



Running backwards you say? You could be right! See Sports on Page 11 for all the details.



It's not all luck—it's talent, too. Read about Tracie Luck in Center Stage, Page 8.



At his last assembly, Principal Sacco exhorts attentive JPMS students to keep reading *The Monocle*.



Hey, what do you know about Straw? See Equestrian on page 18.

The Monocacy MONOCLE

Keeping An Eye On Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

January 28, 2005

Volume 1, Number 19

Principal Sacco Gives His Farewell to Poolesville

By Rande Davis

When Joseph M. Sacco, principal of John Poole Middle School (JPMS), announced his acceptance of an offer from the county school board to head up a new middle school in the Lakelands area of Gaithersburg, concern rippled through the Poolesville area as evidenced by a flood of e-mails. Mr. Sacco, who has led the school administration since 1998, has been a very popular principal among area residents. The school's record in academic excellence, community spirit, service among its students, and innovative scholastic programs has resulted in the school being ranked within the top five middle schools (of thirty-seven middle schools) in the county. Such success is a testament to Mr. Sacco's leadership.

Mr. Sacco, who is a native New Yorker and the father of four boys, looks forward to the unique challenge of opening a brand new school that is roughly three times larger than JPMS. At a hastily-called assembly of students to confirm the announcement of his leaving, Mr. Sacco sought to reassure the students and to

congratulate them on their success in making JPMS such an outstanding institution. He encouraged them to talk to him personally about the transition to a new principal.

Jerry Lynch, a retired and experienced middle school principal, will serve as an interim administrator until a permanent replacement has been named. JPMS has a declining enrollment, which ultimately threatens its ability to offer a broad selection of courses and services to its students.

At this moment of transition, *The Monocle* sought Mr. Sacco's perspective on a number of matters important to the community. Our first question was to seek his opinion as to those items about which he is most pleased.

—Continued on page 4.



Principal Joe Sacco and staff (l to r) Coree Ogden, Mary Phillips, Darlene Umberger and Tiffany Carpenter.

Sculptor Walter Matia—Finding the Music

Sculptor Walter Matia— Finding the Music

By Maureen O'Connell

*We must first see,
Then we may safely imagine more.*
Robert Fawcett

How does one define "art?" I admit that is a very open-ended question. I will take it one step further and ask "who is an artist?"

Several years ago I met, through mutual friends, Walter Matia, an internationally recognized wildlife sculptor. They owned several of his works of art. Upon seeing them, I was impressed by two things: the beauty of the anatomical reality of the figures and their sense of spirit. Recently, I was reading two of Walter's books, *A Question of Balance* and *Spirit of the Bull*, and a flood of questions started bouncing around in my head. So I

called Walter to ask if I could visit him in his studio in Hyattstown. He was gracious enough to give me two hours of his time and be patient with me as I picked his brain regarding his varying concepts of art. Let me now introduce you to Comus resident Walter Matia.

Walter was born in 1953 in Cleveland, Ohio. He says his boyhood days were filled with "bird-watching, botanizing, log flipping and collecting." After graduating from Williams College he apprenticed at Cleveland Museum of Natural History. He then spent eleven years with the Nature Conservancy as the Vice President in charge of Land Management. During this time he continued with his first love, painting and sculpture. In 1980 he began casting bronze sculpture. Unlike many people, he was fortunate that at this time of his life, he was able to combine his passion for wildlife, the outdoors and creating art. In the

beginning he concentrated on bird life, but over the years his subjects grew to include sporting dogs and other mammals such as the wild turkey, the Great Blue Heron, eagles, wolves, deer, cranes and the fox.

In our area his works include the nine foot Great Eagle at American University and a series of large fountains and garden pieces at the Blair House in D.C. In 1988 he was commissioned to create the Merrill Lynch Bull at a scale of one and one-

—Continued on Page 3



Walter Matia's Merrill Lynch Bull

Family Album

This issue we feature the bipartisan Barnesville Inaugural Ball, founded by Lib Tolbert and Father George Reid. Some partisans were probably happier than others.



Ed Brown and Barbara Davidson.

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Finding the Music Continued —

half times life size. They are now installed at the corporate offices of Merrill Lynch in Florida, New Jersey and Colorado.

"In order to attain the best possible, one must attempt the impossible." (Unknown)

In 2001 Walter was selected as the artist to create statues of bulls for the new Reliant Stadium, home of the Houston Texas football team. The challenge was to create sculpture that would portray in bronze the fundamental qualities that define the bull and then to take it one step higher to show the beauty and spirit of the bull. Walter's vision was to have the spirit of the bull represent the spirit of the team. The gestures of the individual bull sculptures represent the three main skills of a football player: running, blocking and tackling. The bulls are enormous. The largest one measures fourteen feet long, eight feet high, four feet deep and weighs about 2700 pounds. The dynamics involved in creating a work of art of this size is daunting. Unlike a painter who in order to produce a "finished product" deals with himself and maybe the framer, a sculptor must work with

and get along with many more artisans to take his initial idea from the rough drawing to the deliverable and installed work of art. It is a team effort.

"There is a peculiar virtue in the music of elusive birds. Songsters that sing from the topmost boughs are easily seen and as easily forgotten; they have the mediocrity of the obvious." (Alex Leopold, *A Sand Country Almanac*.)

Those of us fortunate to live in Monocacy country are familiar with the sights of running deer, geese in flight, wild turkeys, pheasants, hunting dogs and foxes. We see the shape of their bodies; we hear the honking of the geese and the barking of the hounds. But can we see and hear more? Some can and they are the artists; they see beyond the mediocrity of the obvious. There are also the people who are not familiar with these sights and sounds. "The strange crook of a heron's neck and the slow-motion blur of a covey rise are not part of their visual memories."

The title of one of Walter's books, as I aforesaid, is *A Question of Balance*. I asked him what that meant. He answered that creating art "is about

the balance between the time I spend watching animals in the wild and the hours I spend in the studio developing the techniques to depict them in bronze. It is about the battle waged on each work to find the balance between representing anatomical facts and seeking out what is truly artistic and beautiful about gestures and composition. It is about balancing what I know by "seeing" with what I can imagine in a sculptural rendering of that knowledge." I asked him what about the non-Monocacy people who don't have the vision of the story line. Can they "see" the same thing? He replied, "If art is successful, this will not matter. Sculptures that depend too much on story line or on mere anatomical correctness are not up to the task of making metal objects into art. Animal sculptors—all representational artists, in fact—must meet the challenge of getting beyond simple recognition, of balancing what is real against what is beautiful and true about the reality."

Walter has a wonderful Lab named Molly. She is a little older than my two Labs, Max and Sam, and a much more experienced duck hunter. When I arrived at Walter's studio,

Molly, in true Lab fashion, greeted me enthusiastically. Walter and I started talking about dogs—the dog breeds we both have lived with and their respective personality traits or lack thereof. I asked him about his dog commissions. As a fellow dog lover I loved his answer. He commented, "The ten most feared words in my business are, "I want you to do a sculpture of my dog." It's the "my dog" that sets an artist's heart pounding. "My" implying particularly understood to be unique. "Dog," *Canis Familiaris*, implying everybody has an opinion of what a dog should look like. Herein lies the challenge. Sometimes the closer I get to the anatomical and gestural perception of the owner, the farther I get from the essence of the breed. Successful portraiture lies somewhere between telling the truth about the dog and finding the sculptural equivalent of the owner's feelings about it. It is the ultimate question of balance."

As I entered Walter's studio, he was working on a piece. I asked him what it was. It was a sculpture of

—Continued on Page 5.

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Sacco's Farewell continued —

Mr. Sacco replied, "I am most pleased with the progress JPMS has made academically over the years. When I first started, about half of the students made the honor roll, few were admitted to magnet programs, and we were in the lower third in the area of standardized test scores. Today, sixty-eight percent of the students are on the honor roll, over twenty students each year are admitted to magnet programs, and we are in the top ten percent of middle schools in our standardized test scores."

As he looks back over the past seven years, we wanted to know what gives him the most pride in JPMS. "Our new Community Ecology and Technology Academy is a great program that culminates years of emphasis on environmental issues and academic rigor. I am also proud of the great work our Leos do, especially in service to local charities. I am also very proud of our academic pep rallies—how great it is to hear students cheering for other students who get straight As or make the honor roll or who have excellent attendance. What a culture shift!"

Expanding on his thoughts of pride, Mr. Sacco said, "I often talk to students about academic success, but I am equally proud of them for their volunteer service and the support they give each other. We have developed a very special community here, and this is immediately noted when visitors come to the building. JPMS is a wonderful school located in a wonderful community."

Being a teacher or principal is as much a learning experience as it is a teaching position. We wanted to know what Mr. Sacco has learned from his seven years in Poolesville. "I have learned a great deal from the students, staff, and community in Poolesville. 'Smaller is better' when it

comes to educational facilities. The challenge of personalizing education is one that will face me as I go to a new school, but I realize how important that is. The sense of community and caring is prevalent and pervasive in this community and its schools. I will have the opportunity and privilege of helping to create a new school community and will remember the benefits of community-school partnerships I experienced here."

As he leaves JPMS, we asked if there were any concerns he has about the school and what perspectives he wanted to share with the community. Mr. Sacco stated, "Middle schools are

sive number of courses that are high school credit courses, and the JPMS students are very successful in those courses. JPMS is now one of the best schools in the county by any measure. Out of thirty-seven schools, we are usually ranked fourth or fifth. Administrators from Potomac and Bethesda call us at times to find out how we do it."

So, are there any stories or memories that stand out about his experience here? Mr. Sacco shared with us, "There are many stories that I could share. My favorite times have been at honor roll assemblies and academic pep rallies. At first, students

days, I see a dozen kids wearing honor roll shirts—with pride. This was a quiet turning point for us. Ask any student now if they plan to be on the honor roll and over ninety percent will say yes (and mean it)."

After being in education in Poolesville for over a decade, we wanted to let him end this report with his own message to our readers and the community. Mr. Sacco, the mike is yours.

"Thank You! Thank You! Thank You! I have spent eleven years in the Poolesville community and have loved every day here. My community superintendent noted that I had a huge smile on my face during the last high school graduation. I was and continue to be very proud of the students in this community. The town commissioners have been very supportive, the parents are always there for each other and especially the children, and the students seem to really appreciate what they have (how unusual!). Please stay involved and let your voices be heard (especially at the county level). As a small community, your voices need to be a bit louder. JPMS is proof that community efforts can yield wonderful things. I wish all of you continued success and look forward to seeing you in the future."

We know we are not being presumptuous in expressing on behalf of the community our heartfelt gratitude to Mr. Sacco and his contributions to the lives of our children these past eleven years. Expressions of appreciation from students, teachers, and parents have been e-mailed to *The Monocle* this past week. Their notes, each in their own way, express the same message. They each share the writer's affection, gratitude, and appreciation for Mr. Sacco's leadership, and each extends best wishes for continued success in his new position.



At the farewell party with Mr. Sacco: Melanie Dahlen, Sara Defnet, Barb Mumford, Lisa Guertin and Diane Yendrey.

often neglected—we are 'stuck in the middle.' I'm not sure how well the community understands how much growth students undergo during these few years and how hard the staff works to prepare students for high school. We now offer an impres-

sive number of courses that are high school credit courses, and the JPMS students are very successful in those courses. JPMS is now one of the best schools in the county by any measure. Out of thirty-seven schools, we are usually ranked fourth or fifth. Administrators from Potomac and Bethesda call us at times to find out how we do it."



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Finding the Music continued—

Molly, his lab, who was lying at his feet. Here is another quote from his book *A Question of Balance* which I can relate to: "Every dog is unique, and so is every owner. Then there are the retrievers. Or, more accurately, owners who are trained by their dogs. That's me. I don't really care what my dog looks like and I am completely forgiving of her antics in the field. All I know is that despite being a little overweight, long in the back, and with the neck of a polar bear, she's the best Lab in the world. If I ever sculpt her, she will be prancing around my bed with a dirty sock in her mouth. With retrievers, personality is everything." I guess now was the time to sculpt Molly.

I keep referring back to his book *A Question of Balance* because I love so many of the quotes. He mentions Bill Reese, a painter, sculptor, adviser, friend and fellow traveler who had four letters painted across the top of his battered French easel, "ITMS." It's *The Music, Stupid.* In Walter's mind, painting a landscape or sculpting a group of whooping cranes is not about faithfully reproducing what is "right" or accurate. The goal is to find

and explore the forms, patterns and interactions that make the piece visually beautiful and add real understanding. Neither the growth configurations of grass nor the personal spacing of a flock of birds is random. Deciphering these patterns, exploring the compositional possibilities, and pushing the idea beyond field guide accuracy to art is all part of finding the music."

Walter Matia, with his great vision of the world, sensibility and pure love and passion for his subjects, has discovered how to "find the music."

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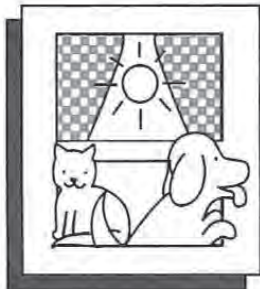
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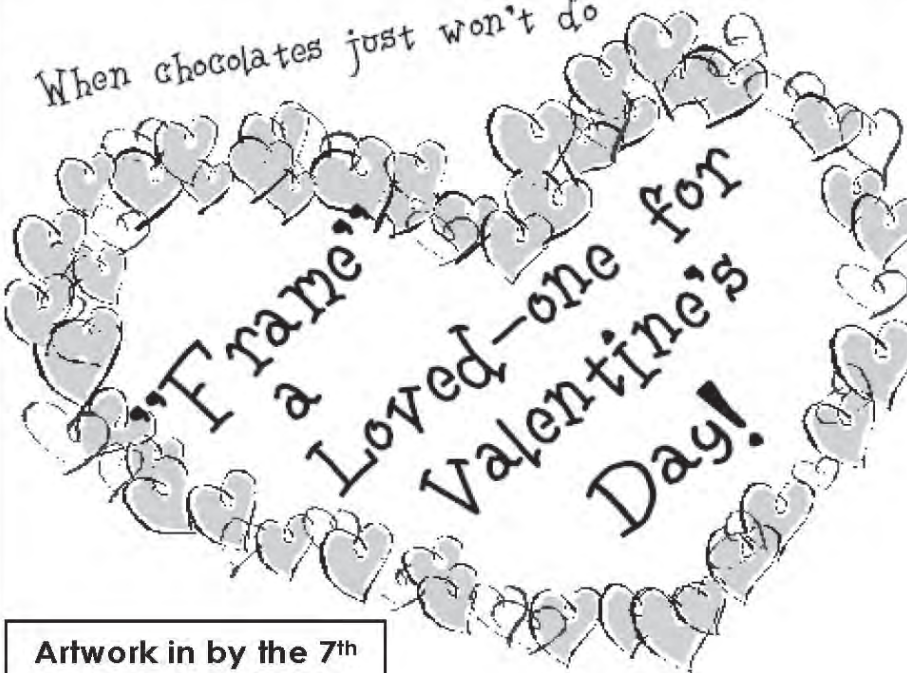
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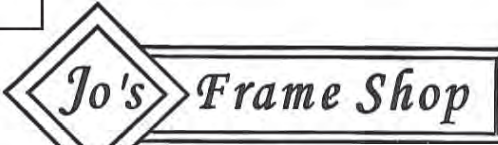
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Thanksgiving in February

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Pancake Breakfast

Cub Scout Pack 694 has its annual Pancake Breakfast on February 5. It will be at St. Peter's Church from 8:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. Portions of the proceeds will go to St. Peter's Building Fund and to the Red Cross Relief Fund.

United Methodist Church Events

The youth at the United Methodist Memorial Church will be delivering pre-ordered subs for the Super

Bowl. This is an annual event with some of the proceeds going to WUMCO. You need to pre-order so call 301-349-2261 or 301-349-2296 no later than February 5.

The renowned Crafty Ladies and Gents will have their famous Spaghetti Dinner on February 11 from 5:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. For those on a serious diet you could just write a check.

Career Day

John Poole Middle School is planning their annual Career Day for February 18. This program is for eighth grade students and designed to encourage them to take their future seriously and to consider the wide range of career opportunities. The Guidance Department would particularly encourage any individual in broadcasting, fitness, veterinary medicine, plumbing, or in electrical repair. Any career would be welcome. Interested business people do not need to have a student in the school and if they are willing to share to experience with these students they should contact Traci Tatum at 301-407-0413.

How to Make Cabin Fever a Festival

If you start having those winter blues in mid-February there is a solution to the doldrums. On February 12 and 13, the Cabin Fever Festival takes place at the Frederick Fairgrounds. Located in six buildings and heated tents, the festival will feature juried craftsmen, artistic demonstrations, decorating ideas, great food and entertainment. Cost is only \$6.00 for adults and \$3.00 for children under twelve years of age.

Award Winning Art Show

The Delaplaine Visual Arts Education Center in Frederick is presenting an art show of the works of those area artists who have won their Meredith Springer Award. Winners of this regional award must have played a role in the growth and strength of the arts community in Frederick County. Located at 40 south Carroll Street in Frederick the show will run from February 5 to February 27. A reception for the artists will be on February 5 from 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m. For more information call 301-698-0656.



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Center Stage

Dame Fortune Smiles upon Lady Luck

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The piano opened the piece. Lovely, thought I.

The mezzo-soprano began to sing. Thought was suspended.

I have been to my fair share of musical performances. Usually, I enjoy them. Sometimes, I get goose bumps. Most rare, a tear will come to my eye. (My violin teacher's most oft-repeated quote, next to the pencil being the greatest invention ever, was that Beethoven said, "Music should bring fire to the hearts of men and tears to the eyes of women.") On Sunday, January 9, at the Weinberg Center for the Arts, a most delicious sensation occurred—goose bumps and watery eyes combined, instantaneously.

The recital given by Tracie Luck (she is très lucky, n'est-ce pas?) opened the Weinberg Center's "Bravo!" Series, a new classical music series of performances, and they couldn't have chosen a better performer. Her presence and expressive singing, notwithstanding the beauty and richness of her voice, bespoke an eloquence that lent grace and warmth to a varied program. Covering many periods, from the classical through the romantic to some modern pieces of the twentieth century, Ms. Luck proved throughout the afternoon that she could convey the incredible range of emotions desired by the composers (at times, in moments of complete silence, as demanded in "Les Nuits d'Été" by Berlioz).

It is not surprising, then, that Tracie Luck was exposed to a wide variety of music during her childhood, including rhythm and blues, pop, jazz, and songs from musicals. Born in Washington, D.C., Tracie moved with her family when she was two years old to Frederick where she was raised. Tracie's parents, Ted and Alyce Luck, both teachers, are her

"first blessing." While studying to be a teacher, Ted Luck was an assistant manager at the National Theater in D.C., which may account for the singing of musicals during Tracie's childhood. Both her parents supported everything Tracie did with "love, understanding, and patience."



Mezzo-soprano Tracie Luck

Tracie says of them, "They have beautiful voices and beautiful spirits. I would strive to have the kind of marriage they have and be the kind of parents they are when the time comes."

As a child, Tracie wasn't aspiring to be an opera singer, opera was not what she listed as music to which she was exposed as a young child. Tracie planned on being a Triple Threat, a combination of actress, dancer, and singer. At the age of thirteen, Tracie auditioned for the concert choir of Governor Thomas Johnson High School. David Crawford, director of the concert choir, saw something in her and suggested that she pursue a career as a singer. He also introduced her to Carol DeSantis for vocal instruction. It was Mrs. DeSantis who took Tracie to a recital given by the great mezzo soprano Jessye Norman—and Tracie knew. She realized then that opera covers the Triple Threat.

By the time she began college at Towson State University, Tracie already had stage experience in numerous musicals at the Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick, as well as being named Frederick's Young Woman of the Year, and in 1993, she was named Miss Frederick.

In 1994, she gave a recital at the Weinberg Center for the Arts accompanied by the Frederick Children's Chorus.

Teacher Ruth Drucker drew her to Towson for two years, then to the Peabody Conservatory for three years from which she received her Bachelor of Music degree. She was then among two hundred people who auditioned for a place at the Academy of Vocal Arts in Philadelphia, and she was one of the eight accepted into the program. There she studied under Joanna Levy, and after four years she earned her Artist Diploma, the equivalent of a Master's degree. All during her schooling, Tracie was receiving accolades for the various roles she performed.

Although she now calls Philadelphia home, she spent the first few years out of school doing numerous apprenticeships with various opera houses from Virginia to Utah to Santa Fe back to Philadelphia. Interestingly, as an apprentice in the Virginia Opera, in the Virginia Opera Spectrum Program, she was part of a touring group that brought opera to Virginia schools. One of the operas, "The Pied Piper of Hamelin," allowed the students to become involved, as well. They were able to see the stage props and how the special effects were arranged. They also participated as the rats and the children in the story, and took part in a mini-rehearsal before the production. Maybe children who saw Tracie Luck will be inspired, as she was upon hearing Jessye Norman.

All these apprenticeships gave her experience in all sorts of roles, singing in choruses, ensembles, and in *comprimario* roles (secondary roles). This gave her the opportunity to work in the field. Since then, Tracie has already made numerous opera company debuts. She debuted in the Opera Company of Philadelphia as Annie from "Porgy and Bess." Her

other debuts include the Virginia Opera and the Michigan Opera Theatre, as well as performing in opera festivals all over the East Coast.

Tracie is very excited to be covering Denyce Graves in the role of Margaret Garner in the opera of the same name. The new opera, by Richard Danielpour and Toni Morrison, will premiere in May of this year at the Michigan Opera Theatre, in July at the Cincinnati Opera Festival, and in February of 2006 at the Opera Company of Philadelphia. At the same time this summer, Tracie will make her Cincinnati operatic debut as Maddalena in Verdi's "Rigoletto," a role she already sang for the Virginia Opera in 2004, and again in Michigan. How lucky we were to have her sing a recital in Frederick.

When children talk to Tracie about singing, she always tells them, "No matter what kind of music you want to sing, learn to sing classically, then you have the tools to do anything." Tracie should know, sometimes she'll go to a Philadelphia open mike night and sing jazz. She is definitely more than just a pretty face.

There is a system of classification for operatic singers, but Tracie gently refuses to categorize herself. She doesn't want to be pigeon-holed into certain roles. The categorization to her "is less important than the art itself."

Although Tracie has no immediate plans to be singing again in our area, one of her goals is to have steady work. As she has achieved so much already, it would behoove us to keep our eyes peeled for her at the Washington Metropolitan Opera or the Virginia Opera performing in Fairfax. Great talents like hers are few and far between, and tears and goose bumps are definitely worthwhile anytime.

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School News

Annual Talent Show Sparkles

By Rande Davis

Move over *American Idol*, our local talent is on the rise. The Poolesville High School annual talent show came just in time to diminish the early winter doldrums. This event sparkles not only for its obvious pride in local talent, but it also offers an impressive variety in the presentations. While presented as a competition, this program is really design to showcase and entertain. Nevertheless, winners were announced in the various categories. Congratulations to all the participants and to those listed below by category.

Singing: Placing in order from first to third was Gracie Jones singing "Honey Bun" with Alex Kreiser dancing, Vicki Greenberg singing "Cabaret," and Stephanie Hellwig and her rendition of "There You'll Be."

Dance: First place went to Bhumi and Neha Patel with their classical Indian dancing. This was followed by Pallavi Das, Indian Fusion Dance, and Chelsea Beroza, dancing to "Uptown Girl."

Band: The battle of the bands had first placing go to Sidehatch (Peter Mattes and Rudi Greenburg, singing "Linger," their original composition), and second place to Hydroplayne (Sam Cooper, Amir Behnia, Emma Dacol, Craig Sadler, and Piper Owens performing "If the Stars Fell").

Instrumental: Violinist Allison Taylor accompanied by pianist Carissa Moore took first place playing "Preludium and Allegro" by Kreisler. Second place went to Melanie Wong on piano performing "Valse" (Opus Postumum) by Chopin. Bryann Benton on piano performed "First Movement" by Aram Khatchaturian.

And, the overall winner is? Drumline (Matt Bushman, Amanda Lyon, Sean Mackenzie, Peter Mattes, Susie Montone, Natasha Nubgaard, Becca Ricketts, and Mandy Smith). Drumline is a spectacular precision drum team performing dramatically under strobe lights to the energizing and crowd-pleasing beat of the drums.

Congratulations to everyone who performed. If only the *Ed Sullivan Show* was still around.

(Note to Monocle readers below the age of 45: *Ed Sullivan* hosted a popular "variety show" in the mid-20th century.)

Boundary Realignment Presented to Board of Education

Parents, educators, elected officials and other concerned citizens joined to together on Thursday, January 20, 2005 to make their case to the Montgomery County Board of Education to consider altering boundaries that determine student enrollment for John Poole Middle School (JPMS). The concern raised by the Poolesville Cluster representatives focused on declining enrollment at JPMS that could negatively affect scholastic and other programs at the school.

The prospect of altering the boundaries for the Clarksburg Cluster, which is still in its earliest stages of development, could serve both the needs of reducing enrollment in that cluster while at the same boosting those prospects for JPMS.

Speaking on behalf of JPMS was Cluster representative Liz Smith and Commissioner Jerry Klobukowski. Mr. Klobukowski testified in favor the proposal. He stated that the Board has a unique opportunity to resolve student population issues since both the Poolesville Cluster and the Clarksburg Cluster both agree with

the proposal. "What is being proposed is a win-win situation on the budget level, class size level, and the student level." Stated Mr. Klobukowski.

About 20 individuals from the Poolesville area were present at the meeting to support the concept on the proposal. The Board will not make a decision prior to the next meeting on February 8.

Kids Assemble Kits for Tsunami Victims

On January 15 an estimated 100 people came to Poolesville Presbyterian Church to assemble Health Kits to be sent to Southeast Asia for the victims of the Tsunami Disaster. The group included children from PPC's Sunday school classes and two youth groups, Tiger Cubs from Pack 694 and Brownie Girl Scouts from Troop 4855. The items for the kits were donated by parishioners and members of the community. Local businesses got into the act as well. Drs. Pike and Valega donated toothbrushes and toothpaste for the kits. Selby's grocery, Cugini's pizza, and Darnestown Food Lion all donated items to feed the volunteers who came to help in the assembly of over 225 kits. PPC plans to assemble about 90 more kits over the next week. All the kits will be sent to Church World Service in New Windsor, Maryland to be shipped to the stricken area for distribution.



Young volunteers assembling kits at the Poolesville Presbyterian Church.

Things To Do

February 1

Thanksgiving in February
Dine at Bassett's or Domino's
10% of proceeds go to WUMCO

February 2 and 9

St. Peter's Preschool Time
Infants through Preschool children with Parents in attendance.
Bible Stories, Singing, Crafts & Snacks
10:00 a.m. & 1:00 p.m.

February 5

Cub Scout Pack 694 Pancake Breakfast
St. Peter's Church 8:00 a.m. to 11:00.

Meredith Springer Artist Awards
Delaplaine Visual Arts Center
Artists Reception and Show
3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.
Call 301-698-0656

February 7 and 21

MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers)
Poolesville Presbyterian Church
Young Mothers Support Group
9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

February 10

Poolesville Library Storytime
Children up to Preschoolers
Stories, crafts, music
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February 12 and 13

Cabin Fever Festival
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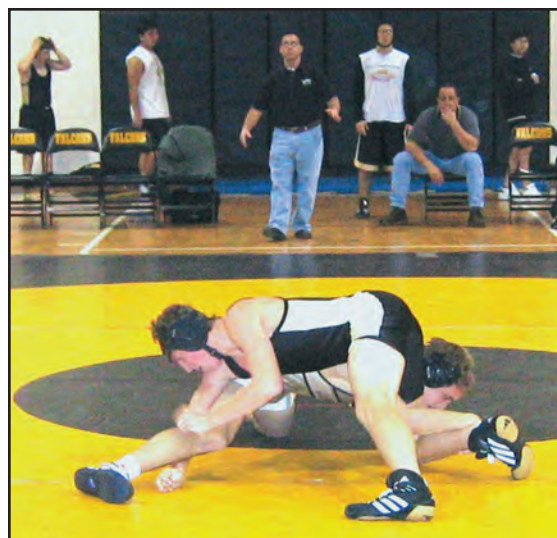
Youth Sports

Poolesville High Wrestling

By Dominique Agnew

When Poolesville High School's wrestling coach, Eric Britton, came to Poolesville last year to begin coaching, to say that the "wrestling program was in disarray was an understatement." Coach Britton, in his first year, was the third coach in three years, and there were only thirteen wrestlers on the team. His goal at that time was to build the program, and although he's succeeding, it is still his goal. From last year's team to this year's team, he's already nearly doubled the team size now that he has twenty-three wrestlers, but this still isn't enough. He would like to consistently have thirty wrestlers to fill all the weight classes. Recruiting new wrestlers has not been easy. There is a lot of competition at PHS for athletes, and there is a stigma attached to wrestling that is no longer of any consequence.

As with any 1A school, there is a smaller pool of students from which to draw to fill the same number of slots for sports as the larger schools. Basketball and indoor track are already well-established programs at Poolesville with indoor track having ninety-five student-athletes. Added to this, Coach Britton is not teaching in the school, but at a different school, so it's difficult to have preseason meetings and the like. Fortunately, on his side is the growing intramural wrestling club in Poolesville (see PAA Wrestling). A large number of wrestlers on the high school team are



PHS Wrestling Coach Eric Britton (standing) and Assistant Coach Jerry Vollmer (seated).

experienced wrestlers from the PAA wrestling team. The young wrestlers have been to some of the high school matches to support the team, and Coach Britton makes an effort to attend some of the practices and matches of the youth team.

Then, there's the "make weight" stigma. "This is long gone," he says. "Wrestlers are no longer killing themselves to make weight. There are many rules to make it, not only difficult, but nearly impossible for kids to do that." Before the season even begins, there is a whole procedure wrestlers need to follow, under the guidance of a doctor, that measures body fat compared with height and weight. This makes clear the healthy weight range for a wrestler.

Despite these factors, Coach Britton is very optimistic about the team and what it will achieve. Presently, his team is very young, of the twenty-three, there is one senior and five juniors. So if eight freshmen join next year to replace the one senior leaving, the numbers will be good for the team. This is what Coach Britton wants the most—to build a program with stability and competitiveness—and he needs the numbers.

While it is difficult for the team to do well this year (something Coach Britton says will change in two years when he expects to have a very competitive team) due to the lack of wrestlers in certain weight classes, he has some individual wrestlers who will do exceedingly well. Juniors Roger Torres and Jimmy Stout (son of Dan Stout, recent inductee into the East Stroudsburg High School Wrestling Hall of Fame) both went to states last year as sophomores and are expected to do so again this year. As it is, Roger Torres is presently ranked second in the county and fourth in the state. Hopefully, there will be at least five wrestlers who will qualify for regions.

With such strong wrestlers leading a young but growing team, the wrestling team shows much promise in becoming a powerhouse for its region and in the state.



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A Farewell to the Last of the Indians

By Rande Davis

What's going on at Poolesville High School, anyway? The walls reverberate with pounding feet, as literally scores of Poolesville High School students storm the hallways forcing innocent visitors to push against the lockers to escape the mayhem. As they run by, their smiling faces and light banter counters the impression that a riot has begun. Just as they slow down by raising their knees as high as possible toward their chests, they suddenly reverse their high-stepping action and begin to run backwards up the hall. This is no riot. Could it be the drama club dancers rehearsing some grand finale à la Chorus Line?

Just then a large man with a shaved head, beard, and very broad shoulders turns the corner and takes charge of this group. When you first see him, the thought *dance instructor* does not come to mind—nor should it. He is PHS teacher and track coach, Scott Mathias. Clearly there is no mayhem. Just the indoor track team warming up for practice after being forced inside due to the cold, snowy weather.

As the track team started out this year, a record ninety-plus students came out to be part of a group of athletes that has proudly set new records and scaled new heights.

The hard work, injuries, and the pressure of other responsibilities have reduced that early group to about seventy students. This is still the largest team in school with nearly ten percent of the students participating.

The team, separated by gender in competition, unites in practice. The PHS Indoor Girls' Track team has been nothing short of stunning in the past four years. As they come out of the

blocks this year, their record speaks for itself: County Champions (first ever), Region Champions (third consecutive) and State Champions (fourth consecutive).

With nearly forty percent of the team coming in as freshmen (twenty girls and eight boys), the team is actually beginning a rebuilding process. With so many freshmen, is Coach Mathias concerned? Not really. "It's always hard to rebuild, but we have great leadership with lots of experience and talent. We rely heavily on the senior class this year.

"In addition, many others have stepped up to a level equal to and beyond anything they have done before. Meghan Rose is a key example of this. She has run the 300 two times and the 500 this season and is ranked in the top ten in the state, all classifications, in both events. The blending of experience, talent, leadership, and competitive drive have made this season a lot of fun."

While the success of the girls has been prominent on this team, the boys' side continues to make gains. Coach Mathias points out, "They ended last season, fifth in the region with more boys qualifying for state competition than ever. They have a mix of seniors with experience and those without it, and their competitive drive has made this season a lot of fun."

There are fifteen seniors on the team. This elite group has been a significant part of the success of this team through the past four years. This group, the last of the Indians since they are the last class to have competed under the old moniker, is

—Continued on page 13.



Senior Indoor Track and Field athletes. Front: Bryann Benton, Stacie Payne, Jackie Hancock and Rachel Unger. Back: Reuben Goetzl, Caitlin Evans, Steven Eader, Eric Agnew, Greg Connor, Coach Mathias, K.C. Marchwicki and Peters Mattes.



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Youth Sports

Last of the Indians continued—

replete with individual achievement in reaching their team goals.

We ran through just some of their individual successes with the coach.

Caitlin Evans is the first four-year hurdler in team history. She ran her personal best in the 100-yard hurdles of 9.2 seconds this season. Bryann "Breezy" Benton has been a most varied runner participating in the 500m, 800m, 4 x 800 relays, pole vault, competing at least once in every event in track and field.

Stacie "Quadzilla" Payne has performed strongly in the 55m and 4 x 200m. She will be running for Dartmouth College next year. Rachel Unger, the star performer on PHS Coach Vollmer's cross country team, specializes in the longer events running the 1600m, 3200m and 4 x 800. She is the leading all-time active point scorer. Battling illness early this year, she is coming back strong.

Jackie Hancock, competitor in the triple jump and long jump, is the school record holder. K.C. Marchwicki is coming off an injury from last year

and has rebounded in this her second year to run in the 1600m and the 3200m.

Chris Rackens has run all four years and is the school's record holder in the 300m and the 500m. Coach Mathias was very pleased with first-time runner Eric Agnew, "Although he is new to the team, he has already ranked second in the 1000m in state competition (all classes)," states Mathias. Steve Eader is another versatile competitor, running everything from 200m to 800m. Sean Peters, who ran the 55m and 4 x 200, is the best "out of the blocks" on the team. Senior Greg Connor came out for the first time this year, competing in the 55m, 4 x 200, and 300m and has exemplified great attitude and leadership.

The athletes are looking forward to the championship season. Both the boys' and girls' teams will be in strong contention to win the Region and State titles; and there is a host of opportunities for them to win both individual and team awards. Just what do the coaches think about this season? "This team has worked hard, endured crazy weather, and performed great already. With the

focus that comes at this time of season (on regional and state competition) and with the leadership provided by the tremendous class of seniors, we are looking for great things, too." We learned a long time ago, don't doubt Coach Mathias.

PAA Wrestling

By Dominique Agnew

In 1997, Dan Stout approached the Poolesville Athletic Association (PAA) about the possibility of starting a wrestling team. "I wrestled all my life and loved the sport," says Dan. "There wasn't a program in Poolesville, and I knew that if I wanted my kids to wrestle, I had to start one." So it began.

That first year, Dan sent out a flyer to the elementary and middle schools in Poolesville and had twenty-five kids on the team. It was a rough year. "We took our lumps," says Dan, "but in the second year, we finished third in the league." In the third year, they were able to split into two teams, Poolesville Black and Poolesville Gold.

All along, Dan's goal was to teach the kids not only about the sport, but

to also teach them about "sportsmanship, how to compete, how to win, how to lose." He adds, "People who wrestled credit it with a lot of positive things. It teaches self-discipline." The emphasis on sportsmanship was realized since the team won three sportsmanship awards during Dan's tenure.

Initially, the team practiced at the high school, but as the team and support grew, it was able to arrange a congenial partnership with the middle school. The PAA wrestling team owns the mat they use for practice and matches (Dan was pleased to have gone to Pennsylvania and to have chosen the mat himself), and the middle school stores the mat. In exchange, the team uses the gym, and the middle school has use of the mat.

As his own children got into high school, it was difficult for Dan to coach the PAA wrestling team and watch his own kids. In 2002, when his youngest began high school, Dan continued to coach; however, by last year, he was no longer coaching, but continued on as commissioner (a team

—Continued on Page 14.



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Mystery History

The Canteen in the Woods

By Jack Toomey

The relic hunter had been in the woods for three hours on a bitter Sunday afternoon ten years ago. Even though the temperature was below freezing, he was not cold because of the constant swinging of his metal detector and his stooping and digging in the ground. So far he had found mostly beer cans and shotgun shells, but a .57 caliber bullet from the Civil War gave him some hope that he was close to his goal.

About two years before, he had been searching a field outside of Poolesville when an old station wagon stopped by the side of the road. An elderly gentleman had gotten out and watched. Since the relic hunter knew the property owner, he gave the man little thought. The old man watched for awhile and then walked out into the field. He said, "You think they were here?" The younger man answered that he had found Civil War relics there before. The old man replied, "I'll show you where they were—get in." He then drove to a site near Poolesville and pointed to a hill and said, "They were up there somewhere." The old man explained that he had devoted his life to researching Civil War encampments in the Montgomery County area. He believed that a New York calvary company had been camped in those woods in 1863, but he had never located the exact spot.

When the next winter came, the relic hunter spent his days off searching those woods for signs of the campsite. An occasional bullet or

piece of brass was found, but nothing to indicate a camp. Oddly enough, one afternoon, he found two 1906 quarters lying next to each other about two inches under the ground. Various scenarios played out in his mind about how these two coins could have been lost together at that spot. Summer came and the woods were forgotten, and the relic hunter returned to the fields away from the poison ivy and snakes.

He returned to the woods after the first killing frost in hopes of finding the long lost camp. Then, on that cold Sunday afternoon, he came to a hilltop. He thought that it was a perfect spot for a campsite. A westward exposure to catch the winter sun, water nearby, and a flat surface for tents. A strange feeling came over him. He soon found a brass calvary spur and a New York coat button. He knew that he had found the camp. A light snow began falling, but he pressed on. Bayonet tip protectors, a large cent dated 1857, another spur, and a brass part of a saddle were unearthed. Then he received a signal in his earphones. He kicked the leaves away to prepare to dig when he saw it. Only this time there would be no digging. Amazingly, he simply bent down and lifted the relic from the leaves. There it lay, practically in plain sight. It was a soldier's canteen. Who had left this canteen there? No soldier would ever have thrown away or lost his canteen. Only a hole or defect could have caused a soldier to abandon his canteen—at this spot in the woods—to be found one hundred and thirty years later at the very spot where it had been dropped.

Youth Sports

PAA Wrestling Continued—

liaison to PAA and the league). Finally, this year, he relinquished the reins. There were too many conflicts, but Dan says, "I am happy to see the program continue."

Continue it has, phenomenally. Steve Seeger who has been coaching for three years at PAA is, for the first time this year, the commissioner of PAA wrestling. "I wanted a slow changing of the guard," he says. He has taken the mantle from Dan Stout and wears it well. "We want the kids to have fun while learning discipline and how to become better wrestlers," Steve adds. "Evidently, we're doing something right because the team grew from twenty-six wrestlers last year to forty-nine wrestlers for this year." With this number of wrestlers, a third team was created, Poolesville White.

The PAA wrestling team is truly something special. For the past two years, the dedicated coaching staff has remained virtually unchanged. Mark Agnew, Kevin Dorsey, Chris Giarratano, Chris Lee, Bruce Savage,

—Continued on Page 17.



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The staff is friendly, a must when you're getting there early in the morning and you haven't had your coffee yet. They are also really knowledgeable and very helpful. It is like you're part of a great family which has really kept me coming back year after year. I can't tell you how many gym memberships I've had in my 50+ years and have had the whole second half of the year's membership totally wasted because I just wasn't motivated to go.

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The Master Plan—One Resident's Perspective

By Rande Davis

Two years overdue and almost exactly one year since the Poolesville Planning Commission presented the Town Commissioners with their draft Master Plan (MP), the commissioners have just completed the final public hearing prior to voting on implementation.

When it passes the commission, the MP will establish guidelines for Poolesville that will define potential structural, economic, and population changes for the next five years. State law requires this process, and concerned residents can rest assured that it is not being forced on the town by a few special interests. Even though it took a long time to develop the document, the end result is a positive exercise in small town democracy. The wide degree of resident involvement, the countless hours of volunteer study and input, and the sincere desire of the Planning Commission and the Town Commission to create a document that reflects the thinking of a broad spectrum of residents speaks well for everyone involved.

The plan has a number of stated objectives including a priority to maintain the small town or village characteristics of the town, adequate water and sewer, and initiatives to ensure that the town's schools offer programs at least on a par with schools in the more populous areas of the county.

Without changing the ultimate cap on the population of Poolesville at 7500, the plan recognizes that growth will need to be incremental and that the actual population will not rise beyond 6500 in the foreseeable future. The plan hopes to improve and strengthen the core downtown and business district.

The Maryland Heritage Areas Program, as part of the Master Plan, has already been approved. The Heritage Area designation enrolls Poolesville in an economic development program with the goal of strengthening the county's tourism potential, and it has been subject to significant misinterpretation of its impact on the town's governance. What distinguishes this program from other historical and preservation programs is the strictly voluntary involvement of any participating

individual or entity. Each property or business owner can decide whether to participate in the program. The town loses none of its autonomy and the program offers the potential of economic advantages that can help many of the businesses in town. It also makes available a range of grants and other economic incentives to the town and others who choose to participate.

The Master Plan encourages the importance of parks and recreation



Poolesville keeps changing one way or the other.

and supports land use densities that will maintain the town's rural ambience. The plan tries to ensure that any new development does not impose costs on existing residents, and is designed to maintain the Well Head Protection Program to protect local water resources.

The thirty-page document is available from Town Hall for any resident and while final adjustments will be made in the coming days, it is not too early to envision what Poolesville would be like in five years as a result of its passage.

It is unlikely that every aspect of the Master Plan would get full implementation within five years. The overall look of the town would hardly be different. The downtown might have some newly installed but antique-looking streetlights with possibly some reconstructed sidewalks. If they came on the weekend they might notice an influx of out-of-towners coming to visit expanded antique stores and shops and to visit the quaint but better-promoted historical sites. The restaurants might be busier and perhaps more varied. There could be as many as 440 new homes although it is more likely to be

fewer. Somewhere in the commercial district a housing program for seniors might have broken ground. It won't be a high rise, but don't be surprised at duplexes or housing on smaller lots.

In the area of roads you might find some redesign at Elgin Road and Jerusalem Road. Fyffe Road (west of Whalen Common) might be extended to Tama, connecting at Glass Way.

Just as important as the potential changes to the town are those things that will not change if the objectives of the Master Plan are realized. Educational programs offered at the schools will be broad and the prospect of school closings will be reduced. If you come in the summer the grass will be green because lawns will be watered through adequate resources as a result of new wells put on line.

Most of all, in five years the town will not have collapsed or have been taken over by the county, and the budget in Poolesville will still be in the black (as it was in 2004). The town will still be run by hardworking volunteers who bring to the table a wide range of points of view that stem from their varied backgrounds and areas of expertise. Poolesville will not lose its character, and not because of some kind of cosmic destiny for the town, but because final decisions will still be made through the involvement of concerned citizens who take on responsibility in elected offices and who accept positions on town committees, schools, and other civic organizations.

This is not to say the Master Plan is perfect, but to point out that without such a plan Poolesville could become unrecognizable. As a document with specific time limitations enjoined by resident involvement, the Master Plan is nothing more than a guide for the future. It does not control us. We control it. The process of its development is a lesson in civics and democracy, and of the involvement of many citizens participating individually and in groups.

Youth Sports

PAA Wrestling Continued—

Steve Seeger, and Chris Wilson form a tight-knit core of coaches helped by many parent volunteers, including equipment manager Judy Murgia and team manager Suzanne Tallia.

The kids practice three times a week at John Poole Middle School. Although, there are many new wrestlers who have joined the team this year, with seven coaches walking the mats, as well as parent volunteers, the kids get a lot of one-on-one attention. New wrestlers are taught basic moves, and more experienced wrestlers are taught more advanced techniques. As did Dan Stout, the PAA wrestling coaches place great importance on sportsmanship. Last year, the Poolesville Gold team won the sportsmanship award for the league. This award is determined by the referees who vote on the winner at the end of each season at the final district tournament.

Having good sportsmanship does not mean the team is also not competitive. As motivation for the wrestlers, there are special awards handed out each week. During the first practice after each match (matches are usually on Saturdays), wrestlers who had pins during the match receive pins (specially-made pins with black and gold beads) to keep. Then, the Heart Award is given out. The Heart Award is a medal carried and worn for one week only by the wrestler who does his or her best and doesn't give up. It doesn't necessarily go to a wrestler who wins, but it can go to a wrestler who perseveres despite having a tough match or a difficult opponent.

There are also big plans for the team. The coaches hope to have in place next year a beltway team. This team would compete at a more intense level of wrestling against other beltway teams outside of the region. Presently, there are some Poolesville-area wrestlers (not on PAA) who wrestle on beltway teams, but they have to go far to find a team with which to practice and compete.

With all this going for the team, it is no surprise that PAA wrestling is very competitive and always gives a strong effort at matches.

Equestrian

Straw: Revisited

By Debbie Lynn,
Poolesville Tack and Supply

At one time, straw was an integral component of every stable yard. Since wheat is grown in abundance, straw is cheap and readily available. For many years it was the standard bedding material for horses. Today, we have several choices in bedding material, and modern horse keeping reflects this variety. Straw has all but disappeared from most horse operations. But it deserves a second look. It has several advantages over more commonly used bedding, such as sawdust and shavings.

Horses are bedded to provide cleanliness, warmth, and padding. There are two basic ways to accomplish cleanliness. One is by sopping up the horse's urine and removing it from the stall. The other way is to allow the urine to drain away. For the first system, you want very absor-

bent material, such as sawdust or shavings. For a drainage method, you want bedding which holds the horse away from wet spots and keeps him clean, much as the liner in a baby diaper works. Straw is a good choice here. It's less absorptive than sawdust, and its bulky nature provides a dry layer for the horse to bed upon. Good stall drainage is a must for this type of horse keeping. Straw and rubber matted stalls are not compatible. For straw kept stalls, the floor should be packed crushed bluestone or small gravel. A layer of slightly larger gravel under the bluestone is even better.

There is another cleanliness advantage of straw over sawdust or shavings. With sawdust, the fine particles of dust accumulate in the coat, and absorb the oils out of the coat. Straw seems to polish the coat, and does not rob it of oil. The horse's feet, too, retain their natural moisture better. Wood fiber beddings can excessively dry the hooves.

For warmth, straw has a clear advantage over other types of bed-

ding. Its bulk captures more insulating air.

Another possibility for keeping your stalls warm is deep littering. This is an old fashioned way of keeping your horse's stall warm in the winter. It's seldom done now; we have stalls with heat lamps, and better insulated barns. But it is another outmoded system which deserves another look. Deep litter methods have several advantages. The stalls stay appreciably warmer, you use less bedding, and if it doesn't reduce your labor, at least it groups your labor time in an efficient way.

I recently compared the ambient temperature of my barn to that of a thermometer laid on top of the deep litter. The thermometer on the wall read 22 degrees, the one in the stall read 29 degrees.

Methods vary for keeping this type of stall. Here is my personal recipe: Part of my decision to use deep litter was the construction of my barn. It is a very old fashioned timbered barn, which is rumored to have been converted from a corn crib.

The upper outside walls are oaken slats, rather than solid walls. I cherish this ample ventilation, but it does make the barn colder. The stalls floors were gravel once, but are now bottomless pits, and pretty soggy even when unoccupied. Straw seems to hold up better in these conditions.

I keep a fairly deep layer of straw in the stall (ten to twelve inches) with high banks across the back and around the back corners. The bedding tapers off in the area of the race gate doors, so it doesn't spill out into the aisle. I leave a bare square for hay. On work days, I pick the manure piles out and redistribute the bedding if they've tossed it around. This takes only a minute or two per stall. Once a week, or as needed, I add a half a bale of straw. On my day off I take out the worst of the soiled bedding and add a whole bale per stall. This process takes far less total time per week than regular stalls, and the stalls stay clean and fresh smelling. I check for ammonia fumes constantly. So far, I've never

—Continued on Page 19.



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Equestrian

Straw Continued—

noticed any. If the weather warms up, I strip the stalls on my day off, and keep them as regular stalls until it gets cold again.

There are a couple of things to watch out for with this method. Ammonia fumes, created by the urine, are harmful to your horse's respiratory system. I think I avoid the problem by using this system only when it's cold, and keeping an ample layer of clean bedding on top. (I also sprinkle the stall floor with lime when I strip them.) Your straw needs to be "bright" straw. Shiny yellow stems, long pieces. Dusty landscape straw will be hard on your horse's lungs. Even good clean straw has more mold spores than good dry shavings. It's because it's a field grown crop. Hay contains mold spores, too. If your horse has COPD (chronic obstructive pulmonary disease) or any other breathing problem, you may wish to avoid straw.

Padding is more a matter of how much bedding, rather than type. There are all kinds of "rules" regarding correct bedding depth, but really, it depends on what you use, and what kind of stall floor you have. Rubber mats reduce the amount needed for padding, but since they are a low to no drainage system, you need to add extra bedding to absorb urine which is trapped in the stall. Concrete floors are not really suitable for stalls, but if you are stuck with them, lots of bedding can compensate. If you are using sawdust or shavings, over a reasonably soft floor, such as gravel or clay, 4-6 inches of bedding is the time honored "rule". You will need more depth if you are using straw, as it is more compressible. To really know if your stalls are bedded deeply enough, sit in them for a while! If you are not clean and comfortable sitting on your stall floor for a while, your horse probably isn't either. If your horse has "bedsores" (i.e.: rubbed elbows or hocks from getting up and down), definitely add more bedding. These types of rubs can become capped elbows or hocks.

Whether you choose an absorptive method of stall keeping or a drainage method depends on your requirements, and ultimately in your aesthetic preference. I love to walk

into my barn and breathe deeply of warm, liniment-scented horse and fresh straw. My horses like a good straw bed, and tend to lie down more readily. I think it seems more natural to them.

However you choose to keep your stalls, just remember what Hercules' fifth great labor was: the cleaning of the Aegean stables!

If you have any questions pertaining to horses, please feel free to e-mail them to: tackandsupply.com. I'll either reply directly, or in the form of a Q & A column in *The Monocle*.

Local History

Letters to Home From a Warrior Encamped In Poolesville

For the soldier in war, every battle they endure is a major conflict. A few in our midst argue that there was no real major civil war history in our area. Don't tell that to E. Bicknell, a Yankee from the 20th Massachusetts regiment, who was encamped at Camp Benton in Poolesville on November 11, 1891.

As he writes a letter to the Chelsea Telegraph and Pioneer about the "affairs" of Edward's Ferry, Mr. Bicknell has no idea he is writing about the beginning stages of a long drawn out war. Rather, he thought he was witnessing what was soon to become the "crushing of the rebellion."

His observations, while not necessarily understood by him at the time, indicates he is facing a tenacious and dedicated enemy that will not be easily stopped. The letter that follows is an excellent portrayal of the situation and events surrounding the conflicts at Edward's Ferry.

First Massachusetts Sharpshooters. Letters of the Civil War. November 11, 1861. Camp Benton, Poolesville, Nov. 11th, 1861.

To the Editor of the Chelsea Telegraph:

Friend Editor:-Affairs at Edward's Ferry remain precisely the same as before the battle. The usual monotonous routine of drill and guard duty is varied only by some slight preparations for the greater comfort of man and beast, which the near approach of cold weather renders necessary. Quite a number of substantial log houses have been erected, the spaces between the log chinked with mud, and the

roof covered with boards. Tents will probably be dispensed with when we go into winter quarters. The 20th Mass. Regiment has two ovens in operation, which turn out as good bread as can be made in the best establishments at home. The ovens are built under the level of the ground, with a bake-house adjoining, and, by working two sets of hands, furnish the whole brigade with warm bread every day. Every enterprising company has built some kind of a shanty, which answers for a cook-house. The favorite form is, a frame of poles covered with poles; considerate skill is sometimes shown in thatching these so the rain cannot penetrate. The horses are also sheltered from the weather by some sort of a covering. The best stable I have seen was made by throwing out the dirt to the depth of four feet, and then setting the roof over this. The horse is led down into this on an incline plane, and the roof being thatched, nothing better could be desired. Fireplaces have been built in almost every tent; but as I have seen very particular descriptions of the different methods of construction in the papers which come from home, I will omit a description. The underground tunnel is the favorite method just now.

The battle of Ball's Bluff has not ceased to be the exciting topic. Gen. Stone without exception blamed. Every one says that we might, as well as not, have been in possession of Leesburg if it had not been for the criminal mismanagement shown, in not providing sufficient transportation. The resignation of Scott gives satisfaction. The army has long felt that McClellan was its proper leader. Now, that he has full command, an advance movement is every day expected. But not such an advance as the papers at home have been predicting for the last two months,-not a simultaneous advance of the whole line from the Atlantic to the Mississippi. We have not such troops for such a movement, and I question if we could raise enough. Such an advance is impossible. Along the whole line the rebels have a chain of fortifications carefully chosen, so as to command the country through which we must pass, and bristling with cannon. Every bridge over which we must pass has been destroyed; every railroad track torn up; every road either render impassable or swept by a masked battery. To march a naked

line of troops against such a line of fortifications, through such a country, would ensure certain defeat. It would be simply a repetition of Bull's Run and Ball's Bluff. We must wrest their strongholds from them one by one. By a sudden concentration of our forces at some point, and a rapid advance, we can drive them from positions, and the same process repeated will give us another point; and thus, step by step, we can drive them back from the line of defences, which they have did all summer preparing; and then, as soon as this has been accomplished, we have them at our mercy. To ensure success every advance must be preceded by a thorough reconnaissance. The advance of infantry should be protected and covered by artillery. Whenever we occupy a new position, even if there does not at the time appear any probability of a retreat from it, it is far the most safe plan to throw up such a breastwork as would render our position impregnable. Unless I am mistaken, to go forward slowly, steadily, and surely, and to fortify as he goes, is the policy of McClellan; and unless he is forced by rash and impatient men, to what they are pleased to call "more vigorous movements." I have no doubt he will soon succeed in crushing this rebellion.

I walked down to the river the other day, to take a look at the late battleground. When within a quarter of a mile of the stream, the notes from a rebel band of music came swelling out, clear and lively, from behind a little patch of woods which concealed the regiment marching behind. A few soldiers were straggling about, curiously examining the field of the late conflict. An officer rode out in sight while I was looking and then disappeared behind a house. The breastwork we had thrown up seemed to have been destroyed, but some of the booths we had made to keep off the rain were still standing. The pickets on either shore are in nearly the same places as before; they see each other often, sometimes talk across the river, and occasionally exchange shots. The day I was down, the rebels fired twice at one of our pickets, but their balls did not come more than three quarters across. The shots were returned with about the same effect. The heavy rain of last Sunday raised the Potomac to such a

—Continued on Page 22.

In the Garden

A Gardener's Journey

By Maureen O'Connell

January is an ideal time to focus on your spring garden plans. The hardiest gardeners might well turn their backs on the garden this month. No harm will come if tasks are left to later in the year. By now the new seed and nursery catalogues are settling in deep drifts around my desk. It is very tempting to gorge oneself by ordering one of these and one or two of those. It is even more tempting, at least for me, to hunt for new rarities with names I can barely pronounce. We must have a plan.

Some readers may have recently moved into a house in a new subdivision, which lacks any gardens or mature plantings. Others might live in an older house whose gardens need a make-over or thinning. All of these situations need a different approach. The most essential point is to be yourself; trust your instincts. You have to please yourself, not me, not your neighbors and not your friend in the local garden club. The elements of a garden should inspire, surprise, or even change the way we see. No matter how humble the garden, it is truly successful if the gardener's presence is palpable.

My husband and I bought our first home in 1972. It was a traditional, split-level in a new subdivision with barely a tree in sight. I was a neophyte gardener and my backyard was the standard rectangular area lined up in a row with neighboring homes to the left, to the right and behind the yard. You could call it a very clean slate. I had my husband Jim dig a long patch on the side of the lawn area. In the early 1970s there were not as many interesting garden catalogues as there are today; Burpees was my gardening Bible. I was familiar with the basic plants, so I ordered zinnia, marigold and cosmos seeds. I bought geraniums, pansies and petunias. They were all the colors of the rainbow and more. Many people think that they don't know how to garden. That's my point. I did not either, but I did not know that. I have been a "humble gardener for a long time! If you are new to gardening, jump right in; get dirt under your fingernails. If you crave Crayola-

bright colors in your flowers, from zinnias to petunias, start planting. One of the most interesting, and funky, gardens I ever visited was awash in color, from plants of all hue to an iron side-gate painted school-bus yellow to finials on the picket fences brilliant in fire-engine-red and periwinkle. You are not trying to create a glimpse of Versailles; that can come later. Some gardeners believe that some colors don't mix together. I don't necessarily feel that way or follow that. You are learning now. Break the rules. Keep things simple. You don't need plant menageries. "Of a good beginning cometh a good end." (Thomas Heywood, English poet 1575-1650).

My biggest mistake in my first gardening endeavors, in hindsight, was to plant seeds. They are less expensive than established plants, and they are fun, especially for children, to watch grow. But, there is an inherent problem; as they emerge and grow, they should be thinned to give them good spacing. So to this day, I do not plant seeds (except morning glories because they are so wonderful) because I cannot bring myself to rip out of the ground a perfectly healthy seedling and throw it away. I would either leave them all jammed together or stick them anywhere I found a spot of unplanted soil. Not a good idea.

In 1975 we bought our second home. It was about twenty years old, so it had mature plantings. The only problem with that situation is that all those wonderfully thought out planting designs eventually out grew and took over their original location. The beautiful yellow forsythia and violet rhododendrons around the patio would every spring climb up the steps towards the garage and form an impassable tunnel. Ruthless pruning was called for. Around the pool was a high fence covered in Blaze climbing rose and privet hedge. Now that was quite a project to keep them tamed. Here we have an example of the wrong plants in the wrong location. With this in mind, you might say that you have lots of ideas for your garden, but how can you get some idea of how they will eventually look? The English decorator and garden designer David Hicks drew his ideas on black and white photographs. January is a good time to take photos of your winter landscape and use them to play with different plans. Tape tracing paper over the photos, or

make enlarged copies, and try out different fences, hedges, walls, pathways, pergolas, and so forth. By drawing the mature sizes of trees and shrubs, you just might save yourself time and trouble down the road.

This house did not have many flower gardens, except for some naturalistic daffodil plantings. To expand my gardening vistas, I became interested in roses. In the 1970s, hybrid tea roses were very popular. The more disease resistant, hardy and repeat blooming varieties were just being developed. So I stopped planting zinnia seeds and explored the rose world. There was a sunny spot at the end of the driveway and it soon became my rose garden. I sprayed, fertilized and watered all my new rose children; they thrived. I learned a lot also about perennials. The varieties that were available were daunting. The catalogues of White Flower Farm and Wayside Gardens replaced Burpee's. Jim became better at digging flower beds, or at least I told him that to keep him digging. His mulching skills also improved. Onward and upward.

We moved to Monocacy country in 1980. Twenty-five years ago, Barnesville, especially for D.C. folk, was considered "out in the country." Our friends would ask us for directions and whether they should pack a lunch to tide them over on their journey. My third house was five years old. The plantings consisted of many white pine trees scattered about, and a long garden stretched parallel to the house, which was planted with white Dogwood trees and Boxwood. It was very apropos for my Williamsburg style house. But, it needed flower gardens. When I moved from Darnestown, I brought with me my peonies, perennials and six roses (the new owner was not a gardener and did not want them). By the way, those peonies and roses still grow in

my garden. This was exciting now. I had more space to grow more plants. Jim became even better at preparing new plant beds, mulching, and planting tulip bulbs. He was now mechanized. (I don't know if that is a word, but it fits the bill and I'm using it). He had a tractor or another "toy" for any garden task. I stopped feeling sorry for him when I asked him to please plant 300 tulip bulbs, because his tractor attachment could do it for him.

In the mid 1990s I discovered David Austin's roses at the Chelsea Flower Show. Now more beds were needed. My knowledge was expanding, along with my aching back. No one ever said that gardening was easy on the bones; it has to be a labor of love.

Through this garden journey of thirty three years, I have come a long way from my hodgepodge style of gardening. And that is the point of my ramblings. The journey of the learning experiences and the mistakes was the fun and not a glimpse of Versailles. Create your garden. Do not be a slave to the latest en vogue garden designs and plants. We need more Gertrude Jekylls and Vita Sackville-Wests for today and tomorrow. I have a little wooden sign that hangs from a branch of the White Birch that says "Welcome to my garden." Don't feel you have to introduce foreign elements into your landscape to make a statement. It's no good trying to appropriate other people's style as a substitute for your own. No amount of combed sand is going to make me think I am in Tokyo. What is the answer? How should your garden look? Look to yourself. Throw in some risk, confidence, surprise, even some whimsicality. Welcome to the world of the garden.

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Focus on Business Framing Memories—Jo's Frame Shop

By Marcie Gross

"When the jeep's here, come on in," says Jo Mills, owner of Jo's Frame Shop. Jo opened her doors on Fisher Avenue on Poolesville Day, September 14, 2002. Since that day, Jo has become a valuable part of the Poolesville community as a member of the Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce, an active Poolesville Day participant, and supporter of the arts.

As you enter the shop, you'll hear the sounds of the blues and feel the warmth of all the colorful pieces surrounding you. This is Jo—she illuminates her shop. It is clear from meeting her that each object was handpicked, and Jo is proud to represent it. She stocks what her clients want, and it is obvious that Jo loves coming to work.

Jo quickly found her love of framing in the 1970s. She began as a picture framer of commercial art for hotels, then followed by framing wholesale work for many artists. They used all-white mats; however, Jo produced museum-quality framing with flair. Next, she turned to retail. Jo worked at two retail stores in Vir-



Jo Mills of Jo's Frame Shop

ginia, but dreamed of owning a framing shop of her own.

Jo and her husband Keith biked over the C&O Canal for many years which led them to Poolesville. After finding a home in Dickerson, the commute to and from Virginia became tiresome. The time had come for Jo to start her own venture. Jo found a spot in town and opened her shop. She and her family worked extremely hard getting it ready for the grand opening on Poolesville Day, and all of their work has certainly paid off. Clients from all over the Washington, D.C. metropolitan area have followed her because of her top quality framing. She loves the freedom in going to work when she wants and in stocking the items she likes.

Jo wants to reciprocate to the community from which she has benefited so much, and her generous spirit shines. She is always willing to contribute to the local schools' art programs. When she learned that

Monocacy Elementary would be performing Charlie and the Chocolate Factory in the spring, she immediately set out to discover how she could help. She donated several items the drama crew could use as props. In the future she would like to teach art students the basics in mat cutting and would like to have apprentices to whom she could teach the framing trade "the right way."

The walls and displays in her shop not only have items from vendors such as Lang Candles and Department 56, but also artwork from local artists and photographers. She offers art on consignment and enjoys doing antique frame restoration. Jo can frame anything. Just sit on the couch in her shop and look in her albums. She has framed military medals, flags, sports memorabilia, and even musical instruments.

Stop into Jo's Frame Shop to meet Jo, and frame your memories knowing they'll be in caring hands.

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Home View
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Day Tripper

Shenandoah National Park in Winter

By Bob Pickett

Bob Pickett is the Naturalist for the Potomac Appalachian Trail Club (PATC) and leads a monthly Natural History hike. PATC, a volunteer organization, has weekly hikes, maintains over 1,000 miles of hiking trails, has 32 rental cabins, and is a land conservation organization. More information may be found at WWW.PATC.net or by calling 703-242-0693.

Each season has its own opportunities that can make a hike special. For some, winter's benefits are composed of what it doesn't offer. It doesn't have mosquitoes or poison ivy, venomous snakes or high humidity. Nor does it have nettles or bees! Certainly, all good arguments. Perhaps the best element that winter doesn't offer is the concealing green wall of summer (although it's becoming all too common to be able to peek under the curtain, thanks to the serious eating habits of our ungulate friends).

The Shenandoah National Park is the place to be in winter. It's great fun to be able to see the stone walls and foundations of the former mountain residents. I recommend getting Carolyn and Jack Reeder's trilogy of books about the Park published by the PATC. The third book, *Shenandoah Secrets*, will take you along the trails and tell you wonderful stories about the people that lived in the homes that you'll be passing. Len Wheat has prepared a self-guided tour of eighteen cabins of the community of Old Rag, or Weakley Hollow, also published by the PATC. While the October fire of 2000 has destroyed some of the chestnut logs, it's still a fun way to spend a winter day. In addition, Len has an appendix listing 28 cabin sites within the Park that still had standing walls as of about 1990. Get 'em and go explore.

For me, the highlight of the winter season is identifying animal tracks in the snow. Get a field guide for tracks, such as the Peterson Field Guide to Animal Tracks, and find out who's active. Even though deer, squirrels, and deer mice are most common, bobcat, fox and coyote are not uncommon. And, yes, you can see bear tracks every month of the year; some arousing for a short stroll, while others may remain active all winter.

One highlight I have yet to

experience can only be had in January and early February, and it only happens late at night. This means you have to rent one of the PATC cabins, or camp on your own in the Park. If you're very lucky, one night, you'll hear what sounds like the screaming wails of a demented woman off in the woods. Consider yourself blessed if you hear this mating call of the male bobcat. They say you will not mistake this sound for anything else in the natural world.

Other winter opportunities? Well, notice earlier I said no mosquitoes. I didn't say no insects. In fact, a not too uncommon winter site on snow are the congregation of thousands of black dots, known as snow fleas. These springtail insects tend to appear on snow near the base of trees, where the reflected sun has melted the snow to the ground, allowing these primitive insects to emerge. They have earned the common name of snow fleas due to the two appendages they have on their last body segment, which enable them to spring a distance of several inches.

Speaking of insects, when you lunch by the creek and find half inch, slender winged insects walking about on the rocks and your clothing, you have found one of several species of stone flies that wait until midwinter to metamorphose from aquatic nymphs to terrestrial flying adults. At least, they don't have many predators out to disturb their courtship. After mating, the female deposits her eggs in the water, at which point, the life cycle is complete for both the adult male and female.

Finally, wintertime is a good time to take up birdwatching. First, you don't have the hundreds of summer possibilities to deal with, and, second, as mentioned before, NO LEAVES! You may not find any birds for an hour or more, and then a flurry of bird activity is upon you, with numerous species flying through the forest in mixed flocks. Take advantage of the opportunity; they may pass through in a matter of minutes, leaving you alone again.

Birds tend to flock in winter. The logic suggests that more eyes mean more food sources found, and more eyes to detect danger (thus, less wasted time looking for predators).

Summer flocking doesn't work due to the territorial needs of birds. Interestingly, woodland flocking is more common with insectivores than with seedeaters. Since seeds come in so many different forms, so do the forms of the bird bills, and thus, seed preferences for each species. Thus, it's not reasonable to expect that searching for communal food sources for such diverse needs will work. Two exceptions are noted. First, intraspecific flocks (all one species) can be found, such as juncos, robins and cedar waxwings, looking for their common food source. Juncos are commonly found foraging in four or five favorite foraging sites, usually no more than two to three hundred yards apart. Incidentally, if you see a flock of waxwings, notice the color of the tip of the tail. Historically, the tip is a bright yellow, but, as the result of the introduced Asian shrub honey-suckles to the waxwings diet, some of the tips are orange! Second, seedeaters do tend to flock in field habitats, where a greater abundance of species and quantities of seeds can be found. Field flocking seed eaters (not an obscenity or rock band) will tend to be more sedentary, thus, more amenable to birding.

Flocking does work for the insectivores, like the interspecific flocks of Carolina chickadees, tufted titmice, white-breasted nuthatches, golden-crowned kinglets, and, maybe a couple of brown creepers and downy woodpeckers. The reason it works, while insectivores have just as many varied bills and specialized feeding habits as the seed eaters, is, unlike the seed eaters, they can find all their needs in one site. You can notice how the chickadees tend to feed on the outer branches, often high in the tree, while the titmouse tends to search the thicker inner branches, or on the ground. Kinglets are very active and tend to hover around branches, snatching insects as they explore the outermost branches. Interestingly, the brown creeper and the nuthatch are both found on the tree trunk. But, while the brown creeper is always found spiraling from the bottom and traveling up, the nuthatch will start high in the tree and travel down the trunks, so that each tends to find eggs and larva that the other would miss.

When you find these winter bird flocks, try to notice who is leading the procession. Studies can be found

supporting either chickadees or titmice. Both tend to be loud and vociferous. Expect to find from four to six of both species, including the mated couple whose breeding grounds you now find yourself, and their offspring and perhaps a few other locals.

Local History

Letter from Home Continued—

height that it overflowed its banks until the river and canal were one. Part of the canal was washed away, and until it can be repaired nothing can pass.

Gen. McClellan has ordered that each soldier shall drill one hour each day with a knapsack packed and strapped upon his back. This order is strictly observed, and gives general satisfaction. The men are glad to have the opportunity to accustom themselves to this exercise. Every one who has carried a knapsack knows that the reason why the knapsack rides so heavily that it chafes the muscles which are not used to the labor.

This company (sharpshooters) has nothing to do, just now, but to keep their guns in order. Gen. Lander has gone to Washington, thus relieving us of the rather severe duty of guarding headquarters. Capt. Saunders has gone home, and letters received from him sate that three companies are being raised to join us and stand by us in action. We are to be furnished with a revolver apiece, and then I should think the whole would be a "whole team." We can pick the rebels off with our rifles at a mile distant! those who are to join us can engage them at shorter distance; and at close quarters we can receive them with our revolvers and bayonets; so let them come on!

While the Captain is gone, the command rests with Lieutenant Gleason, a gentleman, and a good officer. He has the good-will and respect of the men, and we should be sorry to part with either our captain or first lieutenant.

E. Bicknell.

(Chelsea Telegraph and Pioneer, November 23, 1861, Pg. 1, Col. 3.)

The Pulse

Guiding Eyes

By Rande Davis

You have known about "seeing eye dogs," and you most likely find their success in helping persons with vision impairment extremely impressive. What may surprise you about their development is the important role you can play in their training and success. What may surprise you even more is that even when dogs in training fail to graduate, they often end up in a career that just may save your life.

There are a number of people and organizations dedicated to bringing guide dogs to those in need. Nationally, there are programs such as Seeing Eye, Leader Dog, and Guiding Eyes for the Blind (GEB). Locally, the Monocacy Lions Club and Carroll-Manor Lions Club, groups whose central mission is helping persons with vision problems, have supported the Lions Leader Dog Program for decades. Maryland's Guiding Eyes for the Blind (www.guidingeyes-md.org) is part of a national group that is responsible for training up to five hundred dogs annually.

In our area, Kathleen Hayward and Michelle Sauder of Poolesville are two of your neighbors who are devoted to playing an essential role in the development of such dogs through GEB. Mrs. Hayward is now working with her fourth dog, while Mrs. Sauder has recently answered the call to be a "raiser," the term for persons responsible for the pre-training phase of the program.

Raisers often compare their role to that of a parent. The raiser will be matched with an eight-week-old German shepherd, Labrador, or golden retriever in a relationship that will last between twelve to sixteen weeks before the dog, as stated by Mrs. Hayward, "moves out to go to college and enters a career in service." Once accepted into the guiding eye training program, the dog will undergo four to six months of intense and specific training as a guide dog. Raisers often attend the dog's formal graduation.

The process of developing a guiding dog can take up to two years at a cost of \$35,000, which results in an average of eight to ten years of service to a person who is blind. Through the developmental process, the dog undergoes periodic evalua-

tions to assess its ability to succeed as a guide dog. For the raiser, like a parent at SAT time, the big moment comes when the dog is tested through the In for Training (IFT) evaluation which will determine whether the dog will go on to "college" and graduate as a guiding dog.



Kathleen Hayward and Preston

GEB specializes in training dogs to handle high-stress situations faced by blind persons living in highly populated, urban environments. Step by step, the dog goes through a process of training to build its confidence and strengthen its ability to focus only on the moment, and that allows it to fulfill its purpose. Eventually, its success in being able to ignore loud and highly distracting situations will determine whether or not it can become a guiding dog.

The dog lives with its raiser who is required to put the dog through various daily and weekly routines to regulate and minimize many of its natural instincts. This pre-training process focuses on basic obedience, command training, and exposure to controlled socialization situations

that include handling distractions of loud noises, other animals, traffic, and control of normal bodily functions.

Formal weekly classes and quarterly visits from GEB staff follow an eight-week orientation and training program to educate raisers in their role. Just as in any relationship,

never approach the dog without permission from the raiser. You should also avoid eye contact, and while you may comment on the dog to the owner, such comments should not be made directly to the dog. Talk only to the raiser, not the dog. You will recognize the guiding dog by its blue jacket that clearly states it is in training. Although the dog may appear to be simply settled and resting, keep in mind that it is learning one of its most important lessons of "settling." Once it is fully trained and in service, a guiding dog will spend a great deal, if not most of its time, settled at the feet of its owner waiting for the moment when it is needed. Key to its usefulness and success is its ability to not be distracted.

Raisers are also very appreciative of students and others who volunteer to help put the dog through its daily routine. Raisers, like parents, can often use a babysitter.

As you can well expect, not every dog makes it through the entire process. Only about forty percent go on to become a guiding or leader dog. Many, however, move into another essential career, one that may just save your life someday. Guiding eye dogs, when moved into a bomb-sniffing training program through the Alcohol, Tobacco, and Fire arms (ATF) or local police departments, have a nearly one hundred percent success rate of serving our homeland security by identifying bombs and other explosive ordnance. It is intriguing to learn that one of the reasons for their ability to successfully identify explosives is that the only time they get fed is by the hand of the instructor and only after successfully finding such material. Every day, the instructor must set up situations where the dog will find explosive material so that it can be rewarded and fed.

Possibly the most positive aspect of the guiding eye program is this unique "win-win" aspect which results in dogs serving the public even when they are not able to continue in their intended roles as guides to persons who are blind. The local Lions clubs, individuals like Mrs. Hayward and Mrs. Sauder, local veterinary Doctors Eeg and Anderson who often donate their services to such dogs, are examples of concerned citizens helping out those with sight problems. If you would be interested in doing the same, feel comfortable contacting any one of them.

bonding with guiding dog varies from raiser to raiser and dog to dog. Raisers can maintain a lifelong, although distant, relationship with their dog, which keeps them informed of the dog's development and ultimate role of service and can include future visits.

Just as not every dog is suitable for the guiding eye training, not everyone should consider being a raiser, but all of us have role to play and can help in a variety of ways. Mrs. Hayward wants people to know, when encountering a raiser and a dog in pre-training, what rules will be most helpful. Rules, by the way, that are good suggestions when encountering any strange dog. First, remember that the dog, although a puppy and cute, is not a pet. You should



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