

# Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 4, NO. 1

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

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## Commissioners do double take on Town Hall bids

Woodsboro Commissioner John Cutshall let out a laugh as he read over the proposed bid numbers submitted to the Town for the construction of the new Town Hall. His statement: "well we are certainly not going to be spending that much," summed up the feelings of Burgess Heath Barnes and his fellow Commissioners.

The lowest bid, covering all aspects of the construction of the new Town Hall, came in at \$1,600,000, and was submitted by Woodsboro resident and home builder Joel Rensberger. The highest bid, \$2,059,800 was submitted by Morgan-Keller Construction of Frederick.

Barnes, who was on a cruise when the bids were forwarded to him, said that upon seeing the costs, walked back to the ships bar to get a good stiff drink. "I honestly was not expecting these numbers," he said.

When the town entered the process several years back to build the town's first Town Hall, Barnes and the Town Commissioners were pre-

pared to spend somewhere in the order of \$800,000. With that sum in mind, Barnes successfully negotiated a \$400,000 grant with then Governor Hogan's office to help cover 50% of the cost of the construction.

The grant was officially approved in the FY-23 State budget, and in spite of current State budget cutbacks which are affecting key priorities, such as the widening of Route 15, Barnes told the Council that the State money for the Town Hall is not in jeopardy as it is prior year funding. "However," Barnes said, "we need to spend it by the end of 2025, or we will lose the money for good."

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

The original plan, according to Barnes, was to borrow \$400,000 from a bank to cover the cost of the



It was suggested, in jest, that if the cost of the Town Hall could not be reduced, that the current Town trailer be moved to the lot and covered in vinyl siding.

construction not covered by the grant. Barnes said that the mortgage payment for that loan would be approximately \$3,500, which the town could handle. However, Cutshall said that accepting even the lowest bid, under today's prevailing interest rates, would result in the town being faced with a \$12,000 monthly mortgage payment, which, he said, was beyond the reach of the town.

While Barnes said the town could tap into its \$1million General Fund to cover the additional \$800,000, he, and the Commissioners said that was a non-starter as that would leave the town with nothing to cover unforeseen expenses.

As the Council shook its head in frustration, Rensberger stepped to the podium and offered the Council some sage advice and background on the numbers in his bid and how the town could go about reducing the costs.

Rensberger started off by noting that the current design that his bid was based on included a basement. "If you eliminate the basement, and instead build the hall on a simple concrete slab you reduce building cost by \$100,000." He continued: "The architect has the building being an all brick building," and "I don't know how wedded you are to that, but if you opt to only have the face of the build-

continued to page 2

## Planning Chairman denied reappointment

At the December meeting, the Town Council was tasked with voting to reappoint two members of the planning commission whose terms expired in November: Chair David Ennis and Member Russ Wench. Planning Commission members serve five year terms or until their successor takes office.

During discussion of David Ennis's reappointment, Commissioner Mike McNiesh raised concerns about re-appointing David Ennis as he is the husband of current Town Council member Mary Ann Brodie-Ennis.

"Back in the day it may have been necessary to have husbands and wives serve due to lack of interest however nowadays with so many interested people it's not appropriate to have both in office." Said McNiesh.

[In October 2022, Brodie-Ennis joined two of her fellow Commissioners in removing McNiesh from the Town Council for failing to attend three Town Council meetings in a row. In February of 2023 McNiesh won his seat back in a special election.]

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen agreed with McNiesh, noting that it looks like an "oligarchy in town," and that

there were plenty of people interested in positions on Planning Commission.

Brodie-Ennis called Brannen hypocritical, pointing out that Brannen and her husband both ran for the Town Council at the same time. "Your intention," Brodie-Ennis said, "was to both be on the Town Council at the same time." Brannen agreed, stating however that her opinions [on related individuals serving on town commissions] have changed since running the joint campaign five years ago.

Brodie-Ennis further defended the re-appointment of her husband by sharing conversations with residents where she has been asked if she allowed her husband to dictate her opinions on town matters and vice versa. Her response was an adamant, "the answer is no," she said.

Commissioner Gary Baker said he was not concerned about David Ennis serving on the Planning Commission while his wife sat on the Town Council. He backed reappointing both Ennis and Wench because of their involvement with the comprehensive plan update over the past three years and that removing them could cause a delay in com-

pleting that task.

McNiesh however pointed out that other members have left the Planning Commission during the Comprehensive Plan update without effecting the process.

Brannen added that she is not a fan of the housing growth statistics in the comprehensive plan update and said, "I cannot reappoint either member due to what they have done with that part of the plan."

The Council voted two to two, with Ennis abstaining, to not reappoint David Ennis as Chair. Per code David Ennis will continue to serve as Chair until a successor is appointed. Wench however did receive support for another five-year term



David Ennis, a longtime member of Walkersville Planning Commission, is currently leading the rewrite of Town's Comprehensive Plan.

on a four to one vote.

In related news, the Council was informed that Parks Commission member, Kitty Baker, whose term runs through January 2024 will not be seeking reappointment. Her position will be advertised to the public next month. The next term to expire is Member David Toohey in February. Toohey will be seeking reappointment.

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# WOODSBORO NEWS

## Town cancels loan to itself

In accordance with advice given to the Town by the Town's auditor last month, the Town Council voted unanimously to cancel a \$400,000+ loan that it had been carrying in its books from its General fund to its Water and Sewer fund.

No actual money was spent or received by the Town, as the money was lent by itself, to itself, so as Burgess Barnes said: "it's a paperwork resolution to a long simmering issue."

"By clearing up the loan on the books of the Water Fund," Barnes said, "We'll be able to get a better idea going forward what the true financial situation is with the Town's Water and Sewer Fund, and in doing so, get a better understanding of how much it is costing the town to run the water and sewer plant, and to make sure we are at least close to breaking even on cost."

Commissioner Rittlemeyer concurred with Barnes' desire to get a more accurate picture of how much the Water and Sewer System is costing the town.

Both Barnes and Rittlemeyer went to great lengths to stress that their intention in clearing the loan was not to raise Woodsboro's water and sewer rates, but simply to allow the Town to do a better job

budgeting the cost of running the plants in next year's budget.

Currently, all expenses associated with running the Town's water and sewer system, such as electricity, maintenance, equipment replacement costs, chemicals, and waste disposal, are charged directly to the Water and Sewer Fund. While the \$75,000/year salary of the support contractor who physically oversees the day-to-day operation of both plants is charged to the Water and Sewer Fund, the salaries of the Town's two full time employees as well as the Town Manager is charged to the General Fund, regardless of whether or not they are working on items related to the water and sewer system.

The 'hours' the Town's two full time employees work on Water and Sewer operations is tracked and these incremental charges create the bulk of the \$400,000 loan to the Water and Sewer Fund that has accumulated over the last 20+ years.

The Town's auditor told the Council at its November meeting that while in the "perfect world," the water and sewer systems should pay for itself, there is no requirement to do so, and that many small towns, like Woodsboro, often charge staff and office expenses related to working on water and sewer activities to accounts associated with general

town affairs. While she complemented the town staff for keeping track of the 'incremental costs' associated with town staff working on Water and Sewer activities, she recommended that carrying the costs on the books as a 'loan' from one fund to another was "masking" the true cost of running the systems and recommended that the loan between the funds be administratively closed out.

Other towns, like Emmitsburg, have taken a more hard nosed approach to the goal of making their water and sewer operations self-sufficient, to the point of billing the cost of stamps and envelopes used to mail out water bills to their water and sewer fund. Even requiring the town's office receptionist to bill time spent answering a simple phone call from a resident about a water issue to the water and sewer fund.

As a result of this draconian approach, over the years, Emmitsburg drained their water and sewer fund down to a point that it was bordering bankruptcy, while at the same time, its General fund grew, allowing spending on what some considered superficial activities. The need to replenish the water and sewer fund led Emmitsburg to impose a 300% increase in its water rates over the next five years. The

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rate increase inflamed that community, resulting in a turn over of the Emmitsburg Town Council in

October, which is now in the process of reconsidering its prior water and sewer fund charging practices.

## Council to address Councilmen absences

On the heels of the inability of the Town Council to form a quorum at their November meeting due to the absence of Council members, Burgess Heath Barnes suggested that the Council look into modifying the Town's code to address Council member absenteeism.

Barnes noted that Walkersville's code has a clause that allows a council member to be removed if they fail to appear, in person, at three Town Council meetings in a row.

Barnes said, "we all were elected to do the Town's business, and while I appreciate that occasionally one of us will miss a meeting or two, but we have one Council member

who has missed four this year. And if that trend continues, the inability of another member to show up, say because they are sick, will result in the council not being able to form a quorum, as which happened last month, and without a quorum, we can't conduct important Town business.

Barnes noted that unlike regular jobs, where you don't get paid if you don't show up for work, Council members get paid whether they show up or not. "Each of you is being paid \$3,000 a year to serve the community. I think the community deserves to get their money's worth out of us. As the Town code is currently written, we have no recourse to address this issue."

Commissioner Ruttlemyer agreed with Barnes. "This has been a long-standing chronic issue for us. When I was Burgess, at one time we went 3 months without having enough members show up to form a quorum, as a result, a lot of Town business had to be put on hold."

Barnes suggested the Council look into changing the code to address how excused and un-excused absences are handled. "Just like Walkersville and Taneytown, we may need to set a maximum number of allowable un-excused absences. It's one thing to tell us in advance that you can't make a meeting, it's something [else to] simply not

show up or call two minutes before the meeting to say you're not coming."

In November of 2022, the Walkersville Town Council voted to remove Commissioner Michael McNiesh after he missed three meetings in a row. His fellow commissioners, in voting to remove him, pointed not only to the three-missed meetings in a row, but the fact that he had missed eight town council meetings in total, in their justification of questioning his commitment to his elected office. While Walkersville will allow a commissioner to miss three meetings in a year (but not in a row), the Commissioner will not be paid at all for any

further missed meeting.

Emmitsburg allows its Town Council to "compel the attendance of absent members," and while it does dock the salaries of commissioners who fail to attend meetings, the salary reduction only kicks in after missing six meetings in one year. Thurmont's Town code, on the other hand, is silent on allowable actions against Commissioners who regularly miss meetings.

The Town Council agreed to consider discussing in more detail any possible changes to the Woodsboro Town code to address absenteeism at the January Town Council meeting - providing of course - a sufficient number of Commissioners show up to form a quorum.

## Commissioners do double take on Town Hall bids

continued from page 1

ing in brick, and the rest in vinyl siding, you can cut out an another significant cost."

Rensberger also pointed out that the current design has an attic, which added \$50,000 to the building sprin-

kler costs: "If you don't need an attic, then you can reduce costs in not only materials in building it, but in the design of the sprinkler system."

Rensberger went on to note several other items in the design, which while looking nice on paper, significantly

added to the cost of the building, and suggested that he would support the town in doing 'value engineering', such as identifying more cost-effective lighting fixtures and flooring options.

As Rensberger ticked off areas where 'value engineering' could reduce the cost of the hall, the Town Council clearly began to recover from the shock of the initial estimates, and focused on how to reduce their expectations so the Town was still able to move forward with construction.

After a closed door meeting, the Council agreed to sign a memorandum of Understanding with Sanbower Builders of Myersville that if they could make recommendation for changes in the current design that would get the cost of building the town hall down to \$1 million, the Town would sign a contract with them to build it.



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# WALKERSVILLE NEWS

## Town to assume responsibility for sidewalks

At the December Town Council meeting, a public hearing was held to address the Town assuming responsibility for all sidewalk maintenance.

The Town's previous sidewalk ordinance held a property owner fully responsible for any sidewalk repairs. Due to issues with matching the sidewalks and curbs to the new road during the Maple Avenue project, the Town assumed financial responsibility for replacing all the sidewalks involved in the project. Striving to be fair to all town residents, the Council created a

new ordinance naming the Town the responsibility party for all sidewalks within town limits.

The revised ordinance includes official definitions of a hazardous sidewalk, thus changing the previous allowable tilt to a sidewalk pad from 1.5 inches to ¾ of an inch and how the town would hold a property owner responsible for any damage due to their negligence. In the event damage is caused by tree roots or limbs, the resident will have 90 days to remediate the tree and then they will get a one-time 100% free

sidewalk replacement. If the property owner refuses to take care of the tree the town will do it at the property owner's cost and charge them for the sidewalk replacement. If the property owner then refuses to pay for the work, a line will be placed on the property. Any further damage that comes from trees is paid for by the owner.

Another suggestion made by Commissioner Tom Gilbert concerned sidewalk shaving. This process uses a machine that will shave the concrete down to match the level of the surrounding area.

"It is a simple and cost-effective way to remove trip hazards immediately and defers the need to replace the entire pad," said Gilbert. Commissioner Mike McNiesh agreed, suggesting they investigate the cost of the shaving machine and compare it to the replacement of an entire pad.

Gilbert commended the Town for taking on sidewalk the responsibility of sidewalk maintenance and replacement. "There are residents in town that have been paying taxes for 70 years and that money hasn't been used." The

funds for the sidewalk repairs could come from the town's capital surplus accounts which are paid through taxes. Town Manager Sean Williams anticipates \$250,000 a year for sidewalk repairs.

The Town plans to replace a portion of the Town's sidewalk every year, starting with the worst spots. This allows the most hazardous portions to be replaced immediately without overextending the sidewalk repair funds. Williams said, "In terms of when they could start, he would defer to public works staff as that is their expertise." The motion was passed unanimously.

## Council looks into soliciting 2nd Internet provider

The Town Council requested that Town Manager Sean Williams investigate the possibility of obtaining a fiber optic network for residents and town use. Currently only Comcast provides high-speed wired connections within town, but per town code the agreement is nonexclusive which means the town can search around for better pricing and services without penalties.

Williams stated that discussions with Thurmont's Town Manager and legal department revealed the Town has decided, after extensive

research, to sign with Glo Fiber. Their contract will be the same as it was with their previous provider, Comcast, and installation is at least a year off. Emmitsburg is also considering signing up with Glo fiber.

Williams asked the Council if they wanted to go with Glo fiber as well or consider other options. Commissioner Mike McNiesh said "shoot for the stars and hope to get Verizon Fios. We need competition to get the best for our residents." He pointed out that the current provider, Comcast, is the

only one in town and they have a history of raising rates often and never lowering them.

Commissioner Gary Baker was curious to know what the required percentage of customer participation would need to be for a provider such as Verizon to come into town.

Williams was unable to provide an exact answer however he speculated that Verizon could possibly have enough interest already to begin looking into providing service to the Walkersville area. He also pointed out

that installation of the necessary equipment can take up to a year and during that period there would be plenty of time for the word to get out in other nearby areas which would further provide Verizon with a reason to expand into town.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen asked if there was any benefit to asking for local business's involvement. "I know the Sheetz app is always down and their gas pumps run off internet and they are always having issues." A Sheetz employee told Brannen

that she has Verizon and lives in the Discovery community south of town. "If they can get Verizon, why can't we?" she said. [Brannen however, did not specify if the resident had standard Internet service of Fios.]

Williams said he would make some phone calls and investigate obtaining a better provider. In the meantime, Williams said residents can contact Verizon themselves to show their interest in getting them to expand their Fios service, which may help expedite the process to faster speeds.

## Senior Tax credit approved

The Town Council approved to modify the existing town ordinance regarding Senior Tax credits to match a Frederick County ordinance at their December meeting.

The Tax credit applies to property taxes for those who live in Walkersville, however homeowners must apply through Frederick County as the county is responsible for the majority of the paperwork with the rebate.

Commissioner Tom Gilbert explained when they first proposed implementing the credit in 2021 they had a list of qualified individuals and their home values so they could see how much money they would be giving back. At that time, the credit dropped seniors' property tax from 14 percent to 7 percent, as the credit is a 50 percent rebate.

The decision to modify the qualifications is at the recommendation of Frederick County treasurer, who reviewed the numbers and made some suggestions that Walkersville has chosen to adopt.

Two of the changes made impact requirements to qualify. The first raises the gross household income maximum from \$80,000 to \$100,000 and the second raises the property assessment value from \$300,000 to \$400,000. Both are qualifications that must be met as well as the homeowner must be 65 years of age or older.

Another addition to the ordinance is an automatic adjustment

based on the Consumer Price Index that applies to the combined gross income figure.

Commissioner Betsey Whitmore Brannen asked, "Can we expect to see a significant change in the CPI over the next three years that would require us to look over this every year?" Gilbert assured her that the new addition

would be automatic so the commissioners would not need to review it every year. However, if there is a dramatic change in the CPI, they will be able to manually make changes as needed.

Commissioner Gary Baker asked how many residents typically participate in the program. Town Manager Sean Williams

was unable to provide an exact number, however he estimated no more than 100 with a realistic number closer to 40 or 50 residents participating.

The credit would not be in effect until July 1. While the Council voted to pass the change, a public hearing on the change will still be held next month.

### Council revisits County Liaison position

The Council also took up again the need of hiring a part time liaison to help with the Council's representation at meetings of the different County Boards and Commissions and report back to the Town Council on their potential impact on the town.

Town Planner Sean Williams asked the Council what meetings they felt needed better representation. McNiesh said he would like to see the County School Board, Planning and the County Council meetings better covered.

Williams was unable to estimate the number of hours

the position would require. "What has started as a part time position many need to be a full time one with all of the little things, we may need help with."

For example Williams said, if the town decides to begin quarterly water billing, help will be needed there, and the Public Works Department has been tasked with tracking lead and copper lines to be upgraded in the new year and would also need assistance. "It would be a catch all position but it's tough to find someone that would be able to do all that," said Williams.

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 Mon., Jan. 1 - Office Closed New Year's Day  
 Wed., Jan. 3 - 7 p.m. - Parks Meeting  
 Tues., Jan. 9 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting  
 Wed., Jan. 10 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting  
 Mon., Jan. 15 - Office Closed MLK Day  
 Mon., Jan. 22 - 7 p.m. - EDC Meeting  
 Tues., Jan. 23 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting  
 Wed., Jan. 24 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting  
 website: [www.walkersvillemd.gov](http://www.walkersvillemd.gov)  
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## FROM THE DESK OF . . .

### Congressman David Trone

As we kick off the new year, I'm reminded of what matters most: family, friends, and community. Throughout life's most important moments — our most challenging times and our most exciting changes — it's our loved ones who are there for us, cheering us on and being a shoulder to lean on. Whenever this time of year rolls around, I'm especially grateful for my friends, family, and supporters for all that they've done for me.

However, I recognize that the new year isn't just a time for celebration and gratitude. It's a time when families set their goals for the upcoming weeks and months, reflect on their progress, and plan for their futures. As a member of Congress and candidate on this year's ballot, I'm setting goals, too.

I've long said that this job should be more focused on public service rather than politics. Too often, politics divide us and place our own selfish interests above what is good and just. That's why I'm focused on being a public servant — not a politician. In the next year, I'll continue to be a public servant who listens, delivers results, and takes big ideas and turns them into big action.

These are the values and goals that I've set for myself throughout my life. When my father lost our family farm to the bank, it wasn't a choice to do something differently. It was our only option. I had a big idea to open a small store selling beer and soda to help support my family. With a great deal of hard work, some luck, and extraordi-

nary assistance by team members, our business grew exponentially, and we found success as a family.

I entered public service to make that same reality — achieving your dreams regardless of the adversity you face — a possibility for every family.

An important lesson that I learned during my career in business which will guide my work in government this year is the need to think long-term. Too often, politicians are only worried about the next week, month, or election. It's one of the many reasons that not much gets done in Congress. We need to be willing to invest in the ideas that will pay off over years and generations, not just make headlines for a few days.

I believe that it's those same long-

term solutions that will help tackle some of the most pressing challenges we face. If we think long-term about the opioid and mental health crises gripping our communities, we will make progress. The same is true of reforming our criminal justice system, combating climate change, protecting women's rights, and providing world-class education to each student in our state.

The year ahead will be a busy one — but I'm excited for all that we'll achieve together. The primary election is on May 14th, and I'm proud to be on the ballot to be your next U.S. Senator. Because I know that we'll be able to build on our progress and continue to deliver results for Marylanders from the Senate. As you make your plans for this year, I hope you'll consider voting for me. But more importantly, I hope you'll take the time to learn about those who

are running to represent you, understand what drives them to be public servants, and choose the best candidate to fight for you in Washington, Annapolis, and in local government.

Above all else, as I've always said, constituent service is my top priority. My team works countless hours helping to solve your challenges with federal agencies, helping you access the benefits you're entitled to, and hearing your concerns about legislation. Please, throughout this year, don't hesitate to get in touch with us. We are more than happy to help.

From my family to yours, I want to wish you a happy new year, and thank you for your support throughout last year. I couldn't be more proud to serve this community in Washington, and I'm optimistic about what the future holds. Best wishes for a safe, healthy, and happy year ahead.

### County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

Does the Sugarloaf Mountain Area require an additional protective zoning layer with additional land use restrictions? Most of the Sugarloaf area is geographically unsuitable for high-density development and industrial uses already, which is why most of it is zoned for Agriculture and Resource Conservation. I have thought about this question regularly for the last two years, understanding that the vote to approve the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Management Plan Overlay District Map would eventually come before the County Council to be accepted or rejected. That vote came on December 19th, and I voted to reject the proposed Overlay map. Also voting to not pass the proposal were Council President Young, Vice

President Duckett, Council Member Carter, and Council Member Keegan-Ayer. The vote was 5-2, and the overlay did not pass.

I've had many conversations with informed and passionate people on both sides of this issue. I met with anyone who wanted to meet with me, and with some several times. I reviewed meeting minutes and rewatched previous County Council and Planning Commission meetings to try to get the most complete understanding of how we arrived at this point, the desires of all the stakeholders, and the County's approach to this large area plan.

The Planning Commission resubmitted to the County Council the essentially unchanged Overlay Plan that was remanded to them by the

previous Council. Given the initiatives stated in the overall Sugarloaf Area Plan, and the way they are worded, this is not surprising. They would most likely return with the same plan again for a third and fourth time if it were remanded with unchanged criteria.

Some of that criteria made it impossible for me to support the implementation of the Overlay District. For me, it establishes something that too closely resembles exclusionary zoning. It was too late for me to disagree with the passing of the Sugarloaf Treasured Landscape Plan by the time I joined the County Council. I had then and continue to have deep concerns with large area plans that use zoning that results in the county supporting

higher property values for some residents in the name of land conservation, while other residents continue to find themselves struggling to afford housing anywhere close to where they work, and that these real economic inequalities, resulting from zoning, are not being considered.

What I'm suggesting is that we need to examine how county zoning can perpetuate historical housing inequalities when considering future area plans, and I would argue the Livable Frederick Master Plan. Are we making it difficult for property owners to subdivide their land to accommodate additional family members living nearby in accessory dwelling units or other arrangements? Other types of modern exclusionary zoning policies include

parking restrictions, building setbacks, overly stringent environmental reviews, and design reviews.

I was very concerned that if the Treasured Landscape Overlay District Map passed, that it could be replicated in other areas in Frederick County, particularly in northern Frederick County, where the supply of reasonably priced housing for working families is already limited. I will continue to raise the issue of how our zoning and land use affects the ability for residents to find housing they can afford, and to make sure we are not using zoning to unwittingly discriminate against low and middle income households.

Please feel free to contact me with your thoughts on this issue or anything else at [rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov). Wishing you a very Happy New Year!

### Woodsboro Burgess Heath Barnes

Happy New Year!!!! It is hard to believe it's 2024, but a new year has arrived. I hope it's a happy a blessed year for all and that you all had a wonderful holiday season.

On December 16th the town of Woodsboro teamed up with the Woodsboro and New Midway volunteer fire departments to participate in a Santa run that lasted several hours and covered many streets and roads in the town of Woodsboro and areas of New Midway. The response that we received

from not only the young ones, but people of all ages was wonderful, and we will be doing it again next year. Playing Santa is always rewarding and magical seeing the looks on the faces of the children.

At the town meeting on December 12th, 2024, we reviewed the 7 bids that we received from the contractors to build the town hall. We all were a little shocked, to be honest, and are back to making some changes. We have a budget of about 900 thousand with the 400 thousand that were able

to secure from the state for the building, but the bids came in between 1.7 million and 2.3 million. We are in talks about how we can make some changes and get the building into this price range.

I also reached out to our county and state elected officials as well to request additional financial assistance. At the time of this article being written, I have not heard back. We are working diligently and going to get the building built it just may not be the exact style we had planned.

Lights are going up around the new skate park that is being used by the community and we are very pleased that this project was able to happen. I encourage parents to have their children wear helmets when utilizing the skate park to avoid unnecessary accidents.

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

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

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

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# GOVERNMENT

## County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

With the New Year comes a sense of renewal and opportunities to bring out the best in ourselves, showcase the treasures in our community, and move forward with positivity and purpose. Thank you for being part of the movement this year whether you've partnered with us, supported an event, or shared a post on our social media! We truly appreciate having you in our community.

I am proud to be leading our exemplary Frederick County Government staff. This month, our Director of Agriculture and Small Business received a prestigious recognition for her contributions to our farms! Our Division of Emergency Management staff also received an award for their work on improving 9-1-1 communications.

Looking forward to the New Year, I will be hosting budget hearings and listening sessions across the county in January and February. We are also gearing up for the 2024 legislative session, and I have compiled a legislative package reflecting the needs of our County.

### MEDA Award

The Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) recognized Katie Stevens, our Director

of Agriculture and Small Business in the Frederick County Office of Economic Development, with the 2023 MEDA Rising Star Award. Through her continued leadership, she has made remarkable contributions so our farms – and our farmers – can thrive for years to come. Katie's work is helping to preserve our community's rich agricultural history while paving a way for a bright future. She is very deserving of this prestigious recognition.

The award recognizes candidates for their dedication to Maryland's economic development. Katie's work on numerous projects that have significantly influenced Frederick County's economic landscape made her a standout candidate for the award. Some of her most notable accomplishments include fostering innovation and new opportunities for the local farm community so farmers can diversify into value-added production and being instrumental in awarding millions of dollars to local businesses through state and federal funding.

### Budget Hearing and Upcoming Listening Sessions

Earlier this month I hosted a budget public hearing open to the public.

We have multiple listening sessions to provide various opportunities to provide their input on their priorities. The budget process entails public hearings, listening sessions in January through February, the listens session for District 5 will be held Jan. 20, at 1 p.m. at Walkersville High School. *[This sessions will be recorded but not streamed live.]*

This year our county government is looking toward a more outcome and performance-based budget process so that we can ensure fiscal responsibility in our tax dollars and further align our vision with Livable Frederick. My core values of accountability, sustainability, and inclusion are also infused in budget discussions as we continue to meet the needs of our residents.

Our second public hearing will be in March to give us a better idea of the type of requests submitted for the budget and what the proposed capital budget is. I'll be presenting our proposal to the County Council in April so that they can adopt a budget in May.

### MACo Winter Conference Recap

During the first week in December, I attended the Maryland Association of Counties Winter Confer-

ence to meet with leaders of our neighboring counties and our state partners. During the conference, I was pleased to speak on a panel regarding the data center industry alongside leaders from the MD Public Service Commission and the Maryland Department of the Environment industry.

Frederick County was also awarded the County Innovation Award by MACo and the Academy for Excellence in Local Governance for our Convey 9-1-1 program. The award recognizes leading-edge county programs that improve the overall quality of life and service delivery for residents. Through a partnership with Baltimore-based Convey 9-1-1, our Division of Emergency Management added a series of capabilities to support their 9-1-1 specialists. Enhancements include language interpretation for over 170 languages and dialects for residents who call or text it, and precise location of mobile phone callers. Convey 9-1-1 is one of the many services we have to improve access for everyone and create a more vibrant and inclusive community.

### 2024 Legislative Priorities

Going into the 2024 legislative session, my priority legislation focuses on issues of importance to our cit-

izens – maintaining our historic places, caring for our seniors and others with mobility challenges, and increasing safety for our firefighters and families. I am proposing a change to our Frederick County Historic Preservation Tax Credit which will allow more projects to qualify for the credit, funding a Paratransit Task Force to review how this important transportation option is funded statewide, and improving safety standards to address Corrugated Stainless Steel Tubing which was involved in a fire related fatality here in Frederick County and has been involved in other major fires across the state.

Earlier this month we received the distressing news that the US-15 expansion project, which has been the county's top priority for many years, was cut from the State's Department of Transportation Consolidated Transportation Program (CTP). The project represents a critical safety initiative as well as major investment in the economic vitality of our region. I will be working with the full Frederick County Delegation to advocate for the project to remain in the CTP as previously promised. To learn more about my legislative priorities, I encourage you to visit <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/legislativeaffairs>.

## County Councilman Brad Young

The Frederick County Council meets regularly on Tuesday evenings at 5:30 p.m. at Winchester Hall. All meetings are open to the public. The next Council meeting will be on Tuesday, January 2, at 5:30 p.m.

At the January 2nd meeting the Council will be voting on bill 23-22, a tax credit for daycare providers in Frederick County as well as a vote on the admissions and amusements tax rate change. This resolution increases the County's admissions and amusement tax rate from 0% to 5% with exemptions for agro-tourism and volunteer fire companies.

On December 19, 2023, the Council rejected the proposed Sugarloaf Rural Heritage Overlay Zoning District. After a public hearing and listening to all Frederick citizens and property owners most of the Council defeated measure on a 5-2 vote.

Concerns had been raised that the proposed overlay had strayed too far from its original intent. It is believed that the County's current land use practices through Agricultural and Resource Conservation Zoning is working to preserve the region.

The major concern raised by residents in the area would be the siting of data centers. The County's land use table only allows data centers in the Limited Industrial (LI) and the General Industrial (GI) Zones which are not in the Sugarloaf area.

Council Member Renee Knapp is Co-Chairing the County's Data Center Workgroup which is examining lessons from Northern Virginia's experience and are considering appropriate locations

for data centers and potential amendments to the County's critical digital infrastructure law. The Workgroup is expected to issue their report later this winter.

On November 21, the Council passed Bill 23-20 by 5-2 vote. This Bill creates a new use within the Agricultural District to allow limited commercial vehicle parking and material and equipment storage associated with a landscape contractor business. The Council also passed Bill 23-21 by 7-0 vote. This Bill amends our current Zoning Ordinance to allow for cannabis dispensaries, cannabis growing facilities, and cannabis processing facilities. This Bill also creates definitions and approval criteria for such cannabis dispensaries and cannabis growing and processing facilities in response to the statewide legalization of adult-use cannabis. Full legislation can be found on our website.

The Council has several Bills

scheduled in the coming weeks that will proceed through our legislative process. Bill 23-22 will, if passed, provide a tax credit for Daycare providers. Bill 23-23 will implement the changes to the Deferred Retirement Option Program for Career Fire Fighters.

Bill 23-24 will, if passed, amend the Frederick County Uniformed and Non-uniformed employee retirement plans. This Bill decreases the time for a participant hired on and after July 1, 2012 to become fully vested in retirement plan benefits from ten years to five years.

Bills 23-25 and 23-26 will amend the qualifications for participation on the Frederick County Planning Commission and Board of Appeals. These Bills, if passed, will require members to be residents of Frederick County. All legislation can be viewed on our website. Our weekly agendas also contain links to Bills and all rele-

vant documentation. Please visit our website for the most updated agenda and schedule.

The Frederick County Council encourages public involvement at every stage of the legislative process. We welcome public comment at every Council meeting on Tuesday evenings. Members of the public are welcome to attend and give comment in person, leave a voice-mail to be forwarded to each Council Member, or email us any time at

[councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov). Please visit our website at [www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil) to view our latest agendas, legislation, and upcoming calendar of events.

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

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# COUNTY NOTES

## Budget Cuts Put Long Awaited Rt. 15 Widening On Hold

After years of conversation and planning, drivers anticipating road widening congestion relief on U.S. 15 may be left sitting in traffic as a result of a multi-billion-dollar state transportation budget shortfall, which has placed the long awaited and once highly prioritized Route 15 widening project on apparent indefinite delay as of early December.

The \$121 million project to add one lane of travel in each direction from Interstate 70 to Md. Route 26 had been a Maryland transportation priority for years, receiving bipartisan support. The widening project was previously expected to begin construction in 2026.

However, the Maryland Department of Transportation FY 2024- 2029 Draft Consolidated Transportation Program, totaling \$21.2 billion, came up \$2.1 billion short. To balance the final budget, the Department notified Frederick County lawmakers that it intends to withdraw construction funding for all new major expansion projects, which would include the Route 15 widening project.

Expansion of Route 15 to three lanes has been a top priority for both for Frederick County officials as well as local state representatives as the congestion negatively impacts the life of daily commuters as well the growth of northern Frederick County.

Years of development and growth in the northern part of the County have caused the highway to become a congested bottle necked "parking lot" for unlucky motorists at the wrong time of day.

Back in 1990, the commute time from the Northern part of the County to Germantown and Rockville was under an hour; to DC it was an hour and a half. Thanks to the congestion in Frederick alone, the commute times have increased by 30 to 45 minutes. Add in congestion in Montgomery County, and commute times have doubled.

While at one time one could zip through Frederick City at any time of the day without tapping the breaks, now backups begin at 7 in the morning and 2:30 in the afternoon in both directions.

According to MDOT, an average of 87,000 vehicles currently use U.S. 15 each day. By 2043, that figure is

projected to be upwards of 121,400 vehicles per day.

"Frederick is the fastest growing county in Maryland, so any reallocation of federal funds that would've benefited its communities is incredibly disappointing. Widening U.S. 15 would not only have improved the safety and function of the highway, but also have supported increased economic activity in the area and, by extension, jobs. I'm fully committed to addressing this need," said U.S. House of Representative David Trone.

"This is very disappointing, and it is a much-needed improvement through Frederick City to service those that have to travel to the northern part of our county," Brad Young, President of Frederick County Council said.

"I find this cut very disappointing as once again it seems that western Maryland is being overlooked again by the elected officials in Annapolis." Said Heath Barnes. "As Burgess of Woodsboro where a high % of our residents commute to Frederick or even further to DC for work this will continue to be a strain on them. As Frederick County continues to grow and with some of the highest growth areas in northern Frederick County the current state of Route 15 cannot sustain this."

## Frederick County to Receive Over \$1 Million in Grant Funding to Improve Road Safety

Frederick County will receive \$1,050,000 in federal funds to make road improvements with a goal of reducing traffic fatalities and improving bicycle accessibility. The grant was awarded by the U.S. Department of Transportation's Safe Streets and Roads for All program, which was funded through the Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act.

"Safe, accessible transportation is vital to our quality of life and moving our economy forward," Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "I am grateful to our federal delegation for helping to secure this grant for our community. These funds will allow us to improve access for pedestrians and bicyclists and help us realize our goal of zero deaths on our roadways."

Frederick County's Division of Planning and Permitting will use grant funds to update the 2018 County Bike and Trails Plan. In addition, they will construct pilot projects to demonstrate ways excess pavement on roadways can be repurposed, conduct feasibility studies for trail corridors or connections, and support municipalities that are striving to align with a countywide approach to bikeways and trails. These steps support the County's Complete and Green Street Policy. The policy emphasizes the importance of improving the accessibility and mobility of pedestrians and bicyclists, while reducing conflict with motorized traffic. For more information, contact Transportation Engineering Supervisor Mark Mishler at 301-600-6742.

The Federal Safe Streets and Roads for All program was established to support regional and local efforts to prevent roadway deaths through planning and demonstration projects. The goal of the program is to help local governments better understand the safety challenges in their communities and make their streets, roads, and highways safer for all

## Rides For Good to launch in Frederick County

According to United Way of Frederick County, more than one-third of Frederick County residents (over 31,000 households) cannot afford basic needs such as housing, childcare, food, health care and technology. Transportation is especially hard

to access for those households who are living on a limited income. The cost to own or lease a vehicle continues to escalate, let alone the expenses required owning, operating, and insuring an automobile.

Despite overall improvements, the economic recovery in Frederick County, like that in the rest of Maryland, had not reached all families before the significant impact of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Deb Bisenieks, Executive Director of Seton Center, a social services organization based in Emmitsburg that serves northern Frederick County residents, says "Many people that we serve have few, if any, transportation options for accessing the most essential of services, especially for rides to medical and dental appointments, the grocery store and pharmacy, faith activities, educational classes, even jobs. North County is truly a transportation desert, and if you don't have dependable access to a car, then life can be very challenging."

For these reasons, Frederick-based Safe Ride Foundation, a nonprofit organization that has operated the SOS Safe Ride program since 2015, has created Rides for Good, connecting trained volunteer drivers using their own vehicles to transport registered passengers to a broad range of services in the community. The service will begin operations this upcoming February.

Wayne Dorsey, Safe Ride Foundation Founder and Executive Director, says, "We've built Rides for Good to replicate NeighborRides, a volunteer-centered program operating since 2002 in metro Baltimore. In 2018, NeighborRide provided over 18,000 rides to over 300 passengers. It's a proven model, and with Frederick County residents stepping up to help their neighbors in need, Rides for Good will be a success here as well."

Continued on next page

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# COUNTY NOTES

**Continued from previous page**

In a recent interview, Elizabeth Paul, a Frederick County resident and Rides for Good passenger, commented, "Due to my visual impairment, I'm unable to drive. While I can sometimes rely upon family and friends to drive me to my appointments, there are times when I need Rides for Good and their volunteer drivers to help me to pick up my prescriptions and go to the market. If it wasn't for them, I would be in dire straits."

*For information on Rides for Good, and how to become a volunteer driver, visit [www.ridesforgood.org/volunteer](http://www.ridesforgood.org/volunteer) or call 240-657-3090.*

**Human Relations Department Investigates Allegation of Discriminatory Rental Rates**

Frederick County's Human Relations Department recently launched an investigation into claims that households with Housing Choice Vouchers were being charged higher rents than other tenants in the same complex. Approximately 28 households were affected. The County's Division of Housing notified these residents and will be working with them in the coming weeks to file complaints with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights, and to determine if their monthly rent amount will change as a result.

"When our most vulnerable residents are victimized by discriminatory

housing practices, it affects our entire community, with taxpayers bearing the brunt of the cost," County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "Affordable housing is one of my top priorities, because every person deserves a safe, affordable place to live.

Maryland and Frederick County laws prohibit discrimination in housing based on the source of a person's income. The value of a Housing Choice Voucher is considered income, therefore a tenant cannot be charged higher rent because they receive a portion of their income from housing assistance.

"We are currently trying to assist any voucher recipient that may have been impacted by this issue," Human Relations Director Anthony L. Russell said. "We have been in constant communication with the Maryland Commission on Civil Rights to make sure they receive all of the information from our Frederick County residents."

Frederick County residents who think they are victims of discriminatory practices in housing, employment, or public accommodations should contact Mr. Russell at 301-600-1110, or by emailing [ALRussell@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:ALRussell@FrederickCountyMD.gov). Discrimination complaints also can be filed online. The Human Relations Department investigates complaints in a fair, confidential and timely manner, and fashions appropriate remedies when illegal discrimination is found to exist. To learn more, visit

[www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HumanRelations](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/HumanRelations).

**Stevens Recognized by Maryland Economic Development Association**

The Maryland Economic Development Association (MEDA) recognized Katie Stevens, Director of Agriculture and Small Business in the Frederick County Office of Economic Development, with the 2023 MEDA Rising Star Award.

The award recognizes candidates for their dedication to Maryland's economic development. Stevens' work on numerous projects that have significantly influenced Frederick County's economic landscape made her a standout candidate for the award. Some of her most notable accomplishments were spearheading three rounds of the award-winning Agriculture Innovation Grants program, which foster innovation and new opportunities for the local farm com-

munity so farmers can diversify into value-added production, and being instrumental in awarding millions of dollars to local businesses through state and federal funding.

"Katie's dedication to our agriculture economy is inspiring," Frederick County Executive Jessica Fitzwater said. "Through her continued leadership, she has made remarkable contributions so our farms – and our farmers – can thrive for years to come. Katie's work is helping to preserve our community's rich agricultural history while paving a way for a bright future. She is very deserving of this prestigious recognition."

Mrs. Stevens, who grew up on her family's dairy farm, has several notable accomplishments during her tenure with the Office of Economic Development. She spearheaded three rounds of the award-winning Agriculture Innovation Grants program, which foster innovation and new

opportunities for the local farm community so farmers can diversify into value-added production. She was also instrumental in awarding millions of dollars to local businesses through state and federal funding.

"Katie Stevens has that unique talent to bring the County's traditional dairy and row crop farming economy together with the NEW nontraditional farming operations all together in harmony with Frederick's growth," said Tom Mullineaux, President of the Frederick County Agri-Business Committee.

*For more information on the nomination process and MEDA, visit [www.medamd.com](http://www.medamd.com).*

**Karen Gaither Promoted to FCSO Records Section Supervisor**

A long-time and devoted employee, Karen Gaither, Frederick County

**Continued on page 34**



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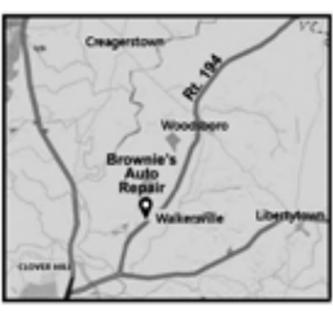
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# COMMENTARY

## Words from Winterbilt

The New Year's predictions for 2024 are not normal

Shannon Bohrer

Every New Year we experience predictions for the coming year. While we have the normal and expected predictions from experts on politics, the weather, and economics, this year feels different.

Often, one could read the predictions for the last several years and it would be difficult to say which year each was made. This year is unlike recent years. We have the global warming issue with 2023 being the hottest year on record, at least until the end of 2024. The expectation from science experts is that we are fast running out of time to address the problem and extreme weather incidents will continue to increase in severity. Then, we have several armed conflicts in areas of the world that remind the experts of conditions not seen since the end of World War II. The war in Ukraine is being ignored because it has been relegated to second place, behind the Israel-Hamas war. We have been warned by experts that the Israel-Hamas war could expand. And if excessive heat and war are not enough, our divisive politics have created a possibility of ending our democracy. The signs for all these predictions are present - and growing.

The predictions of global warming have become more noticeable and prominent in recent years. While water, an abundance of and/or lack

(floods and draughts), has been a topic for years, groundwater, or drinking water, is often not mentioned. Yet our groundwater is in trouble. We are pumping out groundwater faster than the underground aquifers are being replenished. This is not just a water issue. When groundwater is not replaced, the ground can sink, and it often does. Damage to homes, roads and other infrastructure has occurred and is expected to get worse. According to one investigation, "the United States is depleting its invaluable reserves of ground water at a dangerous rate." Our vast aquifers are being depleted much faster than previously believed.

A recent article related to global warming was titled "Something Was Messing with Earth's Axis. The Answer Has to Do with Us." According to the article, our planet's rotation, or centerline, took a slight turn sometime in the early 2000s. The discovery was puzzling. Scientists knew the planet's rotational axis could move, yet the sudden move was unexpected. Researchers and real scientists eventually concluded that the "accelerated melting of the polar ice sheets and mountain glaciers had changed the way mass was distributed around the planet..." The loss of weight from ice and water affected the earth's rotation. The researchers also identified a related factor: "colossal quantities of water pumped out of the ground for crops and households" was

a contributing factor to the movement of the earth's axis.

While global warming is a worldwide threat, many do not see the worldwide threats with the war in Ukraine. Yet it does exist. The war in Ukraine began when Russia invaded a sovereign nation. Russia first invaded on February 20, 2016, and took Crimea. Russia had troops in Ukraine for eight years, and on February 24, 2022, Russia launched a full-scale invasion, expecting to take the entire country. Russia has been rebuffed by Ukrainian forces for almost two years. During that time, Russia has acquired weapons from North Korea and Iran and has made overtures for an alliance with China.

With the support of armaments from democratic Western nations, Ukraine has held off the invaders for almost two years. The fighting is, in essence, a proxy war between autocracies and democracies. We know from history and what Putin told us that if he succeeds in Ukraine, he will go further. It is a fact that many experts believed that the Ukraine war was, and still is, capable of expanding. So, how will the Ukrainian war end? Will the democracies and the West withdraw their support? Or will North Korea and Iran withdraw their support?

On October 7 of this year Hamas attacked Israel and another proxy war began. Israel has a right to defend itself, so they have attacked Hamas inside Palestine. The United States started by supporting Israel with weapons, while Iran is supporting Hamas. Again, democracy is against a theoretical fas-

cist type of government. The collateral damage to innocent Palestinians is reported daily and is changing the world narrative about the conflict.

Supporting Israel and Palestine should not be a binary choice. Both should be supported with the anger directed at Hamas, but that is not the direction of this war. While the Israelis are in Palestine, Hezbollah is attacking Israel's northern border. Hezbollah is also supported by Iran. As the middle east takes sides, similarities can be made with the Russian-Ukraine war. Some experts believe this war could quickly expand. Several neighboring countries, not favorable to Israel, have already been involved indirectly in the conflict.

Going back over one hundred years, on June 28, 1914, the Archduke of the Austro-Hungarian empire, Franz Ferdinand, was assassinated in Sarajevo. That one event started World War I "and ushered in decades of war and political upheaval throughout Europe and across the globe." When smaller nations go to war, and their larger neighbors come to their defense, we have more significant and sometimes greater wars.

Russia, North Korea, and Iran, along with their more significant partner, China, could present a danger that was last seen in both previous World Wars. The danger has increased as China's economy has slowed and as they make allies with our enemies. The world stage is like previous times in history when Kings, dictators, and fascists joined forces against democracies. We like to think a World War is impossible but when right conditions exist, history

can repeat itself.

The last prediction is that our 2024 presidential election has the probability of being our last democratic election. The presumptive leader of one party, our former president, has explicitly stated that he will use the justice department to arrest and incarcerate his political enemies. He is currently charged with trying to change the results of the previous presidential election. And while he is open about his intentions, even to suspend parts of our constitution, he enjoys overwhelming support from his party.

The former president berates anyone who disagrees or challenges him while praising Russian President Vladimir Putin, North Korean President Kim Jung Un, and China's President Xi Jinping. He has also praised other autocrats while disparaging our allies from other democracies. When praising the autocrats, he talks about the absolute control they seem to have, obviously something he desires.

There is no absolute guarantee that any of these predictions will come to fruition, but the probability exists. Furthermore, the probability of a world war would increase if our former president were re-elected. The dictators and autocrats of the world would like to see our democracy fail. Democracy is their enemy, and without us as a leader of their opposition, they see a green light to do as they wish.

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

## The Triad

Biden should cave on immigration

Jonathan Last

Joe Biden and Democrats want to pass a bill funding \$110 billion in aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.

Republicans are refusing to pass any bill to give aid to Ukraine, Israel, and Taiwan.

Why? Republicans are holding this aid hostage and will not release it unless Democrats give them what they want on immigration.

It's a complicated situation, because House Republicans have one set of immigration demands while Republicans in the Senate refuse to say what their demands are. And also you are dealing with a bunch of nihilists who have sacrificed every foreign policy principle they claimed to uphold for the past half century to keep a racist game show host happy. We will explore these complications in a minute.

But let's start with the conclusion: Biden and the Democrats should cave. They should give Republicans (almost) whatever they want.

Trigger warning: You're not going to like this.

Start with two moral truths: It is obscene that Republicans are holding hostage military aid for an ally that is engaged in a shooting war. This is not normal and it is not the behavior of a healthy political party.

Also, even if you take Republicans on their own terms and assume that they are attempting to trade horses—they're playing dirty pool. Last week

Senate Democrats offered Republicans a zero-conditions amendment to the military aid bill. This means that Republicans were free to make any ask they wanted on immigration.

The Republicans refused the opportunity. As my colleague Joe Perticone noted, Schumer offered Republicans a zero-conditions amendment to the bill to allow for a vote on whatever immigration or border enforcement policy they wanted. "This is a golden opportunity for Republicans to present whatever border policy they want, and our side will not interfere with the construction of that amendment in any way," Schumer said during his floor remarks on Wednesday. Unfortunately, this grand gesture to the minority didn't change the outcome of the vote on the supplement. It only served as one more reminder of the current reality: that Republicans are not acting in good faith.

So we'll start our conversation with those two stipulations plus one other piece of received wisdom: You're not supposed to negotiate with hostage-takers.

That said, there are two compelling real-world reasons and four political reasons Biden and the Democrats should give in to Republicans here.

### First, the real-world reasons:

1. Ukraine- Immigration. The war in Europe is more important than domestic immigration policy.

The war is a finite event, the results of which will influence global economics and security for years and decades to come. Depending on the outcome, NATO will either congeal or fracture. Peace and security in

Europe will either stabilize or destabilize. China will either be deterred or encouraged in its quest to subjugate Taiwan. And the economic and military consequences of these ripples will have large-scale effects on Americans.

Immigration, on the other hand, is a perennial challenge for America, as it is for all economically vibrant countries. Even if we "solved" immigration tomorrow, we'd have to re-solve it again next year and the year after.

Net-net, America is better off if Ukraine wins the war, even at the cost of suboptimal immigration policies.

2. Immigration does need reform. Huge sections of the system are broken, the humanitarian crisis at the border is real, and there are some areas where Democrats and Republicans have similar views of which reforms are needed. If those shared reforms can be put into practice, even at the cost of also putting in place some reforms Democrats do not favor, that's moving the ball forward.

The stuff Democrats don't like can always be undone later and the stuff that there's agreement on can stay in place.

### And here are the political reasons:

1. Biden can paint Republicans as anti-Ukraine even after he cuts a deal. He can say that Republicans didn't want to fund Ukraine (which is popular) and so he had to take action to make sure they didn't hand Putin a victory.

2. A deal makes Republicans co-owners of the border. For Republicans, immigration is like *Roe v. Wade*:

It's not an issue they want to solve, it's a political club they want to wield.

Did you know that a few hours after his inauguration on January 20, 2021, Joe Biden submitted a comprehensive immigration plan to Congress? Republicans didn't even deign to respond because they need immigration to be a problem.

But now Republicans have engaged on the issue at the policy level. Biden should use this opportunity to pin them down to concrete asks and then meet them.

If he does that, then anything that happens with immigration between now and next November belongs to both Biden and the MAGAs.

3. A deal shores up Biden on immigration with swing voters. Immigration is a high-salience issue with voters and large majorities disapprove of Biden's immigration policies. So he should make a change and use the Ukraine hostage-taking as cover for butchering up.

4. Reinforce the larger 2024 narrative as a choice between governing, or chaos. Biden isn't going to win 2024 on the strength of his economy.<sup>2</sup> He's going to have to disqualify Trump and make 2024 a contest between a workhorse who gets bipartisan compromises done and a chaos agent who burns everything down.

Cutting a deal on immigration in order to get aid to Ukraine is two-fer. It lets Biden say (a) "I'm the guy who gets business done by doing bipartisan compromise," but also (b) "If you don't like this deal, Democratic voters, then we have to win back the House."

### How to Cut a Deal

There are two options. The first is simply to adopt the House GOP's HR 2. But that's probably not possible. HR 2 has some truly objectionable planks. But the bigger problem is that it's a massive bill and this sheer size makes it too big to live.

The second option is to pull out pieces of HR 2 and offer them to Republicans as a grand border security plan. Here are some components of HR 2 which might fit such a bill:

- Asylum Reform (Section 101)
- Border Wall Construction (Section 102)
- Employment Eligibility Verification (Section 801)

That's a simple, easy-to-understand, Republican-friendly plan. Change asylum procedures, build more barriers, and enforce existing employment eligibility regulations. Biden gets to take credit for them with the majority of voters who will like them. He also gets to share the blame with Republicans for anyone who is still unhappy about immigration.

And it gives him Ukraine aid, which is still a majority-popular position.

Also: Since the Ukraine money is an installment and more will be needed later, some of the immigration concessions (e.g., remain in Mexico, expulsion authority) can be temporary so that Biden can repeat/extend the bargain later if necessary.

Just say yes.

*To read other articles by Jonathan Last visit [www.thebulwark.com](http://www.thebulwark.com).*

# The Liberal Patriot

What it will take to make America great

John Judis & Ruy Teixeira

In our column last month ‘Where Have All the Democrats Gone?’ we suggested how some progressives and moderates could find “common ground,” but we did not advocate including the views of today’s “cultural radicals” in that synthesis. There are good kinds of radicalism and bad kinds.

Here were some of the examples:

**Immigration:** Many left-wing Democrats have advocated radical policies that would increase illegal immigration or even erase the distinction between legal and illegal immigration. These include opening America’s borders, decriminalizing illegal immigration, abolishing the Immigration and Customs Enforcement agency, and opposing employer verification of hires’ legal status. But besides the emigres themselves, the main beneficiaries of these policies are employers who seek cheap, docile workers. In the last half century, the huge influx of legal and illegal unskilled and low-skilled immigrants has held down the wages and thwarted unionization among native workers. This influx has had a particularly harmful effect on first generation legal migrants and African Americans with only a high school education—precisely the people that the radical left claims to champion.

**Crime:** In the name of racial justice, radicals have proposed defunding the police, reducing or even eliminating penalties for crimes for which African Americans are disproportionately

arrested, and even abolishing prisons. The principal beneficiaries of these proposals are the criminals themselves. Those who suffer most from them are the residents of poorer neighborhoods who in the last three years have endured gang violence and a wave of homicides and carjackings, and who also suffer when drugstores and convenience stores close down because the police, hobbled by rules set by radical district attorneys and by a lack of personnel, cannot stem shoplifting. Again, those who suffer most are precisely the people the radicals claim to champion.

**Gender and sex:** Radicals have insisted that a man who identifies as a woman is a woman and is entitled to the same rights that the women’s movement won for women over the last half-century. These include being able to compete as a woman in highly competitive college sports, to which young women thronged after the passage of Title IX. They reject the right of the state and federal government to regulate the use of experimental drugs and surgery on minors, even while calling for state governments to ban any approach other than “gender-affirming” therapy. The beneficiaries of this new politics of gender are a tiny minority of activists who, like those in the anti-vaccine movement, want to subject biological science to a political ideology.

**Race and reparations:** Radicals have argued that “structural racism” pervades American institutions and needs to be addressed by taxpayer-funded reparations to black Americans. But reparations are generally justified in situations where the victimizers (or their immediate

descendants) reimburse the victims (or their immediate descendants) for the ills they have inflicted on them. The radical demand for reparations fails on both counts. About 70 percent of Americans cannot trace their ancestry back to the period when blacks were enslaved, and 22 percent of Americans today even can’t trace their ancestry back to the Jim Crow South, which was dealt a fatal blow by the passage of the 1964 Civil Rights and 1965 Voting Rights acts. First generation immigrants, barely able to support their families in low-wage service jobs, would have to fund payments to middle- and upper middle-class blacks. That would be unfair and very unpopular.

**Climate change:** Radicals advocate ending fossil fuel use in the United States by 2030 and soon afterwards internationally. They reject new investments in fossil fuels, including natural gas, and they exclude nuclear energy as an alternative to fossil fuels. They want Biden to “declare a climate emergency.” Their rhetoric is apocalyptic and invites its opposite—the denial of any danger from global warming. And their objectives cannot be realized without utterly transforming everyday life and shutting down vast swathes of industrial production. Contrary to the claims of the Green New Deal, many jobs would disappear, and Americans’ standard of living would sharply decline. In fact, the radicals’ projections are based on fantasy not fact.

In each of these cases, radicals are responding to real problems. There are as many as 12 million illegal immigrants in the United States who constitute an exploitable underclass. There have been egregious examples in the last decade of police brutality against blacks, highlighted by George Floyd’s

murder in 2020. Many black Americans remained mired in multi-generational poverty. There has been a rash of mental illness among young people, including teenage girls who have suddenly decided that they want to change their sex. And the danger posed by climate change is quite real. But radicals’ response to these problems either makes them worse or discredits any constructive attempt to address them. In each of these cases, the radical approach can’t be accommodated and should be rejected.

**Crime:** Instead of defunding the police, lavishly fund the police—to attract new hires to staff under-policed areas, and to train new hires to weed out the Derek Chauvins and to prevent the unjustifiable use of force.

**Immigration:** Provide a path to citizenship for those illegal immigrants who have come to America to find work, but at the same time take draconian measures to discourage new waves of illegal immigration. These include requiring employers to verify that new hires are in the country legally, strengthening border security, eliminating asylum application as a means of evading legal immigration, and working with Mexico and Central American countries to crack down on smugglers.

**Race and reparations:** Pay less attention to the growing black middle class and more attention to pockets of multi-generational poverty and hopelessness that endure in big cities and also in small towns. In the last three decades many working-class whites in middle America have suffered a similar fate when factories have moved out or mines have closed. Politically and substantively, the best approach is to fund jobs and social services in all the communities that have suffered from deindustrialization.

**Sex and gender:** Aggressively enforce the court’s Bostock decision that bans employers from discriminating against transgender individuals. Add a ban on housing discrimination. But don’t undermine rights that were specifically designed to help women or to protect people’s privacy. Encourage the use of therapy and regulate as an experimental treatment the use of medical intervention for minors who are uncomfortable with their biological sex.

**Climate change:** Take a long view of the transition away from fossil fuels. Use natural gas, with its lower carbon emissions, as a transition fuel. Shift the funding focus to nuclear technology, while deregulating its use, and fund research into new mini-reactors and into technologies that capture carbon.

We were not predicting the future of America nor offering a guidebook by which parties could win elections, but based on polling we think a majority of Americans who currently oppose radical measures would support these kinds of reforms.

As things stand, the two parties are on a political teeter-totter. Elections have frequently been decided based on which party’s radical extremes are more salient. In 2022, Democrats won seats when voters were focused on Republican denial of abortion rights and denial of the results of the 2020 presidential election; Republicans won when voters turned their attention to Democratic groups’ support for open borders or defund the police.

We are not proposing a middle-ground between these radical extremes, but a politics that leaves them entirely aside and focuses on what most Americans really care about.

To read other articles from *The Liberal Patriot* visit [www.liberalpatriot.com](http://www.liberalpatriot.com).

# Good Day, Neighbor

Healthcare

Dorothea Mordan

We’ve done it again. Open season on healthcare—choosing a plan, believing we have power over our health.

Our American history of health insurance has great impact on our current healthcare accessibility. Through the 1950s and 1960s, health insurance evolved into an institution unto itself with the advance of “Employee Benefits”. As the national corporate structure grew, paying employees with “benefits” became an indispensable part of business costs. Benefits are business expenses which are not taxable in the same way as a paycheck. Corporations save money on benefits, so they give generously.

Corporate employees are not everyone, in any country. America has lots of self employed people and lots of employees whose employers find ways to give them just enough paid hours to benefit the business. But not enough to require the business to offer benefits—in this way, health insurance is not available for everyone who works and participates in our society.

Health insurance companies, driven by cost calculations, decide how, where and when a policy holder can get med-

ical care. Such companies are making medical decisions based on economic evidence. Whatever the relationship between costs and statistics of the efficacy of various medical treatments, an insurance company is effectively practicing medicine without a license.

For years the Democrats in Congress have focused on healthcare. The goal is to pull the resources already in healthcare into a connected system that provides care to all Americans. They came up with, and delivered, the Affordable Care Act (ACA). Our country is too big to create or dismantle a national system for everyone everywhere. The ACA was developed and put in place to start filling those gaps in access to medical care.

The ACA works. A person I know, has medications that, in the mysterious retail ways of pharmaceutical companies, is billed at \$500,000.00 annually. A healthcare policy under the ACA insures that it is fully covered. The operative word—*insures*. The Affordable Care Act fulfills its mandate; it insures that medical care will not bankrupt a family.

The system is convoluted, and can be confusing even to the tech savvy shopper on any State healthcare and insurance portal. But it is a system in place, which can be simplified or expanded using the tools in place. The Biden Administration has lowered costs of

commonly used life saving medications such as insulin. Thanks to Biden’s Inflation Reduction Act the new price cap for insulin is \$35.00 a month. Controlling prices and mandating access to medical care have, at minimum, two benefits. Healthcare that won’t bankrupt us. Healthcare that we control for ourselves, with our doctor.

Republicans in Congress have repeatedly stated that the ACA is bad. It’s not clear why, but it is clear that they have provided no alternative plan.

Once having a bit of power, Republicans had a ready answer to the question “how will you govern?”

The GOP answer is to solemnly proceed to practice medicine without a license. Requiring doctors to follow legislative directions on how to practice medicine. Requiring doctors to stop any treatment to save a woman’s life unless they can prove the need to a bunch of people with an unknown understanding of human reproductive conditions. This is as illogical as it is deadly.

The US Constitution’s stated purpose is individual liberty. From our Declaration of Independence,

*“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.”*

Around our country the Republican party is supporting elected legislators who pass, or try to pass, laws concerning an individual person’s body. None of these can be constitutional. To be enforced, every one of them, by definition, has to go through an individual person’s body and their “unalienable rights”. To be enacted, every one of such laws were vetted based on a religious perspective rather than a scientific, medical one.

The First Amendment of the US Constitution states,

*“Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof”.*

Simply believing one has the right to make laws based on religious beliefs does not make it so. Blessed be the posse of bright young attorneys that takes these details to the Supreme Court.

The answer to solving health issues, dangers of pregnancy, gender questions, et. al. is healthcare. A woman with good medical care that will not bankrupt her or her family can make sound, even righteous, decisions with her doctor. A family with good medical care, that will not bankrupt them, can get medical and mental healthcare for family members with gender dysphoria. A responsible government provides the tools for individuals and families to live their lives independently.

Yet the GOP, as a group, practices medicine without a license, and brings no answer to healthcare. The last Republican administration reduced the annual sign up period for choosing a policy. They made it harder to get health insurance if you are self employed, or need a subsidy for the monthly premium. The GOP made it harder if you are a small independent business. They are now making it harder to be an independent person.

A government’s purpose is to protect the citizens. The military protects from enemies, medical care protects from loss of life at any stage, affordable housing and jobs that pay a living wage protect from poverty.

Do we have power over our health? Yes we do, in many ways, whether preventative by clean living, or repair work with sophisticated medical intervention. Policies put in place by Democrats, sometimes with bipartisan agreement, focus on our core belief in the self determination of the individual, with the economic support of government.

Democratic policies set the goal of protecting the whole United States Constitution, the protection of individual citizens and their property rights.

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

To read past editions of *Good Day Neighbor* visit the Authors section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net).

# PASTOR'S DESK

## Will you do anything differently in this New Year?

**Pastor Sean DeLawder**  
**Woodsboro Evangelical**  
**Lutheran Church**

If you are like me, you are wondering, where did the year go? I was just getting used to writing 2023 and now I have to write 2024. Each year seems to go by faster and faster and I look back on my year and wonder to myself, did anything change from 2022 to 2023? Did I do the same things that I did the year before? Did I stick to my resolutions that seemed so doable and inspiring on January 1st but quickly faded away by January 31st. Will I do anything differently in this New Year?

I am a creature of habit. I am one of those people that nefarious people love because I am so predictable. I get up at the same time each day, I go to bed at roughly the same time each night, I take the same routes to church and stores. Even my phone's GPS knows where I am going because when I plug it into my car it gives me a suggested destination to where I went on that same day and time before.

Now do not misunderstand me, I am obviously a believer in routines. There are routines that give our daily lives structure and are good for us. For example brushing our teeth each morning and before bed, bathing, exercising, eating our fruits and vegetables each day, and yes attending church services and being involved with church activities. In fact I recently heard on an NPR radio program which aired on December 22 called "The TED Radio Hour", the host was inter-

viewing Dan Buettner, who for the past twenty-five years has been studying groups of people who have lived into their ninety's and beyond. He says that people who attend church (or are engaged in religious activities) generally live fourteen years longer than people who do not.

Buettner said that you cannot measure spirituality but that you can measure religiosity, which is how often you show up to your faith based organization. In a transcript from that show, Buettner says, "And we know from meta-analyses that people who show up four times a month are living four to 14 years longer than people who don't show up.

But we don't know if that's because belonging to a faith-based community, you're less likely to engage in risky behaviors or if it's because you have a day every week where you're de-stressing and thinking about a higher power or if it's because you have a nice social network that you, you know, close and play." Buettner goes on to say, "And I argue that one of the best public health interventions we have available to us in most cities is getting young people involved with religious organizations. And I say that not as a religious person myself. I say it - look at the data."

That seems to me a very compelling argument supporting becoming involved in church whether it is for worship, for outreach, for social activities or for a combination of them all.

But routines can also stifle our growth. We can get so accustom-



to our routine that we neglect, or resist, trying something new. And doing new things is what helps us grow, learn, expand our experiences, and it is what helps to keep us young. Doing new things is where we can engage with new people and maybe learn something from them. Keeping social and making friends also helps to keep us young.

So maybe we get into a routine of going to church each Sunday morning - and then we go home and go about the rest of the week, as if we got our obligation done and now we can do what we want. But I do not think that is what Buettner was saying and I certainly do not think that is what God wants from us.

Church as part of a routine is good, church that becomes a rou-

tine is not very good. Ask yourself, when I attend a church service or activity, am I engaged? Am I learning? Am I involved? Am I keeping my social relationships fresh and am I making new friends and building new relationships? And most importantly, am I strengthening my relationship with God? God wants us to keep learning and as we continue to grow and learn we are transformed. In Psalm 32:8 it says, "I will instruct you and teach you the way you should go".

So what will this New Year bring? Will it be a year of learning and transformation or will you make the same old resolutions that will begin on January 1st and fizzle out during the rest of the month until you are right back to where you were last year. The choice is up to you. 2024 can be the begin-

ning of the new you. It can be the beginning of adding fourteen years to your life just by simply becoming involved in a faith community. It can become a year of transformation. A year of learning. A year of making new connections and even reigniting old ones. It can be a year that you want to repeat year after year because every day is a new day and every routine becomes a new and exciting adventure.

I used to be lackadaisical about celebrating the New Year. But this year for me is going to be different - I am going to embrace it. I am going to make it a transformative year. I hope you are inspired to make it a transformative year as well. And who knows, just maybe, one person at a time, we will all be inspired to bring God's love and peace and transformation to this world.

I hope you will join us this year at Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church - you are welcome always! We are located at 101 South Main Street, Woodsboro. Our Sunday morning worship begins at 10am. Join us each month for our free community dinners and other activities. For information about our church or any of our events you may call 301-845-4533 or visit our website at [www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com](http://www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com). Our Sunday services are posted each Sunday afternoon on our YouTube channel as well. God's peace and blessings be with you all today and throughout the year.

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Happy New Year!

Join us for Worship  
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Next Served With Grace  
 Free Dinner  
 Feb 5<sup>th</sup> at 5:30 to 7 p.m.  
 No January Dinner  
 All Welcome  
 Supporting our community with fellowship

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 301-271-2379  
 8231-A Rocky Ridge Road, Thurmont  
 Facebook Live - You Tube  
[admin@gracehammoravian.org](mailto:admin@gracehammoravian.org)

 "Peace I leave with you; my peace I give to you. I do not give to you as the world gives. Do not let your hearts be troubled, and do not let them be afraid," John 14:27

Join us on Sunday mornings at 10 a.m.  
 All are welcome

If you are unable to join us in the sanctuary you may view our services on our YouTube channel.

Free Community Dinner  
 January 20th - 5-7 p.m. - All are welcome!

Soup & Sandwich Sale - Saturday, February 3rd  
 Chicken Corn Soup & Vegetable Beef Soup - \$9 Quart  
 Country Ham, Chicken Salad & Sloppy Joe Sandwiches - \$5 Each

Pre-orders only. All orders must be received by January 29th.  
 Order on our website or contact Roger Myers at 301-606-5046

For more information on how to access our services please visit our website or contact the church.



Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church

101 S. Main Street, Woodsboro

[www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com](http://www.woodsborolutheranchurch.com) 301-845-4533


# THE BOOK OF DAYS

## Unlucky Days



### January 2

That peculiar phase of superstition, which has regard to lucky or unlucky, good or evil days, is to be found in all ages and climes, wherever the mystery-man of a tribe, or the sacerdotal caste of a nation, has acquired rule or authority over the minds of the people.

All over the East, among the populations of antiquity, are to be found traces of this almost universal worship of luck. It is one form of that culture of the beneficent and the maleficent principles, which marks the belief in good and evil, as an antagonistic duality of gods. From ancient Egypt the evil or unlucky days have received the name of 'Egyptian days.' Nor is it only in pagan, but in Christian times, that this superstition has held its potent sway. No season of year, no month, no week, is free from those untoward days on which it is dangerous, if not fatal, to begin any enterprise, work, or travel.

They begin with New-Year's Day, and they only end with the last day of December. Passing over the heathen augurs, who predicted fortunate days for sacrifice or trade, wedding or war, let us see what our Anglo-Saxon forefathers believed in this matter of days.

A Saxon manuscript gives the following account of these days - "Three days there are in the year, which we call Egyptian days; that

is, in our language, dangerous days, on any occasion whatever, to the blood of man or beast. In the month which we call April, the last Monday; and then is the second, at the coming in of the month we call August; then is the third, which is the first Monday of the going out of the month of December. He who on these three days reduces blood, be it of man, be it of beast, this we have heard say, that speedily on the first or seventh day, his life he will end. Or if his life be longer, so that he come not to the seventh day, or if he drink some time in these three days, he will end his life; and he that tastes of goose-flesh, within forty days' space his life he will end.'

Astrologers say that six days of the year are perilous of death; and therefore they forbid men to let blood on them, or take any drink; that is to say, January 3rd, July 1st, October 2nd, the last of April, August 1st, the last day going out of December. These six days with great diligence ought to be kept, but namely [mainly?] the latter three, for all the veins are then full. For then, whether man or beast be knit in them within 7 days, or certainly within 14 days, he shall die. And if they take any drinks within 15 days, they shall die; and if they eat any goose in these 3 days, within 40 days they shall die; and if any child be born in these 3 latter days, they shall die a wicked death. Astrologers say that in the beginning of March,

the seventh night, or the fourteenth day, let the blood of the right arm; and iii the beginning of April, the 11th day, of the left arm; and in the end of May, 3rd or 5th (lay, on whether arm thou wilt; and thus, of all the year, thou shalt orderly be kept from the fever, the falling gout, the sister gout, and loss of thy sight.'

In a comparatively modern manuscript of the time of Henry VI, one page is filled with the following, of which we modernise the spelling:

These underwritten be the perilous day's, for to take any sickness in, or to be hurt in, or to be wedded in, or to take any journey upon, or to begin any work on, that he would well speed. The number of these days be in the year 32; they be these:

In January there be 7: 1st, 2nd, 4th, 5th, 7th, 10th, and 15th.

In February be 3: 6th, 7th, and 18th.

In March be 3: 1st, 6th, and 8th.

In April be 2: 6th and 11th.

In May be 3: 5th, 6th, and 7th.

In June be 2: 7th and 15th.

In July be 2: 5th and 19th.

In August be 2: 15th and 19th.

In September be 2: 6th and 7th.

In October is 1: 6th.

In November be 2: 15th and 16th.

In December be 3: 15th, 16th, and 17th

After the Reformation, the old evil days appear to have abated much of the ancient malevolent influences, and to have left behind them only a general superstition against fishermen setting out to fish, or seamen to take a voyage, or landsmen a journey, or domestic servants to enter on a new place--on a Friday. In many country districts, especially in the north of England, no weddings take place on Friday, from this cause.

### January 22 Seventh Sons And Their Seventh Sons

There has been a strong favour for the number Seven, from a remote period in the world's history. It is, of course, easy to see in what way the Mosaic narrative gave sanctity to this number in connection with the days of the week, and led to usages which influence the social life of all the countries of Europe. But a sort of mystical goodness or power has attached itself to the number in many other ways.

Seven wise men, seven champions of Christendom, seven sleepers, seven-league boots, seven churches, seven ages of man, seven hills, seven senses, seven planets, seven metals, seven sisters, seven stars, seven wonders of the world, —all have had their day of favour; albeit that the number has been awkwardly interfered with by modern discoveries concerning metals, planets, stars, and wonders of the world. articles

Added to the above list is the group of Seven Sons, especially in relation to the youngest or seventh of the seven; and more especially still if this person happen to be the seventh son of a seventh son. It is now, perhaps, impossible to discover in what country, or at what time, the notion originated; but a notion there certainly is, chiefly in provincial districts, that a seventh son has something peculiar about him.

For the most part, the imputed peculiarity is a healing power, a faculty of curing diseases by the touch, or by some other means.

The instances of this belief are numerous enough. There is a rare pamphlet called the Quack Doctor's Speech, published in the time of Charles II. The reckless Earl of Rochester delivered this speech on one occasion, when dressed in character, and mounted on a stage as a charlatan. The speech, amid much that suited that licentious age, but

would be frowned down by modern society, contained an enumeration of the doctor's wonderful qualities, among which was that of being a 'seventh son of a seventh son,' and therefore clever as a curer of bodily ills. The matter is only mentioned as affording a sort of proof of the existence of a certain popular belief.

In Ireland, the seventh son of a seventh son is believed to possess prophetic as well as healing power. A few years ago, a Dublin shopkeeper, finding his errand-boy to be generally very dilatory in his duties, inquired into the cause, and found that, the boy being a seventh son of a seventh son, his services were often in requisition among the poorer neighbours, in a way that brought in a good many pieces of silver.

In Scotland, the spae wife, or fortune-teller, frequently announces herself as the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter, to enhance her claims to prophetic power. Even so late as 1851, an inscription was seen on a window in Plymouth, denoting that a certain doctress was 'the third seventh daughter,'—which the world was probably intended to interpret as the seventh daughter of the seventh daughter of a seventh daughter.

To read other selections from Robert Chamber's 1864 *The Book of Days* visit [www.thebookofdays.com](http://www.thebookofdays.com).



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# ECOLOGY

## Winter in the woods

Anne Gageby  
 Director of Environmental Education  
 Strawberry Hill Foundation

Childhood environmental education is framed by rules – bears hibernate, deciduous trees lose their leaves in the fall but conifer trees remain green year-round, and a winter forest is dull and lifeless. While often based in some degree of truth, as we grow up, we discover that there are exceptions to every rule.

I've written before about the rebellious beech tree, a marcescent deciduous tree that holds onto its leaves until the bitter end. Or at least until the wind and storms tear them off the branches. On the other hand, the tamarack is a conifer that drops its needles every fall, often making the tree appear shockingly dead mid-winter, a stark contrast to evergreen pines and Norway spruces.

As children are exposed to environmental education, these rules help the world make sense. After all, the forest can feel immense and wild. It's human nature to break difficult topics into bite-sized pieces that are easy to understand and remember. But as we dive deeper into the truth of how the world works, we find more and more exceptions to these "rules".

We also learn that rules aren't as simple as they seem. Let's take the common question: Do bears hibernate? What should be a simple "yes" or "no" answer is anything but. The question of whether bears

hibernate depends on who you ask and what their definition of hibernation is. If we frame hibernation only in terms of body temperature reduction, bears aren't considered true hibernators. By this definition, amphibians are considered true hibernators as their body temperatures drop to near freezing.

Framed another way, true hibernators are vertebrates that spend extended periods of time with near-freezing body temperatures. And yet chipmunks, who drop their body temperature to near freezing, wake up periodically to eliminate body wastes and eat. They accomplish this by raising their core temperature, going about their business, and then dropping their temperature again to freezing. It's a fascinating cycle they experience throughout the long winter months.

To add to this confusion, some people break down the concept of winter dormancy even further by whether or not an animal is warm-blooded or cold-blooded. Hibernation as a concept is usually applied to warm-blooded animals because their dormancy is generally agreed to be voluntary. Brumation, on the other hand, is a dormancy in which amphibians' and reptiles' metabolisms decrease but the drop is involuntary and caused by changes in outside temperatures. Torpor is yet another kind of dormancy in which animals' core temperatures only drop slightly as they experience the winter slow-down.

All of this back-and-forth over definitions brings us to the last

"rule" mentioned above: that winter forests are lifeless. A short hike along Strawberry Hill's trails shows how lively a Pennsylvania forest can be even in the deepest parts of winter. Goldfinches, black-capped chickadees, blue jays, downy and red-bellied woodpeckers, northern cardinals, and white-breasted nuthatches are just some of the birds you'll likely spot during a winter stroll. The same goes for squirrels, the rambunctious tree-dwellers who make a lot of noise as they chase back and forth amongst the branches. It's hard to imagine a livelier group of creatures at any time of year. Larger animals such as deer, bobcat, coyote, foxes, weasels, and owls are around and leave evidence of their activity throughout the forest. Even bears, those loveable but hotly debated hibernators, can be active if the days are warm enough.

The trick to seeing the forest as alive is to know what to look for. Venturing outside in winter can feel daunting, especially if you're unsure of what to expect or where to go. Added to this is the inescapable fact that the forest can be incredibly silent, especially right after a snowstorm. Snow absorbs sound and many creatures are dormant or laying low in one capacity or another, even the larger animals. Without grazing deer, snakes sunning themselves, and insects flitting around, the woods can feel eerily still. Or, as some would argue, lifeless. And yet the reality is the forest is anything but lifeless.

It's one thing to say the forest is alive and active in winter but it's another to see it for yourself. Join us for a hike and let our Naturalists show you. We have several guided hikes going on in January that will show you a new side to the forest. On Wednesday, January 17th, join in the



Many people mistakenly believe that winter forests are lifeless. A short hike along Strawberry Hill's trails shows how lively a forest can be even in the deepest parts of winter.

fun as we tackle the Foothills Trails. This trail covers about four and a half miles of wilderness not regularly explored. We'll cross Swamp Creek and even climb over some downed trees so be prepared to experience the forest in an entirely new way. This free hike starts at 10am and will likely last until 2pm.

If an evening hike is more your speed, join us on Saturday, January 20th from 7-8pm for our Owl Prowl as we venture into the night in search of native owls. We'll discover what makes an owl an excellent hunter and learn how to spot evidence of an owl's presence even in the dark of night. We discuss which species of owls live in and which visit our beautiful Pennsylvania woods. There will be free hot chocolate and a presentation before a short hike around campus. The Owl Prowl is \$10 per participant and sure to be a good time for friends of all ages.

And of course, what is a winter hike without folktales? On Thursday, January 25th, we will venture into our beloved Pennsylvania woods under the full Wolf Moon and hear brand new stories from the forest including the Legend of Wolf and Sycamore. Discover the history of real wolves which once inhabited our forests. Explore how human fear and misunderstanding shaped our beliefs and hunting practices and led to the elimination of wild wolves in our state. The Wolf Moon guided hike will start at 7pm, last about 90 minutes, and will cover about two miles. This hike \$10 per person.

Winter has settled in and made herself at home. But that doesn't mean the forest is entirely asleep. Join us for a hike and let's bust these myths and reset the rules about how the world works.

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

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SCIENCE MATTERS

# Sex ratios and scientific research

Boyce Rensberger

Science makes progress not by proving that theories are true but by testing them rigorously and being unable to prove them false. That's a crucial distinction to keep in mind when evaluating the claims and counterclaims that are hurled about so often on almost any issue.

An honest scientist, as I've written before, will almost always say a new discovery is "probably" true. A phony will usually make claims as if there could be no doubt in the world.

There are very few things in cutting-edge science that can be stated honestly with absolute certainty. I'm making a distinction here between textbook science (the established findings we were taught in school) and cutting-edge science (the ongoing research that scientists are doing now).

The closest that researchers usually get is to express a high degree of confidence that something is true. But they can reach that level of confidence only after rigorously testing the hypothesis. Or if experiments are not possible, as in astronomy, confidence comes only after repeated observations that point to the same conclusion.

Let's study this issue with a deceptively simple example. Let's say that you, as the scientist, would like to know the chances that any given birth will produce a boy or a girl.

You could simply observe your own family. You might record that it has two girls and one boy. If you're comfortable with that size of sample, your observation might lead you to propose a hypothesis that nature has a mechanism that dictates that twice as many girls are born as boys. That's fine. It's a perfectly valid hypothesis, based on real-world observation, though extremely limited.

Should you believe it? Not yet. If you want to reduce your chance of being fooled, you should first follow the standard scientific approach and test your hypothesis.

How? One simple method is to make many observations and examine them as a group.

So, you look at another family and find that it has three boys. The third family has one boy and one girl. Gradually, as you widen your sample, you find the boy-girl ratio

approaches 50-50. Then, a strange thing starts to happen—once your sample reaches a certain number of families, the ratio never again varies much. You may feel satisfied that you have looked far enough.

Now you have produced what seems to be a piece of scientific information—the chances of any birth producing a boy are about 50 percent, and the same goes for girls. If you are satisfied with your data, you are entitled to take the next step and ask why the sexes should be evenly matched.

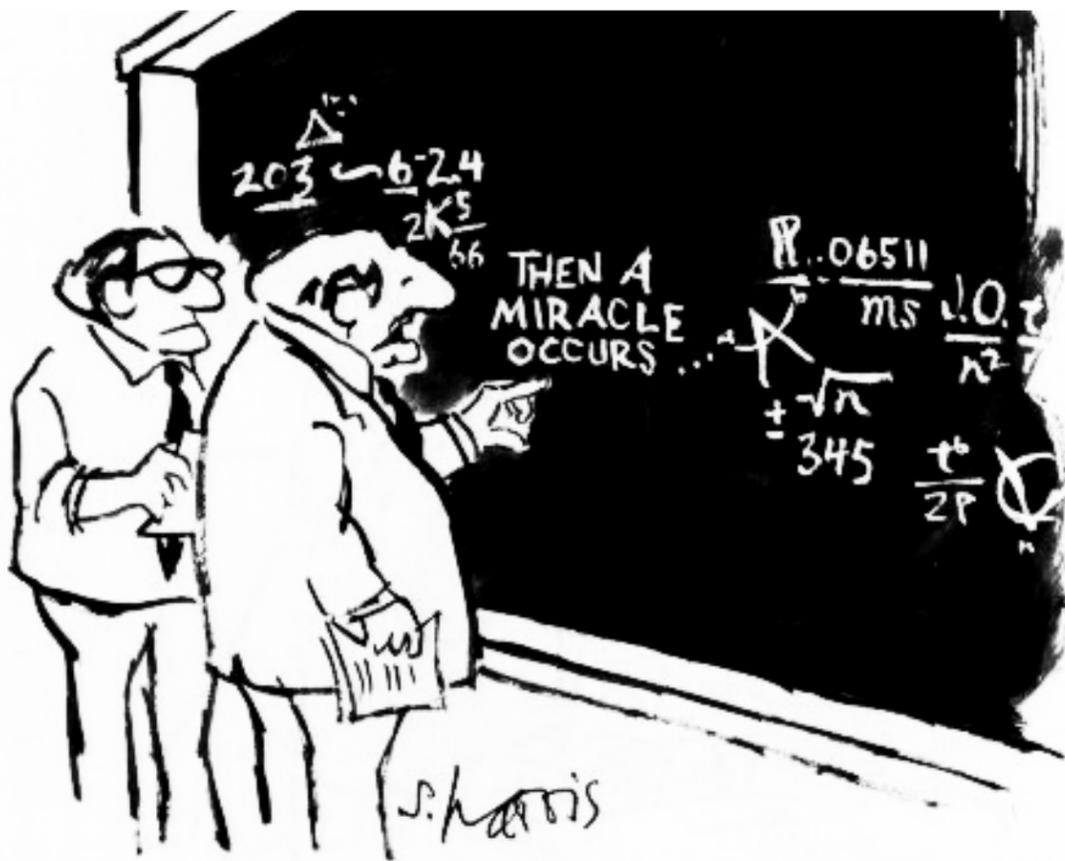
The usual practice in science when faced with a "why" question is to think up a "because" statement. You can search your memory for something that you already know. Or you can make up something. It's okay; scientists make up explanations all the time. That's what a hypothesis is. Scientists just try not to believe them without testing them.

So, you might hypothesize that the sexes are equally matched because everybody needs somebody to love, and a 50-50 ratio makes this possible.

This is the kind of hypothesis that was popular among the ancient Greeks. Objects fell downward, Aristotle taught, because the ground was their rightful place. Since ancient times, science has developed a rather different approach -- testing and careful observation.

In the 1930s, the late philosopher Karl Popper recognized this tradition in science, analyzed its logic and named it "critical rationalism." Popper formalized the idea that a hypothesis can only be proven wrong, never proven right. Therefore, one of the rules of the scientific method is that the only good hypothesis is one that can, in fact, be tested. Our "somebody to love" hypothesis doesn't seem very testable.

Because textbook science tells us about sex chromosomes, a hypothesis for our birth-ratio research project might be as follows: "The sexes are equally matched because parents can bequeath only one of two combinations of sex-determining chromosomes—XX or XY. And the odds that an embryo gets one or the other must necessarily be 50-50." (I'm glossing over the fact that in very rare cases, mal-



"I think you should be more explicit here in step two."

functions of the chromosome-sorting mechanism inside cells can produce individuals with XYY, XXY and other combinations.)

We might imagine testing this by looking at other species with the same chromosome situation to see whether they produce half males and half females.

Let's say it is a year or so later and that we have had a wonderful time on our field trips checking up on the sex ratios of lions and larks, termites and tuna. And we have looked up the reports of other scientists who have studied sex ratios in other species. We would find that not all are 50-50. Some are, but others are not. Our hypothesis needs work. It isn't as simple as we thought. We can't count on the Nobel this year.

In the meantime, one of our graduate students has been examining official records of human births and deaths and has made a surprising finding. If you look at the number of each sex at each age of life--and this is genuine information--the ratios change over time. Among newborns, there are more boys than girls. But male babies are more likely to die than female babies.

As we move through older age

groups, at each age more males die than females. The ratio is close to 50-50 during the reproductive years. And among the oldest people, of course, there are many more women than men. This gives us one scientific conclusion: females really are the stronger sex.

This deeper analysis of the data has revealed a phenomenon far more profound than it seemed at the outset. We can now refine our hypothesis: "Nature has somehow arranged things so that the number of males who die before the age of parenthood is exactly offset by the larger number of males conceived and born in the first place."

So, the "somebody to love" hypothesis was not so far off. And rigorous testing of our hypotheses has led us to a far more complex problem. The arithmetic of sex-determining chromosomes would seem to dictate a 50-50 ratio. The fact that nature doesn't work that way shows that a more subtle phenomenon must be at work.

We need another grant.

*Boyce Rensberger retired to New Midway after more than 40 years as a science writer and editor, mostly for The New York Times and The Washington Post. Write him at boyce-rensberger@gmail.com.*



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## IN THE COUNTRY

# Feeding the birds during the cold months to come

Mary Ann Ryan  
Adams County Master Gardener

Understanding and educating folks on the benefits of planting properly and environmentally friendly maintenance practices can go a long way for our feathered friends.

Watching birds in the winter is enjoyable and fun to do. During the dreary days, we can lift our spirits by watching the little creatures flitting around the feeders and seed heads of perennials, and in and out of evergreen trees and shrubs. Our feeders are outside our family room windows, and I can watch the activity for quite a long time as the birds visit different feeders.

Many types of birds visit in any given period of time. Red-bellied and downy woodpeckers, chickadees, juncos, white-throated sparrows, house finches, cardinals and tufted titmice grace us with their presence. An assortment of feeders and feed will attract a larger variety of our flying friends.

**Plant Life:** When planning for winter visitors, plant things that have seed heads that can remain through the winter months. Common perennials such as black-eyed susans, coneflowers, and asters will provide seeds. Evergreen shrubs and trees, like inkberry holly, American holly and white pines will provide shelter for the birds. Deciduous shrubs like viburnums, winterberry holly and sumac provide berries. Allow old, dead trees to remain standing if safety to any buildings is not an issue.

These will provide nesting holes in the summer, but also the woodpeckers and other birds like blue jays love to use the trees to break open seeds and nuts.

Take advantage of the winter months to plan for a bird habitat. Research the sizes of shrubs and trees; study the best locations to plant bird attracting shrubs, trees and perennials. Understand and see the beauty of a less than tidy garden, as the dead stems and thick brush are the reason bird activity will happen in any given area. Keep in mind the visibility of the feeders from inside your house so you can properly locate the plants for your view of the bird activity.

**Supplemental Food:** We can supplement this natural food source by providing additional seed through bird feeders. Many styles of feeders are available, from tubes and platforms to nets and hoppers. The more variety of feeders you provide, the more variety of visitors you will have. Tube feeders typically attract finches, while the platform feeders will attract larger birds like cardinals and blue jays and the netting can be filled with suet for the woodpeckers.

Probably the most versatile feeder is the hopper. At our hopper, one located on our deck the other outside the kitchen window for easy view, we have finches, juncos, titmice and chickadees visiting daily. We keep it full of black oil sunflower seed. Another feeder that we use is a suet feeder. This feeder allows the birds to feed on the underside as the holes are below the suet

cake. Mostly woodpeckers hang out at this feeder, literally. It's really enjoyable to watch them!

We also have a net that we fill with suet or a peanut butter mixture that includes sunflower seeds. This attracts the woodpeckers, but we get flickers and jays flitting around as well. A piece of a wooden post with holes that we spread the peanut butter/sunflower mixture provides cardinals and blue jays as well as finches and titmice a feast to partake. Gold finches love the tube feeders. The gold finches will feed upside down, making this an interesting watch.

Just as there is a variety of feeders, so goes the types of feed. Millet, sunflowers, corn and peanut butter can all be a food source for birds. The most versatile seed is the black oil sunflower seed. This seed can be mixed with peanut butter and put into the suet feeders, and it can be used in hoppers as well as platform feeders for the cardinals, chickadees and titmice.

The least useful type of feed is millet. Typically when buying a bird feed mix, the millet is what the birds will scratch to the ground and discard. It's mostly just a filler to add weight for the bag. Niger (thistle seed) is used in the tube feeders for the finches. These are tiny seeds and are typically on the pricier side, but the finches just love it!

A winter tradition in our family is to smear peanut butter onto pinecones and hang them on the trees. We also use orange and apple slices, string them together and have an outdoor tree for the birds! Even at 26 and 22, our daughters still enjoy this winter tradition.

**Feeder Location:** When locating the feeders, whatever type you choose, remember one important element: shelter. The birds need to feel protected and have a quick get-away from any



Watching birds in the winter is enjoyable and fun to do. During the dreary days, we can lift our spirits by watching the little creatures flitting around the feeders and seed heads of perennials, and in and out of evergreen trees and shrubs. I can watch the activity for quite a long time as the birds visit different feeders.

potential hunters, like hawks and cats. Be sure to locate the feeders near evergreen trees or near brush or plants that they can quickly fly to when danger is in their midst. Our feeder on our deck has evergreen trees to one side and a dense, deciduous tree to the other. This allows them cover from potential predators.

**Water:** For best bird activity and bird health, not only should you provide a food source (whether with plants or store-bought bird feed) and shelter, but you should also provide water. A heated birdbath can provide that. There are many types of bird baths and heaters on the market. Small fish ponds, or just a clean dish of shallow water set out each morning can provide this source of water as well.

I remember, not long ago, thinking that bird watching was for the "older generation". In the early days of dating my husband, I can remember visiting him in San Francisco. At the time, he was

working with the US Dept. of Interior, researching waterfowl in the bay area. As an avid bird watcher in his mid-20s, the first place we went after he picked me up at the airport was some place in this marshy area looking for a black rail. All these birders, with their scopes, binoculars, and other gear that I didn't understand, were just waiting for this little bird to "flush" out of the grasses. I thought they were all crazy, including my then boyfriend. (I suppose that should have been my first clue...)

But now, in my early fifties, I, too, find this a hobby worth the time. Maybe I'm now a part of that "older generation" I not so long ago deemed worthy of birdwatching. Look into acquiring field guides to help you identify the birds visiting your feeders in the winter. Some guides you may want to look at are Peterson Field Guide to Birds of North America and Sibley Guide to Birds. A website to check out is the Cornell Lab of Ornithology All About Birds ([www.allaboutbirds.org](http://www.allaboutbirds.org)).

My guess is, when spring comes, you'll be more aware of the bird activity around you and utilizing a guide even more frequently than you have during the winter. Enjoy the quiet of the winter and the flurry of bird activity. When we get "snowed-in" again this winter season, remember to take the time to relax and watch the birds. Enjoy the relaxation now, because spring is just around the corner!

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# Great (Horned) Owl or the Greatest?

Tim Iverson, Naturalist

Part of the mission of the Scales & Tales program from Maryland Park Service is to provide enriching programs that educate people on the tales of each and every animal in their care. People have the opportunity to visit any of the six aviaries in the state, but you can also pay to have the animals come to you! There are various interpretive programs to choose from or you can choose a “Wildlife on Display” format. Recently a Naturalist at Cunningham Falls was telling me a story about a 13 or 14 year old girl he met while doing a display at Hagerstown Community College this past spring. One of the birds on display at this event was the Great Horned Owl, and this youngster sure knew her stuff! Upon seeing the bird she exclaimed “Oh, I know why they’re called Great Horned Owls. Horned: because the feather tufts on their heads look like horns. Owls: because they are owls – duh! And great: because... well they do a lot of stuff really well.” And in a nutshell I don’t think I could explain it better in three sentences myself.

Great Horned Owls are the most common owl in the Americas. They are distributed all over the continent from coast to coast, and from the arctic down through Central America. They are also found in many parts of South America, as well. These habitat generalists can be found nearly anywhere potential food can be found – which is anywhere! Rarely do they make their own nests, and instead improvise. They are known to make home sweet home of abandoned nests of other birds. However, more frequently they will roost in tree cavities, stumps, and caves. For this reason they are found in less urban areas.

These birds are the second heaviest owl in North America, second to the Snowy Owl. The Great Horned Owl weighs in at an average of 2 – 4 lbs, or about as much as a phone book. They measure up to about 1.5 – 2 feet and have a wingspan of 3 – 5 feet. That may not seem like much, but they pack a serious punch. It’s said that pound for pound they are some of the fiercest predators around because they can kill prey much larger than itself. Usually, their diet consists of rodents (mice, rats, voles, squirrels, etc.), rabbits and hares, smaller birds and owls, reptiles, amphibians, pets (yes, cats and dogs), and the list goes on! They are known to go after much larger prey too! Small fawns and alligators have been documented prey, but they must be eaten where killed because they’re too large to drag away. However, the most interesting, and one of their favorite meals, is the skunk. Yep, you read right – the skunk. Most birds, with the exception of the vulture, have no sense of smell so this defense does little on behalf

of Pepé Le Pew. Between 6 and 12 hours after prey is consumed Great Horned Owls produce what is referred to as an “owl pellet”. These pellets, which are about 3 – 4 inches long and about an inch wide, are a pill shaped regurgitation of the leftovers they couldn’t digest. These pellets are made up of fur and bones.

These raptors are quite impressive hunters. Their talons are razor sharp and they are capable of squeezing their feet with up to 200 – 300 pounds per square inch. The Great Horned Owl hunts by perching high up and pouncing on prey. Gifted with incredibly acute vision owls can see well at night. Believe it or not their eyes are almost as large as a human’s, and take up a majority of space in the skull. Proportionally speaking if a human’s eyes were similarly sized we would have eyes the size of soft balls! With eyes that big it leaves little room for much else, including muscles to make them move. Because of this the Great Horned Owl must turn its head to see. The neck has 14 vertebrae, twice as many as a human, which allows them to rotate 270 degrees around. The only thing that rivals their sight is their hearing. The ears are slightly offset from one another, the right being positioned slightly higher on the head. This may seem strange, but provides for exceptionally finely tuned hearing. This allows for both depth perception and elevation perception. By turning their heads so both ears are evenly aligned at a sound the owl can pinpoint the exact location of a noise.

Imagine you’re a hungry Great Horned Owl and chasing down prey on a dark moonless night. You’re going in for the catch when you snag your wing on something, a large wire from a power line! You plummet out of the sky and descend helplessly to the ground. This injury is life shattering, because as a bird a broken wing can end it all. Imagine another scenario, an all too common tale among raptors. You are perched aloft in a tree sitting by a road. You’re patiently waiting for dinner to present itself, and it does! First, you hear some rustling. You scan the ground to find a mouse rummaging around in a paper bag scattered on the edge of a road. You sense the moment is right and swoop down for easy pickings. Then just when you swoop across the asphalt a pair of headlights come careening at you. These stories are all too common among raptors, and the true tales of many of the birds housed at aviaries at parks across the state.

The aviary at Cunningham Falls is home to two Great Horned Owls, one male and the other a female. Both of these raptors, along with all the others housed there, are non-releasable due to permanent injury. The male can no longer fly because of a torn tendon in his wing caused by flying into a power line. The female was struck by a car and as a result had one wing amputated. These owls and the other raptors that call home to the aviary at Cunningham Falls State Park are all available to be adopted, and the proceeds from these adop-



The great horned owl, also known as the tiger owl, or the hoot owl, is a large owl native to the Americas. It is an extremely adaptable bird with a vast range and is the most widely distributed true owl in the Americas.

tions goes directly back into funding programs, health needs, any materials needed, and more! Once the Manor Area reopens fly on by the aviary to check out

these masters of the night sky, and the other raptors!

To read other articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

## Gardeners' New Year's resolutions

Maritta Perry Grau & Theresa Furnari  
Frederick County Master Gardeners

As you sit warm and cozy in your house or apartment, sipping tea, coffee, or some other favorite beverage, do your fingers itch to get started on this year's gardening plans? Where to start? What to do? Do you want to expand a narrow bed? Change out the plants in a bed that has become too shady as nearby trees and shrubs have grown, or too sunny because an old tree or shrub had to be taken down? Do you want to add more native plants? Grasses? Vegetables? Shrubs or trees?

One way to satisfy that gardening itch is to browse those wonderful gardening catalogs, online or by mail, from all over the United States, not to mention other countries. Often, you'll see pictures of great garden or lawn plans that you can adapt to your own space.

Perhaps best of all, whether you're looking for vegetables, flowers, vines, trees, or shrubs, you'll usually find all of the information you need about the plant—growing zone, blooming season/color, height and spread, amount of sun/shade/water needed, even the plant's U.S. region or country of origin, just in case you're looking for natives. The nice thing about browsing online is that you can often enlarge the pictures to see details more clearly. You'll also want to check your calendar and note a few dates from these web sites and catalogs so that you know the best time to order, when plants need to go into the ground, and when the last frost occurs in your area.

You don't have to rely only on online catalogs from far-away places, however. Most of the local nurseries in the Frederick-Baltimore-Washington area include pictures, if not whole catalogs, of the plants and garden accessories they carry. But I'll have to admit that one drawback to ordering a catalog is that once you

sign up for one, you're likely to be inundated with many more!

Another—and, of course, to my way of thinking—an even better way to satisfy that gardening itch is to attend our free seminars, either at the extension building, 330 Montevue Lane, or at other places around the county. Plans are still being finalized, but as I write, we are planning seminars on planting for ecological diversity, pruning, and identification of the "dirty dozen"—invasive plants—and that's just in January!

While you're marking those special events for the new year on your calendar, be sure to check local newspapers, our Master Gardener web site, and Facebook pages for announcements of upcoming Master Gardener free seminars and other activities, such as the April 27 Master Gardener Plant Sale and, as noted below in Theresa's section of this column, the June 22 Earthfest. More details on both these events—and others—will be announced as we grow closer to the events.

Seminars at the Extension Building are usually taught by certified master gardeners. They are free, are usually held on Saturday mornings at 10:00, and last for about one to two hours, depending on the topic. Some consist primarily of discussions and slide shows, while others are hands-on activities. In warmer weather, you may even be invited outside to see a demonstration or exploration of some activity in our demonstration gardens. From June through September, we have "Story Time" in the children's garden, where a master gardener reads a story to the children; afterward, the children often have activities to follow up the story. At other times, parents can work with their children to complete activities. The activity sheets are tucked into colorful mailboxes at the entrance to the children's garden. In addition, we are always happy to speak to outside groups interested in gar-

dening topics.

For myself, yes, I have a few New Year's resolutions; unfortunately, I make almost all the same ones every year. And I took a deep breath the other day and actually ordered a gardening catalog. I wonder how many will soon be filling up my mailbox...

Finally, I'm really looking forward to our Saturday seminars in January. All three that are scheduled so far sound both interesting and helpful. And I'm contemplating a wild dogwood that has popped up in the yard, I suppose from seed spread by birds. It's not in a good place, so we're going to have to dig it up this spring. The question is, where to transplant it? It would look so pretty in the back corner of our yard, as long as it doesn't shade our neighbor's garden when it grows up. Decisions, decisions! —Maritta Perry Grau, Master Gardener.

### Mark your calendar for Earthfest in June 2024

Every year, many of us are still deep in thought about our New Year's resolutions and schedules. Is this the year we will visit every baseball stadium in the U.S., lose that holiday weight, or visit our family or friends more frequently? Or, is this the year we are going to consider our role as stewards for the environment and learn why native plants and biodiversity are so essential to the needs of our environment?

So, it is timely to mark your calendars for Earthfest 2024. Formerly known as Earth Awareness Day, this free, family-friendly open house will take place on June 22 from 9:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. at the University of Maryland Extension Office, 330 Montevue Lane, Frederick.

The open house will offer a variety of activities that are fun, interesting, and educational. Activities are planned for residents of all ages to learn about native plants; when and where to plant; who/what/where pollinators are, especially the butterflies and bees; how to create



The demonstration gardens at the University of Maryland Extension Building, 330 Montevue Avenue, Frederick, are open to the public (9 to 4) for self-guided tours or tours led by a master gardener. As well as explanatory signage around the gardens, flyers located in the gardens help identify plants or provide other information about individual plants and gardens.

composting bins; and how to identify birds. You will also be able to collect ideas for landscaping to protect our waterways, obtain information about the Potomac River Basin, and take tours of the demonstration gardens in bloom at the Montevue facility. Activities will be held both inside and outside on the grounds of the Extension Office. Be on the lookout for more information to come in our May column.—Theresa Furnari, Master Gardener

The Frederick County Master Gardeners Extension Office is open 9 to 4 p.m., Monday through Friday. You can also reach us at 301-600-1596. You can also find gardening information and advice online at: [extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county/home-gardening](http://extension.umd.edu/locations/frederick-county/home-gardening).

### Using fireplace ashes in your garden

Since Roman times, wood ash has been recognized as a useful amendment to the soil. In fact, North America exported wood ash to Britain in the 18th century as a fertilizer, and today, 80 per-cent of the ash produced commercially in the Northeastern United States is applied to the land.

Wood stoves and fireplaces are great for warming gardeners' chilly hands and feet. So, what can we do

with the ashes? Since wood ash is derived from plant material, it contains most of the 13 essential nutrients the soil must have for good plant growth and health.

When wood burns, nitrogen and sulfur are lost as gases, and calcium, potassium, magnesium and trace element compounds remain. The remaining carbonates and oxides are valuable liming agents, raising pH, thus neutralizing acid soils. Soils that are acid and low in potassium benefit from wood ash. However, acid-loving plants such as blueberries, cranberries, rhododendrons and azaleas would not do well at all with an application of wood ash.

Wood ash has a very fine particle size, so it reacts rapidly and completely in the soil. Although small amounts of nutrients are applied with wood ash, the main effect is that it is a liming agent. The average ash is equivalent to a 0-1-3 (N-P-K). The chemical makeup varies with the type of wood burned. Hardwoods produce three times as much ash per cord as do softwoods.

Calcium and potassium are both essential to plant growth. Calcium is needed for root development, strong cell walls and protein formation in the plant. Potassium is an important catalyst in photosynthesis and is essential for the movement of sugars, seed formation, protein synthesis and the use of nitrogen in plants.

Wood ash should never be applied to areas where potatoes will be planted as ash can promote potato scab. For most garden soil, 20 pounds (about a 5-gallon pail) per 1,000 square feet can be applied safely each year. That equals about 6 pounds of ground limestone applied to the same area.

The best time to apply wood ash is in the spring when the soil is dry and before tilling. In compost piles wood ash can be used to maintain a neutral condition, the best environment for microorganisms to break down organic materials. Sprinkle ash on each layer of compost. This is especially good if you have oak leaves or pine needles in your compost heap.

Wood ash can be used to repel insects, slugs and snails because it draws water out of these invertebrates. Sprinkle ash around the base of your plants to discourage surface-feeding insects. Once ash gets wet, it loses its deterring prop-

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

erties. Too much ash can increase pH or accumulate high levels of salts that can be harmful to some plants, so use ashes carefully.

Ash should be stored in a metal container with a secure lid. This helps prevent accidental fires from live coals and prevents water from flowing through the ash and leaching out the nutrients before the materials are applied to the soil.

Caution should be used when handling wood ash:

Protect yourself as you would if you were handling household bleach or any other strong alkaline material. Wear eye protection, gloves and a dust mask.

Do not use ash from burning trash, cardboard; coal or pressure-treated, painted or stained wood. These materials contain potentially harmful chemicals. The glue in cardboard contains boron, an element that can inhibit plant growth if applied in excess.

Do not scatter ashes during

windy periods.

Do not mix ash with nitrogen fertilizer as ammonium sulfate or ammonium nitrates or urea. These fertilizers lose their nitrogen as ammonia gas when mixed with high pH materials such as wood ash. For a lawn, wait at least a month after wood ash is applied before putting down a nitrogen fertilizer to allow for the soil to reduce the alkalinity of the wood ash.

Never leave wood ash in lumps or piles. Concentrated piles of wood ash causes excessive salt build-up in the soil through leaching and can create a harmful environment for plants.

I hope this information will help you and others with wood ash this winter. Cozy up to the fireplace all you gardeners, keep warm, enjoy the time of rest from your labors and read those seed catalogs.

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

## Small Town Gardener

No winter whining—five reasons why you need to garden anyway

Marianne Willburn

One of the things that makes a strong impression on me when I am visiting nurseries in South Florida in January, is the fact that they don't get a true winter rest from the breakneck business of growing things.

Our cold climate may nip at the heels a bit, and make all manner of merry hell with the plumbing, and heating, and sense of humor systems that keep us alive and sane over the months that would happily kill us; but it also gives gardeners an armor-clad, spouse-deflecting reason to call it quits and get to guilt-free terms with an armchair and a seed catalog. It's just too damned cold out there.

Yes, but no.

Here's five reasons why you might want to set the catalogs next to the bed instead of the armchair, wrap up warm, and add some outside tasks to your winter daytime routine – even if it looks like nighttime most-athetime out there.

Health - Movement is critical to good health, and most of us don't get enough of it – or Vitamin D – during the warm season, much less the colder season. Letting your joints seize up and your muscles atrophy over what amounts to at least five months of hibernation, will not only contribute to other health conditions, but make it harder to get back into the swing of things when the daffodils start blooming and everything kicks off.

Self-Defense - If you're a gardener-gardener and not simply a consumer-gardener, you know that the garden is made up of more than hydrangeas

and easy solutions. It's also fueled by a relentless growing season that thinks up five tasks for every one you accomplish.

Taking care of many of these tasks in the colder months when the landscape can't fight back is crucial to staying on top of the workload in the growing season. Pruning, brush and vine clearing, and the beheading of annual cool-season weeds are three of the biggest bang-for-buck jobs you can do over the next few months.

Organization - Who on earth has time to sort pots, sort seeds, sort tools, etc... during planting and panting season, aside from the over-achievers we all secretly dislike? Now is the time to Marie Kondo your outside world.

Whether it's the little tool box and stack of pots you have sitting on your balcony, or the full-on nightmare that awaits you in the garage, putting your garden house in order helps you breathe when there is not a breath to be had in spring.

Skill Building - Learning how to be a winter gardener with a winter garden is something easily dismissible by those who don't do it. I know, I was one of them for a long time. It's far easier to say "I don't do a winter garden," than to look outside and see twenty pathetic Tête-à-tête daffodils poking their heads above an arctic tundra and making the entire scene more pitiable than it already is.

Yet, the winter garden is a completely different animal to the spring or summer garden, and should be designed to exemplify the moments of exquisite beauty present in the colder months, not to re-create something that cannot be re-created.

Creating a striking framework

that supports those poor early bulbs with colorful bark, ever-green foliage and the frosted beauty of the previous season, is an enormous skill and one that continually builds upon the successes of the previous year. It takes time, trial and error, and new ways of thinking about garden design to accomplish it, but it makes you a better gardener generally.

With thought and effort, those twenty doleful and disembodied Tête-à-têtes become two hundred little flames interspersed with the fresh blossoms of hellebores under a canopy of red winterberries. And one year, standing with flushed, rosy cheeks and a broad smile across your face, you have a rapturous moment where you realize you've broken the back of it.

And then it's game on.

Connection - Modern life is a life characterized by disconnection. We mark our seasons by Hallmark holidays and rarely come face to face with how our food was sowed, grown, stored, distributed, sold -- and increasingly -- cooked. A thermostat sorts out our heat, a tap provides water. We buy lilies in December, eat apples in June, and power plants keep the lights on and phones in hands until the wee small hours. Who needs valerian root when you've got Unisom?

And yet we are a species that has spent the great majority of our evolutionary process deeply immersed in, and affected by, the rhythm of the planet's heartbeat.

Though we might not recognize it, the loss of connection to, and responsibility for, our basic needs and the needs of our community makes us consumers chasing money for commodities, not producers creating those commodities. This has the subtle effect of making us feel less in control of our own destinies – less purposeful.

In this place, winter is a wasteland – something to be painfully endured on those cold mornings 'twixt car and front door. But when we use those months to tend, to move, to grow, to produce, and above all, to observe, we can endure it with purpose – gently reconnected in a small, but substantive way to the Earth and her seasons.

All that blather to say: Get out there. You'll be happier. You'll feel better. And before you are ready for it, spring will appear and greet you like an old friend, not a new one.

Marianne is the author of *Big Dreams, Small Garden*. You can read more at [www.smalltowngardener.com](http://www.smalltowngardener.com).

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# THE BEST NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTION EVER ...

## Love is a gift

Jennifer Vanderau  
Cumberland Valley  
Animal Shelter

He never realized how quickly life could change. Was it really only last night that he slept in bed beside Mom?

Now, he's just really confused. The humans are talking, using words like car accident and drunk driver and he doesn't get it. He remembers the people in the house from the times they came for the holidays, but he's not sure why they're here now and Mom's not.

There are arguments. About who will take him. About where he'll go. He figures when Mom comes back, she'll explain that he's not going anywhere without her. They're inseparable, you see, he and his mom.

They go for walks together, she takes him to the dog park, she kisses his nose every night and says "sleep tight, sweet boy." They wake up snuggled together and she says she doesn't know what she'd do without him.

It's not until he's in a kennel at the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter that he realizes he might have to figure out what he will do without her.

The nights are kind of scary. It's quiet, but easy to sense the fear in the shelter. He knows he's not the only one who doesn't want to be here. There's so much sadness here.

He misses his mama something awful – the smell of her perfume, the soft touches she always gave him, the kind words and tone she would use when she spoke to him.

It's not that the people at the shelter aren't nice – quite the contrary – it's just he really believed he'd found his soulmate with his mom and now she's gone and he just wants her back.

He would trade everything he knows just to get her back.

His days become pretty routine – wake up when staff arrives, eat his breakfast, take a walk with the staff members, say hello to some people in the public and go to bed when the lights go out.

It's a random Tuesday when he sees him. A gentleman alone, and there's something about him, a spark that says they understand each other, that they're both looking to fill an empty place. The man takes him for a walk and it's really nice, makes his heart flutter in a way it hasn't since his mama went away.

Something pangs when the gentleman leaves, a feeling that he really wants to go with him – that he should go with him, that they belong together. He's kind of amazed when he finds out he filled out papers to adopt him and takes him home a few days later.

His new home is nice – he gets lots of attention and a warm place to

sleep and after a while, when he settles in, he really thinks that he could be happy here.

He still loves his mama and misses her sometimes, but his new dad is so nice and he's grateful that he got a second chance.

Sometimes, when he's in his bed late at night, he'll think to himself, "goodnight, mama, wherever you are" and he's sure – really deep down in his bones certain – that he'll see her again and they'll be together.

His first mama will always have a special place in his heart, but until the time when he can be by her side again, he's going to kiss and play with and adore his new Dad and feel really lucky that he got to be loved, really loved and cared for, by so many people in this lifetime.

A few years ago we had a dog come into the shelter because his mom had been killed in a car accident. You could tell every day he spent in the shelter he was grieving. He just seemed sad, but he was quiet and dignified in his mourning.

The sweet boy eventually got adopted by a single gentleman who just fell in love with him. He waited through two other applicants to get him – the pup just didn't work out for the other two.

If ever there was a meant-to-be tale, this fits the bill.

It's a story that hopefully reminds us all to be grateful for what we have when we have it – because it could be taken away so easily. Love is a gift, always – and is never wasted or ever truly gone.

Those seem like fitting words to begin 2024.

Kiss your pets, tell your family you love them and look for the good.

Happy New Year.

Jennifer Vanderau is the Publications and Promotions Consultant for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter and can be reached at [cvascomm@cvas-pets.org](mailto: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](http://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.



Misfit came into the shelter as a stray and she seems to have had a rough life in her 1 year on the planet. She has some areas on her fur where it appears that someone may have singed her with something hot. While we do not know for sure what had happened to her, we know that despite what she has been through in life, Misfit is still a sweet girl who is very trusting of people. She loves attention and would love to find her loving forever home soon. Can you help her?



If you are looking for a feline hugger, Eddard is your guy! He is the biggest cuddle bug and he loves to hold his paws on either side of you and give you kisses! Eddard is 3 years old and has struggled with stress-related diarrhea here at the shelter. He is currently on a special diet and is doing well on it – he may no longer need a special diet when he finds a home. He loves people so much he just can't stand being in a cage. Could you help him out?



Brutus came into the shelter as a stray and we've found him to be quite active. We think he's around 2 years old and is a terrier mix. He loves to play and run in the yard at the shelter. Brutus knows sit and shake. He loves attention, but he can be hand shy at times. He also chases cats, so a home without a feline would be best for him. Due to no past history and his energy level, an age restriction for children in the home may apply, so please discuss this with shelter staff. Do you have the right spot for Brutus?



Koda was surrendered to the shelter when his owner could no longer care for him. He is a 1-year-old terrier mix who can be a little shy when he first meets new people. Once he's comfortable with you, Koda is such a sweetheart. He loves to go out to the play yard and run! He did live with other dogs, but he will have to meet any dogs that reside in his potential adoptive home to be sure they are compatible. Per his previous owner Koda does chase cats so a home without cats would be best. Do you have the right spot for Koda?



Meg arrived at the shelter very emaciated and had to be fed small amounts of food throughout the day. Meg did test positive for Lyme Disease and because she showed symptoms was started on a round of antibiotics which she has taken like a champ! During her vet exam it was found that her right hind leg at the knee is thickened possibly due to a very old and now healed, ACL injury which does cause a hop to her step every now and then, but it does not slow her down! Please discuss this with shelter staff. Could Meg be your new best four-legged friend?

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

To a poor and lonely stray I'd give:

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

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

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

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

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

-- Author Unknown

For more information about Misfit, Eddard, Brutus, Koda, or Meg call the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at [www.cvaspets.org](http://www.cvaspets.org) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter.

## ...A HOME FOR A SHELTER PET

### Evan

Shawn Snyder  
Frederick County Animal Shelter

Two hundred and seventy-eight days and counting, that's how long Evan has been a resident of Frederick County Animal Control & Pet Adoption Center. While it can be a bit sad to think that for the last eight months he's watched as many other dogs walked past him, out of the kennel and into new forever homes, there is one benefit to being a long-term resident. The longer an animal is at FCAC the more we know about them. Since March of 2023 FCAC staff and volunteers have seen Evan transform from a nervous guy who struggled with kennel life to a goofy and playful dog with an infectious smile. Each day we gain more knowledge that will help us place him with just the right family. Could that family be you?

At six-years-old Evan is considered a

senior at FCAC, but don't be fooled by his age and slightly greying muzzle. He's just as energetic as his much younger counterparts. He can hike for miles taking in all the smells and occasionally wading through local creeks. He loves zooming around in our various play areas both indoor and out. And when he gets ahold of a toy, particularly a stuffedie, his eyes light up. I hope you don't mind a bit of fluff in your house because we're pretty sure Evan holds the record for fastest destruction of a squeaky toy.

Toys are Evan's favorite thing and while he'll play with a variety of them, stuffed things that squeak are number one in his heart. When Evan first arrived at the shelter, we quickly noticed that he destroyed toys. Even though that's a perfectly normal dog behavior we stopped giving them to him in the kennel for safety reasons. Shortly after that we noticed the early signs of resource guarding when it came to those items. To help resolve

that issue, we began providing the toy-loving terrier mix with his favorites in a supervised setting. We also began behavior modification work which includes protocols such as "I Come in Peace" and "Trade." In the months since those things and more have been implemented, Evan is less protective of his toys and has even begun choosing food and affection over playtime.

Speaking of affection, this little goofball loves a belly rub. You'll often see him flop down on the floor and start wiggling when he sees his favorite people so he can get all the love. And although he is a highly active dog, he's capable of cuddling up next to you for quiet and relaxed petting sessions too.

When he comes to training, Evan is a great student. He's very treat-motivated and for the most part takes food gently. He really likes chicken, cheese and peanut butter, but will eat just about anything. He has already mastered "sit," "trade," and "find it." He

has great name recognition and pretty good recall when using his name. He walks fairly nicely on leash too. He seems to enjoy training and right now staff working with him on mastering "down" and "touch."

While Evan is loved by FCAC staff and volunteers, we understand that he's not the right dog for everyone. Here are some things to consider before making Evan part of your family. Since Evan is obsessed with stuffed toys, he's better suited for households with older children. Older kids tend to have less toys that Evan would confuse with his own and can better understand not to take things away from him.

Because Evan really doesn't love sharing his toys and has proven to be dog selective, he'd be best suited to be the only dog in the home. He might be able to have some doggie friends but those introductions should be done slowly and properly. Cats and other small critters are also a no go



for this guy. He's a tenacious terrier and while predatory behaviors are perfectly natural, it's not ok to treat other pets like stuffies.

If you think this fun-loving guy might be the dog for you and you want to show off his superior ability to catch treats in the air to all your family and friends this holiday season, call 301-600-1546 to learn more about adoptable Evan.

### Previously Owned Brooke

Linda Shea  
Frederick County Animal Shelter

Brooke was adopted from the Frederick County Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center when she was a kitten. Now, three years later, her family is moving and Brooke is back on our adoption floor. We understand that Brooke's return is not her fault. However, deciding what to do with Brooke provides an opportunity to explain how we decide what to do with the over eight hundred previously owned animals we have taken in since January 1.

Our shelter is open admis-

sion, meaning we take in any domestic animal that needs us from Frederick County. We only take in animals from within the county because we are 100% tax dollar funded. Whether an animal is brought in by a stranger, an owner, or an Animal Control Officer, we begin evaluating that animal immediately. Our evaluation is to determine the best pathway, or outcome, for each animal. Depending on the specifics of each animal intake, our pathway options include adoption, foster care (typically reserved for sick or underage pets), rescue of exot-

ics or animals with special needs, return-to-owner for stray pets, and euthanasia as a last resort.

We make decisions based on firsthand, objective observations. We evaluate the medical and behavioral history of the pet if available, and overall temperament and health. Realistically, it is difficult to place previously owned animals that have a history of housetraining or litterbox issues, animals that have high dollar medical conditions that require ongoing management through medication and vet bills, or those that don't do well with other ani-

mals or strangers. To a new shelter resident, even the most compassionate handler is a stranger. Some owners relinquishing pets offer up recommendations on rehoming their pet, such as mandating the pet go to a family with no other animals or where they will have a yard to play in. However, those types of stipulations and restrictions don't guarantee success and can even reduce an animal's adoptability. We strive to provide potential adopters animals that are safe, social, and stable.

We take our decision-making process seriously, understanding that the community relies on our years of experience and expertise



in all things animal. Brooke is just one of our pets that comes with years of experience herself, and deserving of a second chance with a new owner.

### Unintended Consequences

Linda Shea  
Frederick County Animal Shelter

Julio is a stray that was brought in by a citizen who found him on Harp Hill Rd. in Myersville. We scanned Julio for a microchip, but he did not have one. We checked reports of lost animals, but there was no match. Since we did not know his background, we provided preventative vaccines. The protocols we have in place ensure proper care for animals in our shelter.

In addition to our Animal Shelter side that provides care for stray and owner-relinquished pets, the Frederick County Division of Animal Control and Pet Adoption Center also provides Animal Control services for the entire county. Periodically, we engage with citizens who are unaware of the Codes and Ordinances related to pet ownership,

and the fees associated with providing services that keep our community safe. Here are just a few of the basics:

**Rabies vaccination**—The Code of Maryland Regulations (COMAR) 10.06.02 dictates the rules on Rabies. In the state of Maryland, all dogs, cats and ferrets must be vaccinated by the time that animal is 4 months old. Rabies vaccines must be boosted every 1-3 years, established by your veterinarian.

**Pet Licensing**—Frederick County Codes §1-5-33 and §1-5-34 reiterate the requirement of a current Rabies vaccine for pets, and state that all dogs and cats in Frederick County must be licensed. The specific licensing fees, \$15 per intact pet and \$7.50 for pets that are spayed or neutered, are defined here as well.

**Running At Large**—Regardless of whether the landscaper left the gate open, or your toddler opened the front door,

Fluffy and Fido are considered to be "at large" if they are off your property. While we are sympathetic to those situations, we are responsible for enforcing Frederick County Code §1-5-24 that states animals running at large to be a violation.

**Microchipping**—In 2006, Frederick County Government approved a policy that allows us to microchip all stray pets before they are returned to their owner. Microchips help reunite lost pets and

owners—ultimately saving lives. Jeremy will be microchipped prior to leaving here—whether he is adopted or reclaimed by his owner.

Responsible pet ownership includes being compliant with established laws and policies, avoiding the unintended consequences of fees and distress that accompany non-compliance. We thank those citizens who are compliant, and those who understand Animal Control's role in keeping pets—and our community—safe.





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Susan P. Keane, DVM

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---

CONGRESSMAN  
**DAVID TRONE**

This time of year, I'm reminded of what matters most to all of us - family, friends, and community. What also matters to me is my service to you in Congress.

**Public Service, Not Politics**

I've long said this job should be more focused on public service and not politics. Too often, politics divide us and place selfish interests above what is good and just. In the next year, I'll continue to be a public servant who listens and delivers results.

**A Vision for the Future and a Commitment to Get Things Done**

Too often, politicians are only worried about the next election. It's one of the many reasons not much gets done in Congress. I take a different approach. I do everything with an eye to a better future for all of us and for generations to come. I have a record of getting things done, and that is why I'm running for the U.S. Senate.

**Helping People**

Above all else, constituent service is my top priority. My team works countless hours helping to solve any problem you might have with a federal agency or program. While we can't solve every problem, I'll fight hard to help you, and I have a great staff that helps me.

**DAVID TRONE**

U.S. SENATE

# Woodsboro - Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL SECTION 2

## Working to ensure everyone has a decent place to live

Gary Bennett & Hugh Gordon  
Affordable Housing Council

Among the many boards, commissions and councils serving Frederick city and county, there is one that advises on the charged issue of affordable housing.

Charged? Well, yes. It is hard to find another issue that elicits such visceral comments both for and against. Most folks support the availability of housing for those economically shut out of the market until it affects them directly. Everyone is for more affordable housing until they think it might affect their own property value or when construction is planned nearby. It is understandable.

That is the tightrope on which the Affordable Housing Council (AHC) is perched.

The AHC serves as Frederick County's main forum to discuss affordable housing issues, is the main advocate for affordable, safe, and decent housing, supports affordable housing providers and their programs, and advises county and city governments on promising new and existing affordable housing laws and regulations. The council is comprised of appointed volunteers who care about affordable housing issues and have no personal stake in encouraging more affordable housing.

### Position Statement of AHC

The Affordable Housing Council believes that:

- All Frederick County residents deserve to live in safe, decent, and affordable housing that does not require more than one-third of their total monthly income to own or rent.
- County, state, and municipal governments should look for every opportunity to incentivize affordable housing options in land use, zoning, and development laws and regulations.
- All stakeholders – government entities, developers, builders, real estate firms, civic and business groups, and consumers of affordable housing – need to recognize that a lack of affordable housing is a real problem for all of us and should work together to find real solutions.
- The lack of enough infrastructure to support increased housing is a real problem and should not be downplayed. Instead of punishing middle- and lower-class Americans, however, we must hold government accountable to proactively fund appropriate infrastructure, especially schools.

### What is affordable housing?

The definition of affordable housing is not always accurately understood, especially in terms of today's charged political discussion. To those with moderate to low incomes, affordable housing is usually defined as housing that requires one-third or less of their disposable

income to afford. This includes rentals and owned homes. For these folks, there is not enough affordable housing to go around in Frederick County and in most parts of the U.S. In the affordable housing world, we are typically focused on the ALICE households, those who are Asset Limited, Income Constrained, and Employed. Basically, they are working citizens living paycheck to paycheck.

### Policy Priorities of AHC

The Affordable Housing Council has been quite successful in developing housing priorities and encouraging elected officials to give them fair consideration. Indeed, both the city's Board of Aldermen and the Frederick County Council, depend on the AHC to be non-staff housing experts. We are constantly looking for creative ideas to help increase our affordable housing stock.

Earlier this year, we recommended and were pleased when the Board of Aldermen approved the updated Moderately Priced Development Units (MPDU) ordinance. The ordinance encourages increased development of affordable housing in the city by requiring developers to pay \$2 per square foot for every unit in the development if they opt out of building the required number of MPDUs. The fee had been flat but is now pegged to the size of the units in the development. The city is then charged with using the proceeds from the ordinance to fund affordable housing programs. The change in the city's ordinance brings it into synch with the county's MPDU ordinance.

Other AHC policy priorities we will advocate for in 2024 include:

Updating the 2016 Frederick County Affordable Housing Needs Assessment report to better reflect current housing and economic realities and to develop a strategic plan to address the findings. Such an assessment and plan would guide county and city programs and resources to better serve residents in need of affordable housing.

Increasing the portion of the county's recordation tax revenue that is earmarked for the housing initiative fund (HIF) in one-time increments and consider permanent changes to the formula that funds the initiative. The HIF is used to provide resources that make home ownership accessible to county residents.

Supporting the implementation of the City of Frederick's rental registration and inspection program. The program provides for protection of renters' rights and landlord and tenant education on renters' rights and best practices.

Advocating for the inclusion of several key policies in the City of Frederick's form-based code initiative: implementing an affordable housing overlay, waiving development fees for projects that meet certain income requirements, allowing for more density and building height in designated areas and right-sizing parking requirements for new projects.

Streamlining Frederick County's and



the City of Frederick's permitting processes to accelerate affordable housing projects. A particular need is to increase staff capacity and use a customer service-based approach to incentivize and encourage affordable housing projects.

Encouraging the implementation of area plans as part of the Livable Frederick Master Plan to include priorities such as implementing an affordable housing overlay, allowing more density in designated areas, aligning available public transportation with affordable housing developments, and encouraging municipalities in the county to allow construction of accessory dwelling units (ADUs).

Waiving or deferring impact fees in Frederick County and the City of Frederick charged to buyers that meet income requirements for affordable housing purchases from a developer. Further, City of Frederick should formalize the waiving of property taxes and impact fees for developers while they are building or renovating homes for sale or rent to residents meeting income requirements for affordable housing.

Hugh Gordon serves as the current chair of the Affordable Housing Council. He commented, "The need for affecting implementation and the

potential for assisting seniors, school teachers, policemen, firefighters, restaurant workers, and the most vulnerable residents of Frederick County is critically important."

According to Malcolm Furgol, vice-chair of the AHC and policy committee chair, "These policy priorities build on past recommendations by the Affordable Housing Council and progress made by Frederick County and the City of Frederick towards realizing a positive environment for safe, stable and affordable housing for all residents."

### Invitation to Participate

The issues are difficult but the stakes are high for all of us. The Frederick County Affordable Housing Council invites you to participate.

AHC meets the second Tuesday of each month at 2:30 pm at a location designated by the Council. Confirm meeting dates and location by checking <https://www.frederickcountymd.gov/6371/Affordable-Housing-Council> or by calling the Frederick County Department of Housing and Community Development at 301-600-6091.

Meetings are open to the public and public participation is highly encour-

aged. Agendas can be obtained at the website noted above. Public comment is welcome at all meetings.

If you are a Frederick County resident, a registered voter and wish to become a member of the AHC, send a letter of interest and resume to [fcg-boards@FrederickCountyMD.gov](mailto:fcg-boards@FrederickCountyMD.gov). Call 301-600-1102 for more information. The County Executive makes all appointments subject to confirmation by the County Council.

The AHC may be comprised of as many as 13 voting members. We currently have seven members and two very good prospects. We are working hard to ensure affordable housing consumers such as teachers, police officers, and seniors are represented on the Council as well as members of industry, nonprofit organizations, and the public in general.

*Gary Bennett is a retired association executive with no stake in the housing market except for being a concerned citizen. Hugh Gordon is the association executive for the Frederick Association of Realtors and has decades of experience as a mortgage banker. They are longtime Frederick residents and members of Frederick's Affordable Housing Council.*

### GVCS HOLIDAY TOY SHOPPE



### Thank you

The volunteers, board members and clients of the Glade Valley Community Services want to share how very grateful we all are for your generous donations to the Holiday Toy Shoppe. With your new or continued support we were able to serve 68 families in the Walkersville feeder school area.

We provided coats, books, sweatshirts, gift cards, clothing, toys and more to 170 children this year (teens receive gift cards vs toys). We once again received 99 homemade stockings and had many raffle items for grocery stores, restaurants, hair salons and more.

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Woodsboro/New Midway Elementary School

# HISTORY

## Woodsboro Remembers

Francis Meehan Smith

Personalities

*Continued from last month*

### Archie M. Stimmel

Archie Stimmel was a lifelong resident of Woodsboro and a well-known professional right-handed baseball pitcher around the turn of the century for the Cincinnati Redlegs, where he was one of the regular Redlegs' hurlers for a number of years.

Archie got his first chance in Scranton, Pennsylvania with the old Eastern League, then he went to Pottsville with the Pennsylvania State League. Next he advanced to Richmond where he felt he turned in his greatest mound accomplishment. Arch went seventeen innings for a two-two tie against Red Ames of Hartford, who later moved along to fame with the New York Giants under the great John McGraw.

After his retirement, Mr. Stimmel returned to Woodsboro where he was a familiar figure on the streets, always having a kind and pleasant word for everyone. He loved fishing and spent many

happy hours in his later years presumably returning to his boyhood haunts. His wife, "Miss Abbey," had a shop on the street floor of their house on Lot 5 where she sold penny candy, sundries, and articles for ladies.

Both Mr. and Mrs. Stimmel were well liked in Woodsboro and were especially gentle and patient with children who often frequented the shop.

### Dr. Andrew Robert Hitchcock

One of the many beloved personalities of Woodsboro for many, many years was Doc. Hitchcock. The only veterinarian in town during the early part of the Twentieth Century, he was a familiar sight to all on the way to make his calls. He usually rode safely in the center of the road at a very conservative speed with the bottles and equipment of his trade in plain view in the back of his 1928 Chevrolet coupe. Upon arrival at the farm where he was headed, he was greeted with relief, as he was responsible for saving the lives of many animals for the local farmers.

Dr. Andrew Robert Hitchcock was born in Stewartstown, Pennsylvania, on June 30, 1873. He

died on December 24, 1951, after a busy and useful life. He attended the University of Pennsylvania until he became ill with typhoid fever and had to stop school.

Dr. Hitchcock had two older brothers, George and Nelson. Both were graduated from the University of Pennsylvania and became veterinarians, George in Westminster and Nelson in Taneytown.

After Dr. A.R. Hitchcock's illness he did not go back to school but studied and rode with Dr. Wilson in Stewartstown for two years. He then came to Taneytown and studied and rode with his brother Nelson for one year. He was married in 1910 and built a home in Mt Airy where he opened an office. However, he again developed typhoid fever and was again very ill. As a result he wore a spinal brace for several years.

In 1913 he opened an office in Woodsboro and practiced here until he retired in 1950 at which time he was seventy-seven years old.

"Doc" was a regular contestant in the continuous checker game at "Eph" Stoner's store. In physical appearance he very much resembled "Doc" Adams on Matt Dillon's TV show, "Gunsmoke."



Archie Stimmel was an area standout as a pitcher who became Frederick County's first major league baseball player, advancing from sandlot play to three seasons with the Cincinnati Reds, 1900-1903. He was the "Pride of Woodsboro." Archie "Lumbago" Stimmel had the misfortune to go 5-19, winning only 20% of his decisions. Although statistics are incomplete, Archie probably won over 100 games in the minors.

### Raymond (Sim) Gilbert

"Sim" Gilbert was a town fixture during the first half of the Twentieth Century in Woodsboro. Regularly seen on the streets going to the Post Office, he brought the mail by hand to many residents in the northern end of town, a more or less self-appointed mailman.

Mr. Gilbert, who could fix anything, worked in leather for upholstery or other uses having inherited the knowledge from his family who were carriage makers and shoemakers and lived on Lots 21 and 22.

"Sim" loved cats and had one cat said to be twenty-three years old. He also had a green thumb and grew any plant capable of being propagated by seed, cutting, or layering. In his early days "Sim" was an expert fiddler, playing for many "lawn" parties and square dances at various local homes.

Although "Sim" was a slight man, slightly stooped in posture,

he stands out as one of the town's best-remembered characters.

### Roy Lenhart

Among many other things, Roy Lenhart is remembered as the town's last farrier. When he came to a farm in the course of his trade he exuded a feeling of confidence and assurance, which even the most fractious animals felt and respected. Roy's skill at horse shoeing transcended the generation of workhorses and driving horses (a necessity in the early days) to the influx of horses during the era of pleasure riding. In later years he was much in demand as shoeing riding horses and racehorses alone consumed his time and talents.

Roy was a "spiffy" dresser when he was not working at his trade and enjoyed getting away from it all by a complete change of living. It was often difficult to recognize the change in appearance and many acquaintances must have said, "Well, I didn't know you!"

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# HISTORY



ers blossomed with one of “Miss Jennie’s” bouquets. Admittedly “hard of hearing,” “Miss Jennie” never quite got used to the contraption which she was forced to wear in later years. A loud, strong voice was needed to communicate in addition.

“Miss Jennie’s” communication with people came however through her interest in the human race. She wrote regularly to boys overseas in World Wars I and II and was a mother to them as well as to her many nieces and nephews. An early advocate of the Women’s Christian Temperance Union, “Miss Jennie” was a militant leader for this cause in the pre-Prohibition days and throughout her entire life remained strongly opposed to the consumption of alcohol.

“Miss Jennie” was short and slight of stature but stood tall in the memory of many people.

### Famous Sons

Mention should be made of several prominent men who were Woodsboro natives and later achieved fame in various fields.

R. Paul Smith became President of the Potomac Edison Co., and also served on the board of directors of several institutions.

Archie Stimmel and Ted Beard became outstanding baseball players in national leagues.

Hairy W. LeGore was on the All American Football team at Yale in 1977.

Dr. Roy Dorcus became an authority on experimental psychology, teaching at University of California in Los, Angeles and writing several important books in his field.

Judge Samuel W. Barrick is now one of the Judges of the Circuit Court of Frederick County.

**continued next month**

*To learn more about Woodsboro’s history, visit the History section of Woodsboro.net.*

Roy was a happy example of a self-made man, at peace with himself, enjoying his chosen employment knowing that horseshoeing was a basic community need and that he was fulfilling a worthwhile service.

### Miss Janet Barrick

“Miss Jennie,” as she was affectionately known to everyone, devoted her life to helping others. For many years she cared selflessly for “Mr. Sam” Barrick, her father, and was always the first person to arrive in any home in town where bereavement or sickness had occurred. Miss Jennie loved flowers. When an especially beautiful bloom appeared in her garden, she promptly took the flower to a friend or invalid. Many times she also brought the flowers to the school for the teacher’s desk so that all of the children could enjoy them.

The author’s first love of flow-

### Harry LeGore

Harry LeGore enrolled at Yale University where he played for the school’s football, baseball and basketball teams and was a member of Skull and Bones.

In football, LeGore played halfback and fullback. He also handled punting duties and reportedly had a 65-yard average. American sports writer Grantland Rice once wrote that he wouldn’t trade LeGore for Red Grange and added: “Harry never played a poor game in his life. He was always a competitor first, last and always — and always had a little more when the chips were down.”

In 1914, LeGore was the starting fullback for a Yale football team that compiled a 7-2 record and defeated Notre Dame 28-0, ending Notre Dame’s 27-game win streak. Knute Rockne later wrote in his autobiography: “I sat on the sideline at New Haven that Saturday and saw a good Yale team captained by Bud Talbott with a crack halfback named Harry LeGore leading the attack. They made Notre Dame look like a high school squad.”

At the end of the 1914 season, LeGore was selected as a first-

team All-American by International News Service sports editor Frank G. Menke, and as a second-team All-American by Walter Camp for Collier’s Weekly and Walter Eckersall, of the Chicago Tribune.

LeGore also played shortstop for the Yale baseball team. In 1915, LeGore was ruled permanently ineligible to complete in college athletics after it was found that his food and lodging had been paid while playing summer baseball.

In 1916, LeGore’s eligibility was restored. The Yale football team in 1915 had won only four games without LeGore in the lineup. With LeGore back in the lineup, the 1916 team went 8-1. A syndicated newspaper story about LeGore’s return to Yale stated:

“Harry Legore is the real shining light of the Eli football team, there isn’t any doubt about that. Legore is the star, with a big ‘S.’ A couple of years ago Legore made a name for himself as an end runner and was the man who struck more terror to the hearts of ‘Old Eli’s’ opponents than any other man on the team. In the summer Legore played baseball, and someone said it was professional baseball with the result that Legore was barred from football as a ‘professional.’ Quite a sensation was created, but

this year Legore was restored and it has been a mighty good thing for Yale that he was. And with his restoration to eligibility as an amateur athlete came the job of fullback on the Yale eleven.”

At the end of the 1916 season, LeGore was selected as a second-team All-American by Walter Camp for Collier’s Weekly. In selecting LeGore as an All-American, Walter Camp called him “one of the nation’s greatest athletes.”

With the entry of the United States into World War I, LeGore was one of ten Yale students recommended by the President of Yale for commissions in the United States Marine Corps. LeGore served overseas for two years with the Second Division.

After his discharge from the Marines, LeGore worked for the LeGore Lime Company. In 1930, LeGore was elected to the Maryland House of Delegates. In 1934, he was elected to the Maryland State Senate. In 1936, he made an unsuccessful run for a seat in the U.S. House of Representatives. LeGore eventually became president of the LeGore Lime Company and also served as a director of the Potomac Edison Company.





## Heroes Needed.

Spend a Little Time Make a Huge Difference.

**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.

Many residents, including Seniors and Veterans, need a way to a doctor’s appointment, to the supermarket and pharmacy, to attend a class, participate in social outings and faith activities, even for a job interview.

**Rides For Good** creates good in the community through a team of volunteers who lend their time to provide safe, reliable rides in their own vehicles to meet the specific needs of our Frederick County neighbors in need.

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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

## January 5

### Trouble Ahead For 1924

The year 1924 is likely to be a memorable one in American politics, both in Congress and on the open political field, until the November election. The whole performance will largely be a scramble between selfish interest to 'get something' from the government; in other words out of Uncle Sam's treasury, either that, or to satisfy personal ambition.

It is not a nice thing to say, but it is our belief that the real Simon-pure desire to legislate for the good of the whole country is a very scarce virtue. We do not believe so much in strength in Union, as in union strength; not so much in United We Stand as that we stand united for ourselves.

The tendency in American politics is away from two great parties, holding to clearly defined differences in policy. We no longer hold to party, but are engaged in trying to hang such amendments to party platforms as represent the most promising expedients for 'getting ours'.

Republicans and Democrats are alike in this. Insurgents on both sides have largely spoiled the negative so long in use for picturing party differences, and, the outlook is that this diversion will have a free ride this year. Sometimes we lament the fact that there are no more great leaders; none big enough to quell the rioting and lead the hosts to victory. But, it isn't the leaders that are lacking so much as it is that the mob element is increasing that does not want leaders.

No man can lead without followers. No man can advise those who do not want advice. When arrogance, ignorance, selfishness combine in sufficient forms, advice based on experience, and leadership based on intelligence, are important. When misguided men feel that they are the government, and that they need only to combine sufficient strength to rule, then are boasted self-government plan finds itself on the rocks.

The role of the people operates ideally only when, and as long as, the best people are in the majority, and can co-operate—can hold together and outnumber the irresponsible radicals. That is just the danger this country is facing this year, as it never has before, and the hope of the future depends on how far the American people will permit their own selfishness to obscure their own good sense.

### Rural Mail Carriers

#### Carrying White Paint

By order of the Post Office Department in Washington, all rural mailboxes were ordered painted white. As the patrons of the routes were very busy, and help scarce, local carriers concluded to purchase paint and brush and paint the mailboxes themselves. They think asking each patron to contribute \$.10 to help pay for the paint would not be out of place, and no one so far has objected to giving the small amount. Quite a few have already paid; others are asked to place \$.10 in their mailbox, or give it to the carrier.

### Mercury's Rise Prevent Snow

Children with new Christmas bobsleds and an urge to create snowman and battle with Winter's elements were cheated out of what promised to be an abundance of snow Wednesday night and Thursday morning when a slight rise in temperature change the first few flakes into rain. The precipitation of rain and melted snow and ice was .91 inches.

### Radio Important

#### Farm Implement

The importance of radio in the production and marketing of agricultural products is brought out in a special survey of about 1,200 farmers just completed by the United States Department of Agriculture. 80% of these farmers said they were interested in receiving both weather and market reports.

More than 50% of the farmers replied that they owned tube sets employing three or more tubes. Approximately 50% of the farmers reported having homemade sets ranging from crystal detectors to tube sets.

More than 75 different makes of sets were found among the manufactured sets purchased. Although the bulk of the sets were confined to about 15 of the leading makes that are more or less widely advertised in radio and general magazines.

The average cost of the manufactured set was \$172. Comparably few of the owners of homemade sets operated crystal receivers. The average cost of a crystal set was \$11. The average cost of a homemade tube set was \$50.

### Plan Playground

#### For New Midway

Efforts are being made by the patrons of the public school at New Midway to

equip a playground for the children of that community. Nevin Smith, Principal of the school, is taking the initiative in a campaign to raise funds for the purpose.

A spelling bee and a box social will be held on Saturday evening. Patrons of the school and the people of the community have been asked to cooperate in making the affair a success. Pickney Richardson, and Samuel Fogle have been named judges of the spelling bee, and Mr. Smith himself will act as the pronouncer. This will be the first of a series of events held to raise money.

The playground will be located on the school premises and will be available for use by the young people of the village and vicinity the entire summer.

## January 12

### Winter Weather Finally Arrives

Saturday was a real hurry up day, caused by the cold and wind. Many whom had been congratulating themselves that we would have a mild Winter found lots of things to do that should've been done earlier, and all outdoor tasks were done with full speed. Caucusing along the streets and lounging about corners, was considerably absent.

Last Saturday morning an oil stove used for heating purposes, due to the furnace being out of repair, caught fire at the home of the Sisters of Notre Dame, on Frederick Street. Sister Barbara, in removing the stove, was badly burned, particularly about the face and hands and was hurried to Saint Joseph's Hospital in Baltimore for treatment. The damage to the building was small, due to the prompt measures taken by the fire department.

Saturday night and Sunday morning produce many stories of frozen water pipes and heating experiences; but fortunately not many cases of serious damage or suffering. Those who had good heating plants, and plenty of fuel, had reason for thankfulness. The thermometer registered near zero, the cold being penetrating because of the strong wind all of Saturday night and early Sunday morning.

### Infant Death

George Long, infant son of Carrie and Franklin Long, died on Sunday at his parents home in Creagerstown, aged eight days. Burial will be at the Mount Hope Cemetery in Woodsboro.

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### Woodsboro School Improvement Association

The Woodsboro School Improvement Association, one of the leading civic organizations of that town, held its regular monthly meeting in the Opera House Tuesday evening. The meeting was open to the public and was largely in attendance.

Mrs. Fizer, President of the Association, presided. Following a few remarks the following program was rendered: singing of the song—America—by the Association and audience; scripture readings and prayer; reading of the minutes of the previous meeting; transaction of business; announcements and remarks by the President.

The Association has a large membership and its meetings are of an interesting nature. The objective of the Association is to promote education and school improvement. The Association also takes an interest in civic affairs and the improvement of the town in general.

### Big Delegation Asked For Repairs To Road

A delegation of between 50 and 60 persons appeared before the County Commissioners to urge them to take action in connection with the construction of a hard road on the Creagerstown Road between the bridge spanning Hunting Creek and Creagerstown. At present there is a cement road built to the Hunting Creek Bridge but from there on to Creagerstown the road is said to be in a bad condition.

Children going to school in Creagerstown are required to travel over the road. It was the original intention to establish a hard road over the route, but as the first part of the road was built in 1921, and at that time the war prices

prevailed, it was decided to suspend operation for a while.

The delegation was the largest before the Commissioners for some time. The section of road in question is about one and a half miles in length.

The Commissioners expect to complete, sometime this summer, a stretch of about 4 miles between Johnsville to Union Bridge. The completion of this road will make it an improve State Highway all the way from Frederick to Union Bridge. This road runs from Frederick to Liberty, to Johnsville to Union Bridge. The Commissioners contend that the completion of this road will give the City another improved highway to Baltimore it will lesson the heavy traffic on the Frederick and Baltimore Road. It's also pointed out that the improvement will improve truck traffic to the City from Union Bridge and other points in Carroll County.

## January 19

### The Sunday Movie Question

It must be that the reason why such a large percentage of the average run of people, fail to take moral issues seriously, is that they fail to take life seriously. Somehow, the conscientious, persistent moralist, is set down as a nuisance and common scold; either that, or perhaps because of certain positions, he is charged with being paid to continue his activities that interfere with popular personal liberties.

Add to this, the fact that even some of our best people encourage the gambling principle—if not actual gambling—wink at moral degeneracy and refused to become actively interested in such matters as Sabbath observation—it is



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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

not difficult to understand the source of the courage to some of our political leaders - with strong constituencies back of them - in promoting radical changes in laws and customs because of the so-called modern demand - "more liberty for the masses".

In line with this trend, is the effort sure be made to legalize Sunday movies in Baltimore. If only in Baltimore, then why should the counties be interested? Because any scheme promoted for financial gains, or for entertainment, or as a fashionable custom, of a large city, naturally find its imitators in the county towns, and because with rapid motor transportation, town and communities within 50 miles of a city are now in fact, merely suburban sections of the cities.

### Farmers' Wives Benefited

The human and social phase of farm electrification, as opposed to strict economic phase, was stressed at a recent meeting of the Frederick Farmers' Association.

"We firmly believe that electricity will add from 15 to 20 years to the life of farmer's wives. Water in the home, pump by electricity, the electric iron, the electric washing machine, vacuum cleaner, range, refrigerator, percolators, curling irons, are all unknown to most farmer's wives and daughters. Electricity will bring them. And, most important of all to the household, will be the advantage of electric lighting."

### One Killed, Two Injured In Wreck

Three persons were injured, one of them fatally, when the machine of Joseph Pittinger of Woodsboro overturned on the Emmitsburg State Road at the intersection with the Walkersville Road, South of Hansonville, Sunday afternoon.

Clayton Shook, of Detour, and his two sons, Clayton Shook Jr. and Daniel Shook, were thrown out of the auto and all three rendered unconscious. Pittinger himself escaped serious injury. Passing machines carried the injured to the Frederick City Hospital where it was found that Clayton Shook Junior, about 19 years old, had been fatally injured. His death was due to concussion of the brain.

It is understood that the party had been in Thurmont and was on the return trip. Making the turn into the Walkersville Road the machine, one of the tires of which had been punctured, overturned. Clayton Shook Junior, was hurled onto a stone pile. Mr. Pittinger who is driving the sedan, was not thrown out, the machine was completely wrecked.

### Whats New High School

A petition for a new high school building at Liberty, will be presented to the Frederick County Board of Education at its meeting Saturday morning by a large delegation of the school patrons headed by the Liberty Patron Teachers Association.

The committee was appointed at a meeting of the Association held in the Liberty High School building Tuesday night. Dr. Stone provided over the meeting. An address was delivered by Superintendent Palmer. A very pleasing oratory and musical program was rendered. The next meeting will be held the second Tuesday evening in the month of February.

### High-Water Begins To Recede In County

High-water caused by heavy rain Wednesday, had receded to considerable extent by Thursday night. While streams were still running full, and in places, out of their banks, danger of damage has passed. The Monocacy River, however, is still high.

While the rain was general, the downpour seemed heaviest in the northern and eastern sections of the county. The Monocacy was out of its bank in a dozen places and inundated acres of adjoining land. Mountain streams where out of their bank and fields beyond Lewistown, along the Thurmont division of the trolley Road, were covered with water, in places several feet deep.

The rain was much the heaviest of the year at Walkersville and Woodsboro. In some localities roads and fields were badly washed. Some of the dirt roads were water bound from fence to fence and have been left in very bad condition. Culverts and waterways were unable to carry off the volume of water and roads and adjoining fields were flooded.

### January 26

### Winter Returns Again

Old King Winter set a new record Sunday night and Monday morning when he shot the Mercury down to a point 5° above zero according to one instrument. It was a sudden drop, which was from a maximum of 43° on Sunday afternoon. Unofficial thermometers situated in other points about the County, showed wildly different temperatures however, one showed at 4° below zero as did one at the drugstore. At some places in the County tempera-

tures ranging from 2° below to a few degrees above zero reported.

The frigid weather was driven through cracks and crannies during the night on the wings of a strong westerly wind, which continued to blow throughout the day, permitting little rise in the temperature under the force of a strong son.

By noon, the thermometer still stood below the 10° mark, and few residents ventured outside of their homes during the morning unless driven by the press a business. Coats were tightly buttoned and hands thrust deeply in pockets by those who were seen in the downtown section during the morning. A number of autos 'froze up' along the roads and many households had trouble with frozen pipes.

### Klan Ran The Wedding

Mrs. Harry Meiser of Creagerstown, who has filed charges of non-support and assertion against her husband is unable to tell who were the witnesses at her wedding. They were all members of the Ku Klux Klan, she says, and were hooded.

Harry Meiser, with whom she had been keeping steady company for 12 years, had refused to marry her, she said.

The Klan took up the matter and one evening conducted the pair to the parsonage of a local church where the wedding ceremony was performed. Meiser promptly left, but recently was apprehended in charge with desertion and non-support.

### Mountain Communities Still Talk Witches

There are witches, but no ghost. This is the firm belief of many persons living in the rural parts of Catoctin Mountain.

The question arose when a teacher in one of the public schools asked her pupils if they believed in witches. A majority of the boys and girls said they did and that their parents did. An interrogation brought to light many queer stories told by the pupils in a general discussion of the subject of how members of their families have been bewitched and the methods used to remove the spell of the witches.

One little girl related that a broomstick placed under the carpet at the door would prevent a witch from exercising her power and that it has been used successfully at her home. A boy said that a spike driven in a fence over which the witch had to cross would cause her to

drop dead, and to remove the spike would bring her back to life. Another boy said an old shoe placed over a door would prevent a witch from entering the house, or if she did get in, she would fall dead.

A popular method of curing spells was taking a strand of hair from the person bewitched and placing it in a hole bored in a tree into which a peg is driven. Another plan suggested by one of the pupils was to take a hair from the mane or tail of a horse and crushed them with a stone on a fence. This will break the hand or fingers of the witch, it was claimed.

Many women in the mountain will not purchase articles from women peddlers for fear of being bewitched. The superstitious women believe that if a witch can borrow or take something from a person, the one giving it can be bewitched.

The teacher admitted that she was amazed by the extent of the superstitious beliefs of the children and their parents in regard to witchcraft.

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

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# LIBRARY NEWS

## January at the library

Robin Bowers

New year, new you, new books, and things to do! Ring in 2024 with your friends down at the Walkersville Branch Library! If you're trying to relax after the holidays, be sure to check out a few books or DVDs to enjoy while getting cozy. Stop by the front desk to ask for a recommendation if you're open to trying something new or explore the online resources at fcpl.org like hoopla Digital to access movies from the comfort of your home. If you're itching to get started on some New Year's resolutions, we can help with that too! Whether it's taking a wellness class from Great Courses (via Kanopy at fcpl.

org) or attending a free yoga class at the library, there are experiences for the whole family.

Please keep in mind that all branches of Frederick County Public Libraries will be closed January 1 and January 14-15 in observance of New Years Day and Martin Luther King Jr. Day.

If one of your New Years Resolutions is to be more active but gym membership isn't for you, try one of the free classes at the Walkersville Branch Library! Keep yourself in a routine by coming every Saturday morning at 10 am to the Freedom BANG class. This is a pre-choreographed fusion of boxing, HIIT, hip hop, world dance, optional weighted gloves, and a touch of attitude, offering a

wide range of options to customize your workout. Twice a month, on January 8 and 29th at 6 p.m., SOL Yoga hosts a free class for all experience levels. If you're interested in yoga but would like some extra support, join the Chair Yoga class on Tuesday, January 9 at 10am. Wear comfortable clothes and bring a mat if you have one; extra mats will be provided.

If you have school-aged children who love to move, bring them to a "Get Moving!" Program this month at the Walkersville Branch Library. January 5 is a Zumba class; on January 12 an instructor from Frederick Martial Arts will teach new techniques; January 19 is all about Yoga. Each program will run from 1 to 1:45.

Many of us want to start the new year out with a clean slate but don't know where to start. Maybe you've tried Marie Kondo's method or tried reorganizing on your own but found it too structured. If you feel overwhelmed by your clutter and don't know where to begin, this class may be for you! On Sunday, January 7 at 1 p.m., Carolyn West, professional organizer, and owner of Organize Me! will teach you some basics to jumpstart your organizing journey.

This month at Senior Café: On January 11th at 10 a.m., Kristin Deely with Frederick Health will talk about signs and symptoms of heart attacks and how to seek care quickly. Are you looking for a new game or a group of folks to play games with? Come to Senior Café at 10am on January 18th to learn how to play Mahjong. Even if you're not interested in learning the game, come out for coffee,

conversation, and laughter with friends, new and old.

Two fun programs designed for adults with intellectual disabilities will take place at the Walkersville Library this month. Prepare to be amazed during a juggling presentation from Theatricks circus performers on January 10th at 10 a.m. and come back for an hour of Bingo starting at 10 a.m. on January 24th!

Are you a self-proclaimed chocolate aficionado? Maybe you just have a sweet tooth and curiosity to learn more about a beloved confectionery. Join Cody Marwine from Perfect Truffle for a chocolate tasting. He'll discuss how chocolate is made, what the different percentages mean and why every bar tastes different. A delicious and educational way to spend a Sunday afternoon! January 21 from 1 to 2:15.

Whether you're a snow lover or not, using your imagination to create snowball launchers, polar bears and more is always enjoyable with friends. These are just a few of the fun STEM activities and challenges planned for the weekly Teen Innovation Hour this January. Team up with friends or compete solo for ultimate bragging rights! Teen Innovation Hour programs will run Tuesday afternoons in January from 3:30 to 4:30. In lieu of Teen Innovation Hour on January 30th, join us at our monthly Teen Library Council (TLC) meeting at 3:30 to help make the library the best place it can be for you! Attendees will not only receive volunteer hours, but also develop marketable leadership skills, credentials for future job and college applications, and have a fun time with other teens.

Looking for a low-key place to hang with friends after school? Stop by the Walkersville Branch on Friday afternoons at 3:30 for Teen Connect. It's the perfect place to engage with friends after school with special guests like peer mentors, teen-oriented community resources and on January 19th from 2:30 to 4:30, the library will host a job fair. Representatives from local businesses will be available to talk to teens about job opportunities with their companies. This is a great chance to learn more about local businesses and the hiring process for your first job!

Kids (and adults!) of all ages are invited to share their favorite story and make a new friend when the Go Team Therapy Dogs are at the Walkersville Branch Library on Thursday January 11 from 6:30 to 7:30.

"Let's Get Ready for Kindergarten" is a program on Wednesdays from 11 to 11:45 where preschoolers and their caregivers can build school ready skills like counting, literacy and exploring their social-emotional selves with peers. Our weekly Fri-YAY Program will continue into the winter from 11 to 11:45 on Fridays. Partake in Paw Patrol fun on January 5; we will have hands-on Paw Patrol-themed games and a special visit from Chase! Bring the great outdoors inside on January 12 and enjoy a variety of camping inspired activities. Though the air has a winter chill, come to our branch for a winter thrill! Join us for a variety of winter-themed fun including indoor "sledding", snowballs, and more on January 19. To end the month with a bang, attend Superhero Training Camp at the library on January 26 dressed as your favorite hero to hone your super skills!

Our schedule for storytimes is as follows:

- Monday: Infants at 10; It Takes a Village (a caregiver-led discussion) at 10:30; Babies at 11
- Tuesday: Toddlers at 11
- Wednesday: Family at 6
- Thursday: Preschool at 11

**It's the start of a New Year!**

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# SCHOOL NEWS

## County schools perform well on State report cards

Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) recently received 2022-2023 Maryland School Report Cards for each of its schools. Just as in past years, the report cards use a five-star rating. Several measures are used to determine the star rating for each school. Maryland returned to the original, more rigorous methodology in calculating the report cards after modifying standards during the pandemic.

The report card evaluates academic performance in reading, math and science, academic growth, English language proficiency, chronic absenteeism, school climate, and well-rounded curriculum. Social studies was added as a middle school measure for this reporting year. For high schools, the state also measures students "on-track" in ninth grade and graduation rate.

Over two-thirds of FCPS schools were identified as either four or five stars. Across Mary-

land, only 37% of schools earned four stars or higher.

"Our students continue to demonstrate progress on the key indicators of school success – academic achievement, progress, and school quality," FCPS superintendent Dr. Cheryl L. Dyson said. "Our staff will continue to use this information, paired with additional local measures to build on our strengths and address areas of need. Our new FCPS Learning Journey will provide the roadmap that ensures we examine students throughout their academic experience and that every child is prepared to thrive in college, careers and the community."

FCPS Chief of Schools and Accountability, Dr. Jamie Aliveto shared, "Results from the report cards are used by FCPS schools in continuous school improvement efforts. School staff regularly monitor student performance; some of



these data are not new to leaders, they are simply synthesized in the state's accountability model. The state report cards offer one additional way in which we can evaluate school performance."

Two measures, student growth and chronic absenteeism, are a strong focus for FCPS school and system

leaders. Student growth in reading and math is being monitored closely throughout this school year in every FCPS school. FCPS families can help with the chronic absenteeism indicator by ensuring strong attendance at school each day. Research has shown there is a high correlation between attendance and achievement.

Maryland designed the report cards to meet federal requirements that help set standards for school accountability. Today, federal accountability standards for schools are legislated in the Every Student Succeeds Act.

See the results at [www.report-card.msde.maryland.gov](http://www.report-card.msde.maryland.gov).

### Board of Education of Frederick County elects officers

Gary Randall

The Board of Education of Frederick County elected Karen Yoho as President and Rae Gallagher as Vice President.

Yoho was elected to the Board of Education in November 2018 for a four-year term and re-elected in November 2022 for a four-year term. She served as the Board's Vice President from December 2020-21.

Yoho served for 25 years as an FCPS educator from 1993-2018. During her 25 years with the school system, she taught every elementary grade except kindergarten.

Her term as Board President goes through December 2024.

Gallagher was elected to the Board of Education in 2022.

She was previously appointed to the Board by then County Executive Jan Gardner in 2020 to fill a vacancy and completed her tenure that same year.

Gallagher is the proud parent of two FCPS students and active with many community organizations.

Her term as Board Vice President goes through December 2024.

After the election, the Board thanked past President Sue Johnson and past Vice President Dean Rose for their year of service as Board leaders. They will continue as Board members.

FCPS posts additional Board member biographical information via [www.fcps.org/boe](http://www.fcps.org/boe). Headshots of Yoho and Gallagher are attached.

# FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

*This month, we asked our writers to reflect on what resolutions they might have for the New Year.*

## Freshman

### Goals for 2024

**Gracie Smith**  
MSMU Class of 2027

As 2023 comes to an end, I cannot believe that I have accomplished all that I have. I graduated from high school as the President of the National Honor Society. I started college at the Mount as a part of the University Honors Program. I began writing for the paper you're currently reading. I have made lasting friendships and connections at school. I have taken opportunities I would have never taken before. In 2023, I have grown so much as an individual, and cannot wait to see what I accomplish in 2024.

As the New Year approaches, I have considered several things I would like to improve on in 2024. One thing is my individuality. I want to be more open and honest with myself about what I like, rather than trying to please everyone else. I have noticed that in 2023, I started doing this, especially in college since I had no one

to please but myself. From this, I have made amazing friends and made so many memories. In 2024 I hope to continue this and to not deny myself the things that I like including my interests, hobbies, and style.

Another thing I would like to improve on is my relationships. I have made so many friends that are very important to me. In 2024, I hope to do more things with them and make more memories. A New Year means new opportunities, and I plan on taking advantage of all the opportunities I can to have fun with my friends and have a fulfilling college experience.

Continuing with maintaining good habits, I hope to do well in my next semester's classes. As of right now, I have over 20 textbooks I get to read next semester, and I would be lying if I said I wasn't nervous. However, as nervous as I may be, I am very excited to see what my professors are going to teach me, and what all 20 textbooks have to offer. As someone who loves to learn, I am very excited for the next semester, and I am very excited about the courses I am taking.

In late 2024, I will be tested to become a certified Gettysburg Bat-

tlefield Guide. I have been preparing for about 4 months now, and with another year under my belt, I am praying that I pass the certification exam. As a history major, I am very excited about this job opportunity and cannot wait to be a guide. Since I live so close to Gettysburg, I am there very often. It's even better that the Mount is roughly 15 minutes away as well, so I can be a guide and continue my education at the same time. With help from my middle school history teacher, I hope that I can juggle my schoolwork and my books in preparation for being a Battlefield Guide.

With that being said, I will be juggling three jobs by the end of 2024. I pray that I am able to build up my work ethic and time management skills throughout the New Year in order to prepare myself. I will continue my job at Giant as a pharmacy technician, write for the newspaper, and, hopefully, be a Gettysburg Battlefield Guide. I am looking forward to the future that lies ahead of me; I just hope that throughout the New Year, I can accomplish everything I need to so that I can juggle three jobs and prepare for my greater future.

Digressing from maintaining my good habits into the New Year, I hope to establish some new habits. To start, I hope to work on saving my money a bit better and creating a stricter budget. As a freshman in college, I learned very quickly that I cannot spend my money how I used to as a senior in high school. I have had to cut my hours at Giant so that I am not overloaded with work and schoolwork. With that, I also need to cut my spending. As prices continue to increase, my bank account is constantly decreasing.

Self-care is something I have always tried to do, however, in 2024 I plan to take it a little more seriously. I don't mean spending more money on myself, I cannot do that, I mean taking more time to do the things I enjoy and taking better care of my body. Looking over my next semester's agenda, I realized that I am going to be very busy. With that being said, I need to dedicate time to do the things I enjoy. Things such as going for walks, reading books, cleaning my dorm room, watching movies, playing video games, and of course, sleeping.

In addition to dedicating time

to myself, I need to take better care of my body. As much as I want to believe it, I can't live off ramen noodles, cosmic brownies, and sweet tea. In this last semester of college, I noticed that my eating habits had become very unhealthy. Not only was I eating hardly at all, but when I did it was very unhealthy food. Now that I am acclimated at school, I intend to start eating 3 meals a day and drinking water more frequently.

While my intentions for 2024 are not what everyone might expect, they are things that I am striving to achieve. I hope that with diligence, self-discipline, and support from my family and friends, I am able to reach these goals and further grow as a young woman. Having goals not only sets us up for success, but allows us to try new things for the betterment of ourselves. It is important to prioritize the things you are aiming to achieve so that you have a balance of success and happiness. As 2024 begins, I hope that everyone has a safe, happy, and blessed New Year.

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

## Sophomore

### My resolutions this year

**Devin Owen**  
MSMU Class of 2026

At the beginning of each year, I make a list of goals, or resolutions, that I wish to accomplish in the new year...and every year I give up about two months in. Maybe it's because I set very unrealistic goals for myself, or because I simply just cannot fit new things into my very busy schedule. Last year, the goal I left in the dust was to start going to the gym at least twice a week again, like I did when I was back home in Delaware. That ideal got left behind once I realized that I very much so did not enjoy the walk over to the ARCC in the cold—or in the nice weather—and most certainly didn't enjoy the part where I had to actually work out. This year however, I am looking to set some more realistic ideals for myself in the new year.

My first goal for 2024 is to have a healthier diet. Over the course of 2023, I would find myself going out to eat more often than not, whether it be Chick-Fil-A, a nice sit-down restaurant, or even gas station food such as Wawa or Sheetz. While it all tasted great, it was not the best thing to put into my body. I'd be much better off eating actual meals daily; spinach salads with chicken or some form of protein, pork chops and vegetables, essentially any home-cooked meal would do. I have learned that I tend to feel better

when I eat healthier: my energy is higher, my mood is better, and I do not feel sick most of the day as I do when I eat a lot of junk or fast food. So, with that in mind, I just think it would do me a lot of good to better my diet.

Another goal I have set for myself this year is to spend more time with my family. Even though I'm a college student, quality time with my family is just as important as time with my friends. In the last year I have learned that people don't stick around forever, and losing them is really, really hard. In April 2023, my Uncle Charlie passed away and that was by far one of the hardest experiences I have had to deal with; he was one of my favorite people. If I learned anything with his passing though, it is crucial to cherish every moment you have with the people you love. Sometimes we take things like presence for granted; we overlook the time that we have and how much we spend with people might not be enough. There are many people in my family that I know I need and want to spend more time with. A good example is my mom; given that I don't live with her, I also do not get as much time with her as I once did. I remember growing up, we would stay up super late every weekend and watch one of the (numerous) shows we picked out together, while eating a bowl of ice cream and learning to crochet. After being on my own for a bit, I miss these moments more than anything. This goal also makes me think to my grandparents: while trying to decide on a Christmas gift for both sets of my grandparents, my stepmom

reminded me that many people at that age just want time with their loved ones. Nothing matters more to people than time does.

Considering that I am a college student, it might be obvious that the next resolution on my list is to stay on top of my schoolwork/grades, and to manage my time better. I noticed in this past semester of school that I was beyond stressed most days. Maybe it's because I started working a waitressing job on top of classes and writing for this lovely paper, maybe it's because I had more readings to do; we may never know. I think that if I manage to stay on top of my work, and get it done earlier rather than later, then I will manage to reduce some of the stress that I have managed to wrap myself in most of the year. This also ties into the time management goal, because if I manage my time properly between work, school, and free time then hopefully my stress levels will be minimal (although, nonexistent would be ideal).

While on the topic of work, my next goal is to save money! I had no idea just how expensive college was, but oh boy! Usually, I am pretty good at setting aside money for certain things, but I do have my moments where I really enjoy shopping. As my best friend like to say, "It's okay Dev, you're just a girl!" This typically leaves me in the mindset that it's okay because I can just make the money back later. Even though this may be true, it doesn't mean that spending it all on shopping is a good idea; it very well would be much better suited towards

my needs instead of wants. I have a feeling though, that this might be one of my goals that gets (partially) left behind in the months of January and February.

My final, and probably most important goal of the year, is to have more experiences than material goods. My mama always reminds me and my siblings that when we die, we cannot take any of our earthly possessions with us to the afterlife. It's a mindset that I have applied to my life in recent months; I would much rather spend my life having these amazing experiences with people I care about. Going to concerts is a perfect example of this: there is something just so ethereal about being in the moment sur-

rounded by people who feel the same way, as we all sing along and dance to the songs being sung on stage in front of us. Family vacations are perfect too; something about being surrounded by my loved ones in a place where our worries and stress cannot reach gives me a feeling of peace. I would much rather die knowing I lived a life full of memories than surrounded by items I'll never see again. My New Year's resolution this year: to live in the moment and make memories with the people I care about, to take with me when I die.

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

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# NEW YEAR'S RESOLUTIONS

## Junior

### No time like the present

**Dolores Hans**  
MSMU class of 2025

Upon reflection of this past year and my awareness of all the things to come in the next, I know now more than I ever have that I need to make a resolution to live in the present. All my life I have spent reflecting or dwelling on the past, with anxiety while looking forward to the future. The present never seemed adequate. There was either a better moment in the past, or a potentially better moment in the future. The truth is, however, that where I am right now, is exactly where I am meant to be. I am missing it because I'm too busy romanticizing what's to come, or feeling the pain from my past even if it is something I no longer have to feel. I used to pray for a man who would love me, not only because of all the fun adventures we could go on together and all the hugs and support, but because I felt so unloved for most of my life. Now, I have that man that I prayed for, and I have never

felt so much love in my life; yet, for some reason, it isn't enough. It isn't enough because now that I have him, I'm thinking about our future together. Constantly! I will actually become angry at the fact that we aren't married yet, and I must stop myself (or more accurately, he lovingly stops me) and recognize that where I am right now and what I have, is what I used to long for and pray for, and that this is where I am meant to be for now. I have to be grateful for the present.

I am so excited to have backyard barbecues and camping trips with my friends when we all have our own families, but I am too quick to miss out on opportunities to make memories with them now, while we are all together on campus.

I am dwelling on and actively feeling the hurts from my past, instead of allowing myself to create space between who I am in the life I live now, from that of my past. Instead of working to heal my wounds, I just reopen them and live through it again, causing me all kinds of hurt.

There are so many things that I look forward to this upcoming year, and I don't want to spend those moments in anything less than pure

bliss and joyful anticipation. In January I start my second semester of junior year, and as a Special Education/Elementary Education major, I will be beginning my internship in Frederick County. This is a very special opportunity, and I don't want to take it for granted. Being a teacher isn't my dream job, but it is something I feel is absolutely an essential part of who I am and how I love. I am not a very career minded person as most people are, but I've always been able to see the deeper beauty in teaching children. This experience will help me grow in so many ways, and I want to embrace that, not hide from it, because it will be a challenge.

In April I celebrate my two-year anniversary, which is insane because I feel like I have known and loved him for at least five years. With another big milestone in the books, it will be really easy for me to look forwards to the future and fall back into my patterns of jealousy (of engaged couples) and resentment (towards all the things that prevent it from being the right time). But I need to look at these two years and realize how time has gone by so quickly and be thankful that I have

him and that we have been able to make so many amazing memories since we met.

In May, my oldest brother is getting married, and he hired me as the photographer. I am so excited to get another wedding in my portfolio, but I also must remember that he is my family, and this is the "end of an era" as people say, because we are no longer children sharing our lives under the same roof and same family. I want to make sure that I am present at the wedding, not just as the photographer to take photos—because that is natural to me—but as his sister, coming out of my shell, enjoying myself, and treasuring this time that I have with him and all of our family. As an introvert and an observant person, I love photography because the purpose is not to be the center of attention. I can hide behind my camera and choose not to be social because my job is to capture the fun, heartfelt, momentous, and intimate moments throughout the event. But I need to remember that I shouldn't hide at my own brother's wedding. I need to be courageous and lively, as well as take beautiful photos.

In June, my other older brother is getting married. I know, it's going

to be hectic in my household (even more than it usually is as a family of ten). In his wedding, I am a bridesmaid. I have never been a bridesmaid before. I've been a flower girl a couple times, but this is different. I am an adult now. As I mentioned before, I am naturally an observer, so coming out of my shell and living in the moment full of joy is something I need to work on.

Next fall begins my senior year, and Lord knows I have a lot on my plate. It can be so easy to be overwhelmed by the unknown. But life is full of uncertainties, and that is something I have to accept. It is something I have to learn to see in a new perspective, so I can embrace it with hope and resilience instead of fear. I also need to remember the good times of my childhood, rather than everything that went wrong. My past is past. Every day is a new day to grow in character, learn truth and reason, and witness beauty. Knowing this, I can start changing my mindset to live in the present moment.

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

## Senior

### The grad year

**Claire Doll**  
MSMU Class of 2024

In 2023, I worked a full-time job and wasn't paid a dime.

Every day, I clocked in before 7 a.m., and I left promptly at 2:45 p.m., commuting back to campus. I then attended evening classes, wrote college essays, edited the Mount's literary magazine, and of course, edited this lovely News-Journal. I managed to exercise most days, hang out with friends over the weekends, and end with a pretty great GPA.

During the day, I was Ms. Doll. I taught some wonderful middle and high schoolers, wrote language arts lesson plans, read novels like *The Great Gatsby* and *The Outsiders* to teach my students. It was exhausting to work so much and balance being a college student.

But I loved it. Of course, I didn't love working a full-time job while my college friends slept in and dressed in sweats and went out to lunch. Or driving home after the most difficult week ever and not getting a single penny for my work. Or the late nights, missed workouts, the tears, or the loneliness of such a busy life. I loved my students: classes of eccentric and positive middle schoolers. I loved my mentor: a wise, wonderful, impactful teacher who guided me through the highs and lows of education. I loved the staff at Thurmont Middle, and I loved this glimpse of the real world, and of what it's like to be a teacher.

In 2023, I got a part-time job

as a barista. I learned to make my absolute favorite thing in the entire world: espresso drinks. I went to so many beaches, saw Taylor Swift (highlight of the year, I'd say), and I grew so many friendships. And of course, I completed two teaching internships in the spring and fall. It was a beautiful year, one where I found myself, but also struggled immensely. Did I really want to be a teacher, when everyone seems to have a negative opinion on education? Did it matter if I missed two workouts in a row? (In the moment, it mattered so much.) Would life after college be all that I had hoped?

I'll be honest: I'm scared for 2024. I graduate in May, and after that, I start working. I'm scared of being a teacher, a real teacher with a classroom and everything. Where will I teach? Where will I live? Will my students like me? Will I even make it?

Not only that, but I won't live with my best friends ever again. Not like this. Now, after every Tuesday evening class, I go to my friend Jordana's apartment to debrief the weekend. I learn to make pottery with my roommate Emma, and I have comforting talks with my other roommate, Kayla, at the end of her bed. I bake cookies with my boyfriend, Gavin. I have wine nights with my friends, and I enjoy trips to Gettysburg for a midday coffee. College is a beautiful thing, something I am so grateful for. I wouldn't change it for anything, and I have learned so much.

However, if 2024 will bring anything, it will be change.

Next semester is the first semester since freshman year that I will have less than 16 credits of classes—

meaning I have a super light course load. I have off Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays. I'm taking the general courses I need for graduation, but also classes such as personal finance and ceramics. I want to better prepare myself for my financial future, and I also want to dedicate time to leisure and new hobbies. I'll still edit *Lighted Corners* and the *News-Journal*, and I'll work on my honors project, and I'll of course be interviewing for teaching positions. But I want to use the space in my schedule to slow down.

I'll never get this time again. The time to be with friends, pursue creative arts, and to do homework at a coffeeshop on a Tuesday at noon. To sleep in and watch the sunrise from my bedroom window, rather than the window at school, or from my car's dashboard. To travel on long weekends and spend hours writing, making pottery, or editing a literary journal. Or being intentional and mindful during my workouts.

My goals for 2024 are abundant. I don't think that one should have a singular resolution, but rather many that complement different aspects of his or her life. For example, one of my resolutions for 2024 is to be more mindful with my time. Rather than cramming assignments, workouts, and shifts into one morning, I will instead give myself space to wake up early, work out, make breakfast, and start my day slowly. With intention. I will limit social media time, maybe even delete some of the apps. I will slow my mind down, journal more, and focus on mental habits that will sustain me while teaching.

Teaching. I have the goal to give myself immense grace when it comes to being a first-year teacher in 2024. I do not expect myself to be the best, or to do everything right. I want to instead build healthy mental practices—like developing a steady and flexible routine—that will reduce stress in the long run. I will not have college classes, homework, studying, or extracurriculars. I will focus on my own time, on my own hobbies, on teaching and the people around me.

My 2024 resolutions look different than previous years. Instead of aiming for a certain GPA, reading a certain number of books, or getting my creative

writing published, I am striving for simplicity. Space. Self-forgiveness. Friendship. I have never been this way before—if you know me, I'm an anxious, indecisive perfectionist—but I truly do think that this year of student teaching has changed me. I have grown past college, and I strive for a life where I can lead my own classroom. I find value in my students and my experiences rather than my coursework, and I have found a passion in teaching.

As for my concrete plans beyond college? Stay tuned for that!

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

*Happy New Year!*

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# ARTS

## Way Off Broadway kicks off 30<sup>th</sup> anniversary season

Justin Kiska

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

In the play, an announcement in the local paper states the time and place when a murder is to occur in Miss Blacklock's home in the English village of Chipping Cleghorn. What follows is a classic Christie puzzle of mixed motives, concealed identities, a second

death, and a determined inspector grimly following the case's twists and turns. Fortunately, Miss Marple is on hand to provide the solution – at some risk to herself – in a dramatic final confrontation.

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

In 1956, NBC's Goodyear Playhouse presented a television adaptation starring Gracie Fields as Miss Marple, Roger Moore as Patrick Simmons, and Jessica Tandy as Letitia Blacklock. Another tele-

vision adaptation came in 1984 as part of the popular BBC series *Miss Marple*, starring Joan Hickson as Marple.

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

Way Off Broadway's production of *A Murder is Announced* brings together a cast who, in large part, appeared together in the theatre's record-breaking production of another Christie mystery in 2022, *Murder on the Orient Express*. The cast includes Jessica Billones as Letitia Blacklock, Betsey Whitmore Brannen as Bunny, Amy

Cajigas as Mitzi, Brian D. Kaider as Inspector Craddock, Bill Kiska as Sergeant Mellors, Pam Neely as Mrs. Swettenham, Laura Hepp Saunders as Phillipa, Wil Spaeth as Edmund, Randy Stull as Patrick, and Megan Elizabeth West as Julia. Taking on the role of the iconic amateur detective is Hannah Pecoraro as Miss Marple.

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

*A Murder is Announced* runs January 19th through March 2nd, with performances are every Fri-

day and Saturday evening, and matinees on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th Sunday of each month.

*Tickets on Friday evenings are \$56; Saturday evenings are \$60; and Sunday afternoons are \$59 per person. Tickets may be purchased by calling the theatre's Box Office at 301-662-6600. A specific Performance Calendar can be found on the theatre's website at www.wayoffbroadway.com.*

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

## "An Evening with the Painting"

The Gettysburg Foundation invites visitors to Gettysburg and area residents to an "after-hours" program on the historic Battle of Gettysburg Cyclorama at the Gettysburg National Military Park Museum & Visitor Center Saturday, Jan. 13, 2024, at 4 p.m. Guests can enjoy an exclusive, close-up look at the restored painting with a presentation combining history, art and preservation.

This special behind-the-scenes program is presented by Licensed Battlefield Guide, author and historian Chris Brenneman.

Painted in the 1880s by French artist Paul Philippoteaux and a team of artists, the Battle of Gettysburg Cyclorama is an immense work of art measuring 42 feet high and 377 feet long. The Gettysburg Cyclorama is one of the largest, free-standing paintings in North America. A

rendition of "Pickett's Charge" on the third day of the Battle of Gettysburg, the painting is suspended in-the-round from the ceiling. This massive piece of history creates a spectacular 360-degree, three-dimensional appearance when viewed from the platform.

"An Evening with the Painting" explores the history of the genre of cycloramas and the iconic Battle of Gettysburg Cyclorama.

Brenneman covers the fascinating creation of this historic piece of art, the rich symbolism found in the painting and the extensive conservation effort to restore the canvas visitors experience today. Program ticket holders enjoy extended time on the viewing platform to observe in full light the remarkable, close-up details and distant battle scenes depicted in the painting. Guests can journey under the diorama to view just how the three-dimensional

"illusion" comes alive. Time is provided for Q&A.

Limited to 40 attendees, the special presentation offers ticket holders approximately two hours of programming. The program begins in the Ford Motor Company Fund Education Center and continues on the Cyclorama platform. The Foundation is pleased to also offer the special program on these Saturdays in the spring: Feb 14, 4 to 6 p.m., March 16 & April 13, 5 to 7 pm.

## This month at New Spire Arts & the Weinberg

**Heather Aubrey Lloyd Brings Janis-Meets-Joni Vocals to New Spire Arts**

Singer-songwriter Heather Aubrey Lloyd is set to captivate audiences at New Spire Arts in Frederick Maryland on Saturday, January 6. Trading one beat for another, this former Baltimore journalist, and co-frontwoman of the band, ilyAIMY, has emerged as a dynamic solo artist, enchanting listeners with her unique vocals.

For over two decades, Lloyd has crisscrossed the nation, playing a diverse array of venues—from bait shops to clothing-optional resorts—as part of the critically acclaimed ilyAIMY. However, her latest venture into solo work has garnered widespread praise, culminating in her debut studio album, "A Message in the Mess." Lloyd's passionate, "sing-me-the-phonebook" alto, accompanied by folk-inspired finger-picked guitar

and infused with the influence of Baltimore's slam poetry scene, has created a sound that defies easy categorization.

Described by The Montgomery Caller as "Janis Joplin... and Joni Mitchell blended together," Lloyd's musical prowess has not gone unnoticed. "A Message in the Mess" received the Director's Award for Album of the Year from the Mid-Atlantic Song Contest, marking the beginning of a slew of accolades, including being a 2018 No Depression Magazine Songwriting Award Finalist, 2018 Falcon Ridge Folk Festival MOST WANTED Artist, 2018 National Women's Music Festival Emerging Artist, and a 2017 Telluride Troubadour Top 4.

In 2019, she secured the Grand Prize for the prestigious Bernard Ebb Songwriting Award. Lloyd's multifaceted talents have earned

her recognition beyond her solo career, with previous accolades including being a Lilith Fair Talent Search Finalist and ilyAIMY's repeat wins as Best Contemporary Folk Group/Duo in the Washington Area Music Awards.

**1964 The Tribute Brings the Era of Beatlemania Back to the Weinberg Center Stage**

1964 The Tribute returns to the Weinberg Center for the Arts on Saturday, January 13, bringing the world's most authentic Beatles tribute back to Frederick Maryland.

Since the early eighties, 1964 The Tribute has been thrilling audiences around the globe by taking them on a journey through a quintessential moment in music history that will live forever. Over forty years of researching and performing have made 1964 masters of their craft.

They are hailed by critics and fans alike as THE most authentic Beatles tribute, which has earned them the distinction from Rolling Stone magazine as the "Best Beatles Tribute on Earth!" 1964 The Tribute recreates an early 1960's live Beatle concert with period instruments, clothing, hairstyles, and onstage banter with an accuracy that is unmatched. 1964 is Mark Benson as John Lennon, Mac Ruffing as Paul McCartney, Tom Work as George Harrison, and Bobby Potter as Ringo.

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

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

*The Weinberg Center for the Arts is one of the region's premier performing arts presenters, offering film, music, dance, theater, and family-focused programming. Located in the historic Tivoli movie theater in downtown Frederick Maryland, the Weinberg Center strives to ensure that the arts remain accessible and affordable to local and regional audiences alike. Weinberg Center events are made possible with major support from the City of Frederick, the Maryland State Arts Council, Plamondon Hospitality Partners, and other corporate and individual donors.*

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# Future you as a friend

Sonya Verlaque

I had a salad today just before I sat down to write, and it was so refreshing. Crunchy, lots of different delicious things in it. Here's an almond, some grilled chicken, shredded carrot. I feel like everything I have eaten from November through December has been dense. Like, heavy, sit in your stomach and induce a nap heavy. The salad almost felt like something brand new.

I feel like we are all always "on the go" and I have to constantly "grab something quick." But if you have 15, or even 30 minutes, you have time to actually eat something that is nutritious and tastes good. You deserve to eat good food and it will help your body function, sometimes I like to even think of future me as a friend. Dinner me will be hungry tonight, she's worked pretty hard and I like her most of the time, let me put something together now so when she's tired and hungry tonight she doesn't DoorDash a bad decision.

## Crockpot Honey Garlic Chicken

This is an easy crock pot recipe for chicken thighs cooked in honey garlic sauce that is full of flavor. Only 5 ingredients that you probably already have plus a couple of standard seasonings. Super easy chicken recipe and also easy to increase in size for leftovers. My husband loves it when we make extra so he can eat it over rice for lunch. To serve this I actually just make some rice and steam some broccoli in the microwave and its similar to having Chinese take out without the delivery fee.

### Ingredients:

- 6 boneless, skinless chicken thighs or breasts, mainly important they are skinless because chicken skin in a Crockpot is not pleasant
- 4 garlic cloves, minced (jar garlic is fine)
- 1/3 cup honey
- 1/2 cup low sodium ketchup
- 1/2 cup low sodium soy sauce
- 1/2 tsp dried oregano
- 2 tbs fresh parsley
- 1/2 tbs toasted sesame seeds

### Preparation Instructions:

Arrange chicken thighs on the bottom of your slow cooker; set aside. (please look at the notes section) in a mixing bowl, combine garlic, honey, ketchup, soy sauce, oregano and parsley; whisk until thoroughly combined. Pour the sauce over the chicken thighs. Close with a lid and cook for 4 to 5 hours on LOW, or 3 to 4 hours on HIGH. Final internal cooking temp for chicken is 165. Remove lid and transfer chicken to a serving plate.

To thicken the sauce you can do it two ways. First make a cornstarch slurry. Use 1 tablespoon cornstarch mixed with 1 tablespoon cold water; mix it

together until mixture forms a paste. The fastest way: 30 minutes before the chicken is done cooking, whisk the cornstarch slurry into the sauce inside the slow cooker; cover and continue to cook for 30 minutes. The second way that requires two steps but is a bit nicer. When the chicken is done, take a small sauce pan and sieve, strain the Crockpot juices into the pot. This takes out the left over chicken bits. Then add the cornstarch slurry and bring the whole thing to a boil and then turn down to simmer for 2 to 3 minutes, then spoon over chicken. It will continue to thicken as it cools also. This will make a smoother sauce and the entire dish stores well for 3 days in the refrigerator.

## Chilled Asparagus with Citrus Vinaigrette

This is delicious and a way to be kind to future you. So, if you planned on making asparagus for dinner, just boil extra and set it aside. Dress with this vinaigrette and you have a nice lunch side dish for tomorrow. This with an egg (poached, hard boiled, whatever) and some crusty toast with butter or cheese feels like "restaurant lunch" as my kids would say.

### Ingredients:

- 1 pound asparagus, woody ends cut off
- 1 tsp orange zest
- 1/4 cup fresh orange juice
- 2 tbs fresh lemon juice
- 1 tbs dijon mustard
- 2 tsp white wine vinegar
- 1 tbs extra virgin olive oil
- 2 tsp maple syrup or honey
- Kosher salt and fresh ground black pepper to taste

### Preparation Instructions:

Bring a large pot of salted water to a boil. Add in the asparagus

and cook for 2 minutes. Immediately remove the asparagus from the boiling water and place it into an ice bath to stop the cooking process. Once the asparagus has cooled remove it from the water, blot it dry with a towel, and place it in a large bowl. In a glass measuring cup combine the remaining ingredients and whisk together to form the citrus vinaigrette. Pour the desired amount of vinaigrette over the asparagus and toss to coat. Cover and refrigerate until ready to serve, salt and pepper.

## Sheet-Pan Chicken Thighs with Brussels Sprouts & Gnocchi

When did Brussels sprouts get such a glow up? I swear 20 years ago no one ate Brussels sprouts, I wish I had bought Brussels sprout stock. This recipe originally appeared in eatingwell.com and is also easy to substitute other vegetables if you don't have sprouts on hand. Green pepper chunks for sprouts, or red peppers or carrots for tomatoes. You can also live this up with some fresh basil at the end.

### Ingredients:

- 4 tbs extra-virgin olive oil, divided
- 2 tbs chopped fresh oregano, divided
- 2 large cloves garlic, minced, divided
- 1/2 tsp ground pepper, divided
- 1/4 tsp salt, divided
- 1 pound Brussels sprouts, trimmed and quartered
- 1 (16 ounce) package shelf-stable gnocchi
- 1 cup sliced red onion
- 4 boneless, skinless chicken thighs, trimmed
- 1 cup halved cherry tomatoes
- 1 tbs red-wine vinegar

### Preparation Instructions:

Preheat oven to 450 degrees F. Stir 2 tablespoon oil, 1 tablespoon oregano, half the garlic, 1/4 tsp pepper and 1/8 tsp salt together in a large bowl. Add Brussels sprouts, gnocchi



Crockpot Honey Garlic Chicken

and onion; toss to coat. Spread on a large rimmed baking sheet. Stir 1 tablespoon oil, the remaining 1 tablespoon oregano, the remaining garlic and the remaining 1/4 tsp pepper and 1/8 tsp salt in the large bowl. Add chicken and toss to coat. Nestle the chicken into the vegetable mixture. Roast for 10 minutes. Remove from the oven and add the tomatoes; stir to combine.

Continue roasting until the Brussels sprouts are tender and the chicken is just cooked through, about 10 minutes more (internal temperature of 165F). Stir vinegar and the remaining 1tablespoonoil into the vegetable mixture.

To read other cooking articles, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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# ASTRONOMY

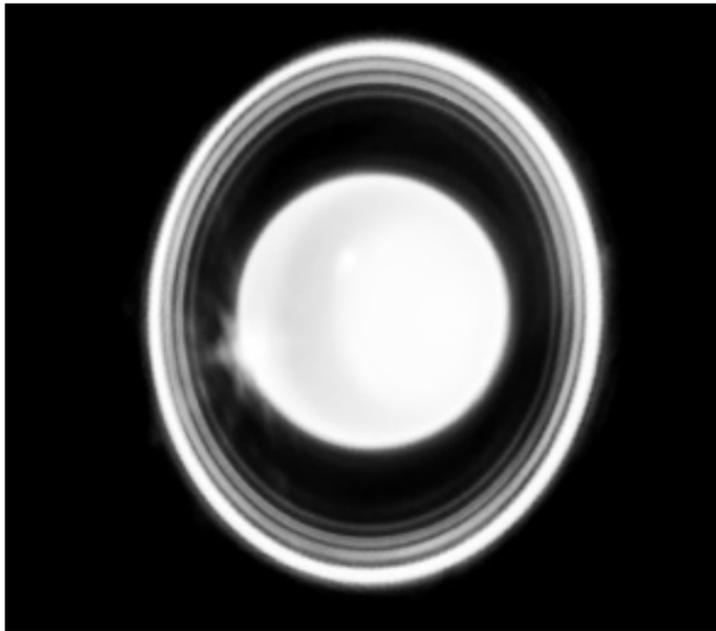
## The night sky of January

Professor Wayne Wooten

The earth is closest to the Sun on January 2, 2024 at 8 p.m.; as our orbit is almost circular, the slight change from perihelion (.983 AU, about 91 million miles) to aphelion in July (about 94 million miles) is so small that our 23.5 degree axial tilt plays a much larger role in our modern seasons. At times, precession will shift the coldest days of winter to aphelion (for instance, the last ice ages, 11,000 years ago).

The moon is last quarter on December 3rd. The crescent moon will occult the bright red giant Antares in Scorpius for observing in the western US before sunrise on January 8. The brilliant planet Venus will be just NE of the pair. The next morning, it will lie south of fainter Mercury in the twilight. Look closely with binocs and you may also spot Mars coming out from behind the Sun into the dawn. New Moon is January 11th; three more new moons to the April 8th total solar eclipse. More on that later, of course. The slender crescent lies below Saturn on January 13th, and above it on the 14th. The first quarter moon is on January 17th, and it passes below Jupiter the following evening. The full moon, The Snow moon, is on January 25th.

Mercury is in the dawn most of January, to the lower left of Venus. It is at greatest western elongation, 24 degrees in front of the rising Sun, on January 12th, and heads back to the far side of the Sun. It merges with Mars in the dawn on January 27th, only .3 degrees above the Red Planet. Use binoculars about 40 minutes before sunrise. By month's end, Mercury is lost in Sun's glare, and Venus too is getting lower and lower in the dawn; it will pass behind the Sun by Spring. Mars will slowly



This zoomed-in image of Uranus, captured by Webb's Near-Infrared Camera, reveals stunning views of the planet's rings.

climb high in the dawn for the next several months.

Jupiter is well up in the southern sky at sunset, well placed for telescopic observations of its four Galilean moons and famed Great Red Spot. Saturn is low in the Southwest in Aquarius by month's end, and will be lost in the Sun's glare by the end of February.

The constellation Cassiopeia makes a striking W in the NW. 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. It is accompanied in small telescopes by companion galaxies M-32 and M-110; we also know of about a dozen smaller satellites gravitationally bound to M-31.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus. Between him and Cassiopeia is the fine Double Cluster,

faintly visible with the naked eye and two fine binocular objects in the same field. Perseus contains the famed eclipsing binary star Algol, where the Arabs imagined the eye of the gorgon Medusa would lie. It fades to a third its normal brightness for six out of every 70 hours, as a larger but cooler orange giant covers about 80% of the smaller but hotter and thus brighter companion as seen from Earth.

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.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead sky. It is part of the pen-

tagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini. You can associate the pair with Jason and the Golden Fleece legend, for they were the first two Argonauts to sign up on his crew.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. As noted last month, on December 11th, the asteroid Leona passed in front of the huge red giant, and as predicted, the 300 mile wide rock did not quite cover the whole surface of the largest star in the sky (except for the Sun, of course) as seen from earth.

While the occultation was not seen in the United States, on the other side of the Atlantic, dozens of observers made detailed recordings to the fading of the star from first to third magnitude (about 1/3 its original brightness) for ten seconds or less! 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 star birth all over the place. You should be able to glimpse this stellar birthplace as a faint blur with just your naked eyes, and the larger your binoculars or telescope, the better the view becomes.

While M-42 is an emission nebulae, shining reddish from the ionization of its hydrogen gas by hot young stars forming inside it, the famed Horsehead south of the belt of Orion is a dark nebula, a dust

cloud lying in front of the red glowing background hydrogen. Just north of it is the much easier Flame Nebula, in the same field of view as Mintaka, the eastern member of the belt. It is also an emission nebula. But the blue color around Mintaka is a reflection nebula, scattering the shorter wavelengths off the interstellar dust, just as small particles in our atmosphere scatter shorter blue waves best, making our sky blue. This is called Rayleigh scattering.

Enjoy such star spectacles while you can. This whole Orion molecular cloud is rich in much dust as well as hydrogen to churn out new, very luminous blue stars like the ones that dominate the naked eye constellation. The horsehead's dust is collapsing into protostars, and their heat and light will soon destroy the famed profile. Even the flame is not everlasting, but its shape and brightness will vary as new stars are born in the dark "wick" to expand the flames still brighter. M-42 also is constantly changing!

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 PM, 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. Below Sirius in binoculars is another fine open cluster, M-41, a fitting dessert for New Year's sky feast.

## Farmers' Almanac

*"Be at war with your vices,  
at peace with your neighbors,  
and let every new year find  
you a better man."*

—Benjamin Franklin  
(1705—1790)

### Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch:

Dry and mild, then rain showers (snow showers west) and seasonably colder (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); rain, turning to wet snow, brisk and colder (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); 11-15: turning warm with rain (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); warm and dry at first, then turning colder with a rain/snow mix (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); turning mild with rain showers, then dry and becoming seasonably cold (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); light wintry mix, heaviest north and west followed by blustery snow showers west then turning milder (26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31).

**Severe Weather Watch:** The Town and Country Almanack warns of heavy snow, wind (4, 5, 6, 7); wintry mix, then heavy snow, wind (26, 27).

**Full Moon:** The first Full Moon of 2024 will occur on Thursday, January 25th. It has been often been referred to as Wolf Moon because of the increased presence of wolf packs that boldly wander close to tribal villages and encampments searching for food. And because of this extreme difficulty finding food at this time, it has also been called Hunger Moon

**Holidays:** New Year's Day falls on Monday, January 1st and Epiphany follows on Saturday, January 6th. Martin Luther King, Jr., famed civil rights activist leader, was born on January 15, 1929. His birthday is celebrated on the third Monday of the month. In 2024, that is Monday, January 16th, his actual date of birth! MLK will be forever remembered for paying the ultimate sacrifice pursuing unity and racial harmony which still eludes us today.

**The Garden:** Mulch landscape beds for winter if you haven't already (and if the weather

allows). Mulching prevents erosion, protects against soil freezes and thaws, and helps retain moisture - all particularly beneficial over a dry winter. Our feathered friends need a reliable supply of water and food during winter but be prepared to continue providing ample amounts of both until natural water and food becomes available later in the Spring.

**The Farm:** Best for planting root crops (3, 4, 5); weeding and stirring the soil (1, 2, 21, 22); planting above-ground crops (14, 15); harvesting all crops (8, 9); the best days for setting hens and incubators (1, 2, 3, 4, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26, 27, 28, 29, 30, 31); the slaughtering and butchering of meat (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16); transplanting (11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16)); the weaning of all small animals and livestock (8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15); harvesting and storing grains (3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10).

### J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living:

*"Resolutions are only as good as the intent to keep them"*



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# FITNESS & HEALTH

## Preventative Care

**Dr. Richard Gough**  
**Frederick Primary Care Associates**

*[This article is the first in a series on current medical topics of interest in our community by the providers at Frederick Primary Care Associates – Walkersville]*

In the last 37 years of my medical practice one of the biggest changes I have experienced in the health care system is a move to focus on preventative care. This major shift is seen as a movement away from focusing on acute disease intervention and management, to one that attempts to identify the disease in its earliest stage and prevent its progression toward significant complications. This is especially true for high blood pressure, diabetes, and cancer.

High blood pressure or hypertension can increase the risks of heart attack and stroke. With the help of home blood pressure cuff monitors, it is now much easier for a patient to track their BP measurements at home. Three or more readings greater than 140 on the top (the systolic BP) or 90 on the bottom (the diastolic BP) should be reported to the physician or healthcare provider. The provider may then implement at least one of several non-drug interventions, or choose medication to help achieve better blood pressure control. Non-drug options include: weight loss, lower salt intake, regular exercise, reduction of stress, stopping smoking (or vaping), minimizing caffeine intake, and avoidance of alcohol.

Great strides have been made in recent

years in the field of diabetes. Testing patients at higher risk for diabetes (those who are overweight or obese, or those with a family history of diabetes) by measuring a fasting blood glucose level may show them to be normal (<100), “pre-diabetic” (100-125), or diabetic (>126). Dietary measures are extremely important in preventing the progression from pre-diabetes to actual diabetes. Avoiding such foods as candy/sweets, starches (breads, potatoes, and pastas), and excessive fruit intake (natural sugars) can be important. Nutritional counselling can also be very helpful.

Once becoming diabetic, patients can be screened for complications of diabetes: yearly eye exams (looking for retinopathy that could lead to blindness), testing of their urine for protein

(to look for nephropathy that could lead to kidney failure), and regularly assessing for loss of feeling in the feet (or neuropathy, that can lead to wounds of the feet, that ultimately can cause hospital admissions for infections or even amputations, especially if associated with poor circulation).

Today there are many different screenings available to help with the early detection of cancer, as early detection can markedly improve treatment and rates of survival. Colon cancer screening is available for people aged 45-75 and includes colonoscopy (every 10 years), stool for DNA testing (every 3 years), or fecal immunoassay testing (every 1-2 years). Lung cancer screening is available for asymptomatic patients age 50-80 who have a 20 pack-year

(= #packs per day x # years) smoking history and are actively smoking (or have quit in the past 15 years).

For women, Mammograms are available for breast cancer screening for women age 40-55 on an annual basis and for women 56-65 years old on either an annual or biannual basis. Cervical cancer screening or PAP smears are indicated every 5 years up to the age of 65 (and beyond if history is unknown or abnormal).

By definition, preventative screenings are often normal, yet the cost of screening otherwise healthy patients is more than offset by the total healthcare costs of treating patients with more advanced disease. Please consider making a preventative screening exam with your healthcare provider.



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# COUNTY NOTES

Continued from page 7

Sheriff's Office (FCSO) Law Enforcement Bureau, officially received a promotion to the position of Records Section supervisor, effective Dec. 2.

"I am very proud of Karen on her promotion, and this is well-deserved," said Lt. Tracy McCutcheon, FCSO Law Enforcement Bureau Support Services commander. "She will provide strong leadership with her extensive knowledge of our Records processes. She has a desire to teach and will encourage and hold others to set a high personal standard as part of the Records Section team."

In this position, Karen will oversee the day-to-day operations of the Records Section. She has direct oversight over all administrative duties regarding records to include warrants, on-scene arrests, requests and disbursement of incident and accident reports, expungements, criminal history clearance requests, maintenance, training, and updating of the Records Management System (RMS), preparing subpoena records for court, and various other records-related duties.

She will manage five Records Section personnel who are responsible for the security of the central records for the agency, by maintaining and updating RMS, and ensuring the proper release and retention of records.

Karen has more than 16 years of records experience, with one

year as the assistant supervisor of the Records Section. She has federal and state training certifications from the Maryland State Police, Maryland Police Training Commission, Maryland Police and Correctional Training Commissions, and Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"I hope to bring a renewed sense of 'team' to the section through encouragement, inspiration, and motivation," said Gaither. "I want to always provide a positive working environment that promotes collaboration from all sections within the Law Enforcement Bureau and other agencies."

The Frederick County Sheriff's Office (FCSO) is a full-service law enforcement agency, an arm of the court, and a keeper of offenders. In this regard, it exists to serve the more than 280,000 citizens of Frederick County with respect, fairness, and compassion. FCSO is committed to the prevention of crime; the protection of life and property; the preservation of peace and order; the enforcement of laws and ordinances; the safeguarding of constitutional guarantees; and safekeeping of prisoners. The men, women, and officers of this office nurture public trust by holding themselves to the highest standards of performance and ethics. The FCSO is located at 110 Airport Drive East, Frederick, MD, 21701. Visit [www.frederick-cosheriff.com](http://www.frederick-cosheriff.com).

## Community Partnership Grant Program Expands

Frederick County's Community Partnership Grant Program will open to a broader range of local nonprofit organizations, Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced today. The competitive grant program provides funding to nonprofit groups that serve the needs of county residents. The county has expanded the program for the upcoming grant cycle, with new priority funding areas.

"I am excited to open up the Community Partnership Grants process to more nonprofits," County Executive Fitzwater said. "For the last nine years, the program has provided strategic support for our human service agencies. We are building on that structure so all community groups have the same opportunity to apply for funding and be held accountable to the same standards."

Grants for the Fiscal Year 2025 cycle will be focused on the following priorities:

- Housing initiatives, including affordable housing and initiatives to help people age in place;
- Addressing Homelessness and housing insecurity;
- Quality of Life initiatives, including support for seniors, youth support and engagement, recreation, and transportation innovation;
- Health and Human Services, such as programs addressing

mental health, behavioral health, substance abuse prevention and intervention, and maternal health; and

- Arts and the Creative Economy including organizations expanding access to cultural enrichment and providing community arts and culture programming.

Applications will be accepted from eligible nonprofit organizations, with a limit of one application per organization. There will be one common application for all priority areas. The link to the online application portal is [FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG).

The deadline to submit an application is 4 p.m. on Friday, Jan. 5. Final funding awards will be considered in the county budget process and announced in April 2024, with funding available beginning July 1.

To better reflect the diverse priority funding areas and align with other Frederick County Government grant programs, the administration of the program has moved to the Division of Finance through the Office of Procurement and Contracting. For more information, visit [FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG](http://FrederickCountyMD.gov/CPG), or email questions to [CPG@frederickcountymd.gov](mailto:CPG@frederickcountymd.gov).

## Frederick County Launches Real-Time Air Quality Monitoring Network

The Frederick County Division of Energy & Environment (DEE) has introduced a network of air quality

monitors to be stationed around the County. The new system will provide real-time assessments of fine particulate matter concentrations in our air. Examples of fine particulate matter include microscopic solids or liquid droplets that are small enough to be inhaled and go deep into the lungs and bloodstream, causing serious health problems. The DEE has initiated this project to track local air pollution, especially in high-risk regions and where people may not be able to respond to air quality problems.

Maryland Secretary of the Environment Serena McIlwain and her staff recently visited one of the County's new air quality monitoring sites. "It was great to host Secretary McIlwain and highlight how Frederick County is working to tackle environmental justice issues. I am proud of the work the DEE is doing to collect and share data to address health and environmental disparities in our community," said County Executive Jessica Fitzwater.

Air quality concerns can vary significantly within a region. To protect those most exposed to poor air quality, the County intends to place at least five of the twelve new air monitors in areas with low-income or disadvantaged populations. These residents are more likely to be affected by air quality issues and may have fewer resources to address them. According to Tiara Lester, Frederick County's Sustainability Program Adminis-

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# COUNTY NOTES

trator, “Last summer, smoke from Canadian wildfires blanketed our region and briefly drew many people’s attention to the issue of air quality. But many people experience similar air quality issues most or all the time.” Neighborhoods bordering industrial operations can be continually exposed to particulates in the air. And those who live or work near busy roads may breathe in many different pollutants regularly.

A key goal of this project is to better understand the air quality of specific areas in Frederick County and to make that information readily accessible to the public. The manufacturer of the air sensors provides an interactive online map that allows the public to easily access air quality data. The map allows users to zoom out and view the big picture of air quality in our region or zoom in for readings from a single air quality monitor.

Two monitoring stations have been installed in the County, one at the County Division of Housing’s facility on Sagner Avenue and one at the City of Brunswick’s Milton Frech Operations Center. “We are honored to lead the way in Frederick County by being the first municipality to join the air quality monitoring network,” said Jeremy Mose, Brunswick’s Assistant City Administrator. “This program will help us track and reduce the sources of air pollution that threaten our health and environment.”

The project provides the opportunity for collaboration among County government agencies and external community-based organizations.

Project partners include the City of Brunswick, the City of Frederick, the Frederick County Sustainability Commission, Mobilize Frederick, the Frederick County Health Department, and the Frederick County Family Services Division. The Frederick County Division of Energy and Environment is committed to creating a healthier, sustainable, and more equitable community for all. For more information on their other projects and programs, please visit their website at [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/DEE](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/DEE).

### Frederick County to Release Business Sentiment Survey

The Frederick County Office of Economic Development (FCOED) is asking businesses to participate in a business sentiment survey to gain insight into what potential resources are needed in the local business community, and which current resources business owners are aware of. All businesses located in the county are encouraged to participate and share their thoughts on doing business in Frederick County and the future of their establishments.

FCOED will announce the results of the survey in early 2024 and use those results to guide the direction of programming and resources for the Frederick County business community. “This survey will give us valuable insight into the issues our local businesses face, and will help shape future resources and how they are made available to those businesses,” says Frederick County Division of

Economic Opportunity Director Lara Fritts. “We want Frederick County businesses to know that we hear their concerns and we are here to support them any way we can. Taking a few minutes out of your day to complete this survey will truly make a difference.

The Frederick County Office of Economic Development serves as the primary contact for businesses to start, locate and expand. We do this by connecting them with Federal, State, and local resources. We assist in site selection, workforce recruitment and training, incen-

tives, marketing and more.

For more information, businesses can reach out to BEACON at Salisbury University at 410-546-6001 or by email using [Beacon@Salisbury.edu](mailto:Beacon@Salisbury.edu) regarding any questions or concerns.

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<p><b>NEW LISTING</b></p>  <p><b>17 N. Altamont Ave., Thurmont</b>                  4 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 3600+ SqFt/                  In-ground Saltwater Pool/ Corner Lot                  Historical Victorian Colonial  <b>\$397,000</b>  <i>Call Cathi Miller</i></p>	<p><b>ACTIVE</b></p>  <p><b>8 Diane Tr., Fairfield, PA</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1900+ SqFt/ Custom                  Rancher/ 1+ Acres/ Walkout Basement  <b>\$409,000</b>  <i>Call Beth Ohler</i></p>	<p><b>COMING SOON</b></p>  <p><b>10210 Coolfont Xing, New Market</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ Lake Linganore                  Community/ Lg. Lot/ Landscaped w/Pond  <b>\$475,000</b>  <i>Call Elle Smith</i></p>	<p><b>ACTIVE</b></p>  <p><b>13115-A Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ 1+ Acre                  Hdwd Flrs/ Exposed Beams  <b>\$335,000</b>  <i>Call Elle Smith</i></p>	
<p><b>NEW LISTING</b></p>  <p><b>13648 Catoctin Furnace Rd., Thurmont</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ Brick Rancher                  on a corner lot.  <b>\$349,900</b>  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>	<p><b>NEW PRICE</b></p>  <p><b>461 Waynesboro Rd., Fairfield</b>                  4 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1800+ SqFt/ 3 Bay                  Garage w/LiF/ 2 Bay Boat House  <b>\$439,000</b>  <i>Call Beth Ohler</i></p>	<p><b>Owens Creek Overlook, Sabillasville</b>                  5 Custom Home Packages w/Land                  starting at <b>\$599,900</b>                  Lots available                  for <b>\$135,000 each</b></p> <p>16011 Foxville Deerfield Road                  5.43 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM                  16013 Foxville Deerfield Road                  5 Acres/ 3 Bdrms, Perc 5 GPM                  16015 Foxville Deerfield Road                  5.24 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 12 GPM                  16017 Foxville Deerfield Road                  5.12 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM                  16019 Foxville Deerfield Road                  5 Acres/ 3 Bdrms/ Perc 10 GPM  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>	<p><b>LOT</b></p>  <p><b>6842 Browns Quarry Rd., Sabillasville</b>                  6+ Acres/ Wooded/                  Conventional Perc  <b>\$149,900</b>  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>	<p><b>NEW LISTING</b></p>  <p><b>300 Hollybrook Ct., Walkersville</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1844 SqFt/ Corner Lot                  Asherman Built Rancher/                  Deerfield Neighborhood  <b>\$499,900</b>  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>
<p><b>ACTIVE</b></p>  <p><b>14280 Upper Edgemont Rd. #9, Waynesboro, PA</b>                  4 Bdrms/ 3 Full Baths/ 5000+ SqFt                  In-Ground Pool/ Remodeled Kitchen                  Finished LL  <b>\$509,900</b>  <i>Call Rachel Hogg</i></p>	<p><b>NEW PRICE</b></p>  <p><b>5101 Wigville Rd., Thurmont</b>                  4 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ 3900+ SqFt/                  Raised Rancher/ 4+ Acres Wooded                  Finished LL  <b>\$449,900</b>  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>	<p><b>LOT</b></p>  <p><b>15519 Kelbaugh Rd., Thurmont</b>                  2+ Acres/ Perc'd/ Scenic View  <b>\$125,000</b>  <i>Call Cindy Grimes</i></p>	<p><b>UNDER CONTRACT</b></p>  <p><b>14720 Claude Ln., Cascade</b>                  3 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ 1300+ SqFt/                  Cape Cod/ Fenced Rear Yard  <b>\$265,000</b>  <i>Call Deb Gartner</i></p>	
<p><b>Kelly Weddle</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  301-693-7232  <a href="mailto:kellyweddesells@outlook.com">kellyweddesells@outlook.com</a></p>	<p><b>Elle Smith</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  301-401-8620  <a href="mailto:smith21788@comcast.net">smith21788@comcast.net</a></p>	<p><b>Valentine Benning</b>                  Salesperson, MD                  301-807-9439  <a href="mailto:valentinebenning@gmail.com">valentinebenning@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Beth Ohler</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  240-315-5376  <a href="mailto:bethohlersells@gmail.com">bethohlersells@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Deb Gartner</b>                  Associate Broker, MD &amp; PA                  301-748-1960  <a href="mailto:deb.theamericandream@gmail.com">deb.theamericandream@gmail.com</a></p>
<p><b>Cathi Miller</b>                  Associate Broker, MD &amp; PA                  301-788-7216  <a href="mailto:cathi@2bizar.com">cathi@2bizar.com</a></p>	<p><b>Diane Bowers</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  301-898-4663  <a href="mailto:bowersrealtor@hotmail.com">bowersrealtor@hotmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Carroll Glass</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  240-674-2538  <a href="mailto:carroll-glass@gmail.com">carroll-glass@gmail.com</a></p>	<p><b>Kelly Rumpf</b>                  Salesperson, MD                  240-292-1746  <a href="mailto:kelly_rumpf@outlook.com">kelly_rumpf@outlook.com</a></p>	<p><b>Rachel Hogg</b>                  Salesperson, MD &amp; PA                  443-605-2426  <a href="mailto:rachhogg1@gmail.com">rachhogg1@gmail.com</a></p>

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