

Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 5, NO. 2 “EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION” —EDWARD R. MURROW FEBRUARY 2025

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NEWS

Proposed Town Budget Workshop Agreed To

The Woodsboro Town Council workshop to solicit resident’s input on the upcoming FY-26 budget. **Page 2**

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State Soliciting Input On Israeli Creek Water Permit

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The Book Of Days

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Ecology

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Attracting birds to your winter garden. **Page 16**

Four Years At The Mount

Reflections on notable individuals born in the month of February.

Joe Lenhart recognized for 50 years of service

At its annual award banquet, the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company recognized Joe Lenhart, who retired September 24 after 50 years with the Company, with the Predacious Chief’s Award. Lenhart was also recognized as the Company’s “Top Responder” for 2024.

Commenting on his awards, Lenhart, who clearly seemed taken aback by all the attention given to him, said “If you are in the fire service for a plaque, a trophy, or a pat on the back, then you’re in the fire service for the wrong reason.”

Lenhart, a native of Urbana, moved to New Midway in 1973 following his marriage to his wife ____ a native of New Midway. He joined the New Midway Volunteer Fire Company shortly after. Like all new members, Lenhart started at the bottom as a volunteer fire fighter but, over the next 50 years, he rose in the ranks and served in almost every position in the Company, from Driver, the Assist

Chief, to Chief, Treasurer, and eventually Board of Directors.

In reflecting on his career, Lenhart said he loved being a fire fighter, “I loved going in to put out fires, but to get to them we needed drivers, and we didn’t have drivers, so I ended up driving most of the time, and eventually just took over that role for the Company ... and then the next role, and then the next ...”

Lenhart was hard pressed to come up with even just a few of his better memories about being part of New Midway. “To be honest, there are just way too many good memories, this is just a great Company, with great people, and I like to be around them and work with them.”

Lenhart said that people used to say he had his own harem. When pressed to explain the statement, a smiling Lenhart said that all the women in the Auxiliary like to work with him, and he was constantly surrounded by 80-to-90-year-old women who



Joe Lenhart, joined by his daughters Terry Fogle and Chris Gladhill.

worked in the company kitchen during its many fundraising events. “Apparently I was so easy to work with that all the women wanted to work with me.”

When asked what advice or words of encouragement he would give to someone contemplating becoming a volunteer fire fighter, Lenhart said, “You’ll get a lot of good experience that will serve you the rest of your life,

and the comradeship is unlike anything you’ll find anywhere else.”

When asked to explain the role of New Midway VFC, especially given that it is sandwiched between two larger fire companies (Taneytown and Walkersville), Lenhart didn’t blink – “We are the local fire company, we are all each other neighbors. When we put out a fire, when are putting out a

continued on page 20

WVFC recognizes members for their service

The Walkersville Volunteer Fire Co. (WVFC) held their annual award banquet on Jan. 18 to recognize the volunteers who have served the community of Walkersville over the past year.

This year, the Honorary Life Membership Award, the highest award issued by the Company, was awarded to Linda Grossnickle. The award is intended to recognize an individual’s commitment to the Company during their lifetime of membership. In presenting the award to Grossnickle, WVFC President Jim Graham noted that Grossnickle, who had joined the company in 2010, had been his right-hand person in keeping everyone up to date on the coming and goings of the Company. She has been instrumental in the operations of the Company’s kitchen, and for the past three years has served as the Company’s Secretary.

Life Membership Awards were received from the following individuals: Gary Baker, Kathryn Baker, Randy Davis, Judy Getzandanner, Debbie Gilbert, Karen Green, Joan Hill and Mary Leatherman. The award recognizes any member who has been a part of the Company for 10 years and is at least 65 years old.

The Member of The Year Award, which is presented to an individual who has exhibited outstanding service to the Company during the year, was awarded to Kristi Staley. In presenting the award, Graham

described Staley as an individual who has taken extensive fire training, served as a line officer, apparatus driver and a member of the Board of Directors. Staley, one of the Company’s top 10 responder also organized monthly training and Chairs the Company’s Cadet program.

Retiring Board of Director members, Andrew Skidmore, Linda Grossnickle, and Bill Horine, were all honored for their service to the Company. In presenting the awards, Graham said Skidmore served the last three years as the assistant treasurer of the organization. He was also an understudy to Vaughn Zimmerman while operating the carnival grounds. Grossnickle was described as a dedicated kitchen staff member, pit beef server and carnival grounds rental staff helper. Graham noted that Horine has served on the Board many years, as well as serving as Vice President of the Company.

The Company’s Most Valuable Responder Award was received by Brennen Clinesmith. According to Chief Chad Barrick, the award is given to a top responder and also to a firefighter that goes above and beyond for the organization. “He [Clinesmith] was a top 10 responder with 167 calls,” Barrick said.

The annual Firefighter of the Year Award was presented to Sam Dmuchowski. “This is the highest individual award a member can



receive on the operational side,” Barrick said. Dmuchowski joined the Company in September 2023. He passed driver’s training quickly and drove on 83 calls, according to Barrick.

Barrick also recognized the Company’s top 10 responding firefighters, with Matt Staley being singled out as the top responder with 448 calls. “These firefighters continue to show their commitment [to] answering emergency

calls throughout the year,” Barrick said.

Barrick described 2024 as “challenging but successful” for WVFC. The Company, he said, responded to over 1,083 calls last year, a 38% increase over 2023 where we ran just over 700 calls. Barrick said that every member of the Company has made a choice to help their community. “Company 11 is probably the strongest fire company in Frederick County,” Barrick said.

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WOODSBORO NEWS

Residents urged to “do the math”

Concerns over the Town’s deteriorating financial condition, the subject of multiple comments made by residents at last month’s Council meeting struck David Williams, a 31-year resident of the town, to be serious enough for him to come to a town council meeting to warn the residents of the town to sit up, take notice, and “do the math” on what he perceived is a growing issue with the Town’s finances.

“I’m here to tell you that since getting word of the last meeting in the newspaper, I was very disturbed and upset. I’ve lived in Woodsboro for 31 years and I do not habitually come to these meetings because I have faith in my politicians that I vote for to respect me as a citizen of the town. And the reason I’m here right now is I feel disrespected by the increase in taxes this year - not that I have any say in the process of how that occurred. I know very clearly why it occurred, but the decision to make that decision I

think was premature, and not very thoughtful of me or any of the citizens of the town.

“I encourage every citizen of the town to do the math to know exactly what just happened. To know that our town’s tax rate is now higher than our closest neighbor to the south for the first time in history. We are now 4% higher than Walkersville. We have never been higher than Walkersville, ever.

“Now when I say 4%, I know that is a difference of verbiage that the town likes to use – you like to use pennies – four pennies higher. Well, I think that is a misnomer because the real money all the residents are paying is more than pennies. For me personally, I will be paying \$175 more in taxes this year than last year and next year I’ll be paying that as well as an additional \$55 and the year after that I will be paying another increment higher because every year the state has raised the tax assessment by 7.086%.

“There is no going backwards unless you plan on going backwards, and I believe as a citizen of the town that there are very viable financial ways of reversing this dramatic and acute trend.

“Again, I encourage what I am saying be circulated to all the residents of the town, and that every single resident of the town must do the math. You must know exactly what the Town is doing and, although we have assumed a mortgage of \$800,000 for the new Town Hall, that will not be full cost, it comes with an additional interest cost for 30 years of \$835,000 or \$850,000, so you have just doubled the cost of the new Town Hall by going this route.

“I just don’t think it’s right for us to sit calmly still and allow it to continue. I think it can be turned around and we would turn it around as fast as possible.”

William’s comments were greeted by a chorus of “Hear hears” by the residents attending the meeting.

Town to hold budget workshop

Following repeated requests by multiple residents at last month’s Town Council meeting for a special workshop to discuss the Town budget, which were brushed off by Burgess Heath Barnes, the Town Council has reversed course and agreed to hold a special workshop in March where residents will be allowed to review next year’s proposed budget line by line and make suggestions and/or recommendations in real time.

The workshop will be part of the Town’s regular monthly meeting, Barnes said, but each budget item will be reviewed in detail and then as much time as necessary will be allotted for residents to give input.

The about-face followed an apology by Barnes to the residents at the January meeting for the way he handled comments from residents during the December meeting, who pressed the Council for

answers on the scope and cost of the recommended repairs to the town’s water and sewer plant that had been submitted by its new operators, the costs for the completion of the state mandated lead pipe survey, and the rationale for and the cost for the new Town Hall.

At the December meeting, Barnes repeatedly interrupted residents during the public comment period, often dismissing their comments out of hand or questioning why they had not brought them up at prior meetings.

Commissioner Jessie Case said he had heard from several residents expressing concern over the lack of transparency in the Town’s financial affairs and requested that he address it going forward.

While the decision to hold a budget workshop was met with the approval of all the residents who had shown up to push for it, Barnes next proclaimed that going forward, he was going to restrict the time allowed

for residents to comment on town affairs to three minutes, after which, “we will ask you to wrap your comments up,” Barnes said.

Further elaborating on the new policy, Barnes said that residents could not use the time to ask him or the Council any questions, and neither he nor the Council would offer any responses to anything said. “The goal is to give you three minutes to speak about whatever is on your mind,” Barnes said.

Barnes implemented the new protocol during the meeting’s public comment period. But Barnes broke it almost right away when during the comment period, Rick Bontz asked the Council to communicate to the town residents the next steps in completing the lead pipe survey. Bontz questioned why the Town approximately spent \$9,100 for a paper-work review to determine what houses were built before 1972, the owners of which subsequently received a letter informing them that the status of them having lead water pipes connecting their homes to the Town’s water system was “unknown.”

Bontz correctly pointed out that it was the Town’s responsibility, according to the requirements of

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the EPA’s Lead Copper Rule Revision, to develop a plan on determining the actual status of at least 10% of all the homes in town that had received the letter. [Editor’s Note: The requirements Bontz referred to were published in the January edition of this paper.]

Bontz comments asking what the next steps in the lead pipe survey would be were expanded upon by Andrew Velnoskey. In responding to Velnoskey, Barnes broke the new protocol and responded to the question, stating that the Town had no responsibility to replace lead pipes within residents’ homes, and the Town would not shut off water to anyone with lead pipes. But he completely missed the point that Bontz and Velnoskey were making, that in fact the Town did have a responsibility to verify the absence or presence of lead pipes from the town’s water system up to a home’s water meter, per the state requirements.

Resident Ed Mortan questioned why the Town was not following the state’s Open Meetings Act by publishing the agendas for town meetings as required, 24 hours prior to a council meeting, and

why the Town had not published any meeting minutes since August of last year.

“At last month’s meeting you continually challenged residents why they had not brought up their issue prior to the meeting. But how could we when we don’t know what is on an agenda and the Town doesn’t publicize the results of the meetings,” Mortan said.

The new protocol met with mixed feelings from many of the residents who had come to get answers on specific issues. “It’s sort of a glass half filled, half empty feeling,” said one resident.

“Unlike last month, where I was repeatedly interrupted while I tried to make my point, this time I got to speak my mind without interruption. But that said, I got no response from anyone on the Council, so I’m not sure if anything will be done about what I talked about, or if I just wasted my time. The least they could have done was given a commitment to look into the issues raised.”

Several residents pointed to Barnes’ response to Bontz and Velnoskey as an example of where Barnes was not listening to what residents were saying or asking for. Nor was the fact missed by many that the Town decided to limit public input during the public comment period without putting the issue on a meeting agenda so the public would be ready to address it during the meeting.

On the flip side, residents were pleased to see Commissioner John Cutshall and Jessie Case approach speakers after the meeting to get more insights on their concerns. “At least they listened” said one resident.

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WALKERSVILLE NEWS

Green Street Project delayed by weather

Town Manager Sean Williams updated the burgess and commissioners on the Green Street Project in January. Delays due to winter weather have caused a halt in the flushing (or cleaning out) of the lines, the next step in the long-awaited project.

The Project entails the replacement of a trenchless structural storm drainpipe lining, sidewalk, curb, and gutter installation and repaving. This necessary work is a direct result of the wear and tear on the over 50-year-old galvanized pipes that are showing signs of severe deterioration.

A bid was accepted for \$453,432 for all labor, materials and equipment in October. This bid will replace 530 linear feet of corrugated metal pipe-lining and is considered a “middle of the road” option. Williams also explained that the replacement lines would not be installed until warmer months, which is also when paving will be done and the sidewalks, curbs and gutters will be poured.

At future meetings, the Council will also be discussing turning Green Street into a one-way for its entire length, with parking being

restricted to the second portion of Green Street on the Maple Avenue side.

Planning continues for Discovery water main replacement

Another large and expensive project for the Town is the Discovery Water Main Replacement. Discovery, a community outside of Walkersville town proper, utilizes the Town’s water services for an additional fee even though it is not technically in town. The pipes in Discovery are old and the last five water line breaks have been within Discovery, thus putting them at the front of the repair list.

Out of the estimated 650 homes impacted by the water main replacement, the first phase will cover around 163 single family homes, about 75% of the single-family homes in total. No townhomes will be included in the first phase of work.

Williams said a meeting was held with the Discovery community’s HOA where over 120 notices of the impending work were handed out. He also said that around 20 residents attended the meeting, where they discussed the timeline of the Project and other

construction details.

At November’s meeting, an estimate of \$3,661,325 was accepted, with \$2.8 million available in ARPA funds dedicated to the Project. With a plan in place, Williams pointed out that the Town will be looking into grants to help pay for the rest of the Project.

Lead pipe mandate work continues

Lastly, the Council was updated on the Lead and Copper Rule Revision (LCRR) mandate that was released by the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA) in 2021. The mandate requires every lead and galvanized pipe in the Nation to be replaced by 2034. A complete service line material inventory and replacement plan was required to be completed by October 2024.

According to Director of Public Works Joseph Birch, they still have a few “unknowns” on the Town’s side. “I cannot say we are 100% lead free due to the unknowns,” he confirmed. He did not say how many on the homeowner’s side were known or unknown.

Homeowners are financially responsible for any lead or galva-

State Soliciting Input On Lochland AG & Turf Water Permit

Maryland Department Of The Environment Water And Science Administration is reviewing the application for the State Permit Lochland AG & Turf LLC, 8901 Crum Road, Walkersville to appropriate and use an annual average of 139,500 gallons of surface water per day and a maximum daily withdrawal of 576,000 gallons on any given day from Israel Creek for sod irrigation.

The state is soliciting input for individuals to provide written comments or to request a public informational hearing, or to be placed on an interested persons list for the listed application.

Any further notices about actions on an application will be provided only by mail to those individuals on a mailing list of interested persons.

Comments or requests for an informational hearing must be received in writing by the Administration on or before February 5.

All inquiries and requests should include the permit application number - FR20245002101; your name, address and telephone number; and should be addressed to Robert Peoples, Chief, Source Protection and Water Appropriation Division, Water and Science Administration, 1800 Washington Blvd., Baltimore, Maryland 21230.

To learn more about the potential adverse impacts of Lochland’s proposed level of water withdrawal from Israel Creek visit www.walkersville.net

For further information please call 410-537-3590.

News Briefs...

Parking concerns at Heritage Park

January’s wet and snowy weather reminded the Parks Commission about issues with visitors parking in the grass at Heritage Park when attending sports events. Commissioner Liaison Chris Ragen asked what they could do to lessen the damage that parking on the grass could cause. “We either need to expand the parking lots or block the grass areas off,” he said. “If we continue to use the grass, it will turn into mud.”

As of now, most visitors park in the grass near the field they are attending. These grass areas are a lot closer than using the established lacrosse field parking lot. Member Kevin Conley added his concern that the long walk for families with small children and the elderly from the lacrosse lot would prove to be too much for most, thus alternatives are necessary.

One alternative to blocking the grass areas off is to build an impermeable parking surface near the softball field or fields four and five, as this would give visitors a shorter walking distance to the softball field. Although the Commission has discussed this before, it comes down to being too expensive at this time because of major infrastructure projects currently under way in Town.

Conley asked if there have been any repairs to the grassy areas due to overuse over the years. Director of Public Works Joseph Birch replied that there really hasn’t been any impact, however there are multiple signs asking cars to stay off the grass.

“It’s a behavior issue. People will park in the grass because it is convenient,” said Ragen. He pointed out that the T-Ball field is especially at risk of long-term damage because there is no parking nearby except a grassy area. With no clear path ahead at this time, the Com-

mission will continue to work with Town staff on brainstorming solutions to this problem.

Railroad introduces plans for renovations

With increasing concerns over pedestrian safety and traffic speed concerns, the Walkersville Southern Railroad Repre-

sentatives reintroduced plans to upgrade the crossing on West Pennsylvania Avenue along with improvements to the area around the train station. The original concept plans were introduced in 2022 and have been approved by the State.

The improvements include new lights at the crossing, replacing asphalt and brick work, renovations to the “Ice House” across the street and upgrades to the small, Town-owned park nick-

named the “Potato Patch” nestled between West Pennsylvania Avenue and Ports Circle.

All the work is projected to cost \$800,000, however the Town owned portion is currently not covered. This is

the main reason for the railroad’s representatives coming to the Town Council. They are asking for the Town to pay for the small park’s improvements that will provide parking and a safe place for train enthusiasts to congregate.



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- ★ Group voting rights
- ★ Attend meetings
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WALKERSVILLE INFO

Wed., Feb. 5 - 7 p.m. - Parks Commission Meeting
Tues., Feb. 11 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Workshop
Wed., Feb. 12 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting
Mon., Feb. 24 - 7 p.m. - EDC Meeting
Tues., Feb. 25 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting
Wed., Feb. 26 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting
Tues., Mar. 4 - 10 a.m. - Free Senior Tax Credit Seminar

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Walkersville Free Senior Tax Seminar

Tuesday, March 4 at 10 a.m.

The town of Walkersville will be hosting a free Senior Tax Credit Seminar March 4 at 10 a.m. in the town hall meeting room.

The town of Walkersville offers a Senior Tax Credit for homeowners 65 and over. The amount of the Walkersville tax credit is 50% of the net town tax. This is a supplement to the state’s Homeowner Tax Credit and the county’s Senior Tax Credit and all qualifications and limitations of these credits apply. The credit was effective with the July 1, 2021 real estate tax bill.

When residents complete a State Homeowner Tax Credit application, it will apply to the State Homeowner Tax Credit, County Senior Tax Credit and Walkersville Senior Tax Credit. If the homeowner qualifies for the County Senior Tax Credit and resides within the town’s municipal limits, they will qualify for the town’s tax credit.

NEW MIDWAY FIRE CO AWARD BANQUET



Generations: Chief Bryan Pescatore and his son Tyler and Michael Rabaïotti with his father Deputy Chief Mike Rabaïotti.



Old, new and future fire fighters: Melvin Crum, Tyler Pescatore, Michael Rabaïotti & Buddy Stover.



Firefighting runs in the Wiand family, Jerry Wiand and his father Mike.



Operational Officers: Chief Bryan Pescatore, Lieutenant Melanie Cooley & Deputy Chief Mike Rabaïotti (Assistant Chief Mike Cornell - Not present).



Larry Hall was recognized for his 60 years with the Company.



Robert Dutrow was recognized for his 70 years, yes 70 years, with the Company!



New Midway's Fire Police: Buddy Stover & Terry Elder.



Executive Officers: Michael Wiand, Chaplain, Joe Lenhart, Treasurer; Terry Fogle, Assistant Treasurer; Melanie Cooley, Board of Directors; Chris Gladhill, President; Judy Smith, Secretary; Terry Elder, Assistant Secretary; & Gary Wolfe, Vice President.



New Midway VFC Operational Members: front row: Jeremy Wiand, Bryan Pescatore, Mike Rabaïotti, Melanie Cooley; back row: Melvin Crum, Mike Wiand, Dave Roles, Tyler Pescatore, Chris Saunders, & Gary Wolfe.

Line Officers for 2025
Chief: Bryan Pescatore
Deputy Chief: Michael Rabaïotti
Assistant Chief: Michael Cornell
Lieutenant: Melanie Cooley

Board of Directors for 2025
Melanie Cooley, Terry Fogle, Sandy Nicholson, Tyler Pescatore, Leon Stover

Executive Officers for 2025:
President: Christine Gladhill
Vice President: Gary Wolfe
Secretary: Judy Smith
Asst. Secretary: Terry Elder
Treasurer: Joseph Lenhart
Asst. Treasurer: Terry Fogle
Chaplain: Michael Wiand



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WALKERSVILLE FIRE CO AWARD BANQUET



President Jim Graham flanked by Linda Grossnickle and Willard Horine. The pair received a special recognition for their years of service to the Company.



Karsyn Barrick, Vaughn Zimmerman, Carol Noonan, Isaac O'Hara, & Richard Gilbert. Karsyn and Isaac were this year's recipients of the Community Foundation of Frederick County's Vaughn Zimmerman Scholarship.



President Jim Graham presents Kristi Staley with the Member of the Year Award plaque.



Top Ten Responders for 2024: Brennen Clinesmith, Samuel Dmuchowski, Craig Moore, Alan Staley, Kristi Staley, Logan Boston, Dalen Hahn, Chase Tracey, & Matthew Staley. (Not pictured: Bradley Bliven)



Brennen Clinesmith was the recipient of Most Valuable Responder Award, presented by Chief Chad Barrick.



Samuel Dmuchowski was the recipient of the Firefighter of the Year Award, presented by Chief Chad Barrick.



Administrative Officers for 2025: Chad Barrick, Kristi Staley, Alan Staley, Matthew Staley, Chase Tracey, James Graham, Dalen Hahn, Brian Hildebrand, Blaine Smith, Chad Weddle, Joshua Barrett, Austin Schroyer, & Richard Gilbert (not pictured: Betsy Graham, Christopher Koch, & Maurice Witt).



Recognition of 2024 Operational Officers: Joshua Barrett, Dalen Hahn, Blaine Smith, Kristi Staley, Matthew Staley, Alan Staley, Craig Moore, & Chad Barrick (not pictured: Bradley Bliven & Zachary Davis)



Operational Officers for 2025: Chad Barrick, Craig Moore, Alan Staley, Kristi Staley, Matthew Staley, Chase Tracey, Dalen Hahn, Zachary Davis, Blaine Smith, & Joshua Barrett (not pictured: Bradley Bliven).

Line Officers for 2025

Chief: Chad Barrick
Deputy Chief: Craig Moore
Asst. Chief: Alan Staley
Asst. Chief: Kristi Staley
Captain: Matthew Staley
Captain: Chase Tracey
Captain: Bradley Bliven
Lieutenant: Dalen Hahn
Lieutenant: Zachary Davis
Sergeant: Blaine Smith
Sergeant: Joshua Barrett

Administrative Officers for 2025

President: James Graham
Vice President: Brian Hildebrand
Secretary: Kristi Staley
Asst. Secretary: Dalen Hahn
Treasurer: Betsy Graham
Asst. Treasurer: Chase Tracey
Chaplain: Chad Weddle

Board of Directors for 2025

Joshua Barrett, Richard Gilbert, Christopher Koch, Austin Schroyer, Blaine Smith, Alan Staley, Matthew Staley & Maurice Witt

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GOVERNMENT

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

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

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

erick County to intervene in the state approval process. This action enables the County to file a petition to intervene in approval process that the PSC will conduct for the MPRP. If a petition to intervene is granted to Frederick County by the PSC, the County would become a party to the case. This would grant the County the ability to file testimony and evidence of the damaging effects on rural areas, conduct discovery to make the process more transparent, and the ability to call and cross-examine witnesses. Member of both parties in our state delegation plan to introduce legislation in this year's Maryland General Assembly in response to the negative effects of the MPRP on the County. Senator Karen Lewis Young (MD District 3) is propos-

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

Delegation Chair Jesse Pippy (MD District 4) also plans to introduce a bill that could affect this process moving forward. His bill would require the PSC to review alternatives to proposed transmission projects, rather than an up or down vote on one plan. Given how long the approval process can take, this is a much more efficient approach. Regardless of whether this bill could pass in time to positively impact the MPRP project, it would be an improvement in the process for future transmission projects. There is a lot of advocacy being done on this issue to protect the interests of Frederick County residents and businesses. I will keep you informed as this process unfolds during 2025. If you have thoughts on the MPRP or another issue, please contact me at rknapp@frederickcountymd.gov. Happy Presidents' Day!

Woodsboro Burgess Heath Barnes

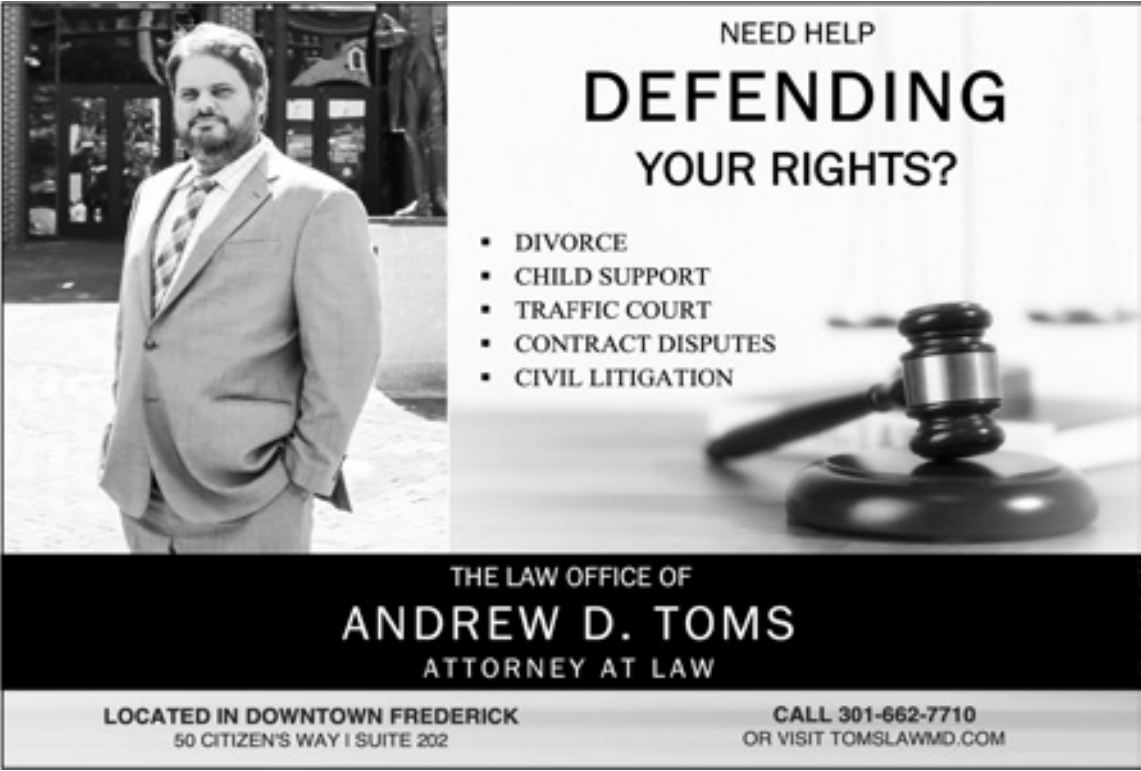
Greetings, Hopefully, everyone is staying warm and if you enjoy the snow, you are enjoying this weather. I have had enough snow and winter even though it's only February. I am ready for Spring and Summer. Due to scheduling conflicts, our monthly meeting for February has been changed to February 4th at 7 instead of February


11th, which is the typical date of the second Tuesday of the month for the town's monthly meeting. Due to requests from some town residents, the decision was made to have a working budget meeting at the March meeting. Although the town code as written DOES not require this extra step, I decided to have an open

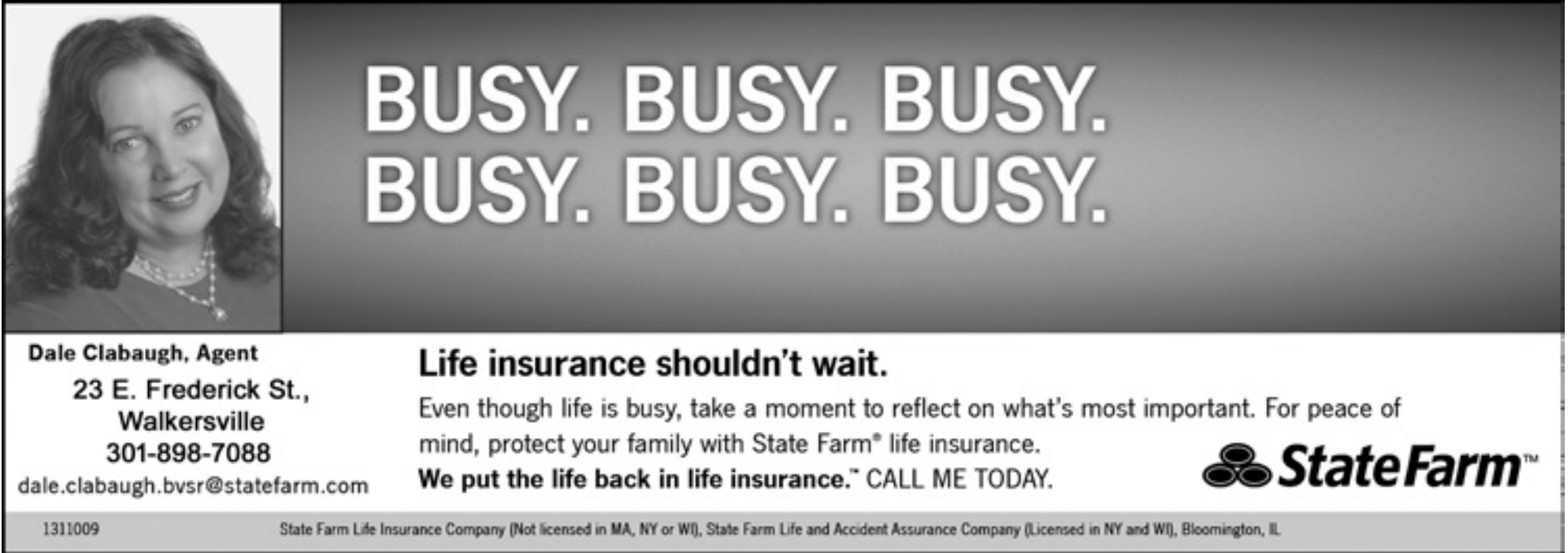
meeting with the budget visible on a screen for all to see as the council goes over the budget. The council will vote on the budget at the April meeting. Reminder elections are coming up on May 10th with voting taking place from 8 in the morning to 2 in the afternoon. The Burgess as well as two council member seats will

be up for election. All nominees to be on the ballot will take place at the April 8th meeting. If you have lived within town limits for a minimum of 12 months and wish to run for office, you must be nominated at this meeting to be on the ballot. Nominations can be made by any other town resident. If you have questions about the requirements or the positions, please reach out to me or Mary at the town office. 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 gladevalley.org@gmail.com , or call 301-845-0213. If you have any questions, concerns, complaints, or compliments please feel free to reach out to me at hbarnes@woodsboro.org or by phone at 301-401-7164. Woodsboro Town meetings are held on the 2nd Tuesday of each month at 7pm. In addition, Planning and Zoning meetings are at 6pm on the First Monday of the month as needed. If you have an item for the agenda, it needs to be submitted 14 days before the P&Z meeting. The current location for meetings is the St. Johns United Church of Christ located at 8 N 2nd Street Woodsboro. The public is always invited to attend.







GOVERNMENT

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

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

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

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

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

healthier future for ourselves and our communities.

State Budget Priorities

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

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

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

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

tion projects already in the pipeline, improving the experience of students, educators, and families.

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

County Budget

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

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

tyMD.gov/FCGTV. To learn more about the budget process and next steps, please visit www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Budget.

Frederick County Earns Three AAA Bond Ratings

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

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

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

Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project

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

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

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

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

County Council President Brad Young

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

ules, please visit our website.

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

The County Executive is currently working on developing the fiscal year 2026 Frederick County Budget. She is required to submit that to the County Council by April 15th. The Council then must adopt it by May 31st, or

the County Executive's proposed budget becomes law. Under the County Charter, the Council can only cut budget line items. The Council may not add to the budget or move funding between agencies.

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

The Frederick County Council encourages public involvement at every stage of the legislative process. We welcome public comment at every Council meeting on Tuesday evenings. Members of the public are welcome to attend and give comment in person, leave a voicemail to be forwarded to each Council Member, or email us any time at councilmembers@frederickcountymd.gov. Please visit our website at www.frederickcountymd.gov/countycouncil to view our latest agendas, legislation, and upcoming calendar of events.

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

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

County Note

County Will Intervene in Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project
County Executive Jessica Fitzwater will petition to intervene in the Maryland Public Service Commission's ("PSC") consideration of PSEG Renewable Transmission's application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity ("CPCN") for authority to construct the Maryland Piedmont Reliability Project ("MPRP").

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

On December 19, 2024, the County Executive's Office asked to brief the County Council on the possibility of intervening in this matter. The Council scheduled a briefing

for tonight's meeting, which starts at 5:30 p.m. On December 31, PSEG Renewable Transmission filed its CPCN application, and, on January 10, 2025, the PSC set a February 17 deadline to petition to intervene.

On December 9, 2024, the PSC responded to a letter from the County Executive and Council and indicated it

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

The details of that hearing will be posted to www.frederickcountymd.gov/mprp when they are available. County officials urge residents to check this site regularly for facts related to the potential impact of MPRP to County assets, project

timelines and details, letters sent to and received by County officials, and video of the County's October 9,

2024, public meeting. The County will update the page as more information is available.

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COMMENTARY

Words from Winterbilt

The deficit, colonialism, TikTok & pardons

Shannon Bohrer

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Steve Bannon, a consultant to Trump’s first administration, was accused of collecting money for the “We Build the Wall” program and then pocketing it. Bannon was charged with fraud, as he “covertly routed” the

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The Bulwark

America needs a real opposition party

Jonathan Last

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

Irrelevant

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

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

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

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

Biden didn’t start the housing

affordability crisis—that train left the station in the late ’90s. It got worse under Trump. And then it got even worse under Biden.

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

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

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

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

Then there’s Ukraine.

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

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

could collapse and Russia could start advancing with alacrity.

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

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

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

Prediction: Pain

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

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

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

Schumer is playing footsie with Trump’s Gulf of America nonsense.

What is wrong with these people?

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Instead, Democrats get the worst of all worlds.

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

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

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

Ruthless Aggression

As always, professional wrestling is the codex for politics and the key for Democrats understanding their position.

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

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

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

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

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

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

COMMENTARY

The Liberal Patriot

Democrats' continued fixation on identity politics carries risks

Michael Baharaeen

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Good Day Neighbor

Valentine to public education

Dorothea Mordian

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

PASTOR'S DESK

What is love?

Reverend Sabrina Slimmer
Keymar Evangelical Wesleyan Church

Love is often seen as an emotion—something that comes and goes, depending on how we feel at any given moment. We hear people say, “I’m in love,” or “I fell out of love,” as though love is simply a fleeting feeling between two people. But is love really just an emotion? To understand what love truly is, we must look beyond emotions and examine love through a Biblical lens. The life and sacrifice of Jesus Christ offers us the clearest definition of love—one that is active, sacrificial, and not dependent on fleeting feelings. Love, as demonstrated in the Bible, is not a feeling but an intentional choice to act in kindness, sacrifice, and compassion.

Love is Not a Feeling,
But an Action

To begin understanding love from a Biblical perspective, we turn to the Apostle John, who defines love not as a mere feeling but as an action. In 1 John 4:9-10, we read:

“This is how God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son into the world that we might live through Him. This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

Notice how love is described not by a feeling but by the actions of God and Jesus. The passage highlights verbs like “showed,” “sent,” “live,” and “sacrifice.” None of these words are dependent on an emotional experience. God’s love was demonstrated through action—through sending His Son to die for

the sins of the world, even though humanity did not deserve such an act of grace. If love were solely a feeling, we might expect God’s love to be based on how well humanity treated Him or whether He “felt” love for us. But instead, God’s love transcends feelings and is shown through purposeful actions.

Love That Is Unconditional
and Sacrificial

In the Bible, God’s love is described as unconditional and sacrificial. Despite humanity’s flaws, rebellion, and sin, God chose to love us. He did not wait for us to “earn” His love or prove our worth. He loved us first, and that love was demonstrated through the ultimate sacrifice: Jesus Christ’s death on the cross. In verse 10, we are reminded: “This is love: not that we loved God, but that He loved us and sent His Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins.”

This sacrifice is the embodiment of love—a love that does not depend on feelings but on a commitment to give, even in the face of rejection or unworthiness. If God’s love were based on feelings, how could He love a people who frequently turn away from Him? Yet, in His great mercy, God’s love remains steady and unwavering. Jesus didn’t die for humanity because we were perfect or deserving; He died because love is not about feelings, but about choosing to act in grace, mercy, and sacrifice.

The Transformative
Power of God’s Love

The power of God’s love is not only in its constancy but also in its transformative nature. When we accept God’s love, it changes how we see



ourselves, others, and the world. The Bible tells us that God’s love is so profound that it leads to transformation, redemption, and healing. When we embrace Jesus as our Savior, we experience a love that sees us not for our mistakes or failures, but for who we were created to be— “in the image of God.”

Jesus, who saw beyond the surface of people’s lives, didn’t focus on their flaws or sins. He saw them as they were intended to be beloved children of God. His love redeems, restores, and justifies. This is not a passive love—it is active, and it transforms everything it touches. When we embrace this love, it shapes our identities, our relationships, and our mission in the world.

A Call to Act Like Jesus

As Christians, we are called to reflect the love of Jesus in our own lives. While we cannot atone for the sins of others or save them, we are called to lead others to the

one who can: Jesus Christ. This love is not just something we feel; it is something we do. Jesus’s love is active, moving, and sacrificial, and we are called to embody this same love in our relationships with others. We should not passively hope that others feel the love of Jesus through us; instead, we must actively seek to see others the way Jesus sees them. This means being vulnerable, allowing ourselves to be interrupted by others, and stepping out of our comfort zones to show compassion and mercy.

This year, let us not sit idly by. Let us go out into the world and seek to truly see those around us, to love them with the same love that Jesus has shown us. Even when it doesn’t make sense, even when it’s uncomfortable, we are called to show mercy, lend a helping hand, and share the love of Christ. When people ask why we do these things, we can point them to the source of our love—Jesus.

The Unshakable Love of God

In conclusion, love is not a fleeting feeling, but an enduring choice to act in grace, sacrifice, and compassion. God’s love for us is not based on how He feels about us, but on His unshakable commitment to us. He loves us through action, through sending His Son to redeem and restore us. As we embrace this love, we are called to reflect it in our own lives, to act with mercy and compassion, and to share the transformative power of God’s love with others.

You are seen, known, and loved by God. His love is a love you can trust—because He has proven it through more than 2,000 years of faithfulness. As you rest in His love, let it empower you to love others in the same way. Our victory is not found in our strength, but in our faith in Jesus Christ, the one who has already overcome the world and defeated death. Through Him, we are more than conquerors.

Hold fast to the love of God, and let it guide your life and your interactions with others. Through His love, we can overcome the challenges of this world and live in the victory He has already won for us.

If you would like to hear more and see this kind of love in action we would love to welcome you to Keymar Evangelical Wesleyan Church in Keymar, MD. Every Sunday morning at 9 and 10:15, and Wednesday nights at 7 we offer something for the whole family: kids, teens, and adults. Come check us out at 1011 Francis Scott Key Highway, Keymar.

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THE BOOK OF DAYS

Lady Sarah Lennox



Lady Sarah Lennox—born 14th February 1745—is an interesting figure of a subordinate class in modern English history. Her father, the second Duke of Richmond of his creation (grandson of King Charles II), had made, in early life, not exactly a romantic marriage, but a marriage which was followed by romantic circumstances. The bride was Lady Sarah Cadogan, daughter of Marlborough's favourite general. Their union was a bargain to cancel a gambling debt between the parents, and the young Lord March was brought from college, the lady from the nursery, for the ceremony. The bride was amazed and silent, but the bridegroom exclaimed—"Surely you are not going to marry me to that dowdy?" Married he was, however, and his tutor instantly carried him off

to the Continent ... Three years afterwards, Lord March returned from his travels an accomplished gentleman, but having such a disagreeable recollection of his wife that he avoided home, and repaired on the first night of his arrival to the theatre. There he saw a lady of so fine an appearance that he asked who she was. "The reigning toast, the beautiful Lady March." He hastened to claim her, and they lived together so affectionately, that, one year after his decease in 1750, she died of grief. Lady Sarah, one of the numerous children of this loving pair, grew up an extraordinary beauty. Of this we get some testimony from the great domestic chronicler of the last century, The charms of this lovely creature had already made an impression on

the heart of George III, then newly come to the throne at two and twenty. There seems no reason to doubt that the young monarch formed the design of raising his lovely cousin (for such she was) to the throne. The idea was of course eagerly embraced by her ladyship's relations, and particularly by her eldest sister's husband, Mr. Fox, who held the office of Paymaster of the Forces, and was anxious to strengthen the party to which he belonged. Any such project was, on the other hand, calculated extremely to offend the King's mother, the Princess of Wales, who, for the support of her power over her son, was desirous that his future wife should be beholden to herself for her brilliant position. Early in the winter 1760-1, the King took an opportunity of speaking to Lady Sarah's cousin, Lady Susan Strangeways, expressing a hope at the drawing-room, that her ladyship was not soon to leave town. She said she should. 'But,' said the King, 'you will return in summer for the coronation.' Lady Susan answered that she did not know—she hoped so. 'But,' said the King again, 'they talk of a wedding. There have been many proposals: but I think an English match would do better than a foreign one. Pray tell Lady Sarah Lennox I say so.' Here was a sufficiently broad hint to inflame the hopes of a family, and to raise the head of a blooming girl of sixteen to the fifth heavens.

It happened, however, that Lady Sarah had already allowed her heart to be pre-occupied, having formed a girlish attachment for the young Lord Newbottle, grandson of the Marquis of Lothian. She did not therefore enter into the views of her family with all the alacrity which they desired. According to a narrative of Mr. Grenville: 'She went the next drawing-room to St. James's, and stated to the King, in as few words as she could, the inconveniences and difficulties in which such a step would involve him. He said, that was his business: he would stand them all: his part was taken, he wished to hear hers was likewise.' In this state it continued, whilst she, by advice of her friends, broke off with Lord Newbottle, very reluctantly on her part. She went into the country for a few days, and by a fall from her horse broke her leg. The absence which this occasioned gave time and opportunities for her enemies to work; they instilled jealousy into the

King's mind upon the subject of Lord Newbottle, telling him that Lady Sarah still continued her intercourse with him, and immediately the marriage with the Princess of Strelitz was set on foot: and, at Lady Sarah's return from the country, she found herself deprived of her crown and her lover Lord Newbottle, who complained as much of her as she did of the King. While this was in agitation, Lady Sarah used to meet the King in his rides early in the morning, driving a little chaise with Lady Susan Strangeways: and once it is said that, wanting to speak to him, she went dressed like a servant-maid, and stood amongst the crowd in the Guard-room, to say a few words to him as he passed by. Lady Sarah would sometimes appear as a haymaker in the park at Holland House, in order to attract the attention of the King as he rode past but the opportunity was lost. The habit of obedience to his mother's will carried the day, and he allowed an emissary to go on a mission to obtain a bride for him in the Protestant courts of Germany. It is believed that lady Sarah was allowed to have hopes till the very day when the young sovereign announced to his council that he had resolved on wedding the Princess Charlotte of Mecklenburg. She felt ill-used, and her friends were all greatly displeased.

With the King she remained an object of virtuous admiration,—perhaps also of pity. He wished to soften the disappointment by endeavouring to get her established in a high position near his wife: but the impropriety of such a course was obvious, and it was not persisted in. Lady Sarah, however, was asked by the King to take a place among the ten unmarried daughters of dukes and earls who held up the train of his queen at the coronation: and this office, which we cannot help thinking in the circumstances derogatory, she consented to perform. It is said that, in the sober, duty-compelled mind of the sovereign, there always was a softness towards the object of his youthful attachment. Lady Sarah Lennox in 1764 made a marriage which proved that ambition was not a ruling principle in her nature, her husband being 'a clergyman's son.' The marriage however was dissolved by an Act of Parliament in 1776, and she subsequently married Major-General George Napier. In 1826, Her ladyship died at the age of eighty-two, believed to be the last surviving great grand-daughter of Charles II.

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

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ECOLOGY

This winter feels like a real winter

Anne Gageby
Director of Environmental Education
Strawberry Hill Foundation

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

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

Those delicate white flakes gather and become an insulating blanket that protects plants, trees, and wildlife from the creeping midwinter chill. Without snow, super cold temperatures like we experienced last week freeze the soil deeper underground. This can lead to damaged root systems and kill plants and trees. Snow's insulation effi-

cacy is due to the air pockets found between fallen snowflakes. These air pockets trap warmer air and moisture, effectively slowing down heat loss between the ground and outer temperatures.

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

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

It's fun to discover the benefits of a snowy winter but let's be honest, snow isn't for everyone. As we experienced recently, it can disrupt travel

plans, close schools and businesses, and requires physical investment in its removal. Yet, to the forest snow is a welcome sight. A variety of rodents such as mice, voles, and shrews live in or utilize the subnivean zone, that almost-magical world between the snowpack and the Earth's surface. These creatures live, rest, and find meals here. They go about their days protected from winter's harshest attitudes by the thick layer of white above them. Without this protection, rodent populations decrease as food supplies dry up and lack of cover opens them to higher rates of predation.

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

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

Hiking in the cold brings a wide variety of health benefits from improving overall immunity to



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

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

Winter hikes have more than just health benefits for anyone willing to brave the chilly air. The lack of bugs is a universal upside for any hiker. No spiderwebs in your hair or mosquitos making you a snack. Plus,

there's something fun about the crunch of snow under our feet as we take a walk outside. It brings out a child-like wonder and excitement as you traipse around the woods.

Or maybe that's just me. I definitely feel like a kid again when I'm out on a winter hike. Tapping into that energy makes being out in the cold more enjoyable. Plus, the forest is beautiful this time of year. Shimmering ice and snow-dusted trees make a spectacular backdrop for any hike. If you're looking for an excuse to get outside, this is it. Check out our list of upcoming winter hikes and programs at Strawberry Hill and join us for some winter fun. While you're out, take in the forest around you and all that winter is doing behind the scenes. After all, this has been a winter to remember and one that will make spring even better for creatures and plants of all varieties.

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THE RETIRED ECOLOGIST

If you're a Cowbird, old habits die hard

Bill Meredith

"Black and white buffalo pass in and out of red barns...."
—Aldo Leopold, A Sand County Almanac, 1949

I looked out of the kitchen window one morning last month and was not surprised to see that half of the yard was white. That was not unexpected; after all, it was January, and snow had been forecast. However, I was surprised to see that the rest of the yard was black, and seemed to be moving, like the raisins used to do when my grandmother poured them into a pan of boiling rice on her old coal stove. It was confusing, but after a moment rational thought took over, and I realized that if I would blink my eyes a few times and get fully awake, normality might return. I tried it, and the raisins turned into cowbirds. I had not seen any of them since last summer, but here they were... hordes of them under the feeder and in the adjacent trees.

It takes a while to absorb something like that when you've just got up. The first explanation that came to mind was that Alfred Hitchcock was alive and well and living in Emmitsburg; but old habits soon took over. Ecologists always start counting things when suddenly confronted with the unforeseen, so I began calculating. I picked several areas of about a square yard and counted the cowbirds in each of them; they averaged about 11 or 12 birds each. Estimating that the area I could see through the window was about five yards on a side, that would make it 25 square yards. I didn't have pencil and paper handy, so I rounded the observed 11 or 12 down to 10, which I could multiply in my head, and added 100 more to account for ones in the trees and the fudging of the numbers. That gave me a minimum estimate of 350 birds. Looking at the entire mob of them, that didn't seem unreasonable.

Watching the swarming mass seemed to make my mind dizzy, and it wandered off into the past. When the first European settlers arrived in this area, about 300 years ago, there were no cowbirds to be seen. This region was forested back then, and cowbirds are adapted to grasslands, not forests. They orig-

inated in the prairies of the Midwest, where their ancestors made a living by following herds of ancestral buffalo from time immemorial, even before the last Ice Age.

In those days the buffalo numbered in the millions, and like the wildebeests in Africa, they were constantly on the move; if they had stayed in one place, they would have eaten every sprout of green vegetation within reach. Their migration pattern took them northwest from Texas and Oklahoma to the edge of the mountains, then to Wyoming, the Dakotas, and then southward again. Cowbirds travelled with the herds, and they too were in numbers beyond imagination; each tribe of Plains Indians had a name for them in its language which translated to "buffalo bird" in English.

In spring and summer they ate insects, which were flushed up from the grass by buffalo; in winter, they ate seeds which they picked up from the ground or from buffalo dung. Because they had to move with their food source, they could not build nests and raise fledglings like other birds, so they evolved the habit that ecologists call nest parasitism; they laid their eggs in the nests of other birds.

Of course the coming of European settlers changed all that. In the east, forests were cut down and converted to farms, with fields of hay and various grains; so in an ecological sense, the eastern forests became interspersed with grasslands. In the west, the open prairie was fenced off, plowed, and planted, mainly with wheat. The great herds of buffalo were virtually wiped out in the 19th Century by hunting for their skins and meat, by farmers protecting their crops and fences, and by "sport shooting" by passengers on the railroads. Aldo Leopold, one of the most eloquent of the conservationists who succeeded Teddy Roosevelt, was old enough to remember the last of the buffalo herds, and he described the changing ecosystem of the prairies as populated by "black and white buffalo which moved in and out of red barns" instead of following the ancient migration route.

The cowbirds adapted. They still wandered about in flocks, but they patronized herds of cattle in the summer, and in winter

they shifted from buffalo chips to cow pies. And many of them drifted eastward to the newly created "prairies" where the forests once had been. Here, they continued the old habits of traveling in flocks, feeding on insects in summer and seeds in winter; and they continued to practice nest parasitism, which we all learned about in school. They merge into larger flocks in the fall, and usually stay out in the countryside, where they wander from one dairy farm, feedlot, or grain field to the next.

Living in a flock is safer for them; there are more eyes to spot predators, so the individual birds can give more of their attention to finding seeds to eat. If one bird detects danger, there is no vocal signal; it simply takes wing, and the whole flock instantly follows. If a really big storm occurs, the flocks will move further south, but after a light snow they simply expand their search for new spots in the local area, often ending up in towns where they can find both food and shelter. When they find a place like my yard, and see other small birds around a feeder, they descend on it like the plague.

Watching them from a window where they are only a few feet away gives you a different view than the one you get from walking in a field. I noticed that they required less "personal space" than other birds; they were often only an inch or two apart, yet they made no attempt to peck each other like starlings or sparrows do. Flocking behavior apparently requires tolerance. I also noticed that while most of them were vigorous and well-groomed, there were a significant number that were less active and showed signs of ill health. Damaged legs, un-preened feathers, and improperly folded wings indicated that some of them would be at greater risk when a hawk came by and the whole flock took flight. This surprised me at first, but then I remembered the basic rule of population dynamics. To have a stable population size, the death rate must equal the birth rate. If each of the females lays ten eggs in the course of a summer, an equal number of deaths must occur to prevent the population from expanding to the point



The arrival of Cowbirds is the bane of anyone who feeds birds in the winter as they crowd out those birds you are intending to feed, and once they come, the only way to get rid of them is to stop feeding altogether.

that it would begin to destroy the other species of small birds that become foster parents to parasitic cowbird babies... and ecologists have found that the populations of various warblers and sparrows do decline when cowbirds become too numerous. Cowbirds can live at least 16 years in captivity, but in nature their life expectancy is much less. I would guess that all of the hundreds that stopped in my yard, only a handful will survive five years, and none will still be alive in ten years.

The snow melted after a few days, and the flock went back to the country. Yesterday it began snowing again around 10:00 A. M., and by noon the yard was full of cowbirds again. I don't particularly like them; but I was glad they came,

because as I watched them the quotation by Aldo Leopold came to mind. I used to assign chapters from his book for my ecology class to read, and regularly read it myself for pleasure; but since retiring, I hadn't opened it. So now it rests on the stand by my reading chair, and I'm finding that the prose has not suffered from my neglect. I wish I could have met him; but he died in 1948 while fighting a grass fire near his farm on his beloved prairie. I was in high school then, and had not yet heard of him; but he was to become a role model for me. And the cowbirds brought him back to me.

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IN THE COUNTRY

The Maple Mafia

Tim Iverson, Naturalist

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

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

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

a black market of sorts.

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

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

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

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



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SCIENCE MATTERS

Why “The Telepathy Tapes” are like Uri Geller

Boyce Rensberger

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

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

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

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

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

That brings me to today’s Uri Geller moment.

This has not yet made it to the couches of today’s late-night shows, but in January it dominated our currently prominent medium of podcasting. In the first week of January

“The Telepathy Tapes,” as the podcast is known, knocked “The Joe Rogan Experience” off its usual No. 1 place on Spotify’s chart of the Top 100 podcasts. Then it held on to No. 2 and as of this writing in mid-January, it is the fifth most listened to podcast in America.

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

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

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

So it would appear. But as this column is named, science matters! That’s why I’m writing about this. I was prompted to look into the current controversy by a famous scientist I know who heard about the telepathy claims, searched online and happened on a story I wrote in The New York Times in 1975 about magicians debunking Uri Geller. She thought this might be the same sort of phenomenon. I think it could be.

At this point, though, I want to tell you about a horse named Clever Hans. I’m not changing the subject.

It might explain a key factor better than anything else. Perhaps you have heard of this.

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

So real did the phenomenon seem that the German government created a commission to examine Hans. Eventually a skeptical psychologist carried out various tests and realized that the only thing Hans was doing was watching his trainer for subtle movements that the trainer inadvertently made when Hans tapped the correct number of times or he pointed to the correct letter. Horses are good at sensing subtle movements of people. It’s important to state that Hans’s trainer was honestly unaware that he was giving signals to his horse. The phenomenon is known as the Clever Hans effect.

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

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



THE MASTER GARDENER

the butcher. Peanut butter is another fat/protein substitute but I've heard that peanut butter prices are expected to increase as well.

White proso millet- Millet is attractive and utilized by ground-feeding birds such as doves, sparrows and juncos.

Mixed Bird Feed - If buying a mix, look carefully at the contents of the mix and the percentage of each type of seed. A mix with mostly sunflower and white proso millet is best. Many of the other seed types are generally not eaten which results in waste and more spoilage and cleaning of feeders.

Calcium and grit – These overlooked supplements are essential to a bird's health and survival. Try providing crushed oyster shells, play sand and egg shells (disinfected). This is simple and inexpensive.

When trying to keep feed costs down, offer suet and a cracked corn/black oil sunflower mix. These three foods will not be wasted and will provide for a diversity of species.

Suet is cheap and once it is rendered (melted) it can be formed into molds and you can add other feed types such as sunflower.

When feeding birds, one must understand how certain birds feed. For instance, sparrows and doves are ground or platform feeders. They are not equipped to feed from a suet feeder or a nyjer feeder. Another example would be a cardinal or grosbeak cannot feed from a suet feeder or a nyjer feeder. All birds have preferences for the type of food and how that food is presented. Keep in mind that a bird's bill and feet type dictates what type of food and or feeder type it can feed from.

Common feeders available are tube

feeders, hopper feeders and platform feeders. Using these types will provide a diverse presentation of food for a variety of species.

Peanut butter – I like to spread my peanut butter and sunflower mix on pine cones or other rough surface or use a spoon and stuff into a pre-drilled hole in wooden log/branch.

Hopper feeders – These common feeder types can be easily made from recycled products. Assure that drainage is provided and a means of cleaning these and all feeders.

Shelter/Cover – One of the common mistakes made with bird feeding is the failure to provide adequate shelter not only from the weather but from lurking predators, such as the cat and the Sharp-shinned Hawk or Cooper's Hawk. To deal with weather, try to protect your feeders from the wind. As for predators, keep the feeders in an open area but assure that cover is nearby. Evergreen trees are great for protecting the feeders from both wind and predators.

Birds which are likely to be encountered at local feeders include: Mourning Dove, White-throated Sparrow, Bluejay, Chickadee, White-breasted Nuthatch, Cardinal, Tufted Titmouse, Downy Woodpecker, House Finch, Gold Finch and Junco.

The average property owner can indeed enjoy bird feeding by simply following the information above. When people understand the bird's requirements and then offer those requirements you will enjoy feeding our feathered friends. Remember: if you provide it they will find it and they will thank you!

Frederick County Master Gardeners February Seminars

February 1 - "Vermiculture" From vermiculture to composting, learn ways to benefit the environment and your garden. We will offer tips and techniques for using worms to transform kitchen scraps into nutrition-rich plant fertilizer in a small space inside your home.

February 8 - "Bay-Wise Principles" Encourage wildlife; control stormwater runoff; mow & water efficiently; mulch appropriately & recycle yard waste; fertilize, plant & manage yard pests wisely; and protect the waterfront. These 'best practices' can earn you Bay-Wise certification—and a distinctive yard sign.

February 22 - "Planning Your Veggie Garden (online only)"

Think You Want a Vegetable Garden? Wondering how to plan a home vegetable garden? Learn what kind of garden will fit your needs, when to start, what to plant, how much is enough, and tips on finding resources for planning, garden supplies, and seeds.

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

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

Small Town Gardener

Making the most of winter

Marianne Willburn

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

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

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

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

Black raspberry and red raspberry canes are more easily



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

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

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

The early spring weeds are getting a

foothold right now. Bitter cress, dead nettle and chickweed pepper the beds and the pathways. Sadly for them, very little else is green. They are easily singled out and eliminated with a vicious scrape of my hoe. For every weed I destroy, I feel the joy of having destroyed the potential for hundreds more – particularly the bitter cress, whose seeds are violently catapulted in every direction when the gardener pulls it in May. Those weeds go straight to the chickens, who appreciate their greens more than most humans.

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

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

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

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PETS

Animals can show emotions and thoughts

Jennifer Vanderau

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

Can you imagine this?

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

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

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

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

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

You guys, I'm telling you. This one got me.

We see the pup carry her baby to the front door and place the little one on the porch. We then see the techs come out and bring both the puppy and the mom into the clinic.

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

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

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

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

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

inside the building would help her.

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

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

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

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

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

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

Emotions and thoughts also have vibrational frequencies.

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

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

Sometimes as we go through life, especially in today's world, it can feel like all that surrounds us is gloom and

doom. This winter for some reason, I've been out of it more than usual. It might be the insane cold and frigid temperatures, but for whatever reason I've been struggling with feelings of sadness more than usual. I know I get seasonal depression, but I can usually work my way through it.

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

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

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

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

Jennifer Vanderau is the Public Relations Coordinator for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter in Chambersburg, PA, and can be reached at cvascomm@cvas-pets.org. The shelter accepts both monetary and pet supply donations. For more information, call the shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit the website www.cvas-pets.org. CVAS also operates a thrift store in Chambersburg. Help support the animals at the shelter by donating to or shopping at the store.



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



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



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



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

For more information about Magic, Auto, Stacey, Mocha, or Duke, call the Cumberland Valley Animal shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at www.cvaspets.org or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

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

To a poor and lonely stray I'd give:

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

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

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

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

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

-- Author Unknown

PETS

Harley



Bethany Davidson
FCAC Humane Educator

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

most importantly, loved as part of the FCAC family. Looking adorable in her brand-new dress Harley strutted around her party with a happy grin greeting everyone as they arrived. Since no one could resist her cute little face she not only received cake and presents but enjoyed tons of extra snacks and endless butt scratches. We hope these simple gestures serve to make Harley feel as special as she is and remind the community that she's still looking for her forever family. And because we have spent the last 365 days getting to

know Harley we are now better equipped to help her find just the right family. Harley is a confident and friendly dog who enjoys the company of her human companions. How does she feel about other animals? Well, let's just say she prefers to be the only four-legged family member in your home and heart. She's a high energy girl who needs time each day for exercise and zoomies, but she also knows how to relax. In fact, sometimes she likes to relax all 60 pounds of her on your lap. She's whip smart and not only enjoys training but catches on very quickly. We think she'd be a great candidate for a canine sport like agility. Then there's all the little things. Things like how she goes cross-eyed when she sees an especially delicious treat coming her way. Or how she does a little dance when she's happy about receiving butt scratches. She prefers to ride in the front seat on her car rides and loves to show you her favorite toys. Sometimes it takes a while to find just the right forever home and that's okay. We'll continue to love and care for Harley until her special adoption day arrives. If you think that you might just be that family for Harley, go to visit FCAC.as.me to book an appointment to meet her.



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



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



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



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

For more information about Harper, Martha, Bean, or Lightning call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at www.frederick-countymd.gov/fcac or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

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COMMUNITY NOTES

Joe Lenhart recognized for 50 years of service

continued from page 1

neighbor's fire. Other companies can come to help, but it's our responsibility and goal to be there first to help those who help us. But given how few fires we have, we spend most of our time helping them put out their fires." Like many small communities with out a local government, the New Midway VFC serves as the heart and soul of the New Midway community. Want to know what is going on in the community? Drop by the fire hall. Looking for fellowship? Drop by the fire hall.

Chris Gladhill, Joe's Daugh-

ter, beamed brightly as she watched her father being interviewed for this story. Chris, who is now the Company's President, said she grew up in the fire company. Chris's eyes shinned as she recounted her early years as her father ran calls, "Oh I loved it! I loved that I knew that he was going out to help people."

"He never came home and told us about the fires as he didn't want to upset us, but when they had good outcomes, he always told us. It was because of him that I grew up not being afraid of fire, and I made sure I passed that philosophy onto my two sons."

In recounting her memories, Terry Foggie, Joe's youngest daughter, said "You often hear the term 'military brat' applied to people who grew up with a parent in the military. My sister and I describe ourselves as 'fire hall brats' as we were always in and around the fire hall all our lives. While my father was busy cooking for the banquets, my sister and I waited on all the tables. We were only ten when we started, but it was a lot of fun."

Terry recounted that many times her father, who was a brick mason, would have to leave his job to answer a call, and when done, return to work, resulting in him coming home late at night.

"Being part of the fire community has been a huge positive for me," said Terry. Terry recounted how, in the early days, she would join her father in the Company's tanker truck and go down to local ponds and fill the tanker up and then drive around and fill up local swimming pools. Both my sister and I got to ride in the fire trucks with him during parades," said Terry.

Both daughters echoed their father's words on the importance of the New

Midway VFC for the community. "We can always use volunteers, be it on the administrative side or the operational side," said Terry. "If you're not sure what you can do, or want to do, just stop by and talk to us!"

"If you want to become a fire fighter," Terry said, 'the County offers all the classes you need, and they are all free. All you have to do is put in the time to attend the classes. Once you graduate, we will work with you to get you all the practical experience you need. You will be mentored and trained every step of the way, and along the way, discover just how rewarding being a volunteer fireman can be."

"For those who don't want to be an actual fire fighter, or can't due to age, we have lots and lots of administrative type tasks that need to be carried out, and positions that need to be fulfilled. Those jobs are just as rewarding, and as important as driving a fire truck, for without people in those roles, the fire trucks would never leave the building."

In reflecting upon his role as Chief of the Fire Company, Brian Pescatore said he and everyone in the Company does it because they, "want to take care of the people they live with and the people they live around then. We want to provide a service that helps everyone be safe."

Pescatore smiled when asked what it meant to be called Chief, "to be honest, it doesn't mean anything to me because I never wanted to be Chief. All I ever wanted to do was to help people. I never tell people I'm the Chief of the Company. It doesn't matter to me. This department has been here for me when I needed it the most, so this is my way of returning something back to the community. I want to see this company succeed, and I will do everything I can to accomplish that, to see it grow. I look forward to seeing my son, who has been around fire trucks since he was 4 years old, replace me, and his son or daughter someday replace him. Seeing kids out there protecting lives and property is a great feeling, it really is."

Echoing Lenhart, Pescatore said it's not about the pat on the back, but "for me, it's the feeling I did something good. Where one realizes it or not, we are always here for the community, and God willing, we will always be here. We're all one big happy family and we have a lot of fun."

Pescatore said the one message he would like to get out to the community is "whether you think you have the time or not, we can always use help. No matter hold your or old you are, or your skill set, there is always a job for you here. Come join our family, you'll never regret it."

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11 - \$2000	27 - \$500	43 - \$500	59 - \$500
12 - \$500	28 - \$500	44 - \$500	60 - \$500
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Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

SECTION 2

Catoctin Christmas bird count

Kathy Brown
Frederick Bird Club

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

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

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

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

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

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

It was the best owl count in many years, but I suspect the success was not due to a true population increase, but to the dedication of a few talented birders who began the day well before dawn.

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

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

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

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

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

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

A few of our farmland raptors are clearly in trouble. American Kestrels have declined by a third in the last twenty years. Northern Harriers, never common, are now exceedingly rare. Nocturnal owls are diffi-

cult to find in a primarily daytime count, but studies indicate populations for Barn and Short-eared Owls are both in serious decline.

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

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



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

As of the end of 2024, over 70 individuals and organizations have requested nest boxes and the 55 state-wide volunteers have already installed many nesting boxes for Kestrels and Barn Owls. In the coming years, the Maryland Farmland Raptor Program, will initiate work on improving nesting habitat for Northern Harriers and Short-eared Owls.

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

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

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

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

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HISTORY

Williams History of Frederick County

Prefatory Notes

The work we are presenting to our patrons has two sources of value. One of those is its historic utility as a memorial of the progress and development of the community, from the earliest period with which we could become acquainted through family records, and traditions to the present day. The preservations of the data affords the means of illustrating and confirming or correcting and amending existing histories, and supplies material for the compilation of future ones. The second source of value is the personal interest attached to the biographical and geological records, comprising or portion of this work, either a studies of life and character, or as memoirs of individuals connected with the reader as relatives or fellow citizens.

On both these accounts, a collection of biographical records is a useful contribution to current literature and a legacy to succeeding generations. Colonies of various nationals and creeds peopled the territory now comprising Frederick

County; their descendants have taken an active part in national affairs, in war and peace; and it will be strange indeed, if their annuals have not brought to view many scenes, and revealed many facts well worthy of being noted and remembered.

In the execution of this work, no pains were spared to ensure the absolute truth upon which its value depends. The material comprising the History of Frederick County was compiled by T.J.C. Williams, and Folger McKensey and their production must prove to be a valuable addition to the library of everyone who is fortunate enough to secure a copy and be a lasting tribute to their memory.

The biological sketches were gathered from the most trustworthy services by careful note takers. After being arranged by competent writers, and neatly typewritten, these biographies were submitted for correction and revision, which we hope was so thorough that few, if any, errors and facts, names, or dates will be found in the completed work. Those who furnished the data are, therefore, responsible for

its genuineness and authenticity. Great care was taken to have the sketches as free from error as possible, but we do not hold ourselves responsible for mistakes, as no charges were made for the insertion of any reading matter contained in the work.

The work of the posterity of the early pioneers and settlers, who, driven from their foreign homes by persecution, braved the sorrows of, and the perils of the wilderness through single-handed devotion to principle, have been proven by the religious, educational and benevolent institutions that have sprung up within the borders of Frederick County; by the public works in which many have taken distinguished parts; by the record of military service; and their no less valuable services as civilians; in brief by the whole social fabric which they have reared, and which makes the land rescued by the forefathers from the wilderness a region of homes, culture, peaceful, and inviting.

Martin. They were members of the Lutheran Church and died in the Creagerstown District. They had five children.

David R. Kolb, son of Mr. & Mrs. David Kolb, was born in at Creagerstown in July 1814 and died July 19, 1894. He was given a common school education, and learned the trade of mason. Mr. Kolb was married to Amelia Ann

Favorite. She was born at Creagerstown in 1815 and died in Woodsboro, March 21, 1883. After their marriage, they made their home in the neighborhood of Woodsboro. They held membership in the Church of God. They are the parents of three children.

Thomas Kolb, son of David and Amelia, was born October 5, 1844. He spent his boyhood and youth on the farm near Woodsboro, attending the public schools of the neighborhood. He left school at the age of nineteen. After his marriage, which took place in 1866, he made his home at Detour. In 1883, he established a farm machinery business in which he continued for six years. He then went to his farm near Detour, which he operated for seven years. His children married and left home, and he consequently returned to Detour, again taking up the farm machinery business. He has been engaged in this line ever since, at which he has met with success

Politically, Thomas Kolb is a Democrat. He joined the Church of the Brethren at the age of twenty-one. He was called to the ministry, October 30, 1879. He

remained on the first degree of the ministry for two years. He was then, in 1881, advanced to the second degree, and later the third degree. He was ordained to the eldership and has charge of the Monocacy congregation, which embraces five churches. He has traveled extensively in his church work, being acquainted with ten states. He is a forceful speaker and his influence for good is powerful.

Thomas was married March 15, 1866, to Mary Saylor. She was born near Beaver Dam in 1837. They where the parents of four children.

Daniel Saylor, the grandfather of Mary, was born December 29, 1775. He settled at Beaver Dan and was a farmer. He was member of the German Baptist Church. Daniel was married October 11, 1807 to Mary Simond. She was born April 8, 1783 and died March 26, 1861. There where four children born to this marriage, two of whom reached maturity: Jacob and Daniel.

Jacob died February 23, 1877, aged sixty-eight years. He was a farmer all his life and prominent in the Church of the Brethren. He was married to Susan Renner. She died April 6, 1861, aged forty-seven years old. They had six children.

Daniel died June 6, 1885. He was a miller by trade. In later years he was called to the ministry of the German Baptist Church and devoted his time to religious work. He traveled and preached a great deal, organized churches all over the country. He was a great missionary in his day. He was twice married, first to Sarah Root, and secondly to Sarah Rohrer.

Jesse Wilber Kolb, Son of Rev. Thomas and Mary, is a traveling salesman for the International Harvester Co. He was born in Detour, March 22, 1872. At the age of six his parents sent him to the public schools of his native place. At the age of nineteen, he quit school and engaged in the general merchandising business at Troutsville. He then became a partner with his father on the farm machinery business at Detour, the name of the firm being changed to Thomas J. Kolb & Son.

In the spring of 1897, Jessie accepted a position as traveling salesman with the Deering

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HISTORY



George Buckey

Harvester Co. Jessie was married November 29, 1894 to Cora Haugh, of Ladiesburg, they made their home in Detour until 1902. Jessie is a stanch Democrat and a member of the Woodmen. They had one child.

Dr. Joseph Long

Joseph Long, MD, one of the successful and leading physicians of Walkersville, was born on a farm in the Jefferson district, August 19, 1879. He is the son of John and Charlotte Long.

Christopher Long, the grandfather of Dr. Long, was of German descent, and spent his life following the occupation of a farmer in the Jefferson district. He was a member of the Lutheran Church. He was the father of six children.

Joseph Long, son of Christopher Long, was also born in the Jefferson District in 1828, and died in 1888. He spent his life following agricultural pursuits in

his native district. In politics he supported the Republican Party. In religion he held membership in the Lutheran Church. John was married to Charlotte Culler. She was born in 1836 and died in 1886. They were the parents of seven children

Joseph W, Long, son of John and Charlotte, spent his early life on his father's farm, and as a boy attended the public schools. He later attended Frederick City College. Having decided to take up medicine, he entered the Hahnemann Medical College in Philadelphia, from which institution he was graduated in 1903. He then spent one year in the Children's Homeopathic Hospital at Philadelphia. In 1905, Dr. Long located in Walkersville, where he has since remained in the active practice of his profession. He is possessor of a large and lucrative practice, and ranks high among the younger physicians of the county.

Dr. Long was married February 11, 1909, to Daisie Hinea of Walkersville.

George Buckey

George Buckey, retired banker, Union Bridge, son of Ezra and Susan Buckey, was born on his father's farm near New London, Frederick County, November 2, 1829.

Mr. Buckey, who belongs to one of the oldest families of Frederick County, is a descendent of the renowned Indian fighter, Colonel Henry Boquet. Colonel Boquet was a personal friend of George Washington, and a prominent officer under General Braddock. At Bushy Run, in the Allegheny, in 1764, he won the fiercest battle ever fought between the white man and the Indians.

Mr. Buckey's grandfather, George Bucky, died near Mount Pleasant, Maryland, in 1882, age 92.

Ezra Bucky, father of George Buckey, was born at Mount Pleasant, Frederick County, October 3, 1803. He was an intelligent farmer, and spent his life in cultivating and improving his land in Frederick County. Ezra Buckey was married to Susan Root, who died at her home in Frederick County, age 33. Mr. Buckey second wife was his sister-in-law, Ann Root. He died at Johnsville, Frederick County, age 55.

George Buckey spent the first 16 years of his life on his father's farm, where he attended the schools of the district under Mr. Cassidy. He was 16 when his parents removed to Johnsville, and he completed his education in the school there under John Repp, leaving school at 18. Having finished studies, Mr. Bucky learned milling at Pipe Creek Mill, near Middleburg, with the Reverend Daniel Saylor, and was employed for four years at the Linganore Mills, near Frederick, then owned by Cornelius Shriner.

While he was working at the Linganore Mill, Mr. Buckey purchased the Pipe Creek Mill from his old employer, Daniel Saylor, and took possession of the property September 1, 1853. After

carrying on the business successfully for eight years, Mr. Buckey sold the mill to his brother, Daniel Buckey, and removed to his present home at Union Bridge and opened a store for the sale of general merchandise. In 1865, Mr. Buckey sold his store and began dealing in grain. Four years later he repurchased the store, which he managed until 1884, when he finally sold the business

In 1884, Mr. Buckey open his bank, known as the banking house of George P. Buckey. On the opening day, the deposits reached \$5,000, and afterwards ran up to \$92,000. Owing to failing health, caused by severe rheumatic affliction, Mr. Buckey was compelled to retire from business in 1900. His general health is excellent, and, although he is 80, he hopes to rid himself of the affliction by means of osteopathy as he has been generally benefited by the treatment. Mr. Buckey believes in sharing his good fortune, and, in 1895 divided amongst his sister, his brother, and 18 other relatives the generous amount of \$100,000.

Of the many farms that he owned, he has retained only two. Mr. Buckey has been successful in every financial undertaking. His capital was very small. On attaining his majority, his father presented him with \$1,000 and he received a little more from his grandfather's estate. Thus, with what he had saved, amounted to \$2,000, which he paid on the mill property, leaving him \$7,000 in debt. However, the business was so profitable that the indebtedness was canceled in three years.

Mr. Buckey has what some people call business sense, and seems rather to feel, than to see, an opportunity. He is always on the alert, prompt to act, and yet able to bide his time with patience. He is a stanch Democrat, was converted to the principles of democracy in his youth. By his grandfather, Richard Root, he has never aspired to public office, but has been elected Tax collector for the 12th district, of Carroll County, 33 consecutive years.

George Buckey was married,

May 29, 1856 to Elizabeth, daughter of Jacob and Elizabeth Scriner, of Carroll County. Mrs. Buckey was a member of the Dunkert Church. She died December 29, 1906, age 76 years and three months. They had been married 50 years and seven months. They never had any children.

Mr. Buckey never identified himself with any particular church organization, but claimed a birth-right in the German Reformed Church. He was friendly to all denominations of Christian people, and contributed generously of his money towards building and sustaining churches.

In 1860, when he moved to Union Bridge, there was not a single church in the town, and no place to hold religious worship, except in an old dilapidated schoolhouse. In 1866, Reverend Thomas Slicer, the son of the vulnerable Reverend Henry Slicer, who was a young minister in charge of the circuit, began a revival in the old school house, which was packed to overflowing.

Mr. Slicer made many converts, and one day said to Mr. Buckey; "Brother Buckey, don't you think that we ought to have a church in this town?" "Yes, by all means", replied Mr. Buckey. Then the minister said: "if I draw up a subscription paper to raise the money to build it, will you start the list with \$100?" Mr. Buckey readily promised and in a short time the money was ready, and the Methodist Episcopal Church was built.

That set the ball rolling and in less than 12 years there were five churches of as many different denominations in the town. To the building of each edifice, Mr. Buckey contributed the same amount, \$100, and has been a liberal contributor to sustaining them.

George Buckey was not only a liberal contributor as well to relatives and churches, but in January 1887, he gave \$500 to the Union Bridge Water Company, and November 1901 he gave \$500 to the Maryland Collegiate Institution, now known as the Blue Ridge College of Union Bridge.

continued next month

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100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

February 6

Chickens Stolen

A large lot of chickens were stolen from Noah Babylon, of New Midway, on Monday night, the thieves leaving 21 of the original flock of over 400, this being the second time this year that his flock was visited by thieves. It seems almost incredible that such wholesale thefts can be successfully carried out, at a comparably public spot, like Mr. Babylon's farm.

Of Interest To Automobilist

The variation in the efficiency of brakes on a long trip is due to several things, but the condition of the brake lining is perhaps most important. Sometimes the lining will become polished, in which case the brakes will not be very efficient. In other instances, the lining may be roughed up, in which case the brakes will suddenly begin to be more effective. The application of them going down long grades will cause the lining to become polished, whereas a few sudden applications of the brakes will rough up the linings. Dust and water will also alter stopping conditions.

That an engine will sometimes heat up on a hill for lack of oil is dependent largely upon the position of the oil pump, the type of oil in the system, and the conditions of the oil. The pressure on the bearings during a pull uphill makes greater demands upon the oiling system, and if the bearings do not receive the proper amount of oil, they will heat up, and perhaps stop the engine.

The flickering of the oil pressure gauge when descending a steep hill is simply due to oil in the crankcase flowing away from the oil pump in cases where it is located at the rear of the engine. There is no particular danger

if the pressure is affected in this way, since the engine is usually under its own power descending hills, and therefore does not need a constant high-pressure supply of oil to its bearings.

To clean spark plugs, soak them in a mixture of alcohol and kerosene overnight. Then in the morning the carbon can be wiped off with a clean rag. Because of the highly glaze surface of the plugs, emery cloth or sandpaper, should never be used. When the glazed surface becomes roughened, the plug quickly fouls and stops firing.

Radio Sales Tax Proposed

As it means of improving radio broadcasting programs, Secretary of Commerce Hoover has declared himself in favor of imposing a tax of 2%, on the sale of radio equipment. His views on this subject, Mr. Hoover said: "I've heard only one very reasonable suggestion, that is to fix a certain tax – say 2%, on the sale of radio equipment. One company reports sales running over \$2 million in 1923, and that will be a good deal higher this year. You could probably provide enough that way to pay for daily programs on the best skill and talent.

"Radio is becoming more important in the life of the country every day. It is already one of the necessary adjuncts. Right now I think the most important thing is improvement of what is put on the air. It isn't so much a question of growth, because that takes care of itself, as long as the material put out is really worthwhile. That is the most vital thing of all."

Gasoline Advances Two Cents

The fourth advanced this year in the price of gasoline – this time two cents a gallon, was made this week; making the advance for the year of six cents per

gallon. The failing off in sales, seems the best reason offered, but it is back by a rise in the price of crude oil.

Winter Wheat Concerns

Just what may be the effect of the heavy coating of snow on winter wheat is causing some concern. Ordinarily, a snow blanket is good for it, because it prevents the rising up of the ground and the killing of the roots. Strange as it may seem, a snow blanket keeps the roots warm and protects it from with the freezing cold air – keeping the roots in a dormant state.

But the present snow is very heavy and has laid on it for over a month, and under it there is a coating of ice, and dormant wheat needs a certain amount of air; besides, much of the wheat was planted so late it did not get a strong growth before the winter set in. Of course, there is nothing to be done about it now, and it is useless to worry, but the common theory that snow is good for winter wheat, may prove to have its limitations.

Woman Struck By Husband, May Die

George Hahn – keeper of the fish hatchery in Lewistown, is in jail pending the recovery of his wife brought to the city in a serious condition on Sunday morning, following an alleged attack upon her by Hahn, on Saturday night. Mrs. Hahn is in the Frederick City Hospital with the entire left front side of her skull crushed. A large blood clot was removed from her brain on Monday.

The State's Attorney stated that no charge would be placed against Hahn until the exact condition of his wife can be determined.

The attack, which Hahn is accused of having made on his wife, in which he is said to have struck her over the head with a shotgun, breaking the stock, occurred on Saturday night in the Hahn's home near Lewistown. No one but Hahn and his wife were at the home at the time.

Hahn, who is nearly 60 years old, broke down at the jail on Sunday, when informed of the condition of his wife. He told officials that he had been drinking wine, and did not know what he was doing.

Mrs. Hahn, who is about 45 years of age, was found by a neighbor following the alleged attack. She was not brought to the hospital until Sunday morning.

OUR BOARDING HOUSE—By Ahern



Little hope is held for her recovery.

Reports from the State's Attorney on Monday night stated that the state would bring charges of murder against Hahn in case the wounds sustained by his wife proved fatal. Hahn is confined to the county jail without bail, and will be kept there until Mrs. Hahn's condition can be determined.

February 13

Troopers Raid Rocky Ridge Home

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

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

The Problem In Radio Service

"In view of a very rapid change in radio

technology within the last six months, and to give greater clarity to departmental policies, it seems to me desirable to review the situation." Secretary Hoover of the Commerce Department said.

"There can be made one point of view in the consideration of radio regulation and development. That is to assure increasing service to the listener. The radio is steadily enriching our homes. More practically to our farmer folks, it is bringing more of those contacts that the town populations have alone enjoyed up to this time. The road of progress is to stimulate the development of the art, to prevent interference with and between broadcasting stations; to secure greater perfection of reception, and increase the number of alternative programs and better programs.

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

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

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

"The most difficult problem in radio regulation and development is the distribution of wavelength use, so as to prevent interference between stations. There are in all 80 different wavelengths




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available, if we keep the stations 10 kilocycles apart, and stagger the assignment of wavelengths geographically so as to prevent overlap in the area of effective reception. The recent experiment of the department in attempting to increase the number of wavelengths by decreasing the difference to seven kilocycles, proved unsuccessful, with the present development of industry.

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

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

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

It is practically impossible to increase the number of wavelengths available to the cities because they are all in use in other communities, and because it is absolutely necessary to maintain a wide kilocycle separation between stations

so close together. Otherwise they will destroy each other's signal.”

Loses Load Of Hay On Main Street

While coming down Main Street in Union Bridge, Grover Davis ,with a load of hay, ran the wheels up on the snow bank, to break the force of the descent, causing the wagon to upset and spreading the load of hay over the street.

Elmer Pittenger, driver for the Fairfield Farmers Dairy, was bringing a load of milk from Detour to Union Bridge when the large truck cut through the new macadam road, sinking to the axles, making it necessary to summon help to relieve the truck.

February 20

Said He Was Collecting Money For Other

A man, giving his name as Pierce, was arrested last week in Walkersville, and committed to jail on a charge of vagrancy. He claimed to be begging funds for a destitute family near Taneytown named Brendle. He had also been begging in Taneytown, where he said he was collecting money for an Emmitsburg family. Once the Sheriff of Frederick County being communicated with, it was found that Price has served jail there for the same offense. The destitute families seem to be a myth.

Woodsboro Play Largely Attended

Not withstanding inclement weather; a large crowd attended the comedy drama “An Early Bird”, given in the Woodsboro Opera House, Wednesday night by the Lutheran Church Sunday School class, of which Miss Ethel Fogle is teacher. The play was given in three acts, all of which were appropriately set with scenery.

There were 14 students in the cast, and they rendered their parts in a very credible manner. The play abounded in interesting and amusing situations and the young performers were given rounds of applause.

Several Seek Open County Commissioner's Seat

That there is no lack of applicants to fill the unexpired term of the late County Commissioner Warren Dudderar is evident by reports of the number of persons who are said to be willing to accept the appointment.

Frank Stevens, of Creagerstown, a former member of the Board, is said to be willing to accept the appointment. George Thomas of Libertytown has expressed interest also. Emmitsburg is also said to have a candidate. It is understood that friends of John Jamison of Walkersville have urged his acceptance of the post, but it is understood that Mr. Jamison does not desire the appointment.

In addition to the number of Democrats seeking the appointment, there are number of Republicans who are bringing pressure to bear in their own behalf.

Glade Valley Plans Big Bazaar

The Glade Valley Council, Number 113 of the Junior Order United Americans Mechanics of Walkersville, is planning, and has definitely made every arrangement to have one of the largest bazaars ever held in Walkersville. The bazaar will be held in the old school house, well adapted for the purpose. The dates have been fixed for Thursday, Friday and Saturday evenings, February 26th, 27th and 28th. The wives of the members of the Order will be in charge of serving a supper each evening. The entire proceeds will be given to the Maryland state organization of the W.O.U.A.M. who are erecting a building to be known as a Maryland Building at the National Orphans' Home in Ohio.

Former Garage Man Arrested

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

serial numbers and selling cars with changed engine numbers.

Black was arranged before magistrate Sherman Bowers, Friday afternoon and released on \$1,000 bail. Black is charged with having in his possession or having sold, at least a dozen cars with defaced engine numbers. Officers of the state police have been on the trail of such cars for many months, all of which were traced to Black's garage. Investigations which led to the arrest of Black have been in progress for nearly 2 years it is said.

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

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

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

February 27

Refuses To Testify Against Husband

George Hahn, caretaker at the Lewistown Fish Hatchery, indicted for assault with intent to kill his wife, pleaded guilty to assault and battery and was sentence to six months in the House of Correction and fined \$25 and costs. Upon the payment of the fine and costs the court suspended the prison sentence.

During the trial, it was said that both Hahn and his wife had been drinking, and a quarrel ensued. During the progress of the quarrel, Hahn ceased a shotgun and dealt the woman a hard blow over the head with it. At the trial, the woman refused to testify against her husband, and did not appear in court. And even when so far as to refused to come to court saying that she did not feel able to make the trip and had no testimony to give.

Two witnesses testified that Hahn was a hard-working man and provided for his family. It was brought out that both had been drinking, and were evidently under the influence of liquor at the time of the trouble. Hahn's attorney said that Hahn was very sorry for what occurred and could only account for it by reason of drinking.

The judge stated that it was a serious offense for a man to strike a woman, particularly to break a gun over her head. After reviewing the case, he imposed the sentence and fine. He added that while the prison sentence would be suspended, it would stand against Hahn and if he ever again struck his wife or misbehaves towards her, he would be re-arrested and the sentence imposed.

Arrest Made In Train Station Robbery

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

Transportation Of School Pupils

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

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

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

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

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

Valentine's Day is February 14th!

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LIBRARY NEWS

Do you love the library? Want to spark the same excitement in others? Looking for a way to invest in your community? If you answered yes to any (or all!) of these questions, then you're a friend of the library. Make it official by joining The Friends of the Walkersville Library community group! We're seeking new members and volunteers to help fundraise and advocate for more high-quality programs and events. Stop by the Walkersville Branch Library or give us a call at 301-600-8200 to learn more.

Nobody can have the winter blahs when Bollywood (or Mr. Darcy) is around. Join Zind Performing Academy, a modern Bollywood dance studio, as they perform for us and then be swept away by the wonderful Bollywood film retelling for Pride and Prejudice in the community room. All ages welcome. Sunday, February 9 from 1 to 3.

February is Heart Month! Join Katy Smith, Manager for Preventive Cardiology and Outpatient Cardiac Rehab at Frederick Health to learn about heart health, risk factors for heart disease, signs/symptoms, and treatment. You will learn about the preventive side of heart disease and cardiovascular services at Frederick Health. Free information and resources provided on Thursday, February 6 at 10.

Wind down after a hard day's work with a 1-hour, free yoga class offered by Sol Yoga. It will be held on Monday, February 10 and 24 at 6. If you're looking for an exercise class that will invigorate and warm you up, try out Freedom BANG Fitness class every Saturday at 10.

Get in the Valentine's Day spirit by learning about Found Poetry from Professor Alba Sarria from Mount St. Mary's University on Thursday, February 13 at 10. If a

2025 resolution is to reorganize or if you're undertaking downsizing, join Carolyn West from Organize Me! on Thursday, February 27 at 10 for some tips to ease the process.

Come together on Sunday, February 23 at 1:30 at the Walkersville Branch Library for a screening of The Tale of the Lion: Our Voices, Our Stories, a documentary film based on interviews with twenty-five of Frederick County's "living treasures," African American people who are ninety and older. Barbara Thompson (a Walkersville branch patron) and her cousin, the late David Key, both leaders in the African American Resources Cultural and Heritage Society interviewed those featured in the film for over a year and half to preserve their stories and inspire all who hear them.

The Walkersville Branch Library has programs designed for adults with developmental disabilities and their caregivers. Enjoy some music by a Brass Quartet and learn more about their instruments on Wednesday, February 12 at 10:15. Watch a balloon artist twist and sculpt amazing creations on Wednesday, February 26 at 10:15.

We welcome adults who want to practice their English to a conversation class hosted by the Literacy Council of Frederick County every Monday from 6:30 to 7:45. Students will practice their speaking and listening skills with conversations guided by an instructor from the Literacy Council of Frederick County. Please note, registration is required by the Literacy Council of Frederick County. If interested, please register through the FCPL Calendar or give the Walkersville Branch Library a call for assistance at 301-600-8200.

Need help expunging your record from a past conviction? Meet with an attorney from Mary-



land Legal Aid to discuss your options and begin the process on Thursday, February 27 from 4 to 7. This is a free service!

Elementary Library Explorers gather again on Tuesday, February 11 at 6 to explore all things STEM! Visit various stations hosted by the Walkersville High School National Science Honor Society students to earn your next badge.

Read on for fun afterschool programs this month at the library just for tweens (ages 10-13)! Minecraft Monday is back on February 3 from 6 to 6:45; learn the ancient Japanese art of Kumihimo braiding on Wednesday, February 12 at 4; eat dessert before dinner by making your own ice cream on Monday, February 17 at 6; make pompom critters on Wednesday, February 26 at 4. From fluffy foxes to cute bunnies, you'll get to create your favorite furry friends to take home!

Teen Tuesdays at 3:30 are the perfect time to decompress after school, meet new people, and have fun with friends! Take friendship bracelets to the next level when you learn the Japanese art of Kumihimo braiding and make your own creation on February 4. Do you love tiny things? Make your own tiny library on February 11 and fill it with miniatures of your favorite titles! Create a unique, personalized piece of art to hang on your wall on February 18.

Teenagers who want to be involved in the library events or those who need volunteer hours are

welcome to join the Teen Library Council; TLC meets on the last Tuesday of the month, so join us at 3:30 on Tuesday, February 25!

Our "Take a Closer Look" program for elementary and middle grades will explore deep space with a NASA engineer on February 7 at one. Join Elixir Dance and Fitness on February 21 at 1 for some introductory dance steps! No prior experience is needed but wear comfy clothes that make it easy to move so you can show off your new skills!

Tired of playing with the same toys at home? Come out to Fri-Yay every Friday at 11 to explore new activities with your little one! Zoom into outer space on February 7, show your love for the library on February 14, partake in Puppet Palooza on February 21, and explore the great outdoors with an imaginary camping trip on February 28!

Our schedule for storytimes is as follows:

- Monday: Infants 10am; Baby Steps Skill Building at 10:30; Babies at 11
- Tuesday: Toddlers at 11
- Wednesday: Family at 6
- Thursday: Preschool at 11

Bilingual Storytime at the Walkersville Branch Library will be on Wednesday, February 5 and 19 at 6. This dynamic and engaging storytime is fun for the whole family and will feature songs, rhymes and more in English and other world languages.



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SCHOOL NEWS

The path ahead

Janie Monier
Frederick County School Board

Continued from last month

Governance and Accountability: This pillar focuses on establishing clear governance structures and accountability measures to ensure that educational reforms are effectively implemented and that schools are held accountable for student outcomes. FCPS publishes a report in June and December of each school year to update the Accountability and Implementation Board under Pillar 5 of Blueprint on our progress in fulfilling our obligations under Blueprint. The most recent report published in June 2024 can be found on this webpage: <https://www.fcps.org/blueprint/blueprint-milestone>.

The Blueprint is set to inject \$16.6 billion more in state funding for education from 2024 through 2029, with expectations of additional funding beyond that period. The mandates under Blueprint are not fully funded by the state and it is expected that the local education agencies and counties

will add to the funding of the mandates, in addition to budgeting for what the mandates do not cover and issues of local concern, such as our sports, arts, humanities programs and our school infrastructure and staffing. Areas of the Blueprint that are funded by the state versus county is determined by a formula that does not account for the explosive growth in our county since 2020, the new schools we need to build to accommodate that growth, and the aging infrastructure which needs renovation or replacement. All of which comes on the heels of increased inflation. This means that a high school built before 2020 would cost approximately \$80 million. Now, that same high school costs \$120 million. And those are just the numbers to build the school and does not include staffing the school and transporting students to and from school.

Lastly, we come to the role and scope of the FCPS Board of Education. Board members collaborate to create policy within the limits of state and federal law, approve budgets, oversee the roll out of the master plan, give final approval on matters and

materials related to the curriculum, staff appointments, purchases related to equipment, land acquisition, and the cost of school renovation, maintenance, and construction.

One of the laws that has a large impact on guiding policy and resources in every school district is the IDEA Act, previously known as the Education for all Handicapped Children Act, enacted in 1975 under Gerald Ford. The legislation requires local education agencies to provide a free and appropriate education to all children tailored to their needs. Families typically interact with this through their child's Individual Educational Program (IEP) which provides instructions for the educator and staff on the goals and best practices for educating the individual student. Programs at FCPS that fall under special education include the Expressions program, SUCCESS, and the Rock Creek School. If a public school system can no longer meet the needs of the student through an IEP, then the system will pay for private placement of the student. This law covers the child with learning disabilities and the child who may require a wheelchair or feeding assistance. Our school nurses, as provided through the Department

of Health, assess and assist with medical needs while the Special Education Instructors (SEI) and Instructional Assistants (SEIA) work with our special education students to ensure their IEP goals are met and are socializing as is appropriate with the general education student population. The federal funding promise under the IDEA Act was to provide 40% of a pupil's special education funding. That number is closer to 13% and has never been fully funded by the federal government. The IDEA Act falls under the purview of the U.S. Department of Education along with Pell grants, FAFSA, Title 1 grants, and 504 Plans.

Curriculum is under the oversight of state and local education agencies (LEAs). An example of curriculum as guided by the state are the Science of Reading, evidence-based teaching methods which are being implemented in all our elementary schools. Additionally, under a new policy set forth by the Maryland State Board of Education, all 3rd graders will need to be reading on grade-level before they can advance under the permission of their parent. They can only advance if the parent agrees to reading interventions while they are in 4th grade.

As promised, I will continue to provide the information that is within my discretion to do so and to honestly address the challenges we are facing in the coming years. Each article will dive deeper into the issues summarized above. This will include literacy rates, test scores and standardized testing, attracting and retaining the educators and staff our students need, how our charter schools fit into the overall academic offerings and budget, the RVP program, and more, as our capital and operations budget and each pillar of Blueprint will impact, either directly or indirectly, how we meet these goals.

In closing, I want to express my deepest gratitude for the opportunity to serve our families, schools, and community in this capacity. I am committed to fostering an environment of transparency and collaboration. As we navigate the complexities of our educational landscape, I am confident that together, we can create a brighter future for all our students. Thank you for your trust and support, and your unwavering belief in the power of education. I look forward to your continued engagement, until the next article, Janie Monier, Member-Elect of the Board of Education.

PowerSchool Data Breach Impacting FCPS

The following is a communication shared with the FCPS community this afternoon regarding a data breach that affected FCPS as part of a larger incident involving PowerSchool:

Dear Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) Community

We are writing to inform you of a data breach that affected FCPS as part of a larger incident involving PowerSchool, a Student Information System (SIS) used by schools nationwide. The breach occurred between December 19 and 28, when a threat actor gained unauthorized access to data from districts across the country, including FCPS, using stolen credentials. FCPS became aware of the breach on January 7 and was notified by PowerSchool that FCPS was affected on January 8.

FCPS began a multi-year transition to a new SIS last school year as our previous SIS, used for over 10 years, is being phased out. During this migration, some data was transferred to the Power-

School platform, and some of this data was affected by the breach.

Here's what we know so far:

Data Affected: The breach impacted two FCPS data tables in the new SIS, including records of both teachers and students. We are actively working with PowerSchool to determine exactly what data was impacted and will share additional information in a follow-up communication.

Mitigation Steps: PowerSchool has confirmed that the breached data file has been deleted and is no longer accessible. They have also notified the FBI and hired a cybersecurity firm, CrowdStrike, to assist in addressing the breach. CrowdStrike has reported that at this time no data from the breach has been found on the dark web, and they continue to monitor this space.

While this breach has affected many districts across the country and the full scope of the breach is still being investigated, we want to assure you that FCPS stopped collecting social security num-

bers for students more than 10 years ago so this sensitive data was not exposed.

While PowerSchool is responsible for this incident and its impact, our team acted swiftly once we were notified

and is continuing to investigate. FCPS understands the importance of your trust and is diligently committed to protecting our student and staff data.

PowerSchool has informed FCPS

that they will provide additional information, including contact information, that community members can use to dialogue directly with the company. We will share that information with you once it is available. Thank you for your understanding.

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FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

This month we gave our Four Years At The Mount writers the creative freedom to write a letter to or about a historical figure born in the month of February. Let's dive into our history!

Freshman

Constantine the Great

Cameron Madden
MSMU Class of 2028

A long time ago, born on the 27th of February, 272 AD, one of the most esteemed men in history was born. Constantine the Great, who later became the Roman Emperor from 406-337 AD, is one of the most known Romans in the public consciousness, mostly due to his association and adoption with Christianity; He was the first emperor to adopt such and lead one of the longest reigns of the empire in its history.

Happy Birthday to you Constantine! You were born in one of the most contentious times in Roman History, and despite that you rose from greatness. You were born in the East, where in your early days you were under threat from Palmyrene forces that sought to break away from Rome. Despite the danger of your childhood, you had stood strong, and for many years your early life was marked by trials that would have broken a lesser soul. Being the son of Constantius Chlorus and Helena, you experienced the political turbulence of the Tetrarchy, where four rulers tried to govern the weakened Roman Empire. You proved your mettle early on, showing that you were not just the son of a co-emperor, but a leader in your own right. Your military prowess was evident in your campaigns in Gaul, Britain, and along the Rhine, where you defended the empire's borders with skill and bravery, making your father and the empire very proud of your actions.

At 32 years old, I wonder where your mind took you in the Battle of the Milvian Bridge. It was there that you reportedly saw a vision of the Christian cross, accompanied by the words "In this sign, you will conquer." I wonder if it truly was a prophetic vision, or perhaps was stirred on by thoughts of your mother, who today is known as St. Helena. Either way, it is incredible to think that after so long you were able to conquer those who stood in the way of peace in the Empire.

I also wonder, how after all of your conquests, and when you finally became the full emperor, you were able to keep your vision of prosperity so focused, rather than being blinded by power. After all, during the Edict of Milan in 313, you allowed for religious freedom across the empire, showing no envy or lustful intent in your role as emperor. After a long string of turmoil and corruption in the position, you were able to make it prestigious once more, and became the example, and archetype for what an emperor should be for the rest of the empire's history.

Your reign had significant reforms and achievements, many of which were headed by you in an effort to prosper its people. You founded the city of Constantinople, which would become the new capital of the Roman Empire and a beacon of culture and power for centuries, and for a thousand years, it would be the greatest on the continent. Your legal and administrative reforms strengthened the empire which were able to eliminate corruption (in some areas) and influence between military and civilian administration. Not only this, but you also instituted economic reform that helped put value back in Roman currency, and that would stabilize and refine the economy. One of your biggest commitments and personal goals was to build churches and support the Christian community to spread the faith th far and wide. You were a visionary who understood that the unity of the empire could be achieved through a

shared religion, and I mention all of these feats not only to highlight your strengths, but to acknowledge the benefits you had across the people of your empire, and furthermore to the identity of Europe.

We can't exactly ignore your methods of securing the position of emperor though; many rivals were put down, and consolidation of power certainly destroyed the tetrarchy system (honestly for the better.) Yet since the goal was to unify the nation so that it can be stabilized it seemed to be something that was necessary in order for you to achieve what you had. You demonstrated that faith could be a guiding principle for governance, and your example inspired generations of leaders who followed.

As we celebrate your birthday this February, we should remember not only your achievements which shaped the Western world as we know it today, but also the enduring impact of your vision. The world you helped to shape continues to feel the influence of your decisions, from the spread of Christianity to the preservation of Roman law and culture, much of which we see in our own legal systems and ways of governance. Your life is a testament to the power of conviction and the enduring

ing impact of leadership rooted in faith and purpose and should be an inspiration for all who wish to uphold their nation's prosperity, and all who are fit to lead.

Had you not been born, then many things like the spread of Christianity would have been either prevented, or even snuffed out, and even the survival of the empire was prolonged due to your leadership; long enough where we can still admire the strength and adaptability of the Romans. Rome reached its last golden age under you, and as your legacy continued on, those who were less fit to rule than you ultimately failed where you succeeded.

Happy Birthday, Constantine. Your legacy lives on, and your contributions to history continue to inspire. In this month, we honor the memory of a ruler who dared to dream of a united and peaceful empire, guided by the principles of faith and justice. May your story continue to be told for as long as there are people to tell it, reminding us all of the power of a vision, and the strength of character required to be called: The Great.

To read other articles by Cameron Madden, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

Sophomore

Galileo Galilei

Gracie Smith
MSMU Class of 2027

"Mathematics is the language with which God has written the universe."
-Galileo Galilei

The age of modernity is heavily taught at Mount Saint Mary's University. The distinction between ancient and modern science, philosophy, and even theology is discussed to a point that makes you wonder what life would have been like without the Enlightenment. Now, for each of the above topics, their respective enlightenment occurred and even developed over time. Contrary to my typical articles revolving around some sort of American history, I'm going to talk about science.

Galileo Galilei, born February 15th, 1564, is most commonly referred to as the Father of Modern Astronomy, the Father of Modern Physics, and, at

this point, the Father of Modern Science. Born in Pisa, Italy, he is recognized for his invention of the telescope. This invention was revolutionary for its time since it disproved the accepted theory that everything in the sky revolved around the Earth; this is known as geocentrism and is still believed in some parts of the world - though not many. Instead, it was discovered that the Earth, and all the other planets, revolved around the sun. This is known as heliocentrism, which was originally proposed by Copernicus and later confirmed by Galileo.

Nevertheless, not everyone was very accepting of this new and confirmed discovery. The theologians of the Catholic Church were always in some sort of disagreement with Galileo, mostly due to his arrogant character but also because his scientific discoveries constantly disproved their interpretations of scripture. The persistent bickering between the Catholic Church and Galileo was never-ending to the point that the theologians, unwilling to hear Galileo's rebuttals to the interpretations of scripture, sentenced Galileo to house arrest for life.

Galileo wrote to the Grand Duch-

ess Christina, most likely a patron of his discovery, voicing his concerns since the Theologians cast him and his ideas away. I find it very impactful that he said *"I piously and prudently agree that sacred scripture can never lie, but only insofar as the true meanings of its words are understood."*

Galileo, in response to the theologians' accusations, stated that scripture and the existence of God are true, however, it is misinterpreted by the theologians. In his letter, Galileo then continues to, very assertively and pompously I'll admit, suggest that the theologians reanalyze the Bible and look at it more literally rather than symbolically due to its collision with recent scientific discovery.

This task was something that challenged not only the theologians of the time but *everyone*. That is to say, how can science and religion coexist peacefully when one is constantly contesting the other? Galileo challenged the world to accept heliocentrism and continue the practice of Catholicism. Thinking synchronically, this was a huge task for the average person. Despite the printing press being invented in the early 15th century, not everyone had access to books to obtain the knowledge Galileo and other scholars did. The average person lived off of the words the Catholic Church fed to them during weekly

or daily mass. Scripture was printed and distributed to those who could afford it. Galileo asked people to reconsider everything they've understood about Scripture and, as the theologians made it out to be, go against what had already been established. To the average person, you were forced to choose between the Catholic Church and the Enlightenment. One side guaranteed eternal glory in Heaven for those who worshiped and believed while also declaring eternal damnation for those who chose to go against the Scripture. Meanwhile, the other side offered new ideas, new certainties, and modernity as we know it today. Was there really a correct side?

When most people think of Galileo, they only consider what he invented rather than the lasting impact he left on Europeans, and now us. While a notably ignorant and arrogant man, Galileo stood up for his discovery while jointly encouraging others that scripture was still true. It is one of his greatest accomplishments; the establishment of the peaceful coexistence between science and religion.

Arguably the most interesting thing about Galileo was his ability to reveal the intentions of the Catholic Church in the 16th century. By this, I mean that his discovery and further, persecution, exposed how corrupt the Catholic Church was during that time. Consider-

ing the means and advances he had to go through to make his points evident go to show how narrow-minded the theologians were. It is scary to think about how their dismissiveness could have impacted the Enlightenment. That is to say, entertaining the notion that Galileo's discovery would have been rejected altogether would mean perhaps a few more centuries of believing in geocentrism. How could this have impacted our history? I mean we've got the Renaissance, the 30 Years War, the English Civil Wars, the French Revolution, the American Revolution, the Haitian Revolution, the American Civil Wars, then it gets interesting with World War I, then World War II because the Treaty of Versailles just wasn't enough to stop the Germans.

The theologians were faced with a harsh reality that they were forced to accept. That doesn't mean that the foundation of what you believe doesn't exist, it just means you have to change the angle at which you look at it. Initiating this way of thinking from a young age allowed for the adaptability of humans to be more flexible. The acceptance of modernity had begun to be seen positively rather than something that was feared.

This February 15th, in honor of such an incredible scientist, I challenge you all to think of a time in which you rejected change; a time when you were scared to accept the truth; or a time when you were forced to see things from a different perspective. Change is a part of life, but so is acceptance. Learning to coexist with ideas that make us uncomfortable makes us stronger. Galileo, and all he stood for, proved that science can coexist with religion.

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



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HISTORICAL FIGURES BORN IN FEBRUARY

Junior Langston Hughes

Devin Owen
MSMU Class of 2026

So much has happened over the trajectory of life in the world, especially in recent years. I feel as though we are often so swept up in the happenings of our own lives, the present, and even the future, that we often disregard the past. How can we do that though, when the past is what shaped us into who we are now; it has shaped society and the world as we know it. There is a saying between one of my friends and I in regard to change, we frequently say that we are “waiting for a catalyst” in order to make a change in our lives or to make a hard decision. We need a big moment in order to feel like we are making the right choices. Sometimes though, the small moments make all the difference too. Change is simply just part of the life we live; it’s inevitable. However, most of the changes we’ve seen throughout history haven’t occurred without a bit of a fight. Introducing the birthday boy: Langston Hughes! Born on February 1st, 1902, in Joplin Missouri, Hughes ended up becoming one

of the most well-known poets in the Nation and one of the most recognized leaders of the Harlem Renaissance—the most influential period in African American literary history, lasting from the 1910’s until the mid 1930’s. Hughes was an innovator of the jazz poetry art form, an art form that ended being insanely popular. In addition to his role as a poet and leader of the Harlem Renaissance, Langston Hughes was also a playwright, novelist, and an activist; a multi-tasking king if you will. He moved to New York City and flourished in the literary world. Not only did he flourish here, but he also shaped the literary world as we know it, addressing his poetry to people—specifically the African American people—and sharing the importance of making a change and having a dream. Hughes died aged only 66 years old on May 22nd, 1967. Even after his passing though, his name lived on for generations to come.

Dear Mr. Langston Hughes, I would like to wish you a very happy birthday! The date is February 1st and you are aged approximately 123 years old today. Ironically, you share a birthday with someone else who has shaped my life in crucial ways. My best friend’s mom, my bonus mom, was

also born on February 1st but she isn’t nearly as old as you are today (no offense). I have found that different people shape your life in different but equally important ways. Similar to my bonus mom, you have better shaped my understanding of the world. Poetry is a beautiful and complex form of art. Words hold power and we often wield it without thought, at least in today’s society we do. Looking back though, we use words to make the most critical decisions. For example, in order to declare war, our President addresses the Nation and states the intentions: “We declare war on...” Words are powerful in a way we cannot or do not fully comprehend. Mr. Hughes, YOUR words are powerful. They have carried on your legacy for years following your passing 58 years ago.

In my American Literature Survey course from last year here at Mount St. Mary’s University, we read and analyzed your poems as a class. We listened intently and read closely and not only did we hear your words, but we understood them. I believe the first poem we looked at was “The Weary Blues”, which you wrote in 1925. It’s interesting to think about the differences between the world in which you lived and the world that we are living currently. I myself am

an avid poetry lover, and I have even written a few poems myself. It’s a form of expression that I never really understood prior to college. I used to write songs when I was younger, albeit they aren’t the best, but I used this as a way to express how I felt and the dreams I had. Looking back, I hear your words, “a dream deferred is a dream denied”, I apply this to my life anytime I consider pushing my dreams back. If I push them back now then I am denying them and making them to be less important. We should all always follow our dreams and make them important.

As I write this letter to you, I am sitting on the couch in my living room apartment, drinking a cup of coffee, listening to music and grinning like an idiot. Specifically, I am writing this letter while listening to music by Hozier, another idol of mine, who reminds me a bit of you. When I listen to his music I feel good. I find myself getting in the groove of writing, pushing past my writers’ block, and pouring my heart out on paper. For the past few months, I have been completely burnt out. I haven’t been able to find the love for writing in which I have had my whole life. Between school, work, and mentoring I haven’t had the desire to write for myself. I’ve been writing

for work, for a paycheck. But why did I start writing for the paper in the first place? Because I loved writing. It has been a passion of mine; a way to express myself through the power of words! You once said, “Life is for the living. Death is for the dead. Let life be like music. And death a note unsaid.” Sometimes we need to hear it put pretty simply: you’re alive so live your life. You can be dead when you’re dead, there’s no time for it now. Sometimes I need to listen to you more often, I need to live my life and feel the way music makes me feel, and I very obviously need to embrace my love of writing and words and everything else life has to offer.

Langston Hughes. The man that you are. Thank you. Thank you for being so unbelievably talented. Thank you for being an inspiration to not only the African American community and literary community, but also to the young writers, poets, playwrights, and activists around the world. You’re name and legacy is one that will be remembered for eons. You made a difference in the world, and we’re forever grateful for it.

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

Senior Laura Ingalls Wilder

Dolores Hans
MSMU Class of 2025

There are historical figures that are renowned by the world, our country, and the textbooks. There’s our history and those who impacted it, and then there is my history. My history, my life, has been impacted by many figures, whether similarly honored by the greater society, or less notable than most textbooks but still well-known. From a young age, I was most heavily impacted by books I read and the show I watched that taught me about family, hard work, and how a simple life can be the most rewarding if it is filled with love. How a little house in a small community can hold a value far greater than any luxury you can name, because of the family that lives within it.

On February 7th, 1867, Laura Ingalls Wilder was born. She lived a life centered on family and she shared that devotion with those who read her stories. She began writing down her childhood memories into stories at the request of her daughter, stories that were published and more than a century later were eventually read by a young Dolores. These stories inspired the creation of a television show, Little House on the Prairie, which is still one of my favorite shows. And so, as her birthday approaches, I write her a birthday letter.

Dear Laura Ingalls Wilder, Happy 158th birthday! It is an honor to be writing to you. I wish there was a way to explain to you that not only am I, a twenty-two year old woman, writing to you, but so is a 10 year old who just discovered your

books, and a 16 year old teenager who watches the show based on your life every night. On this day, I hope to share with others the significance of your life, and thank you kindly for having the courage to share your story. As a twenty-first century woman, I will never know what it is like to ride in a covered wagon across the country, or walk a mile from my farm to sell eggs to the mercantile for about ten cents. But through your stories, you gave us a window into the life of a pioneer, capturing the beauty of the simple life of those times with such vivid detail and heartfelt emotion. Your books have inspired generations, and just as my mom introduced me to you, I will introduce you to my daughters.

You taught us about resilience, the power of family, and the simple joys of everyday life. Through the ups and downs of your family’s journey across the country, we learned that even in the hardest times, there is always hope, courage, and love. You showed us the good qualities of your own parents through your characters. Charles with his relentless optimism, hard work, and love of his wife and children, and Caroline, with her quiet strength, memorable teachings, and authentic femininity. These characters provided me with role models, and helped me envision the mother I want to be and the marriage I want to build.

You expressed the role of your sister, Mary, as beautiful and intelligent, a do-good girl with maturity. When I was in high school I related to her when my own younger sister became a thorn in my side and yet my favorite person. No matter how I could relate myself to the women in your stories, deep down I will always be comforted

by the character you created to represent yourself. Laura, a self-assured, wild, tomboy-ish girl who just wanted to do right by others.

I always loved the warmth of the home you created in your books, the home you allowed me to be a part of. Though it was unremarkable in features and structure, it never felt cold, even if a blizzard blew through the cracks of the wooden walls. To me, there was always a fire and blankets to keep the warmth from escaping the pages of the story I felt welcomed into.

Even beyond the pages of your books, your own life was just as warm and important. You moved all around the midwest, no doubt facing numerous challenges. What I find astounding is that even though where you resided changed often, the goodness of your family made every single house a home. Every cold winter was faced with a warm hug, every long and rocky road was overcome with the stability of your family’s courage, and every struggle was surmounted on the ideal of hope.

With every word you write I am whisked away from my loud and busy life and I land at the edge of a creek with cold rushing water that’s surrounded by dainty white flowers and tall green grass that reaches up toward the sky as if it is stretching after a long slumber. My dress blows in the spring breeze and life is as simple as it should be for a little girl.

Thank you for the childhood you created for me in your books. Thank you for deciding to write, even later in life. As someone who has many passions and is unsure where my life will lead, your example shows me that it’s never too late to start something new. Thank you for giving me role models and a way to envision

my life. Simple and full, adventurous and stable, and grand in a little way.

As I, and all your readers celebrate you on your birthday, we thank you for showing us that the adventure of life is about much more than the places we go—it’s about the love we share, the memories we make, and the way we learn to appreciate each

moment, no matter how small. Happy Birthday, Laura! I’ll meet you on the bank of the creek. With gratitude and admiration, Dolores Hans

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



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ARTS

The GreenSpring Foundations “A Musical Valentine”

The 2025 GreenSpring Spring concert series showcases internationally renowned soloists and award-winning young musicians who represent the future of music. All concerts are free to the public, with a free-will offering collected to support the GreenSpring Foundation’s music education programs and performances. In the spirit of Valentine’s Day, join us for an enchanting performance by the Davin-Levin Duo, featuring classical guitarist Colin Davin and Emily Levin,

principal harpist of the Dallas Symphony, February 15 at St. Paul’s Evangelical Lutheran Church, Utica, 10621 Old Frederick Road, Thurmont. Their romantic melodies promise to sweep listeners off their feet and create a memorable experience. A “clearly felicitous combination of two plucked string instruments” (Cleveland Classical), the Davin-Levin Duo is comprised of Emily Levin, Principal Harp of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, and Colin Davin,

Associate Professor of Guitar and Director of Guitar Studio at Shenandoah Conservatory. Since their first performance in 2015, the Davin-Levin Duo has revolutionized the genre, expanding the repertoire through commissions and arrangements and establishing their instrument combination as a dynamic chamber music experience. For more information about GreenSpring Spring concert series visit greenspringmusic.org



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1964 The Tribute – February 7. Experience a Beatles’ Concert the way it was performed over 60 years ago... 1964 meticulously re-creates the magic of a live Beatles’ performance with artful precision and unerring accuracy, and brings you as close as anyone could possibly get to feeling the magic of a Fab Four live performance. For over 30 years, 1964 has thrilled audiences with what is considered to be the most authentic tribute to The Beatles using period instruments, clothing, hairstyles and onstage banter with an accuracy that is unmatched. A perennial favorite on the Weinberg stage, you won’t want to miss this one-of-a-kind salute to the boys from Liverpool.

Admiral Radio – February 7 at New Spire Arts. This husband-and-wife singer-songwriter duo weave a unique Americana sound blending traditional country, folk, and roots music. Inspired by the prior life of their 1941 wooden Admiral Radio, South-Carolina based duo Coty Hoover and Becca Smith create a unique Americana blend rooted in traditional styles that also touches the heartstrings of the

modern-day listener. This husband-and-wife singer-songwriter team weaves threads of country, folk, and roots music together to create a nostalgic sonic tapestry evoking simpler times filled with homespun comfort.

The Frederick Speaker Series - Dr. Robert Ballard – February 6. Renowned Ocean Explorer & Scientist. On more than 120 deep-sea expeditions, Robert Ballard has made many major natural discoveries, such as the deep-sea vents. Oh, and he found the Titanic. The man who made some of the most startling undersea discoveries in recent years, Robert Ballard describes what it was like to locate the Titanic, among other sunken famous ships. In his talk, through the use of stunning high-quality images and personal accounts, Dr. Ballard will present his most recent work in deep water archaeology and the technology of tele-presence. He discusses motivating people to think outside the box, learning how to deal with failure-that failure is just a step along the way to success, motivating children to choose careers in math, science, and engineer-

ing; and how to live your dream. Ballard is a dynamic speaker who will have you on the edge of your seat wanting to start a whole new career in exploration!

Porter Carroll’s The Evolution of Cabaret – February 8 at New Spire Arts. This dynamic show reinvents traditional cabaret by blending R&B and pop songs with interactive, re-imagined arrangements, captivating audiences. Evolution of Cabaret is a dynamic show that redefines the traditional cabaret experience. Porter Carroll, Jr. founder of Atlantic Starr the R&B/Pop hit machine from the 70’s, 80’s and 90’s is selling out shows in “The Evolution of Cabaret”, an innovative cabaret/nightclub act that puts a new exciting spin on popular classics never before seen on the Jazz club and cabaret circuit, featuring a tasty panoply that runs the gamut from R&B and improvisational jazz to soul, funk, blues, Rock & Roll and more.

Barron Ryan Trio Presents “There Arises Light (in the Darkness)” – February 13 at 7:30. Discover hope and resilience through the power of music. The Barron Ryan Trio “There Arises Light (in the Darkness)” is a poignant performance commemorating the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. Pianist and composer Barron Ryan, joined by violinist Christopher Whitley and cellist Alex Cox, presents a poignant musical tribute to the victims and survivors of the 1921 Tulsa Race Massacre. A lifelong Tulsan, Ryan’s composition com-



Admiral Radio’s duo Coty Hoover and Becca Smith create a unique Americana blend rooted in traditional styles that also touches the heartstrings of the modern-day listener.

memorates this historic atrocity by expressing the profound love and hope that can arise from even the deepest grief. Through this powerful work for violin, cello, and piano, the trio will take the audience on a journey from struggle to triumph, offering beauty to the memory of a painful past. This one-of-a-kind performance showcases Ryan’s 2021 commissioned work, My Soul Is Full of Troubles, created in collaboration with Chamber Music Tulsa to honor the Tulsa Race Massacre. The piece captures the human spirit’s journey through adversity, creating a space for reflection, healing, and hope. **Scythian** – February 15. Rousing and raucous, Scythian (sith-ee-

yin) plays roots music from Celtic, Eastern European and Appalachian traditions with thunderous energy, technical prowess, and storytelling songwriting, beckoning crowds into a barn-dance, rock concert experience. The Washington Post says “Scythian’s enthusiasm is contagious, and shows seem to end with everyone dancing, jumping around or hoisting glasses.” Tickets for all these events may be purchased online at WeinbergCenter.org, by calling the box office at 301-600-2828, or in person at 20 West Patrick Street.

Led Zeppelin IV - February 21. Experience the iconic sounds of one of rock’s most legendary albums as Classic Albums Live performs Led Zeppelin. Released in 1971, Led Zeppelin IV features timeless tracks like "Stairway to Heaven," "Black Dog," and "When the Levee Breaks." Classic Albums Live delivers a note-for-note, cut-for-cut recreation of this legendary album, followed by a set of Led Zeppelin's greatest hits. With no costumes or gimmicks, the focus is entirely on the music. Founded in 2003, Classic Albums Live has earned a reputation for unparalleled precision, performing over 100 shows annually across North America. Their dedication to authenticity has made them a favorite among fans and critics alike.

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COOKING

Feeling cold February

Sonya Verlaque
FCC Culinary Program

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

- French-ish Chicken Casserole**
Ingredients
4 boneless skinless chicken breasts
1 tbs, olive oil
1 onion diced
3 cloves garlic minced
1 cup heavy cream
1 cup chicken broth
1 tsp. dried thyme
1 tsp. dried rosemary
1 cup shredded mozzarella cheese
1 cup grated Parmesan cheese
1 cup baby spinach

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

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

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

- Greek Orzo Chicken Soup**
One classic way to fight a cold is with avgolemono, a traditional Greek soup. It's got plenty of lemon juice so you can make sure you're getting your vitamin C. It is also a good sore throat soother that can easily be prepped ahead and frozen. Also high in protein using both egg and chicken.

- Ingredients*
6 cups reduced-sodium chicken broth
1 cup water
3/4 cup uncooked orzo
4 large eggs
1/4 cup lemon juice
4 cups shredded cooked chicken
Chopped fresh dill (if available)

Instructions: In a large saucepot, combine the broth and water. Cover and heat to a boil on high. Add the orzo and cook until al dente according to package directions, stirring occasionally. Reduce heat to low. Meanwhile, in a large bowl, beat the eggs until smooth. Gradually whisk in the lemon juice until incorporated.

Slowly whisk 1/3 cup of the hot broth into eggs to temper them. You don't want scrambled egg soup. Gradually stir egg mixture into remaining broth. Add the chicken. Cook 2-3 min., until thickened, stirring occasionally. Season with salt and pepper to taste. Serve with chopped dill.

- Cranberry Crumble Bar**
Clearly we can't have a February food article without a valentine's treat. These cranberry cookie bars store well in an airtight container for 4 days or you can freeze them (without the glaze) and defrost at a later time and add the glaze then. They are a crumbly shortbread base with tart cranberry, for when you need a break from all the chocolate. They would also be usable for thanksgiving or Christmas too, a very versatile desert
- Shortbread Crust ingredients*
1 cup (226 g) unsalted butter, room temperature
1/2 cup (100 g) granulated sugar
1/2 cup (100 g) light brown sugar, packed
1 large egg, room temperature
2 tsp. vanilla
3 1/4 cups (405 g) all-purpose flour, spooned and leveled
3/4 tsp. baking powder
1 tsp. cinnamon
1/4 tsp. kosher salt

- Cranberry Filling ingredients*
2 1/2 cups fresh or frozen cranberries
2/3 cup (133 g) granulated sugar
1 tbs. cornstarch
1 tbs orange zest
1 tbs orange juice
1 tsp. vanilla

- Vanilla Glaze ingredients*
3/4 cup powdered sugar, sifted
4 tbs. whole milk or heavy cream
1/2 tsp. vanilla



Avgolemono (greek lemon chicken soup)

Instructions: In the bowl of a stand mixer fitted with the paddle attachment, cream together the butter and sugars until light and fluffy, about 3 minutes. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. Add the egg and vanilla, mixing to combine well. Scrape down the sides of the bowl. In a separate bowl, whisk together the flour, baking powder, cinnamon and salt.

Add the dry ingredients and mix just until the dough starts to pull away from the sides of the bowl. Do not over mix. Set aside roughly 2 cups of the dough (loosely packed) and reserve to use on the top of the crumble. Press the shortbread dough into an 8 x 8 baking pan lined with parchment paper. Use your hands or the flat side of a measuring cup to press it evenly into the corners of the pan.

Bake at 350°F for 15 minutes, or until the edges are slightly golden brown and the center is just set. Do not over bake. Remove the pan from the oven and allow the crust to cool slightly while you make the cranberry filling. In a large bowl, mix together the cranberries, sugar, corn-

starch, orange zest and juice and vanilla.

Pour the cranberry mixture over the pre-baked crust. Use your hands to break up the remaining 2 cups of shortbread dough into smaller, flat pieces. Place them randomly on top of the cranberry filling, leaving space between them for the cranberries to peak through. Bake for about 45 minutes, covering the top of the pan with aluminum foil for the last 10 to 15 minutes of baking time so that the crumble does not turn too dark. Remove the bars from the oven. Place the pan on a wire rack and cool completely before adding the vanilla glaze.

Vanilla Glaze - Whisk together the powdered sugar, milk (or heavy cream) and vanilla. The glaze should be thin enough to run off a fork but not so thin that it's transparent. If the glaze is too thick, add more milk. If too thin, add more powdered sugar. Drizzle over the top of the bars once cooled. Slice into squares.

To read other Cooking articles, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

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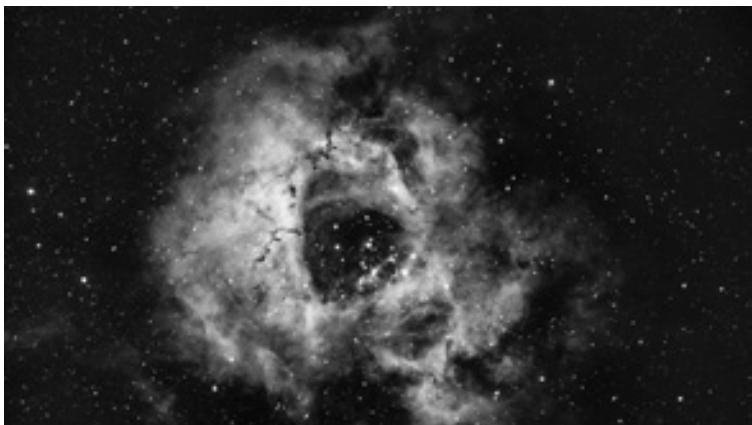
The night sky of February

Professor Wayne Wooten

For February, the waxing crescent moon is two degrees to the lower left of Venus, now near its greatest brightness. This would be a good evening to catch them together before sunset, easily visible in daylight by 4 in the SW. The first quarter moon sits five degrees north of Jupiter at sunset, almost directly overhead at sunset for us. On February 9th, the waxing gibbous moon makes a neat triangle with bright red Mars and Pollux in the Gemini. Farther north in Greenland, observers can see an occultation, which of course hopefully many of you observed last month on January 13. The Full Moon, the Hunter Moon, rises at sunset on February 12th. The last quarter moon rises at midnight on February 20th. The new moon is February 27th.

Mercury is lost in the Sun's glare this month. Venus dominates the western sky, but starts overtaking us and retrograding this month. She appears as a bright crescent, growing larger in size but less lit this month in small telescopes. Mars is at its best. It was closest to us in January, but now well up in the NE at sunset and will reveal its North Polar Cap and some dark lava flows on its deserts with larger scopes, high power, and good seeing. Jupiter is also perfect for observing, almost overhead at sunset, and its four large moons and Great Red Spot visible in telescopes. But Saturn, its rings almost closed edge on, is lost in the glare of the Sun all month. When it emerges again in the dawn next month, we will be seeing the dark underside of the rings for the rest of 2025, and most scopes will only show the disk of the giant planet.

For a detailed map of northern hemisphere skies, about January 31st, visit the www.skymaps.com website and download the map for February; it will have a more extensive calendar, and list of best objects for the naked eyes, binoculars, and scopes on the back of the map. Also available is a



For years, we have been using photos taken from the Hubbell or Webb Telescopes, but Professor Wooten sent us this photo of the Rosette Nebula just to give us an idea what an amateur stargazer can do when they pair new phones capable of taking high-resolution photos with telescope stands equipped with tracking motors that allow a telescope to remain focused on a given spot in the sky for an indefinite period.

video exploring the current sky, from the HST site at: http://hubblesite.org/explore_astronomy/tonights_sky/. S&T has weekly highlights at: <http://www.skyandtelescope.com/observing/astronomy-podcasts/>.

The constellation Cassiopeia makes a striking W in the NW. She contains many nice star clusters for binocular users in her outer arm of our Milky Way, extending to the NE now.

Cassiopeia's daughter, Andromeda, starts with the NE corner star of Pegasus Square, and goes NE with two more bright stars in a row. It is from the middle star, beta Andromeda, that we proceed about a quarter the way to the top star in the W of Cassiopeia, and look for a faint blur with the naked eye. M-31, the Andromeda Galaxy, is the most distant object visible with the naked eye, about 2.5 million light years away.

Overhead is Andromeda's hero, Perseus. Between him and Cassiopeia is the fine Double Cluster, faintly visible with the naked eye and two fine binocular objects in the same field. Perseus contains the famed eclipsing binary star Algol, where the Arabs imagined the eye of the gorgon Medusa would lie. It fades to a third its normal brightness for six out of every 70 hours, as a larger but cooler orange giant covers about 80% of the smaller but hotter and thus brighter

companion as seen from Earth.

At Perseus' feet for the famed Pleiades cluster; they lie about 400 light years distant, and over 250 stars are members of this fine group. East of the seven sisters is the V of stars marking the face of Taurus the Bull, with bright orange Aldebaran as his eye. The V of stars is the Hyades cluster, older than the blue Pleiades, but about half their distance. Aldebaran is not a member of this cluster, and twice as close as it is.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the overhead sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini.

South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the eastern sky at dusk. The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks

his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. The bright diamond of four stars that light it up are the trapezium cluster, one of the finest sights in a telescope. Just east of Betelgeuse is the fine binocular cluster NGC 2244. But the much fainter Rosette Nebula that lies around the cluster shows up nicely in this fine photo of it.

Look closely at this Valentine's Rose for you. The red of the petals is colored by ionized hydrogen, or an H II region. H I is just optically invisible neutral hydrogen, which can be mapped with radio telescope at 21 cm wavelength. II indicates the hydrogen atom is hot enough to ionize, with its single electron kicked up to higher energy orbitals. The particular red color is the emission line created by the electron falling from the third to the second excited state, and is the same red color some of you remember from last April 8th during totality as the bright red prominences extending over the limb of the totally eclipsed sun! The energy to ionize this gas comes from the hot young B class stars, just born in the center. Such clusters are forming from the inside out, with the expanding gases also rolling up the dark tendrils of carbon dust you see well at the top of James' shot. As Carl Sagan noted, we are made of such star stuff, ashes of stars!

In the east rise the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises before Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. Sirius dominates the SE sky by 8, and as it rises, the turbulent winter air causes

it to sparkle with shafts of spectral fire. Beautiful as the twinkling appears to the naked eye, for astronomers this means the image is blurry; only in space can we truly see "clearly now". At 8 light years distance, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see with the naked eye from West Florida.

For a sense of stellar distances, consider sunlight is eight minutes old by the time it warms your face. So the light from Sirius has taken the number of minutes in a year (eight minutes versus eight years), or $60 \times 24 \times 365.25 = 525,960$ times; Sirius is more than a half million times distant than our Sun. While it is 21x more luminous than our Sun in reality, no wonder the Sun rules the day! And Sirius is the closest star you can easily see from here. Almost every thing you see in the night sky must be millions of times more distant from us than our home star.

When Sirius is highest, along our southern horizon look for the second brightest star, Canopus, getting just above the horizon and sparkling like an exquisite diamond as the turbulent winter air twists and turns this shaft of starlight, after a trip of about 200 years!

To the northeast, a reminder that spring is coming; look for the bowl of the Big Dipper to rise, with the top two stars, the pointers, giving you a line to find Polaris, the Pole Star. But if you take the pointers south, you are guided instead to the head of Leo the Lion rising in the east, looking much like the profile of the famed Sphinx. The bright star at the Lion's heart is Regulus, the "regal star". Fitting for our cosmic king of beasts, whose rising at the end of this month means March indeed will be coming in "like a lion".

Farmers' Almanac

"Late February days; and now, at last, might you have thought That winter's woe was past; so fair the sky was and so soft the air."
—William Morris (1834–1896)

Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch: Turning milder with occasional showers, perhaps starting as freezing rain, then turning dry, blustery and more seasonable (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); turning milder with a rain/snow mix then turning blustery with flurries; light snow accumulation far west (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); another round of rain, changing to snow then colder, but turning dry (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); dry, then warmest weather of the month followed by rain (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); more rain, then turning more seasonable (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); seasonable and dry (28, 27, 28).

Severe Weather Watch: The Town and Country Almanack sees no severe weather activity in the month of February.

Full Moon: February's Full Moon will occur on February 12th. It is called the Snow Moon, where the snow was deepest, while many other tribes called it Wolf Moon because of all of the howling heard during the month, which just happens to be

the middle of their breeding season! And because there is such an extreme scarcity of game to hunt everywhere during this month, it was also aptly referred to as Hunger Moon.

Special Notes: The famous "Punxsutawney Phil" makes his annual and much-anticipated appearance on Sunday, February 2nd when he issues his 'prediction' of the coming of Spring! If it is a sunny day and this little Marmot Monax sees his shadow, he will retreat post haste underground, to remain there for another 6 weeks of Winter! If it is cloudy and he doesn't get scared by his own shadow, Spring will come early in 2025. The Christian Festival of Lights, or Candlemas, is celebrated on the 2nd as well. As part of a long tradition, many churches would display many more candles on this day during their daily services. Not only did it make the service a special one, but it was also believed that the additional light would provide protection from illness and plague in the coming year.

Holidays: Valentine's Day, February 14th, falls on Friday in 2025. Show that special someone just how special they are and how much you appreciate them. The birthdays of Presidents Abraham Lincoln (February 12th)

and George Washington (February 11th) are collectively celebrated on President's Day, which falls on Monday, February 17th, providing us with an extended holiday weekend. Enjoy!

The Garden: It's time to turn the compost pile (if it's not too frozen!). Plants that may have been pushed out of the ground by frost heave should be pressed firmly back into place. Deciduous shrubs and trees are still dormant enough to transplant this month. Once the buds have begun to swell, it will be too late. Continue feeding our feathered friends. You will want them to stick around so they will provide natural insect control when the weather warms again.

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

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living
"Never seek happiness at the expense of another person."



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Celia Alspaugh
WHS Class of 2028

Considering the large number of participants, following the warm up, the group of 52 students is split into two separate sets. Each cluster of students do the same things, just in different rooms to account for space. After that, the batches are split into even smaller groups, which will be the

Directly after the Top Ten, teams move forward into standard rounds. Each round begins with someone introducing their team members, and then thanking something. For example, “We would like to thank Mariah Carey” or “We would like to thank Mrs. Boller’s holiday earrings.” Students thank anything and everything under the sun, and it is one of the little quirks of the Academic Team that make it a tight-knit, welcoming community. Then it gets serious. The first round is the Lightning Round, which is made up of fast-paced questions. Categories generally have related answers. For example, all answers will begin with the letter A, or

Though it can seem like stakes are high for these students with their team members relying on one another to win, it never becomes a negative environment. As put by freshman participant Eli Nutakor, they all “love the friendly atmosphere” and know they are surrounded by people who celebrate their victories and accept their missteps.



Walkersville High School's academic team.

Their final match before the competitive season began was their annual alumni showdown. This match consisted of not only students, but also alumni and teachers. The bones of the operation remained the same, but with a few tweaks. For starters, to celebrate this special match the rounds were held in the auditorium onstage. Instead of holding a warm up round or “Top Ten,” the members chose instead to have the traditional snack of breakfast cereal. That’s right, tables were lined with sugary cereals and all types of milk. After enjoying their snack, an epic showdown commenced. Many familiar faces were visible amongst the teacher’s panel. Science teachers Erica Carbone and Kate Boller, English teachers Cynthia Kuske and John Van Bloom, math teachers Collin Williams and Jonathan Newman and counselor Alec Parker took turns winning points for the red team. The Lightning Round consisted of rapidly delivered questions about popular Christmas movies. After tragically answering two questions wrong, Carbone and Williams saved the day by getting three right, pulling their team out of the negatives. The teachers continued their glorious win streak by going six for six in the No-Buzzer Round. Their train of success went off the rails when Wil-

To all those who enjoy Jeopardy, trivia, or even just supporting the students, the general public are invited to watch Academic Team matches every Friday night at 6pm. Matches are held at Frederick High School. Bring family and friends, see how many questions you may know the answers to, and enjoy this mind-stimulating event. Each "host" school is the team who is off, so they help with the technical work behind the scenes. Parent Kira Froud has two children involved in the Academic Team, and states that "Academic Team has been fun to watch. It is impressive to see them show off their depth of knowledge in such a variety of subjects." Coming to see matches can be exciting for the viewers as well as the students. To see the schedule, check out www.fcps.org/academics/schedule for more information. There is no admission required, and all are welcome. The championship round will be held Friday, February 21st with a theme of 'Banned Books.' Hope to see you there!

*To read other articles by Celia Alsbaugh,
visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

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<div>NEW PRICE</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>20 Zanella Dr., Emmitsburg</div> <div>5 Bdrms/ 3 Baths/ Wrap Around Porch</div> <div>2 Car Attached Garage/ Open Floor Plan</div> <div>\$429,900</div> <div>Call Diane Bowers</div> </div>	<div>BETH OHLER & CO.</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>N. Nixon Rd., Crystal Springs, PA</div> <div>28+ Acres/ 2 Lots/ Perc'd/ Homesite or Hunting</div> <div>\$185,000</div> <div>Call Beth Ohler</div> </div>	<div>NEW LISTING</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>12 E. 14th St., Frederick</div> <div>2 Bdrms/ 1 Bath/ Bungalow/ Fireplace/ Hdw Floors</div> <div>Covered Porch/ Large Yard</div> <div>\$365,000</div> <div>Call Cindy Grimes</div> </div>	<div>COMING SOON</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>13220 Pennersville Rd., Waynesboro</div> <div>Many Recent Upgrades/ Hdw Floors.</div> <div>Fireplace/ Lower Level Storage</div> <div>\$210,000</div> <div>Call Cindy Grimes</div> </div>	<div>Beth Ohler & Co. - NEW LISTING</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>1230 Hunters Woods Dr., Hagerstown</div> <div>2 Bdrms/ 2 Baths/ One Level End Unit TH</div> <div>\$310,000</div> <div>Call Erin Kelly</div> </div>
<div>NEW LISTING</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>122 Bennett Dr., Thurmont</div> <div>3 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ Bennett Estates Community</div> <div>Fenced Yard/ Finished Lower Level/ No HOA</div> <div>\$490,000</div> <div>Call Elle Smith</div> </div>	<div>NEW LISTING</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>1050 Brinker Dr., Hagerstown</div> <div>3 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ Condominium</div> <div>Great Investment Property</div> <div>\$209,000</div> <div>Call Elle Smith</div> </div>	<div>COMING SOON</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>120 Bosc Ct., Thurmont</div> <div>5 Bdrms/ 3 Full Baths/</div> <div>Finished lower Level & Garage</div> <div>\$419,900</div> <div>Call Cindy Grimes</div> </div>	<div>Owens Creek Overlook Lots</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>Foxville Deerfield Rd., Sabillasville</div> <div>1 Lot Available</div> <div>Wooded/ 5 Acres w/ Well/ 3 Bdrn Perc</div> <div>\$129,900</div> <div>Call Cindy Grimes</div> </div>	<div>NEW LISTING</div> <div>  </div> <div> <div>16 Lombard St., Thurmont</div> <div>4 Bdrms/ 2.5 Baths/ Beautiful Vintage Charm</div> <div>on Double lot with Large Yard</div> <div>\$475,000</div> <div>Call Elle Smith</div> </div>
<div>  </div> <div> <div>Kelly Weddle</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>301-693-7232</div> <div>kellyweddells@outlook.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Elle Smith</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>301-401-8620</div> <div>smith21788@comcast.net</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Cindy Grimes</div> <div>Broker - 301-271-3487 x203</div> <div>301-788-5354</div> <div>Cindy_Grimes@msn.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Beth Ohler</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>240-575-1700</div> <div>bethohlersells@gmail.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Deb Gartner</div> <div>Associate Broker, MD & PA</div> <div>301-748-1960</div> <div>deb.theamericandream@gmail.com</div> </div>
<div>  </div> <div> <div>Courtney Eyler</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>240-575-1700</div> <div>Courtney@BethOhlerCo.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Diane Bowers</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>301-898-4663</div> <div>bowersrealtor@hotmail.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Carroll Glass</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>240-674-2538</div> <div>carroll-glass@gmail.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Kelly Rumpf</div> <div>Salesperson, MD</div> <div>240-292-1746</div> <div>kelly_rumpf@outlook.com</div> </div>	<div>  </div> <div> <div>Erin Kelly</div> <div>Salesperson, MD & PA</div> <div>240-575-1700</div> <div>Erin.Kelly90@outlook.com</div> </div>

COMMUNITY NOTES

County Earns Three AAA Bond Ratings
Frederick County has once again earned AAA bond ratings from all three major bond rating agencies,

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater announced today. Fitch, Moody's, and Standard & Poor's each reaffirmed Frederick County at the highest possible rating

based on the County's exceptional financial management and culture of long-term planning. "This achievement is a testament to Frederick County's

unwavering commitment to fiscal responsibility and sound management of tax dollars," said County Executive Fitzwater. "We can be proud that our AAA ratings allow us to invest in schools and other critical infrastructure for our community."

Frederick County remains one of the few jurisdictions nationwide to earn AAA bond ratings from all three rating agencies. Similar to how a consumer's high credit score allows them to borrow money for loans or mortgages at lower interest rates, bond ratings allow Frederick County to pay lower interest rates on the construction of schools, roads, libraries, parks, and more.

Earlier this month, Fitzwater and key Frederick County Government leaders met with credit analysts from all three rating agencies in New York City to review the County's financial reserve policies and fiscal management procedures to address critical needs such as cybersecurity and climate change.

In their reports, the rating agencies highlighted Frederick County's "exceptional financial management" and noted that "robust reserves" provide for financial flexibility. Analysts also commented that the County benefits from a diverse local economy with ongoing development, particularly in the areas of biotech and life sciences. According to the agencies' reports, the County's healthy finances are expected to remain stable on a forward-looking basis.

Executive Fitzwater expressed her appreciation to County employees for their hard work in ensuring taxpayer dollars are managed responsibly. "It's the commitment and expertise of our employees that drive our success – they are our greatest asset," she said.

For additional information, contact Division of Finance Director Erin White at 301-600-1193 or via e-mail at EWhite@FrederickCountyMD.gov.

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Sometimes I ask my clients what they would like me to write about in my Journal articles. One of my guys said to write about how we can not do as much as we use to as we get older and explain how important it is to respect those changes. I thought that was a great idea so here we go!

Most people don't like to admit that things they use to do years ago have become a little more difficult. Maybe we can't work as long as before, maybe we can't lift as much as before, maybe we just get tired sooner and more often. That's normal and the sooner we accept it the better for our body, mind and spirit. Slowing down can help your body, of course, but it can also help your mind and spirit. Your attitude can affect how you react to any situation. If you get down on yourself and feel bad about yourself that will affect how your

feel both in body and mind. Keep your spirits up and think positively about what you have to do and the task will be finished in not time. You will also feel good about yourself and your abilities. Always keep a positive thought, even though I know that can be difficult at times.

Being positive keeps you happier, healthier and makes the task at hand go a little easier. Negativity just adds to frustration and feeling down on yourself. I'm definitely not saying just give up and don't do anything. You know that's not possible and not good for you. I'm just saying slow down a little, pace yourself and don't get frustrated. When we are younger and work all day, then come home and cook, clean, take care of the kids, the lawn and whatever the day throws at us, we just keep going. That's great and go for it as long as you can but when you start to see yourself becoming tired, just slow down. You'll still get it all finished just

maybe not in one day.

Eating healthy, exercise and being mindful of your body are the best ways to keep living your best life. Just because you see minor changes doesn't mean your not living your best life. It just means life is changing and you need to change with it. I don't want anyone to read this and think, oh well, I don't need to do much anymore. On the contrary, I want you to think, how can I appreciate the things that are changing and incorporate ways to complete the daily task at hand while still respecting and taking care of my body, mind and soul.

It's a new year and a great time to figure out what has changed with you and how you are can keep the strength and

willpower you have and improve on anything you may notice is becoming more challenging. One thing I want people to realize is I'm not saying don't do anything, I am saying keep exercising and going as strong as you can just don't push yourself too far and overdo it causing injury or permanent harm.

Asking for help from your family, neighbors, friends or whoever is not a sign of weakness, it's a sign of intelligence and acceptance. Sometimes moving furniture or other heavy objects may have been easy for you before but having someone to help with that big sofa only makes sense. Actually, it made sense before because it's easier with the more help you have, you just didn't want to admit it before.

I want everyone to realize that as we age things change and admitting and

realizing that is better for our health. Keep exercising, eating healthy and taking time for yourself. Start exercising, eating healthy and taking time for yourself if you have not been doing that. No one likes getting older and the changes that come with aging but the sooner you realize and incorporate them in your life the better your quality of life will be. Over exertion and pushing yourself can cause injury that may affect you for the rest of your life. Strength and conditioning and adapting to challenging yourself but not overdoing it will add to the quality of life for you for years to come.

My motto has always been, keep moving you'll be glad you did. I'm just saying moderate the speed at which you are moving to respect what your body is telling you now and in the future.

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