, over time, lead to a diagnosis of high blood pressure.

Our health is, in a way, our contract with life. Our lives are our respon-

sibility, so why don’t we think about health the same way. Why do we sub-contract the most fundamental aspects of our life to other people if our health is our responsibility?

I used to do home renovation for my job. When I would hire sub-contractors, I often worried that they would not do as good a job as I could.

Now you might say, well, I am not a healthcare professional, I have to sub-contract. That may be true. I propose to you that you know yourself and your symptoms and the subtle shifts in the function of your body better than anyone else in the world. Only you can detect the subtle signs of an imbalance in your health

All you have to do is acknowledge that your health is your responsibility. Know that you have the “ability to respond.”

Begin to pay attention to the messages your body is telling you.

What to do with these messages, you ask? Sometimes the answer is as simple as going to bed a bit earlier or eating a bit less. It might mean turning off the news on the television or internet. It might be as simple as substituting room temperature or warm beverages for iced or cold beverages.

Then, pay attention and see what helps or doesn’t help.

Once you begin to reawaken your mind to your body’s messages, you will notice more and more subtle signs of an imbalance earlier and earlier.

This process of taking responsibility for one’s health is an opportunity to educate yourself about your body’s specific signs of needing help and then what helps and what doesn’t.

Once you get a sense of how you can help yourself, you will also learn what you can do yourself and when you might need to bring in a medical professional such as your local acupuncturist.

Want to learn more? Give me a call. Be well.

Jefferson Breland is a board-certified acupuncturist licensed in Pennsylvania and Maryland with offices in Gettysburg and Towson, respectively. He can be reached at 410-336-5876.



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Each year people ask you for a Christmas list so they have an idea what you would like for Christmas. This year how about surprising them with a list of time they could spend with you and things you could do together. People say it's not the gift that counts, it's the thought. That can be so true with family and friends. Most people have the things they need and sometimes gifts end up being something that gets put in the closet and never used. The gift of time is something that will be greatly appreciated now and always remembered in the future.

I remember when my sons were in school some years the teachers would have them assemble a coupon book for Mother's Day or Father's Day or some other holiday. They would write down on a coupon what they would do for us. Sometimes it was wash the dishes or rake leaves or give us a hug each day for a month. I always extended that coupon with a no expiration date.

This may be the year that you would like to show family and friends how much they mean to you by setting aside time to visit or spend helping them with something. Of course, buying gifts are the tradition at Christmas time but time and help may be a gift they will treasure even more.

I know being with family can sometimes be challenging. Maybe this can be a way to get closer and get to know people better. Giving the gift of time is not only for our family but can also be extended to neighbors, friends, and acquaintances. Just a visit to your neighbor that doesn't get out much can mean a big difference to them. They may not have the chance to talk with people and it could make their day much better. Loneliness is big problem for older people or those who just don't have family to look in on them.

I have told you many ways the gift of time and visits can help others but it can also make a big difference in your own life. Sharing time, talk, experiences and yourself with others also improves your health. People are social beings and in today's world contact with other people is becoming less and less. Exercise, healthy eating, meditation are all important to keep us in the best health we can be but sharing help and time with other

people is right up there with these things. Maybe committing to visit someone a day each week will get you and them out of the house for a walk. Maybe you can share a healthy meal with them and try new food. Finding a way to share time with someone else could not only be the answer for them, but for you too.

This year Christmas could be the beginning of a special experience for you, your family and friends to discover a way to be healthy in body and soul. I always tell you to keep moving and that not only means physically but mentally and socially too.

Getting and staying healthy means taking care of all parts of our being. When one part is not up to it's best the other areas are affected too.

I hope this gives you something to think about this holiday season when trying to figure out what to get someone for Christmas or what to tell someone you would like for Christmas. You could share this idea with your children or grandchildren. It would make you happy and give you time to be with them more. If you have any ideas to share, I would like to hear them. You can contact me at 717-334-6009. Merry Christmas and Happy Holidays!



Health Department Recognizes World AIDS Day on December 1

The Frederick County Health Department (FCHD) joins with the global community to recognize the 35th anniversary of World Aids Day on December 1st. As part of our commitment to end HIV and AIDS, FCHD will provide walk-in HIV testing on December 1 and every Tuesday and Friday from 9AM-3PM at 350 Montevue Lane Frederick. Testing is free, anonymous, and no appointment is required. Other times and locations for HIV testing are available by calling 301-600-3342 or by visiting Health.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HIV.

For decades, World AIDS Day has served as a reminder of the challenges faced by millions worldwide living with HIV. It is a day to honor the lives lost, celebrate progress made, and recommit to ending the stigma and discrimination associated with this disease. This year's theme, "World AIDS Day 35: Remember and Commit" highlights the crucial need for unity, awareness, and access to healthcare for all.

For more information, please visit Health.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HIV or call 301-600-3342.

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Pay Off A Mortgage
Eliminating a mortgage in retirement increases cash flow. A HECM does not require monthly mortgage payments. Borrower must occupy home as primary residence and remain current on property taxes, homeowner's insurance, the costs of home maintenance, and any HOA fees.

Stand-By Credit Line
A retirement strategy where the homeowner uses the credit line as a bucket to draw from during bear markets.

Long Term Care Protection
Set up a credit line and let it grow untouched, to use only if needed.

Emergency Back-Up
Set up a credit line to use only as needed.

Tenure Payments
Tax-free lifetime income stream, thereby reducing the need to make withdrawals from tax portfolios. Consult a tax specialist.

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

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

SPORTSMAN'S CALENDAR GUN RAFFLE 2024

THE 12 DAYS OF CHRISTMAS IS A \$1000 A DAY PRIZE

Annual Fundraising Event to support the Emmitsburg Vigilant Hose Company #6 Fire & Rescue

Calendars will be available starting the middle of September at the VHC Fire Hall and Stateline Gun Exchange, Emmitsburg

For more information contact the Vigilant Hose Co. at: 240-674-0154 or visit www.VHC6.com

ASTRONOMY

The night sky of December

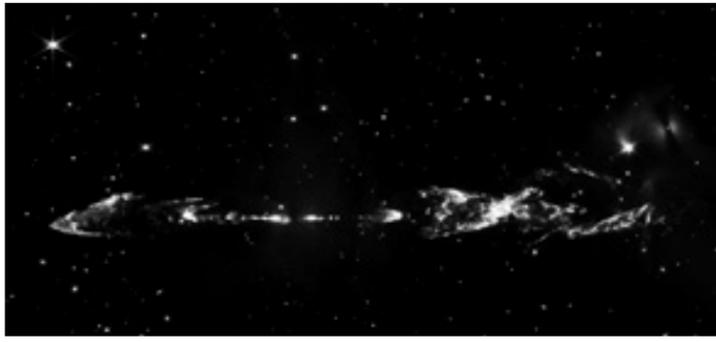
Professor Wayne Wooten

The last quarter moon is on December 6th. The waning crescent moon passes just south of Venus (watch both in broad daylight after sunrise!) on December 9th. The new moon is on December 12th; four months until totality on April 8th! The waxing crescent will set well before midnight on December 13th, the peak for perhaps the best annual meteor shower, the Geminids. The meteors come out of Gemini in the NE, and while there may be more after midnight, there tend to be quite a few in the evening as well, and the faint crescent will not interfere even then.

The crescent passes below Saturn on December 17th, and the first quarter moon is December 19th. The winter solstice occurs on December 21st at 10:27 to begin winter, and this is our shortest day. The waxing gibbous moon passes just left of Jupiter on December 22nd; with clear afternoon skies, can you spot Jupiter naked eye before sunset, using the moon as a guide? The Full, or Yule Moon, is the day after Christmas this year.

Mercury and Venus both are morning stars, with Mercury climbing higher in the SE dawn as the year ends, to reach greatest western elongation in January. The pair will be closest on the morning of January 12th, when they make a striking alignment with Mars below them, now emerging from behind the Sun.

Jupiter is well placed for evening viewing in Aries, dominating the eastern sky at dusk, and Saturn is getting lower in the SW in Aquarius. Observe all four giants now, as Uranus (Aries) and Neptune (Aquarius) are also visible in binoculars. Nor seen is Comet Hal-



Imagine you could go back in time 4.6 billion years and take a picture of our Sun just as it was being born. What would it look like? Well, you can get a clue from this glorious new image acquired by the James Webb Space Telescope. Towards the centre of this object, called HH212, is a star coming into existence that is probably no more than 50,000 years old. The scene would have looked much the same when our Sun was a similar age. Physics suggests those dramatic outflows of gas are the means by which the nascent star regulates its birthing.

ley. This month it is at aphelion, outside the orbit of Neptune; by January, it heads sunward again, to arrive with the naked eyes in the dawn skies of June 2061. At its best that August, it will be ten times brighter than it appeared back in 1986. Something to live for! Here is the striking conjunction of it, Venus, and the crescent moon on the evening of August 18, 2061.

The square of Pegasus dominates the western sky. South of it are the watery constellations of Pisces (the fish), Capricorn (Sea Goat), Aquarius (the Water Bearer) with Saturn now, and Cetus (the Whale). Below Aquarius is Fomalhaut, the only first magnitude star of the southern fall sky. It marks the mouth of Pisces Australis, the Southern Fish. If you want an ideal ap for learning the constellations, download "Nocturne" for Apple phones, and mount it on a tripod for 2' exposures of the sky, which you can then annotate with star names, constellation lines, and even the mythological figures. Makes the sky come alive.

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. Her 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, lying about 2.5 million light years distant.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus, rises. 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 compan-

ion as seen from Earth. This method of observing changes in a star's brightness when another body (even a planet!) eclipses it is a very powerful tool in finding stars sizes, shapes (tidal distortion of Algol was confirmed by my master's thesis at Gainesville), and exoplanets.

Look at Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Their appearance in November in classical times was associated with the stormy season, when frail sailing ships stayed in port. Aldebaran is not a member of the Hyades, but about twice as close as the Hyades; distances in astronomy can be deceiving. Usually the brighter objects are closer, but exceptionally luminous objects, like Rigel in Orion, may be over 2,000 light years distant yet still first magnitude.

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. 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. UWF alumni can associate the pair with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew of adventurers.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominat-

ing the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. It is part of a huge spiral arm gas cloud, with active starbirth all over the place.

Something very special will happen to Betelgeuse on the evening of December 11th. At 8:17 p.m., observers in Key West should see this bright star fade greatly for a few seconds. The small main belt asteroid Leona will cover (some!) of the huge surface of this red supergiant, one of the biggest in the galaxy. So this will, like last October 14th, be an annular eclipse, where the dark body does go through the center of the star, but is NOT big enough to cover it completely. You will probably hear a lot more about this unique event in days ahead. For us, too far north, just a close miss, alas.

Last but certainly not least, 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 minutes before Sirius, the brightest 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

Farmers' Almanac

"Christmas is a season for kindling the fire for hospitality in the hall, the genial flame of charity in the heart."

—Washington Irving (1802-1882)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Dry and milder at first, then turning breezy and colder with rain east and snow west (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); seasonably cold and dry, then breezy with light snow (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); dry, turning milder, then rain, possibly mixed with wet snow west (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); dry and mild at first, then showers, turning breezy and cooler (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); 21-26 seasonably mild with periods of rain (21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); dry, turning cooler but more seasonable; flurries possible west (27, 28, 29, 30, 31).

Severe Weather Watch: The Town and Country Almanack sees no severe weather in December's forecast.

Full Moon: December's full moon falls on the 26th. It has been appropriately called Cold Moon by many Native American tribe (because of the lower temperatures during the month!). Many other tribes noticed beavers scurrying to finish their dams and lodges before the lakes and ponds begin to ice over, so they called it Ice-Forming Moon And Beaver Moon.

Special Notes: The Winter Solstice of 2023 will occur on Thursday, Decem-

ber 21st. Remember that The Almanack makes a great gift, one that keeps giving throughout the entire year! Go to www.almanack.com/order, order a holiday copy or two (or three or four!), and check out the new digital version available on-line at a price that will surely entice! And don't forget to include a nifty the Almanack knows which way the wind blows! sweatshirt or tee under the tree. Go to www.bonfire.com/the-almanack-knows, check out the styles and colors, and order one today.

Holidays: Advent Sunday falls on the 3rd in 2023. Hanukkah begins at sunset on Thursday, December 7th, celebrate Christmas on Monday, December 25th, and Kwanzaa, on Tuesday, December 26th. Celebrate and share the holiday spirit with family and friends and try to keep that joyful and giving spirit alive throughout the coming year! Everyone here at The Town & Country Almanack wishes everyone the happiest of holidays and again, pledges to its loyal readers (and followers on social media!) to continue to inform, inspire, and entertain as it has done for the past 228 years! New Year's Eve falls on Sunday, December 31st. For a safe, family-oriented evening of fun, food, and entertainment on the very first night of the year, go to www.first-night.com/cities to find a First Night Celebration nearest you.

The Garden: If you need holiday greenery, grab your shears and head for the back yard. If you are lucky, you will have a variety of boxwoods, yew, fir, or a variety of pine trees to choose from. If you are really lucky, you may even have a holly tree! A live Christmas tree is still a tradition in some homes. Check its freshness by tapping the branches. Very few needles should fall. Stroke the branches to make sure the needles are resilient and not brittle, have an aromatic fragrance, and good green color for the species. Before bringing the tree indoors, cut 1-inch off the bottom before placing in the water receptacle, and fill it with ½ cup regular 7-up plus 1 quart water or tree.

The Farm: Best for planting root crops (7, 8); weeding and stirring the soil (2, 3); planting above-ground crops (1, 18, 19); harvesting all crops (20, 21); the best days for setting hens and incubators (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31); the slaughtering and butchering of meat (12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18); transplanting (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18); the weaning of all small animals and livestock (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19); 1, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28); harvesting and storing grains (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

"The thought that goes into the giving of a gift to a friend or loved one, is so much more important than the value of the gift itself"



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COMPUTER Q&A

Own your software so it does not own you!

Aysë Stenabaugh
Juster's Computer
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All software that you purchase has a license which determines the end-users rights to their applications. It's common for popular software such as Microsoft Office or QuickBooks to require you to enter a serial number or product key for the software you purchased which is usually somewhere inside the software packaging, on your store receipt, or if purchased online, could be included in an email. Should you ever need to reinstall your software that information will be required, so it's important to keep it somewhere safe.

Product keys are generally used by software companies to cut down on piracy or the illegal use of their applications. If you ever find yourself needing to contact support for your program, your product registration will also help determine your support eligibility. In the case of Microsoft Office, with the exception of the subscription software (Office 365), your paying for the license to use the software on that one device, not to be confused with Owning the software. You will not be able to then install that software on a second device without first uninstalling it on the first device and deactivating it. Ever since Microsoft office 2013 users of Microsoft products have the ability to add their product key to their Microsoft account thus negating the need to keep your product key safe as long as you maintain access to your Microsoft account.

In order to maintain access to your Microsoft account, you should always keep your email address and phone number up to date in the event that you forget your password or get locked out of your account. You can check your Microsoft account information by logging in at www.account.live.com if you'd like to add your product key to your office account you can navigate to the office.com website where you can login with your Microsoft account. Once you've selected your account you can then choose, "I have a product key" to add your already purchased product.

If you end up losing your product key some products like QuickBooks will display your information if the application is still accessible on the device. Key finders can retrieve product keys for older versions of Office but those versions are now obsolete and those versions (2010 and older) shouldn't be installed anyway. It's recommended that you keep your software up to date, as a general rule of thumb, software that is ten years or older is considered to be obsolete. Avoiding software updates can seem like a good idea but can cause issues to be compounded and more difficult to troubleshoot and resolve.

For those who don't need to use specific applications and prefer to save money, there are often alternatives to mainstream software that offer similar functionality with little or no price tag. Open office is a great option to replace many of the same functions found in the Microsoft Office suite. Adobe Acrobat Pro users can find many cheaper options that let you edit and create PDF's including Foxit or Nitro. Since each user has their own preferences its best to shop around and compare features and try a trial version of the software to ensure the software is a good fit for you.

For any user, the best method to ensuring that you do not lose any of your licensed software is to ensure that your device is backed up with a system image. A properly configured system image back up not only your important data files but your software and settings as well. We recommend



purchasing an external backup drive and setting up a system image with Windows built-in software which will back up all your software and data. In the event that your device received a bad update or experienced a hard drive failure, you would be able to restore to the latest system image.

This holiday season let us at Juster's Computer Services help make the most out of your devices. Whether you are looking to purchase a new machine, upgrade an existing one or just want to learn

how to use your technology more efficiently we can help. Contact our support team at 717-642-6611 or visit us on the web at www.jesterscomputers.com or on Facebook.

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COMMUNITY NOTES

From the Desk of Thurmont Mayor John Kinnaird

Christmas is upon us and Karen and I want to wish everyone a very Merry Christmas and the Happiest of New Years!

On December 1st, Thurmont Police Chief Greg Eyer retired from the Thurmont Police Department. Chief Eyer served our community for eighteen years and in those years he brought the department from a small town force to a professional Police Department. Greg began his Police career right here in Thurmont under the guidance of Chief Herman Shook. He moved on to the Frederick County Sheriff's Department where he came up through the ranks and retired as a Major before returning to the Thurmont Police Department. During his time here, our department has grown in size and moved into a new headquarters building. His leadership brought new technology, an increase in the number of sworn Officers, and a new standard of community policing. One of the Chief's most recent accomplishments was instituting the switch to a dedicated retirement benefit for his Officers. His service has created a Police Department our community is very proud of, and we all thank him for his service. We wish Greg and Brenda all the best as they head off on a new adventure in life.

Please consider donations to the Thurmont Food Bank and Clothes Closet in the coming weeks and months. The winter months bring additional hardships to our friends, neighbors and family members less fortunate than ourselves. Donations of non-perishable food, decent cold weather clothing or cash to these organizations can make a real difference in the lives of many.

It is with great sadness that I talk about the death of former Thurmont Commissioner Bill Buehrer. Bill lost his battle with cancer last Wednesday. I have known Bill for about fourteen years, having met him while attending Thurmont Town meetings. We sat in the back row and shared our thoughts on the future of the town. Bill ran for office in 2011 and was elected as Commissioner of the Town of Thurmont. Commissioner Buehrer was extremely proud to serve our community and would often state that Thurmont was the best municipality in Frederick County. He truly believed that we live in the best town possible and worked hard to make sure our residents received the best possible municipal service. As a Commissioner he was very supportive of all events in town and volunteered to help at many of them. He was proud of the sense of spirit in our community and was active in Economic Development, Main Street, and was an active supporter of the Gateway to the Cure fundraising. Bill was very supportive of all of our staff and Police Officers and helped insure they got the equipment necessary to do their jobs professionally.

It was my pleasure to serve with Bill over the past twelve years. We did not always see eye to eye on every topic, but we worked to do what was best for our community. Bill and I found ourselves at the radiology department at Johns Hopkins where we both underwent radiation therapy for our cancers. He was keenly aware of how impactful illness could be on families and was very considerate of those impacted by cancer. This is why he was such a dedicated

supporter of the Gateway for the Cure campaign. We spoke often about our illnesses and he had a very encouraging and positive outlook. I am sorry to see Bill pass, but I will be forever grateful to have known him. Karen and I send our deepest condolences to Bill's wife Colleen and their family.

Here are some thoughts from others that served with Bill.

Former Commissioner Wes Hamrick:

"It was my honor and privilege to first meet Bill several years ago when I was hired on as a staff member with Stauffer Funeral Home. He and his wife Colleen recently transferred from South Carolina to work the pre needs and after care for the Stauffer Funeral Home. I instantly connected with both of them. Bill, along with prompting by Colleen, convinced me to run for commissioner. It was their encouragement, faith in my ability and support that I made the decision to run.

"For ten years, I served with Bill. His personality and that of the other board members provided a nice balance on the dais. Although Bill could have a sometimes gruff and tough minded exterior, underneath was a very kind and gentle spirit. He truly had the heart of servitude for his community and only wanted the best for Thurmont.

"The next to the last time I saw Bill was at my last meeting as commissioner. I went to each one and hugged and thanked them for their support and for the privilege of serving with them. Since Bill sat at the furthest end of the dais, he was the last one for me to thank. We hugged and he held on to me and said I love you to each other. He truly was a gentle bear in the truest sense. He will be missed and my prayers are with Colleen and his family.



Bill Buehrer lost his battle with cancer on November 22

"May God keep you in His protective arms, my friend."

Commissioner Wayne Hooper:

"Bill loved our community and served with the best interest of Thurmont at the heart of his work. He was always quick to say that Thurmont is the best municipality in Frederick County and he truly believed it was."

CAO Jim Humerick:

"I think Bill was a man of great integrity who loved Thurmont. I sincerely appreciate his support of the town employees and our endeavors to improve operations over the years."

CFO Linda Joyce:

"I am sorry to hear about Bill. I would like to mention he was receptive to moving the town forward and embraced positive change."

Economic Development Manager Vickie Grinder:

"I will always remember and love Bill for his compassion and support for the Gateway To The Cure campaign. He was a driving force for the Gateway To The Cure Golf Classic, and was a huge reason for its success. Even when he wasn't feeling his best, he was always there to help with the tournament no matter the task he was given. Bill was also a huge supporter of all of our Thurmont small businesses and their owners, and could be found patronizing them all. I will greatly miss him and his ambition to bring home a larger check each year for our Gateway To The Cure for the Hurwitz Breast Cancer Fund. I sure hope he is looking down and smiling because this year was the largest total collected in our ten-year history of the campaign. I will miss you Bill."

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Our annual "Christmas for Community Kids" is in full swing!

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Help us to brighten Christmas for those in our community who can use a little Help!

Donations will be accepted now through December 14th at the following locations:
Wantz Chevrolet, Taneytown Bowl & Grill, Taneytown Liquor Barn, Kennies Market and Carroll Vista Club House.



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Party Trays

(Meats, Cheeses, Fruits, Vegetables)



Fruit Baskets

Poinsettias

(Locally grown from Catoclin Mountain Growers)



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Early!

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“Like you, I’m saddened that Congress is broken. We know how to fix it - but it will take leaders who have the courage to do the right thing and get back to doing the people’s business.”

DAVID TRONE

DEMOCRAT FOR U.S. SENATE



Congress Is Broken

The past few weeks are a great example of how broken Congress is. A complete government shutdown was narrowly avoided, and the “solution” was a very short term, 45 days. Federal agencies that do critically important work across the nation continue to be horribly underfunded. And then, for the first time in our history, the House had no leader as politics became more important than solving the problems of the people.

We Know How To Fix It

The good news is, we know how to fix it. The bad news is, far too few of my colleagues have the political courage to do it. We need to elect leaders with the expertise and values to move us forward and not make Congress a popularity contest. When I got elected, I quickly learned that too many politicians are more interested in being on TV than passing legislation. Since my election, I’ve worked to pass dozens of pieces of legislation that make a difference on opioids, mental health, veterans issues, education and more. And if you see me on TV, I’m only there to talk about our progress or to advocate for real solutions.

We also need to say “NO” to PACs and lobbyists. Their power over our government is a scourge on our democracy and stands in the way of progress. In the last election, they shelled out over \$1 billion in campaign cash. Make no mistake: there are strings attached to these contributions.

Actions Speak Louder Than Words

Since the very beginning, I’ve refused to take a nickel from PACs, lobbyists, or corporations. And if I am elected Senator next year, I’ll be the only Senator who has fulfilled that pledge. Once I’m there, I won’t stop fighting until we ban these contributions and get back to working on behalf of the American people.

The final – and one of the most important – task is for our leaders to do more listening and less speaking (or yelling). It’s past time for Congress to return to being an institution of integrity. And that’s why I’m running for the U.S. Senate. I’ll always put the people first, and I’ll work to reform Congress from within. But I need your help and hope I can earn your support.

DAVID TRONE
U.S. SENATE