

The Monocacy MONOCLE

Keeping An Eye On Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

November 17, 2006

Volume III, Number 16.



The Frederick Children's Chorus is getting ready for the holidays. Read all about it in Center Stage on Page 6.



This photogenic duo (we've exceeded our quota of "kid" jokes) should make you want to visit our Ag News section on Page 5.



Meagan Fedders, Lily Nichols and Anna DeSota are in the garden on Page 10.



See our Halloween photo Special on Page 12.

Vandalism That Crossed the Line Turns More Violent

By Rande Davis

Khalid Shahin, proprietor of L'Nora's restaurant in Poolesville, came to work just after Halloween to find that obscene and vile graffiti had been spray-painted on the front of his establishment. Upset with this turn of events, it was not until he got to the back of his store that he found the desecration even more disturbing. There, in yellow spray paint, he discovered the words "Arab B***h" covering the back wall. Vandalism, often understood to be by bored youth, is not unusual and unfortunately comes about from time to time. This, however, crossed the line.

Mr. Shahin, a naturalized American citizen from Lebanon, was deeply shocked and hurt that such a thing could occur in Poolesville. "I have been told that some of this sentiment is held by a few in town, but I was still very angered. Vandalism is one

thing, but this is so insulting."

He opened L'Nora's, a take-out restaurant specializing in pizza and other light lunch and dinner selections, over a year ago. "I was then and still remain excited about building my family business in Poolesville. When I left my IT career to venture into food, I looked at many places to go. The Poolesville community seemed so perfect. I still think this is something that is not about the town but more about some kids with too much time on their hands. Still, it is very upsetting to confront."

While the graffiti incident was very disturbing, the morning of November 12 brought even more upsetting news. As Mr. Shahin was having Sunday breakfast with his daughter, the Montgomery County police arrived at his home to inform him that vandals had again targeted his store. This time, however, they had thrown bricks through his front window and door.

The report to the police indicated an automobile hit a brick sign at

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Racist graffiti behind L'Nora's in Poolesville.

A Brave Neighbor Returns Home

By Rande Davis

When Poolesville Elementary School teacher, Patrick Stevens attended last year's all-day Veteran's Day festivities at Monocacy Elementary School in October, it was a day of bittersweet emotions. It was the day he was deployed to Iraq.

His return was in time to be on hand for the November 10 Veteran's Day event at MES, and he received an especially heartwarming greeting from the students and faculty.

Most in the area know Mr. Stevens for his fifteen years of teaching fourth and fifth grades at PES, and his deployment touched the students in a very personal way. As he left, promises made of keeping in touch were

promises kept, and for the next twelve months, Mr. Stevens, the teacher, be-

came Warrant Officer (CW3) Stevens, a black hawk helicopter pilot.



Warrant Officer (CW3) Patrick Stevens.

Warrant Officer Stevens has been in the Maryland National Guard for twenty-five years and is attached to Charlie Company – 2nd of the 224th. In Iraq, his unit was attached to the 7th Battalion – 101st Airborne. While in Iraq, his duties included flying VIP missions, general support, and some special operations. Some of the notable VIP missions included flying the Iraqi prime minister, American ambassador, Saddam Hussein's defense team,

-Continued on Page 18.

Family Album

Sponsored by: *Selby's Market Your IGA Hometown Food Store*



In action at the Cub Scout Food Drive.



Folk's forks in action at the St. Mary's dinner.



The Veterans Day ceremony at Whalen Park.



The action was hot and heavy at the Poolesville Commissioner election.



Chip Dunn in action at the St. Mary's Turkey and Ham Dinner.

Big Board

PHS Drama Club Offers First Presentation of Year

The Midnight Players of Poolesville High School presents Guys and Ghouls at the high school auditorium on November 16, 17, and 18. All evening performances start at 7:30 p.m. with the Saturday matinee at 2:00 p.m. Tickets sell for \$8.00 for adults and \$5.00 for students.

Candy Cane Manor at Kentlands Mansion

Shop in the relaxed atmosphere of the historic Kentlands Mansion for artisan-made holiday decorations, furniture, jewelry, fabric items, and so much more. The show runs from November 16 through 19 opening at 10:00 a.m. each day. Thursday and Saturday, doors will close at 7:00 p.m. Friday hours will end at 9:00 p.m., and Sunday, the show will end at 5:00 p.m. Admission is free. Visit candycanemanor.com or call 301-972-6354 for more information or directions.

Operation Santa – Your Chance to Remember the Troops at the Holidays

The Arthritis and Osteoporosis Center of Maryland will be collecting items for soldiers posted overseas who will not be home for the holidays. Suggested items are: laundry detergent, puzzle books, nerf balls, jerky, granola bars, chips and crackers, sunflower seeds, nuts, dried fruits, trail mix, squeezeable peanut butter, raisins, hard candy, books, handheld games, gels for insoles, "clean" magazines, and party supplies (for New Year's Eve). Items can be accepted from 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m. from November 1 through December 14. The center is at 71 Thomas Johnson Drive in Frederick. Call 301-624-1164 for more details.

Country Legend Phil Vassar

Coming to the Weinberg Center for the Arts in Frederick is Phil Vassar. Renowned for his songwriting, penning country hits in the 1990s, he is now a sought-after performer. He will be playing his piano and singing songs from his latest album, Greatest Hits, Vol. 1, at the Weinberg on Saturday, November 18 at 8:00 p.m. Tickets prices range from \$25.00 to \$40.00. For more details, visit www.weinbergcenter.org or call 301-228-2828.

St. Peter's Christmas Attic Sale

Poolesville's St. Peter's Episcopal Church will offer thousands of Christmas items and decorations donated

by parishioners and friends of the church. The event will be Saturday, November 18 from 9:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. This annual event will also offer a bake sale and pecans in time for the busy holiday baking season.

An Evening with Chris Matthews

On Sunday, November 19, at 3:00 p.m., Chris Matthews will share insight into the world of politics with humor and wisdom. As host of MSNBC's Hardball and NBC's The Chris Matthews Show, he is well-known, well-educated, and well-respected. Ticket prices range from \$17.00 to \$47.00. For more details, visit www.weinbergcenter.org or call 301-228-2828.

Community Thanksgiving Service Open to All

Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic Church will host this year's annual community Thanksgiving service on November 19 at 7:00 p.m. Poolesville area churches traditionally join together each year for this special community worship service with the worship being shared by various clergy from the area. The church is located at the corner of Tom Fox and Fisher Avenues.

Russian-American Circus

On November 24 at 1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m., enjoy the stunning combination of circus arts, dance, music, and comedy that create a unique melding of the artistry and magic of the circus with the rich tradition of the European theater. Trained and produced by veterans of the world-famous Moscow Circus, kids between the ages of six and sixteen fill the stage and dazzle audiences with synchronized acrobatics, juggling, unicycling, acrobatics, and gravity-defying balancing acts. Outrageous costumes fill the show with color and movement. This is a special treat appropriate for the whole family. Tickets are \$10.00 to \$15.00. For more details, visit www.weinbergcenter.org or call 301-228-2828.

More Holiday Sale Days in Clarksburg

The Clarksburg United Methodist Church thinks you should beat the hectic shopping at malls and join them on November 25 between 10:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. They will host a holiday sale festivity that has representatives from Weekenders, Tupperware, Pampered Chef, Longaberger Baskets, Usborne Books, Discovery Toys, Party Lite, Tastefully Simple, Silpada Designs – Home Décor, Avon, Premier Designs, Creative Memories, R & E Crafts, Eagle Pool Balls, Mary Kay,

and the Body Shop. Along with offering holiday gift ideas, they will have refreshments and door prizes. The church is located at 23425 Spire Street (near Route 121) in Clarksburg.

A Judy Collins Christmas

Don't miss Judy Collins accompanied by the Frederick Children's Chorus on Saturday, December 2 at 8:00 p.m. at the Weinberg Center for the Arts. After a fifteen-minute opening act by the Frederick Children's Chorus, they will then accompany her on numerous holiday favorites. Between the incomparable alto-soprano of Judy Collins and the angelic voices of the Frederick Children's Chorus, it will be a wonder if anyone leaves with a dry eye. Ticket prices range from \$38.00 to \$48.00. For more details, visit www.weinbergcenter.org or call 301-228-2828.

Maryland Christmas Show

The 18th Maryland Christmas Show at the Frederick Fairgrounds will be on November 24 and 25 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. The show brings together many fine artisans and merchants to make your holiday shopping a really fun time. With seven buildings offering holiday items, you can view the work of over five hundred top artists and craftsmen. Among

the items for sale will be furniture, quilts, jewelry, clothing, wreaths, toys, ornaments, and many, many more selections.


Emergency Preparedness on Agenda in Clarksburg

The Clarksburg Civic Association invites community members to join the association at their monthly meeting on November 27 at 7:30 p.m. at the Wimms Recreation Center on Wimms Road next to Clarksburg High School. The topic for the evening will be Emergency Preparedness: Are you Ready? The presentation will be by the Damascus Emergency Preparedness Team (DEPT) with the main speaker, Brian Geraci, from the Homeland Security Department.


Health Event Scheduled at Area Church

Clarksburg United Methodist Church located at 23425 Spire Street will host a Life Line Screening event on Saturday, December 9. Lifeline Screening, a provider of quality health screenings, will offer three medical tests to detect vascular problems that can lead to stroke. The cost for the various tests runs from \$35.00 to \$129.00, and interested persons can call 800-

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Happy Thanksgiving




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Commentary

Editor's Note: The following is solely the opinion of the author and does not necessarily represent the opinions of Monocacy Press LLC or the Monocacy Monocle.

The Next Move Will Be More Difficult

By John Clayton

Okay, I'm a Democrat. I have admitted it before, and I am admitting it again, even though the upcounty is predominantly GOP. However, I seem to be having a great week. It started when the Redskins beat Dallas on Sunday. Then, following an absolutely boffo election day, the Democrats have taken both houses of Congress, everything that was up for grabs in Montgomery County, and practically everything in the state. I will forever remember November 7, 2006, with great fondness. Even Britney and Kevin's divorce announcement couldn't take the smile off my face (Britney who? Exactly).

Frankly, I was prepared to accept less. I really thought Governor Ehrlich might remain the governor, and even Michael Steele was said to be making up ground on Ben Cardin. Then, lo and behold, neither of those races even turned out to be close. It even got better in Virginia where Senator George Allen, an unreconstructed Bush Republican, lost his seat to a moderate Democrat, James Webb. This is amazing when you consider that Allen was able to campaign as a Republican, unlike Mr. Steele here in Maryland.

But the purpose of this column is not to gloat, or to dance in the end zone—at least not for more than two paragraphs. I personally know, like, and respect many Republicans, including my good friend and publishing partner, Rande Davis. In fact, I may have as many friends, relatives, and in-laws that are Republican as not. With a few notable exceptions, I don't take any particular glee in their current misery. In fact, I am somewhat sympathetic because I think they have been let down by the National Republican Party and by the president, as we all have been. Many fine public servants such as our own Delegate Jean Cryor got caught up in the electoral tsunami, and through no fault of their own, lost their elected positions.

We Democrats have to remember that some of these new senators

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and representatives were elected not because they were Democrats but because they weren't Republicans, and much of the rancor and gridlock in Congress has been between the president and his own party, particularly his right wing. Perhaps these new moderate Democrats will join with like-minded moderates from both sides of the aisle and actually get something done.

The current consensus holds that immigration reform, education, Social Security, and Medicare are plausible candidates for concerted sleeves-rolled-up compromise. Can these folks get something done without worrying about who gets the credit in 2008? Probably not—let's not go crazy here—but we can hope.

In his biography, Lincoln, David Herbert Donald quotes Abraham Lincoln as saying, "Nearly all men can stand the test of adversity, but if you really want to test a man's character, give him power." The American people have decided that the Republican Congress, after twelve years in power, has failed that test. The Democrats will need to prove they can do better in a much shorter time.

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Ag News

Getting Ready for the Holidays

By Alicia Agnew

After finishing a busy and successful show season with their goats, the 4-H Dairy Goat Club is getting ready to help out others for the holidays. Every year, 4-Hers and their families have several projects to help needy families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. For the Holiday Giving Program, each family will contribute food and other items to a basket that will be delivered by the club to a needy family in the area. The club puts together one basket for Thanksgiving and one for Christmas. At Christmas, the club also gathers presents for children of the family.

Another annual event in which the Dairy Goat 4-Hers participate is caroling at the Friends Nursing Home in Sandy Spring, Maryland. Last year, members and their families put on a little show including Irish dancing, violin, and guitar. This year the 4-Hers will be caroling December 18 at 7:00 p.m. Also this year, the Dairy Goat 4-H Club has decided to take on

a new project: Operation Christmas Child. Each 4-H family will fill an empty shoe box with toys to be sent to a needy child around the world. For more information about this project, you can visit www.samaritanspurse.org/occ.

As well as their various service projects, these 4-Hers are very active in their own specialty: Dairy Goats. At each meeting, a 4-Her presents a goat-related topic to the rest of the

club. This can involve breeding, kidding, milking, nutrition, and health. In the spring and summer, the club participates at local shows. Last year, one member, Kaylene Lyons, was the Maryland Dairy Goat Youth Representative. Others members have also been involved in the Fair Court in the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair; Kaylene's sister, Casey Lyons, was a fair princess this past summer. This year, the goat club numbers

nearly twenty youths from all parts of Montgomery County. You can find them and their goats every year in Barn 38 at the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair.

Dairy goats are found worldwide, and more people in the world drink goat's milk than cow's milk. In the U.S., the American Dairy Goat Association (ADGA) now recognizes eight individual dairy breeds. Dairy goats can produce more than a gallon a day after kidding in the spring. Members of the Dairy Goat 4-H learn how to raise kids and show them in the show ring. Goats are judged against a standard laid down by the ADGA. In showmanship, 4-Hers have the opportunity of showing their goats and their knowledge of goat confirmation. In the fall, 4-Hers learn about choosing a good buck (male goat) and how to improve their bloodlines.

The Dairy Goat 4-H Club meets the third Monday of every month, sometimes at the fairgrounds and other times at the OBA Bank in Germantown. New members who are interested in learning more about goats are welcome. You don't have to have your own goat to participate. For more information about joining the club, contact Diana Patton at (301) 383-4857 or Kathy Lyons at (301) 570-5577.



Thinking about the holidays?

Local News

Poolesville Commissioners Protest Proposed County Cable Agreement

The following letter was sent to the Montgomery County Council on behalf of the Poolesville Town Commissioners addressing a pending cable TV franchise agreement between Montgomery County and Verizon. The current proposal before the council would deploy Verizon services to all of the county within three to five years, except for Poolesville and the surrounding western Montgomery County area, would not be provided service for at least seven years.

A council vote on the issue is scheduled for the end of the month. Poolesville Commission President Ed Kuhlman signed the letter on behalf of the majority of the Commissioners. Commissioner Link Hoewing, a Verizon employee, recused himself from the decision.

The letter is dated November 18, 2006, and is addressed to Montgomery County Council President

George Leventhal.

The letter reads:

The Commissioners of Poolesville understand that the Verizon cable TV franchise agreement, as negotiated by the County Executive, is now before the County Council for approval. The Commissioners welcome competition in the cable TV arena; however, the Commissioners object to Verizon's deployment schedule which ignores a concentrated population center larger than many down county municipalities. Along these lines, there are several points which should be considered prior to final action by the Council.

First, one of the requirements of the Montgomery County's original cable TV franchise agreement (dating back to the 1980's) was that all municipalities, regardless of size, would have cable extended to them. That same requirement needs to be included in the Verizon Agreement with installations in Poolesville to be completed in one to three years of the effective date of the agree-

-Continued on Page 15.

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Things to Do

November 16, 17, and 18

Midnight Players – Guys and Ghouls
Poolesville High School Auditorium
7:30 p.m. plus 2:00 p.m. matinee on Saturday
Admission: Adults \$8.00, students \$5.00

November 16 to 19

Candy Cane Manor
Artisan and craft holiday shopping
Kentlands Mansion
Open everyday at 10:00 a.m.
Admission is free

November 17

PES PTA Fall Dance
Poolesville Elementary School
Benefit for Relay for Life
Admission: \$3.00

November 18

Christmas Attic Sale: St. Peter's Church
Holiday items and bake sale
9:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.
Country Legend Phil Vassar
Weinberg Center for the Arts, 8:00 p.m.
Admission: \$25.00 to \$40.00

Longaberger Basket Bingo
Benefit for Poolesville Community Pre-school

St. Mary's Pavillion in Barnesville
Doors open at 5:30 p.m.; the games begin at 7:00 p.m.
Tickets \$15 advance, \$20 at the door. 301-349-0781

November 19

An Evening with Chris Matthews
Weinberg Center for the Arts, 3:00 p.m.
Admission: \$17.00 to \$47.00
Community Thanksgiving Worship Service

Our Lady of the Presentation, 7:00 p.m.

November 22

St. Peter's Pre-School Bible Study, 1:00 p.m.

November 24

Russian-American Circus
Weinberg Center for the Arts
1:00 p.m. and 5:00 p.m.

Admission: \$10.00 to \$15.00

November 25

Holiday Shoppers Festival Gift Show
Clarksburg United Methodist Church
10:00 a.m. to 2:00 p.m.

November 24 and 25

Maryland Christmas Show
Frederick Fairgrounds
500 Vendors, 8 Buildings
10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

November 27

Book Discussion Book
Poolesville Library
A Single Shard by Linda Sue Park
7:00 p.m. - Appetizers; 7:30 p.m. - Discussion

Emergency Preparedness: Are You Ready?

Wimms Recreation Center, Clarksburg
7:30 p.m.

November 28

Family Story Time
Poolesville Public Library
Stories, fingerplays, and music, 7:00 p.m.

November 30

Story Time
Poolesville Public Library
Three to Six Year Olds
Stories, fingerplays, and music
10:30 a.m. and 1:30 p.m.

December 2

A Judy Collins Christmas
Judy Collins with FCC sings Christmas favorites
Weinberg Center for the Arts
Tickets \$38.00 to \$48.00

December 3

Community Holiday Lighting Ceremony
Whalen Commons – Poolesville
Early Evening

December 9

Life Screening
Clarksburg United Methodist Church
Cost: \$35.00 to \$129.00
Pre-Registration is required
800-324-1851 or visit lifelinescreening.com

Center Stage FCC to Accompany JC

By Dominique Agnew

The Frederick Children's Chorus is honored and thrilled to be accompanying the famed Judy Collins for a "Judy Collins Christmas" on Friday, December 2, 2006, at 8:00 p.m. at the Weinberg Center for the Arts in the heart of Frederick. Judy Col-



The Frederick Children's Chorus at Strathmore.

lins made her musical debut at the age of thirteen performing Mozart's "Concerto for Two Pianos" soon after which she changed her instrument of choice to the guitar and began her folk/pop musical career that has spanned more than four decades. The Frederick Children's Chorus, under the leadership of Artistic Director Judith DuBose, will first be the opening act, performing songs from their winter concert repertoire for fifteen minutes, then they will sing familiar Christmas songs and carols (some of Judy Collins's own arrangements) with Judy Collins. It promises to be an evening to remember.

This invitation to perform with an artist of the caliber of Judy Collins is just one of numerous opportunities the Frederick Children's Chorus has received and continues to receive due to its unmatched excellence and artistry. Founded in 1985 by Judith DuBose, the chorus has grown from a handful of singers to over two hundred voices. The Chorus is composed of four different choruses: the Training Chorus, for beginners; the Intermediate Chorus, a step up from the Training Chorus; the Concert Chorus, mostly fifth through eighth graders and the focus

of the chorus; and finally, the Chamber Singers, high school students who have outgrown the Concert Chorus and are ready for more, namely, a repertoire usually found performed by college and professional choirs. While singers in the two preparatory choruses prepare for the Concert Chorus, the Concert Chorus and the Chamber Singers are the showcase. They travel to adjudicated competitions (most recently in New York) and consistently receive superior ratings, and they are invited to perform as featured groups at professional conferences—a pedes-

tal for other choruses to emulate—and for local charities and organizations.

Even after twenty-one years, the chorus continues to grow, but not necessarily in numbers. The Chorus began offering sight-reading classes to its members through its educational initiative a few years ago when the need was perceived. Also, seniors in the Chamber Singers who may be considering a career in music can serve internships to train and conduct the Training Chorus. Members of the Chamber Singers are also involved in the day-to-day operations of the organization from office work to newsletter preparation to booking guest musicians.

Of course, shoots have sprouted—perhaps they're branches—extending the reach of the chorus. A few years ago, the chorus began offering summer camp through Frederick County Parks and Recreation. Children spend a week finding their voices (every child has a singing voice) and experiencing the joy of singing and creating music with others. At the end of the week, the campers put on a fully-

-Continued on Page 15.

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Business Briefs

By Rande Davis

Twenty Years and He Is Just Getting Started

As you shop Poolesville Hardware this month for your everyday needs or even for the upcoming holidays, be sure to give John Speelman a high five. Believe it or not, John's been serving Poolesville residents for twenty years! We know he has some celebratory plans, and we will make sure you know about them in the next issue.

Fresh Seafood Now Available Locally

Jim Chambers, owner of Prime Seafood, a major supplier to over seventy area high-end restaurants including the Comus Inn, has set up a retail location at Lewis Orchards at the corner of Peach Tree Road and Route 28. Mr. Chambers started Prime Seafood in 2004. He will be providing a tantalizing array of fantastic fresh seafood including salmon and halibut which he flies in from Alaska, fresh Maine lobster, Canadian oysters, rainbow trout from the western Smoky Mountains in North Carolina, and steamer clams and scallops from Maine.

Mr. Chambers is a marine fishery biologist by education, and his distributorship business follows a twenty-year career with the National Marine Fishery Service where he was responsible for the national habitat protection program nationwide.

Seminar Show for Horse Owners Big Hit

H.C. Summers Feed and Supply in Jefferson hosted an "Ask the Pros" seminar/trade show for horse owners, farm operators, and other agricultural professionals. There were over fifteen professionals on hand offering information on their services and provid-

ing breakout seminars throughout the evening. The equine-related topics included veterinary dentistry and massage. Representatives from the Maryland Cooperative Extension Service and area 4-H members were also there to answer questions. The event was held at the Frederick County 4-H Center and proceeds from the evening went to benefit the Frederick 4-H.

Antique Buffs Await Public Property Auction

The Boyds Antique Shop near the Boyds Post Office is selling out after many years of retailing antiques. They will have a public auction on Saturday, December 2 starting at 9:00 a.m. The building, a small rental house, and all inventory will be offered. The property is located on just less than one acre of land.

Jimerson Offering New Service

Doug Jimerson of Berryville Road is specializing in Long Term Care Insurance which provides insurance protection from the sometimes devastating costs of in-home and institutional nursing care. Mr. Jimerson, who is well known as a singer-songwriter, has performed often in the area, specializing in Civil War music. He is with the Mass Mutual Group of Bethesda, Maryland.

Business News from the Monocle

Please excuse us for shamelessly plugging our advertising, but we have some business news to share with you as well this issue. The next few issues of the Monocacy Monocle are well positioned for area businesses seeking to promote their services and products for the holiday season. With over 13,000 readers and going to 4500 homes, the Monocle can help get your message out to those living in upper Montgomery County and southern Frederick County. If you are formulating your plans, be sure to give us

call. If you haven't tried us yet, this is a good time to do so. We are easy to reach at 301-349-0070.



Jim Chambers handles some prime seafood.



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Beallsville - Just Listed! - 3 BR, 2 full BA Cape Cod on 5.42 acs. Main lvl LR, DR, remodeled kitchen, 3-season rm, office/study, full BA & BR. The upper lvl consists of two BRs and full BA. The lwr lvl is unfinished w/ utility area. Amenities include wood flrs., updated BAs, new windows, large storage shed. Great location just minutes to MARC station, C&O Canal, & Whites Ferry. MLS #MC6232206.

Offered at \$539,000



Poolesville, Summerhill - Spacious 4 BR, 2.5 BA townhome w/in walking distance of schools, parks and stores. Main level entry foyer w/ wood flrs., eat-in kitchen w/ double door refrigerator, built-in microwave, maple cabinets & new stove w/ ceramic cooktop, new stackable Kenmore washer & dryer, living rm/dining rm. combo w/ FP & French doors to Trex deck. Upper lvl Master BR & BA, 3 more BRs, full hallway BA. Freshly painted with new carpet throughout. MLS #MC6235384.

Offered at \$276,500

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Barnesville - Stately colonial on 23.5 wooded acs. in the private equestrian subdivision of Conoy. 5 BRs, 2.5 BAs., hwd flrs. on main lvl, spacious kitchen w/island, fam. rm., 2 FPs, sep office on lwr lvl w/ at-grade walk-out. Amenities include a 4-car detached garage w/ studio above, lovely bi-lvl deck, flagstone walkways, stream and pond. MLS#MC6215200.

Offered at \$1,400,000



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Focus on Business

Poolesville Vision and Contact Lens Service: Home-Based Professional Eye Care

By Rande Davis

When Robin Mevissen, of Poolesville Vision and Contact Lens Service, moved to Poolesville in 1994, the appeal of the town was natural since she had spent the previous seventeen years in another small town—only it was in Wangen, Germany.

This New Jersey native’s journey to Germany began after graduating from upstate New York’s Hartwick College with a B.A. in economics. She studied Optometry in Munich (Augenoptik) and practiced in Germany. After she returned home to the United States, she attended the New England College of Optometry in Boston and graduated in 1993. She and her husband, Dr. Thomas McInnes, met while at the New England College of Optometry and then came to Poolesville to live. Dr. McInnes partners in Poolesville Vision and Contact Lens Service and has a practice in Silver Spring.

Upon arriving in this area, Robin worked for the Georgetown University Medical Center in the early FDA refractive surgery studies. Later she practiced optometry in the Kentlands for eleven years.

“It has been my dream to open an optometry service based in our small community of Poolesville,” states Robin. She realized her dream on her opening day was this past

Poolesville Day. “I think being able to make an eye appointment right here in Poolesville will be convenient for many residents.” This home business located at 19739 Selby Avenue in Tama I offers primary eye care. They prescribe eyeglasses and fit contact lenses while specializing in difficult contact lens fits, including bifocals, toric, RGP, and keratoconic contacts. They also carry an inventory that allows them to fill many contact prescriptions the same day. They treat ocular emergencies and disease. They consult in refractive surgery and perform eye exams to meet MVA license renewal requirement. Eye exams are scheduled by appointment (301-916-3214) including evenings, early mornings, and Saturdays.



Dr. Thomas McInnes and Robin Mevissen.

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Profiles

Native Father

By Dominique Agnew

Fr. Walter Lawrence of St. Mary’s Catholic Parish in Barnesville, Maryland is a native son all around. Born in Washington, D.C., he grew up in Montgomery County, specifically Rockville. “I am a native,” he jokes. The only time he was really away from home for any length of time was when he spent three years at seminary in Albany, New York. Even during those years, he still kept his family residence here and came home for



Fr. Walter Lawrence of St. Mary’s Catholic Parish.

the summers. He comes from a small family having only one sister. On his mother’s side, the family was small, as well, but on his father’s side, there are many aunts, uncles, and cousins—none of whom are Catholic.

Perhaps the devoted *Monocle* reader remembers the feature on Father Herbert of Our Lady of the Presentation in Poolesville. Therein, Father Herbert described how it seemed all his friends knew he would become a priest long before he knew himself. Father Lawrence, on the other hand, knew where he was going early on.

From the earliest age, “as long as I can remember,” Father Lawrence was always interested in things about the church, mass, and priests. He went to Catholic schools and chose to go to the seminary right out of high school. He began by attending seminary in Baltimore to be sure the priesthood was the correct path. Following this, he was sent to Albany by the archdiocese,

then returned to Baltimore to finish his studies. He holds a Bachelor’s in philosophy and a Master’s of Divinity. While many people agonize over their vocations in life, this was not the case for Father Lawrence. “It’s always been clear to me,” he says. Father Lawrence was ordained in 1973, and his first assignment was at St. Gabriel’s in Washington, D.C.

His next assignment was at St. Patrick’s at Norbeck which he described as a “great assignment.” At the time, Flower Valley was a new development. There were many younger families and lots of children. It was a vibrant community, and the people were very hospitable. “There was a good spirit there,” he reminisces. Because he had a notion of a “great assignment,” it begged to be asked whether he’d ever had a bad assignment. The quick response was, “Of course not.” With a smile, he added, “We have our preferences.”

At St. Mary’s in Barnesville, Father Lawrence’s seventh assignment, he is coming up on the end of his fifth year. This came on the heels of nine years at Holy Redeemer in Kensington, a large parish with a large congregation and a school. After nearly a decade at such a large, busy parish, “It was nice to come here,” he says.

Father Lawrence is impressed by the volunteerism of St. Mary’s. Not only is there a great group of volunteers to help now, but St. Mary’s has a remarkable history of volunteers. Because the parish is so small, “We do a lot of things for ourselves.” There are only four part-time salaried employees. “People step up and do what needs to be done,” he says. “It’s great.” On the other hand, the small size of the parish poses its problems to the congregation, and among them, Father Lawrence and the parish council see two: the difficulty in reaching out to young people and the limit of services that the parish is able to provide.

One of the difficulties in reaching out to the youth of the parish is that despite the small size, the parish covers a large geographic area, almost two hundred square miles. The teens of the parish attend many different schools, both public and private, in both Montgomery and Frederick Counties. This, in turn, relates to the limit of services the parish can offer such as youth groups or better facilities. Regardless, Father Lawrence thinks St. Mary’s is a wonderful parish.

-Continued on Page 16.

Local History

Annie Sue's Wedding A True Story

By Jack Toomey

One hundred years ago, it was legal for a person to be married in Maryland at the age of sixteen in civil ceremonies. There is no doubt that some young people, acting on the spur of the moment, took advantage of the law. Some couples traveled from neighboring states to be married at the courthouse in Rockville.

On Jan 16, 1912, two young lovebirds appeared before the clerk of the court at the old Rockville courthouse. Fred Byrne and Annie Sue Linton had come to Montgomery County by buggy from Loudoun County, Virginia to be married because of the lenient Maryland law. Mr. Byrne, who was twenty-four, had been forbidden to see Miss Linton by her father and had been barred from visiting their farm. One day, they eloped and made their way to the Rockville courthouse. The marriage clerk, who apparently was suspicious of Miss Linton's age, asked how old she was, and Mr.

Byrne spoke up and replied, "She is over nineteen." The couple was then married by the clerk, and then they quickly returned to Loudoun County and took up residence on Mr. Byrne's farm. In the meantime, Mr. Linton, the father of Annie Sue, had found out about the marriage and set out to look for his daughter. When he couldn't find her, he went to Rockville and swore out a warrant charging Byrne with false swearing. The problem? Annie Sue was only fifteen.



The courthouse in Rockville where Annie Sue was married in 1912.

Montgomery County Deputy Sheriff Lambert and Mr. Linton went to Loudoun County with the warrant and started

to look for Mr. Byrne. Sheriff Lambert spotted him on a road near the farm and began chasing him on horseback. Lambert overtook him when Byrne's horse stumbled and fell. Both the sheriff and defendant were covered with mud and slightly injured, but the officer was able to take his prisoner to the nearest train station, and they boarded the next train for Washington. Other deputies were waiting at the Washington station, and they delivered Mr. Byrne to the Rockville jail. Eventually, he was released on bail pending the action of the grand jury.

In January, 1913, the Montgomery County grand jury convened. They heard testimony from Mr. Byrne and Annie Sue Linton Byrne. Mr. Byrne testified

that he did not commit perjury because shortly before he and his wife had entered the courthouse, he had placed two pieces of paper in Annie Sue's shoes. On each piece of paper he had written "19," thus, he could not have lied since Annie Sue was standing "over nineteen." Annie Sue then testified that she had led Fred to believe that she was over fifteen. The grand jury deliberated and released Fred Linton without charges.

Fred and Annie Sue returned to Loudoun County where they took up residence and within eight years their family had grown with the addition of Maud, Ludwell, Richard, and Josie. After 1920, the family moved from Loudoun County and was not heard from again.

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"Hate Crimes" Continued From Page 1.

McDonald's at about 1:30 a.m. and about 2:00 a.m. bricks from that sign were thrown through the windows and door of L'Nora's restaurant and the adjoining Poolesville Subway. The vandals knew how to turn the electricity off to the entire shopping center so that their attack would be in the dark and security cameras would not be functioning.

Sunday evening David Statler of WUSA Channel 9 was sent to Poolesville to file a report about the hate crime. Mr. Shahin was interviewed about the incident. Ray Hoewing of Poolesville On-Line was also interviewed for background information about the area. The damage to both establishments is reported to exceed \$1,500.00.

Mr. Shahin resides with his wife and children in Germantown but still feels very much a part of Poolesville. Although he reported the incident to the Montgomery County police, but unless a witness comes forward, he does not expect the perpetrators to be caught. He is hoping that parents may notice an unexpected can of yellow spray paint and will realize that this is a good opportunity to straighten their child before it goes even further.

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In the Garden

Sowing Seeds

By Maureen O'Connell



Garth Seely and his helpers.

In June, I wrote an article about Garth Seely, a Dickerson resident and professional landscape designer. While creating and maintaining gardens for his clients in D.C., Bethesda, and Potomac, he harbored a dream of working with children and fostering a curiosity, love, and respect for nature. Even those of us fortunate to live within the boundaries of the Agriculture Reserve lead such busy lives that we fail to observe and appreciate the beauty and mystery of nature all around us. Garth saw this and was determined to make a difference, to sow some thought seeds, in young children's lives. In June his dream became a reality. Landscape and Nature Discoveries, Inc. (LAND) was granted a 501(c)3 non-profit status. Garth started after-school nature clubs at the Elf School, Barnesville School, Monocacy Elementary School, and Poolesville Elementary School. He opened up a whole new world to his students. The children walked the fields, the meadows, and the forests around their schools. They observed the signs of the changing of the seasons, tapped maple trees for maple syrup, discovered the dens of foxes and groundhogs, planted vegetable and flower gardens, and dug in the dirt for fat, wiggly worms. Part of this learning experience involved community service. I spent several hours one Saturday morning in June watching Garth and eight of "his kids" placing and decorating terra cotta planters in front of many Poolesville businesses. This project gave the boys and girls a real sense of pride in their accomplishments. They could point out to their friends all summer their "flower pots."

In the fall, after-school classes resumed. The children from all four schools meet once a week for five weeks. Garth will take only twelve students

in each group, so there is competition to secure a spot on his teams. On Tuesday, October 31, the last day of the fall session, I met Garth and nine of his gardeners at Monocacy Elementary School. They were going to plant three dogwood trees and two Norway Blue Spruce trees on the school's grounds. Garth is a very patient man. It was 3:30 p.m. on Halloween. The three girls and six boys were very excited from the holiday festivities at school that day, and they were looking forward to trick-or-treating that evening. When Garth gathered them all together near his truck—laden with shovels, mulch, fertilizer, and trees—they quietly listened to his instructions. The girls, Anna DeSota, Megan Fedders, and Lily Nichols, were to dig the holes for the dogwood trees and plant them. The boys, Bryce McKenney, Cole McKenney, Austin Nichols, Zachary Pearson, Johnny Siegrist, and Mateo Zapata, were going to replace a dead dogwood tree, and plant two Norway Spruce trees. As I watched them, I was impressed with the interest they showed in their assignments. And, they were also having a lot of fun. They even resisted the temptation to throw dirt at each other. One of the boys, Bryce McKenney, volunteered this comment, "This is the best after-school activity." I asked him why, and he said, "Well, we get to get down and dirty; we plant things; and we learn about something." I asked Anna, Lily, and Megan why they joined the club. They all said they liked nature and liked to learn new things. Lily said that in the Brownies they planted impatiens. She liked working with flowers, so the club sounded like fun. I asked her if her parents liked gardening. She said yes, but not as much as she does.

I did not have time that Tuesday to talk with Garth about the children's other landscaping projects at their school, so last week, I met him at Monocacy and got a tour of the school grounds.

Monocacy Elementary School has probably the most beautiful setting of all the county elementary schools. In part, this is a tribute to the goals of the Agricultural Reserve. The school is surrounded by open fields of hay, grasses, and grazing horses and cattle in the spring, summer, and fall. In the winter months, these fields are waves of emerald green winter wheat. And in the background, there is our own special Sugarloaf Mountain. Most of the landscaping, except for the mature trees, has been done by Garth and his kids. The school's main entrance used to be flanked by muddy, well-worn paths. Now, there is

-Continued on Page 11.

Photo Courtesy of Ray Hoewing.



L'Nora's after the vandalism.



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“Sowing Seeds” Continued From Page 10.

a small flagstone patio with an inviting stone bench to the right of the entrance. The stones might not be perfectly level, but the kids did all the work themselves. In the spring, it is a bright spot with flowering pansies and spring bulbs. The path to the gym has a lovely, mulched spot with a beautiful Japanese Maple tree in the middle. The grassy area at the base of the school's flagpole was once a weedy patch of sparse grass. Garth and his helpers got rid of the weeds and reseeded the plot. It is now carpeted with lush, weedless green grass. The path to the flagpole is bordered in bright green liriopé. It ends with two large clumps of tall, waving grasses that mimic the surrounding fields. If you walk a little further to the left, you come to a paved basketball courtyard. Along the base of the school's exterior walls in this area, there is a vegetable garden. In the spring, the children plant tomatoes, radishes, lettuce, and onions. When I was there, there was one lone head of lettuce that was still fresh and green. Around the back of the school, there are several beige and brown portable classrooms. Their stark, metal sides are now softened with butterfly bushes that are filled with butterflies in the spring and

summer. This area leads to a secluded, inner courtyard. There is a mulched area with attractive wooden chairs and tables. In the warm weather, teachers often hold their classes in this peaceful setting. In the middle of the yard is a square flower bed. I noticed the many, pretty impatiens plants growing there. These were the plants that Lily told me she planted when she was a Brownie. To the left of the flower bed, there is a tall, redwood archway given to the school by one of the graduating classes. It is now covered with the bright, orange flowers of a trumpet vine. At its base, there are two large clumps of one of my favorite plants, lamb's ear.

Garth is a fountain of ideas. He loves to talk about his plans for future projects, and, of course, “his kids.” He will continue to work with the children indoors during the winter months. If pigs could fly, and Garth had more time, who knows where his ideas will take his kids. Our children are fortunate to live in such a beautiful part of Montgomery County, and to have such talented and generous people like Garth and his volunteers in LAND. If you would like more information about this program, call LAND 301-972-7266.

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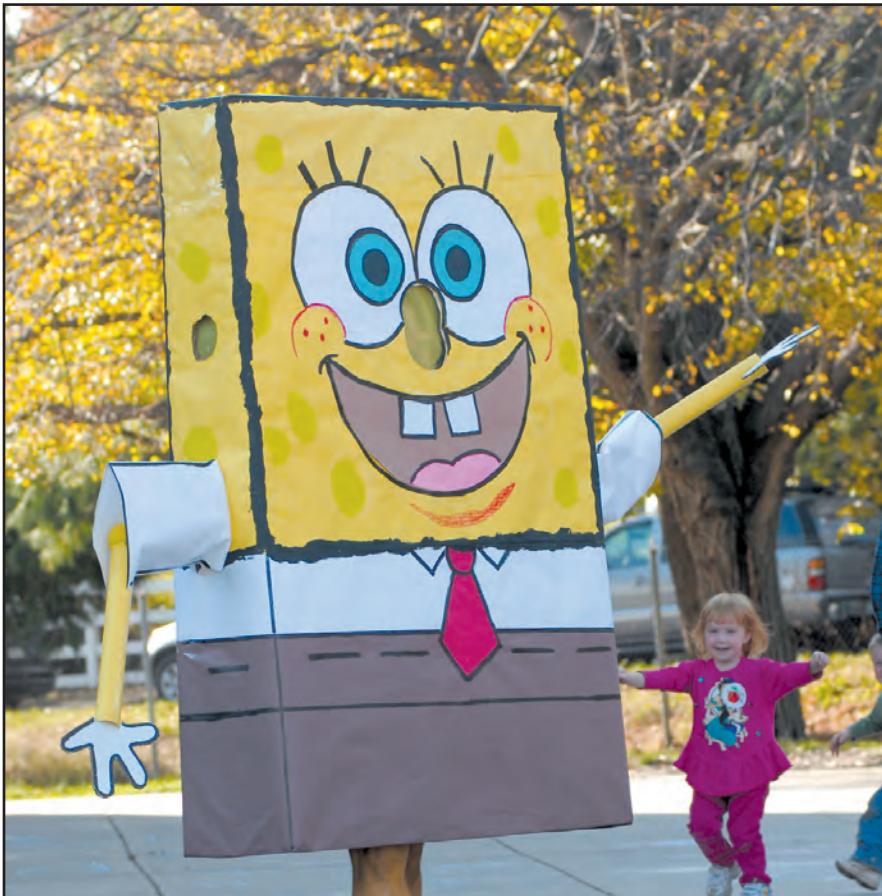


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"Children's Chorus" Continued From Page 6.

staged performance. Another branch is the new Little Music Makers. Initiated by Ann DuBose (Judy's daughter) and Amanda Barber, former chorister, the Little Music Makers is tailored towards five- to eight-year-olds as a preliminary to the formal chorus. Using a combination of established methods developed by Kodaly, Dalcroze, and Orff, the Little Music Makers introduces young children to singing skills through games and childhood songs. Fun and activity-oriented, the Little Music Makers makes for an easy transition into the Training Chorus.

Judy DuBose is especially excited about the new leadership that has grown with the chorus. "The leadership is spreading out among the offspring," says Judy. Both of her daughters, Ann and Lee, have returned to Frederick after their university studies and have taken active roles in the directing and the leadership of the chorus. Also, Amanda Barber, among some of the first singers in the Frederick Children's Chorus, has returned to help and has taken on positions of teaching and directing. Judy thinks that not only did the chorus draw her children back, but the community did,

as well.

The weekend after the performance with Judy Collins, the Frederick Children's Chorus will be performing its winter concert, "A Season's Promise," on Saturday, December 9, 2006, at 7:30 p.m. at Gov. Thomas Johnson High School in Frederick. The theme of this year's concert is aptly reflected in the selection of traditional and modern songs and carols performed by the chorus: the promise of the arrival of Baby Jesus, belief in dreams and their fruition, anticipation of all the delights of the winter season, and in the case of the song "Al Hanassim" for Chanukkah, praise and thanksgiving for God's miracles and deliverance. Ticket prices are \$10.00 for adults, and \$5.00 for seniors and students. Tickets are available at the door. For more details, visit www.fredcc.org or call 301-845-2451.

Looking a little further to the future, the chorus is also honored to have the opportunity to be performing the well-known Carmina Burana by Carl Orff with the Maryland Symphony and the Baltimore Choral Arts Society. The performance of the cantata based on a selection of twenty-four medieval poems will take place on Saturday, April 21 and Sunday, April 22, 2007.

"Poolesville Commissioners" Continued From Page 5.

ment. The currently planned build out schedule illustrated in the proposed agreement shows most of Montgomery County receiving service within one to three years, and most remaining areas in the three to five year range. The western portion of the County, Poolesville in particular, is the schedule's only exception with service not beginning for at least seven years, if at all, due to the 6,000 home threshold requirement singularly imposed by Verizon for its own business profitability.

Second, Poolesville is the only designated "Smart Growth" area in the western portion of the County. It is also the only such population center in the entire county that is being ignored in the proposed Verizon Agreement. By denying the next generation of technology, as well as competition for cable TV service, the County is effectively penalizing Poolesville and underwriting an agreement that is both inequitable and harmful to our local economy. It cannot be a reasonable agreement that penalizes one smart growth area simply because it doesn't meet the service-provider's desired profitability threshold.

The possibility of limiting the deployment to Poolesville and making it a hub for future expansion has merit. Poolesville itself is very concentrated and its population easily reachable by the new fiber network. Its citizens are highly educated, have solid income, and have a demonstrated familiarity with modern technology as shown in the census data below.

- Population as of 2006
5,167 (Planned increase to 6,500 starting in 2007)
- Family Dwellings

1,633 (415 Homes additional to be built)

- Total Acreage
2,374
- 91% of the homes have computers
- 93% of those computers have Internet connections
- In the single family homes, more than half of the residents have college degrees or higher
- 70% of the residents work in Montgomery County
- Median household income is \$104,000

• Poolesville High School, with its magnet programs, would be another significant example of a beneficiary of this advanced technology

As this data illustrates, Poolesville is one of the best markets in the County and undoubtedly would provide a good market for the new Verizon services. Unfortunately, it is being penalized doubly, because of its size, and also because of its location in the Agricultural Reserve. Deployment costs would undoubtedly be recouped, but not on the preferred Verizon timetable. Certainly there are options that Verizon and the County/Town, working together, could develop to include provision of the same level of service to Poolesville, similar to the Agreement of twenty years ago. Poolesville is a municipality in good standing in Montgomery County and is entitled to equality with all other municipalities. The dual issues of making next generation technology available in Poolesville and generating a competitive choice for cable TV service are of prime importance to Poolesville and, prior to Council approval, we would request an opportunity to meet and

-Continued on Page 21.



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Local News

Johnson and Yeatts Win Town Election

By Rande Davis

The election to the two open spots in the Poolesville Town Commissioners' race resulted in newcomer Tom Yeatts taking first place (646 votes), Roy Johnson second (608 votes), and Tom Dillingham (487 votes.) Voting for town commissioner was at Poolesville High School rather than at the general election locations at Poolesville Elementary School and John Poole Middle School. The turnout for the town elections was just under thirty percent with a reported 971 voters making the extra trip to the high school.

An estimated 201 voters chose to select only one of two in making their choice. Referred to as "bullet voting," the concept in voting for only one is to not add to the totals of other candidates beyond your first choice. It is unknown how many of these "under votes" were due to bullet voting versus voters simply not realizing that they were allowed a choice of two.

The commissioners' race, an abbreviated campaign of three weeks, pitted the two experienced candidates against only one new prospect. Commissioner Johnson and challenger, Tom Yeatts, stood the grueling thirteen-hour election-day ordeal, at times in a cold, slow drizzle, by greeting voters and getting to know each other. Commissioner Dillingham chose to leave the site after the morning hours.

It seems that a benefit of the shared ordeal by Johnson and Yeatts was the opportunity to have an extended conversation about the town and its issues. Both candidates voiced a newfound appreciation and understanding of each other from that experience. Mr. Johnson told the Monocle that he "found Tom Yeatts to be level-headed and sincerely having the best interests of the town in his heart with no hinder agendas. I look forward to the new commission as possibly being the best that I have served in all the ten years of my service as commissioner."

Mr. Yeatts voiced similar respect for Mr. Johnson and stated that he "was very thrilled and excited with the outcome and looked forward to starting his service in two weeks. I was very pleased with the so many

positive statements from the voters and was surprised that the negatives voiced were so few. Many people expressed their appreciation for my decision to run. They expressed their support by thanking me for running and offering a new perspective."

Mr. Johnson also was thankful, "I am always appreciative when the voters voice support and seem to recognize I have been trying to do a good job." In greeting voters, Mr. Johnson was a bit surprised that the issue of more things for young people to do was brought up so often. He expressed that this issue is something the town needs to look at in the coming term.

Mr. Dillingham expressed mixed emotions on the result since he originally was ready to retire until lack of candidates caused him to seek

reelection. "I just want to thank the voters for allowing me to serve the town for the past twenty years. It has been a singular honor to serve," he said. He expressed the hope that through his service, the town is now a better place to live. "I hope we will continue the small town way and quality of life."

The best slogan of the campaign belonged to Roy Johnson - Vote for Roy and Tom. Perhaps Tom Dillingham was the big winner, though, especially in considering the criteria he had set up for himself during the candidates' forum. In his closing comments, he stated that it was his intention to remain in office until he lost an election or was buried in Beallsville. Given his self-appointed choice, supporters, friends, family, and even challengers were pleased with the final results.

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"Father Lawrence" Continued From Page 8.

ish in a beautiful setting with great people.

Throughout his three decades as a priest, of course, Father Lawrence has had good days and bad days. Included among his more memorable experiences were a sabbatical in the Holy Land and two private masses with Pope John Paul II. In the spring of 1985, Father Lawrence took a three-month sabbatical with three priest classmates, and they traveled to Egypt, Israel, Greece, and Turkey. While visiting the various holy places, things in the scriptures really "came alive." One could really visualize the events of the Bible. He called it an "outstanding experience." Of his two exceptional opportunities to attend a private morning mass with Pope John Paul II, he was deeply moved; Pope John Paul II was such an intensely

prayerful man. He says, "Both times were extremely impressive experiences."

Father Lawrence enjoys sabbaticals and calls them great renewals. When Cardinal Hickey was alive, he approved of sabbaticals, and priests could request one every seven years. Cardinal McCarrick wasn't of the same opinion, "If you need a break, walk around the block," he would say. Father Lawrence says he has yet to hear what Archbishop Wuerl has to say about them.

In the end, Father Lawrence is happy with his life as a priest—it's what he always wanted to do. He says, "There was no time when I regretted my choice or thought, 'I'm in the wrong field.'"



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Police Blotter Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present

The Montgomery County Police Department is seeking the assistance of the public in identifying a woman who passed away at a local hospital on November 2. The woman was found unconscious at the Shady Grove Metro Station and expired a few days later. She is described as a black woman, approximately forty years old, 5-3", 105 pounds. While conscious, she claimed that she had just arrived from Egypt and called herself "Happy Richard." If you are able to assist the police in identifying this person, call the police non-emergency number at 301-279-8000.

October 25. Armed Robbery, near the Germantown MARC station. A Boyds man was walking from the train station when he was approached by three black males at Liberty Mill Road and Liberty Heights Lane. One of the suspects displayed a pellet gun and demanded cash. When the victim said he had none, one of the suspects struck him over the head with the gun and the suspects ran off.

Past

November 18, 1910. Raymond Jenkins of Germantown was a patient at Freedman's Hospital (now Howard University Hospital) in Washington where he was being treated for a gunshot wound. Sheriff Vielt went to Washington where he arrested Jenkins and charged him with breaking into the home of James Devine who was said to have shot Jenkins.

November 20, 1927. Grayson Palmer, age 21 and the son of a prosperous Barnesville farmer, was killed at Darby's Crossing when the car in which he was a passenger was struck by a Baltimore and Ohio Railroad express train.

November 20, 1984. Two explosions, occurring in the pre-dawn hours, rocked a Planned Parenthood office in Rockville and an abortion clinic in Wheaton. A police investigation revealed that bombs had been placed at both buildings causing considerable damage.

November 18, 1969. Two Poolesville brothers, who had just been sentenced to four years in prison for cattle rustling, escaped from the Rockville courthouse in a hail of gunfire. A force, consisting of the Maryland State Police and county detectives, arrested the brothers in a Monroe Street apartment about an hour after their escape. The two had been convicted of stealing cattle from a Poolesville farm and selling them at the Frederick cattle auction. One of the brothers was found to have a bullet wound in the buttocks.

November 19, 1900. Jacob Plummer and Hoskless Hall quarreled at an oyster supper in Poolesville. They stepped outside to settle their disagreement, and bullets flew. James Powell had the misfortune to step between the parties and received a bullet wound to the stomach, but it was said that he was more frightened than hurt since he was wearing a coat, three shirts, and two vests all of which slowed the bullet.

November 22, 1861. The wife of Niman Easton, who had been found with his throat cut at his residence in Rockville the week before, was arrested by the county sheriff and charged with his murder.

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**"Warrent Officer Stevens"
Continued From Page 1.**

the Jordanian prime minister, and flying security support for Secretary of Defense Donald Rumsfeld.

Mr. Stevens greatly appreciated throughout the deployment the strong support of wife Suzanne, daughters Hanna (fifteen) and Emma (twelve), and many friends in the community. Last June, as part of the army's rest and recuperation (R & R) program, he was able to come home for a two-week visitation before returning to Iraq. The R & R was a wonderful experience for him allowing him to be with his family and get back in touch with some students.

The following interview by the Monocle asked Mr. Stevens questions about his experience that we are honored to share with our readers.

Monocle: I think everyone would like to know how the family held up.

P.S.: In our household, we were fortunate, my wife is a stay-at-home mom, and she has always taken care of all the financial things like bills and taxes, so it wasn't a huge shock to her. In addition, my daughters are well adjusted, kept busy with their school,

and only on a few occasions did they find questions upsetting.

Where were you based?

In Balad which is northwest of Baghdad about one hundred miles.

What surprises about Iraq did you find?

Iraq is not the desert you think of, there is a lot for fertile areas and a beautiful architecture, and in Baghdad, the mosques are beautiful along with the palaces. Up north of Kirkuk, the people up there really like Americans and there really is not much in the way of violence. It is as safe as here; you can walk around in the towns and cities. That was a surprise. My working experience with the people was mostly in flying around VIPs and average soldiers. All the ones we saw were very friendly and very appreciative. Interaction with them was always positive.

I found the biggest problem coming from the insurgents coming in from Syria and Iran.

Tell us about your daily experience.

We had two primary missions. One was to support the American Embassy, and we also were assigned to fly the generals to their destinations.

This support mission is based on the demand to fly. My day would begin based on their schedule. Normally, it would start at 7:00 a.m. and end in the evening. Some missions were four hours, others were eight hours. One of the advantages of this mission is getting to see the whole country and places like Saddam's palace in Baghdad (which is now the American Embassy) that others might not get to see.

The day would usually end in reviewing flight plans for the next day and doing flight preparation which included computer work printing out your maps and charts. Typically, we would report two hours prior to flight time for briefings, getting weapons equipment in order. They tried to provide one day off in seven, but often we would go to ten days.

When you had leisure time, what activities were available?

In my situation, I was not able to join any of the many sport leagues. However, we had different gyms, running, and at times I would run at 2:00 a.m., and it would still be 100 degrees. They had a pool and movie theater. Most of the time, time off was for rest.

What were the meals like?

We had four meals a day: breakfast, lunch, dinner, and mid-rats—that is midnight rations. The food was fine. We even had a Burger King and pizza place available.

While there, what did you miss the most besides your family?

It was mostly the simple things like having a bathroom and shower in your room instead of having always to walk a hundred feet outside to those facilities. For the basic things of need, the army did a good job. The special packages, like Girl Scout cookies, always were appreciated though. Of course, in other units, basic needs are sometimes more difficult to get.

You came home for two weeks last June, how did that go?

I told my wife that it was not longer because any longer would have been much harder. It was a very surreal experience. I was really impressed with the welcoming home we got in Atlanta. The airport was clapping as we went through. It was very touching.

How was it like for you in keeping

Continued on Page 19.

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**"Warrent Officer Stevens"
Continued From Page 18.**

touch with the family?

In the pod that I was in we were very lucky to have a computer wiz. He purchased a satellite system, we all chipped in, and we had wireless communication in our rooms. We were able to keep in touch on a daily basis. Of course, there was standard telephone communication set up by the army.

I understand that you were able to keep in touch with your students.

There were several pen pals and four or five in my unit that also were part of the pen pals. Occasionally, we got a nice package from them. Most have moved on to the middle school, so they are more dispersed now.



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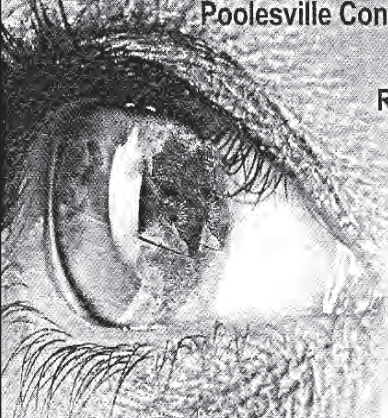
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"Poolesville Commissioners"
Continued From Page 15.

jointly explore options in creating a win-win situation for all. As with all such agreements, this one is in need of exploration of options, negotiation, and give and take on all sides to achieve a level of equality for all citizens of the County. Poolesville cannot be singled out as the only population center in the entire county to be excluded from timely inclusion in the Verizon Agreement.

One option to consider could be for the County to apply, or assist the Town in applying, for USDA Rural Utility Service grants. These grants have assisted many rural Towns in network build outs, and we understand that Verizon is very familiar with this process.

In conclusion, Poolesville is a prime market with strong desires to receive this service and there is no reason (other than Verizon's corporate interests) why the presently proposed agreement has this singularly inequitable bias against our town. Unfortunately, with the current scenario, Poolesville residents, as well as the students enrolled in the Poolesville High School magnet programs, would

not have the opportunity to (a) enjoy this next generation of advanced technology and (b) have meaningful competition to the current cable TV monopoly in town, all of which is being made available to the rest of Montgomery County, for at least seven years or, more than likely, never at all. We do not believe that the County Council should go on record as having discriminated against the best interests of Poolesville, its citizens, its businesses, and its high school students in this matter.

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The Pulse

We Believe in Magic

By Maureen O'Connell

Winston Churchill once said, "The outside of a horse is good for the inside of a man." Substitute the word child for man and a small Shetland pony for horse, and you will know why Denise Chasin "believes in magic." This simple proverb is the guiding light of a program that she became involved with two years ago:



Virginia Strench, Jamie Kashima and Caraline Lynch, with Grace. If ponies could fly -- there is the magic.

Personal Ponies.

Personal Ponies was established in 1986 by Marianne Alexander in memory of her brother Bernard Garfield, who had epilepsy and died of pneumonia when he was thirteen and Marianne was fifteen. This made a lasting impression on her. All of his short life, Bernard had wanted a pony, someone to be "his special friend." Marianne saw what a difference this simple thing could have made for her brother. Later in life, when she had the time and resources to create this magic for other children, she devoted her life to this dream. Her non-profit organization is dedicated to providing children with disabilities a small Shetland pony to love and care for—completely without charge. These children might have an emotional or physical condition, be it caused by disease, birth defect, accident, or circumstance. They might be confined to wheelchairs; they might be blind, have cerebral palsy, Down's Syndrome, spina bifida, cancer, or autism. Others might have emotional or behavioral problems.

In 2004, Denise, through a mutual friend of Marianne Alexander, learned about this program. She was impressed with its mission, and she decided that she and her family, husband Eric and their two daughters Sydney and Amanda, had the time

and resources to make a contribution to her community through this wonderful program. She got in touch with the national office of Personal Ponies, and they provided her with a UK type Shetland pony, who was in foal. This was the start of making her dream a reality. Her property on Conoy Road in Barnesville became "Chasin Dreams Farm."

Personal Ponies is different from other handicapped riding programs. While these ponies can be ridden and trained to pull a cart, a relationship between a child and a pony can be established by grooming, hand grazing, or just hugging this very docile and lovable little creature. He is simply there for them.

In the past two years, three foals have been born at Denise's farm, and she now has six ponies. Several children come to the farm regularly to visit their "special pony friend." She also takes the ponies around the community. They have visited nursing homes, schools, camps, hospitals, and special needs programs. Everywhere these ponies go, they bring an offer of friendship and a ray of sunshine.

The program operates on two levels. If you have adequate facilities to care for a pony on your property, the program will locate a suitable pony and lease it to you at no charge. The organization, through private donations, takes care of the cost. You are responsible for the cost of his daily care. If you can't keep a pony at your home, volunteer sponsors, such as Denise, maintain your pony for you, and you can visit it as often as you like.

Personal Ponies relies entirely on volunteers. They assist the program in many ways. You can set up a breeding farm on your property and assume responsibility for breeding, raising, and training these special ponies, who will someday become someone's "special friend." Volunteers are also needed to offer assistance at these farms. There are many chores to be done, from holding and hugging a sixteen-inch newborn foal, to grooming the ponies. As this program depends one hundred percent on private donations, any financial assistance is greatly appreciated.

Denise recently held an "Open House with the Ponies" at her farm. Over one hundred people attended. They met the ponies and some of the children who are regular visitors. There was one three-year-old boy that I met, who comes with his mother every Saturday. Right now, all he wants

to do is feed the ponies. He knows them all by name and the type of feed that they like. He does not groom them or ride them. All he wants now is to have this very small "special friend." That's where the magic is. If you would like more information about this very worthwhile program, you can contact Denise at 301-349-2161.

"Big Board" Continued from Page 3.

324-1851 or visit lifelinescreening.com. Pre-registration is required.

Who Can Resist Basket Bingo?

Everybody is invited to attend Basket Bingo to benefit the Poolesville Community Preschool at St. Mary's Pavilion in Barnesville on Saturday, November 18. This is a great opportunity for us to help our little ones get a great start. Doors open at 5:30 p.m. and the games begin at 7:00 p.m. There will be twenty games, three specials, raffles, door prizes and more featuring Longaberger Baskets filled with lots of goodies. Refreshments will also be available. For advance tickets which are \$15, call 301-349-0781, otherwise, tickets are \$20 at the door. Come and have a great family night out.

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