

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

January 10, 2020 • Volume XV, Number 20



A fire on Budd Road destroyed this home. More on page 5.



Students helping WUMCO, Help! More about their work on page 8.



The newest PHS varsity sport: Bocce! Learn about this sport on page 11.



The winter garden is the time for planning. Read more in Garden on page 12.

Commissioners Select New Town Manager

By Link Hoewing

The Poolesville Commissioners announced at their January 6 meeting that they had chosen Seth Rivard from among six finalists to be the new town manager. Rivard is currently the Community Development Director in Charles Town, West Virginia where he manages economic development, planning, and zoning code enforcement for the town. He starts his new duties as town manager on January 13.

In announcing Rivard's appointment, Commission President Jerry Klobukowski stressed that the selection was unanimous. Technically, a new town manager can be approved by a simple majority vote of three commissioners out of five, but all five commissioners supported Rivard's appointment.

Charles Town has a population similar to Poolesville's, about 5,900 people. It is the county seat of Jefferson County and is located in a rural area, again very similar to Poolesville. Rivard has thirteen years of experience

in local government and has worked previously in Jefferson County and in Lebanon, Tennessee. He lives outside of Harper's Ferry, is married, and has two children in schools in that area.

In a brief discussion with Rivard after the commissioners' meeting, he stressed his experience in rural town affairs. He had clearly already reviewed key town reports and documents, including the town's charter and many of the reports done by the Fair Access Committee. He expressed enthusiasm for the work the committee has been doing and noted in particular how important it is for rural areas such as the Upcounty to have access to the same services available in other, more urban parts of Montgomery County.

Rivard said that he is not planning to move to Poolesville given that he has young children in school. Although the prospectus advertising the town manager position suggested

Continued on page 9.



Poolesville's new town manager: Seth Rivard.

The Grand Women of the Monocacy Mary: Regal in All Respects

By Rande Davis

"My Lord alive, I never thought it was possible."

So stated Mary Chiswell of her 103rd birthday. Spoken softly like a half-prayer of thanksgiving and half-thought of amazement, she expressed gratitude for her life milestone—and then went on to celebrate her 104th birthday. Before her death, she was celebrated by the whole town as the Poolesville Day Grand Marshal in 2006.

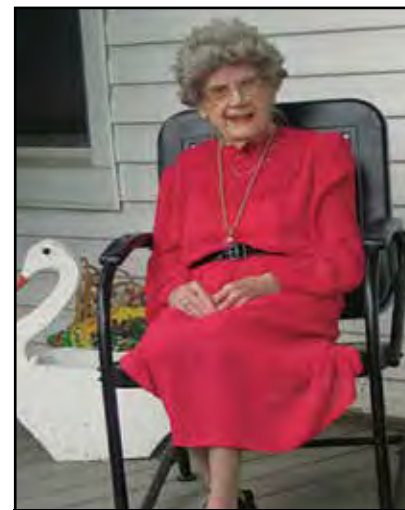
It should not be surprising that our latest Grand Woman of the Monocacy was a lifelong schoolteacher as were three of four already profiled who were either teachers or had careers in school administration.

Prior to her death, we had the honor of visiting with the grand lady to talk about her remarkable achievement of

keeping her eye on Poolesville for over a century. The longevity is to be respected, for sure; however, it was her sharpness of mind and enthusiastic reflections on her life that were so admirable

You never just visited with Mary since she was gloriously old school and would elegantly receive you as you would wait patiently in the parlor for her entrance. At this point in her life, her entrance was a bit less grand as she had to use a walker. Still her beautiful brown eyes sparkled as she sat down on the edge of her Masterpiece-Theater-like chair, regally stiff-backed with hands folded on lap. She had dressed for the occasion, too, in her bright red dress complemented

Continued on page 13.



2006 Poolesville Day Grand Marshal: Mary Fyffe Chiswell.

Family Album

Bringing in the New Year in Town

Photos by Katie Hanna.



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Rande(m) Thoughts

Uh-Oh, It's Prediction Time

By Rande Davis

Happy New Year! Happy Decade! 'Tis the time to be gracious. Our holidays are over, the new year begins, and with the next major festival focused on love, how nice it would be if we could simply be gracious during the wintery period between communal celebrations.

This is the time of year when the dangerous penchant to make predictions promises to embarrass prognosticators more than to validate them. Well, after fifteen years of writing in the Monocle with no concern for the pain of public embarrassment, I see no reason to shy away now—so here goes.

With the naming of Seth Rivard as the new town manager, we enter a brand-new town era: The Era of Rivard. How is that for not shying away from putting some real pressure on our new town manager right away, as if having to follow Wade Yost wasn't enough.

It was great when commissioners finally came to a decision after a lengthy convoluted process. Watching their angst and exaggerated need for keeping everything so close to the vest—as if hiring a new town manager is meant to be a and-the-winner-is moment—was a bit too much. With their total combined experience of hiring employees not one of the commissioners' strengths, perhaps their reticence was understandable. Now that it is over, with a satisfying decision under their belts, perhaps they can begin anew and get along better. The promising news is everyone always acts better in public. My first prediction is that now that the closed doors are open, the commissioners will get along better, too.

The two big stories for 2020 will still be the decisions on a new school and what proposals may be made on the Willard property in the center of town. Everything about the Fair Access Committee has astounded me with its progress far better than any prediction I would have made this time last year. I won't discount their success thus far, while "thus far" still means a long way to go. If I have to predict, then I think I will give credit where credit is due, and I believe in them with a great deal of hope, much more than ever before, but perhaps not enough to hang our hat onto. If strength of effort and

professionalism of approach are the deciding merits, then the new school looks more likely than not. Here's to hoping so.

The Willards have been painstakingly canvassing every community and civic group they can talk to about public acceptance of a housing project on their property next to town hall. Thoughts, ideas, and hopes are being shared. Due to our still being a free enterprise country and with established ordinance restrictions long ago put in place, there is a great deal they or others can do with no public involvement at all. That they are doing otherwise is a testament to a family with deep roots in this town. Unless there is undetected insincerity on both sides or on one side or the other, I am predicting a successful proposal will come to fruition. Even in 2020, I have to believe that people of good will can still come together. The result, if mutually agreed upon, will strengthen our local economy, aid in our quest for a new school, and leave the most minimal public relations damage as possible.

For the life of me, I cannot understand how a new, third gas station in town will succeed without damaging or even destroying one of the others. The simple truth for anyone selling gas in town is that most drivers here do their serious fill-ups elsewhere. Local stations are stop-gap and lawn-mower providers. A third stop-gap station won't change that unless their pricing is something more nuanced than waiting to see what the other guy charges and then lowering it by two cents. Still, unless there is some undiscovered environmental reason they cannot build, and with this commercial property under existing ordinances, a third gas station will be hard to stop.

Everything new in town has come after severe opposition from some part of the populace. Dollar General? Remember when some testified they didn't want "those kinds of people shopping in their town." Now, guess what? We all do. Tractor Supply? So far so good for them. Did it kill Poolesville Hardware? Doesn't look like it. Oh, the angst we put ourselves through.

Now Dunkin' Donuts has opened, and the hysteria of facebook has once again been fully exposed. Opinion varied from those who could not wait for them to open to those self-appointed food critics who have such high self-esteem in thinking their judgement on franchise food is unique or needed. Please, people, all of our restaurants

Continued on page 7.

In Your Own Backyard

Autumn Adventures Along the C&O Canal: Part One

By Jon Wolz

I had several adventures along the C&O Canal this fall. My most exciting adventure was visiting Benjamin Latrobe's Marble Quarry with Paul Kreingold. Latrobe was the second architect of the Capitol. I attended two

presentations given by Paul on "The Lost History of Potomac Marble." Paul is the conservation director for the Izaak Walton League, Loudoun County Chapter. He offered to lead me to the old "lost" quarry. In his presentation, in part, he described the construction of the United States Capitol building in the early 1800s by Benjamin Latrobe, the War of 1812, the burning of the Capitol building by the British in 1814, and Benjamin Latrobe's efforts to reconstruct the Capitol building. Latrobe had located

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Paul Kreingold and Jon Wolz near some of the Potomac marble stones abandoned two hundred years ago near Benjamin Latrobe's marble quarry.

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Keeping an Eye on Local News

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Local News

Fire Destroys Budd Road House

By Jack Toomey

The Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department's annual Santa Ride was interrupted when the fire engine and those from Germantown and Rockville were dispatched to the 16200 block of Budd Road where they found a one-story house engulfed in flames.

Since the fire had a considerable head start and the location was in a non-hydrant area, firefighters were faced with a task of ensuring that no one was trapped inside the house and of preventing the fire from spreading. A relay system involving tanker trucks was established to provide water to the engine companies. A fire investigator later said that the house was a total loss and may have started in the area of a woodstove.

Many residents realized that the house had been the residence of Neville Smith, a beloved Poolesville resident, who had died about a year ago. Smith had built the house by herself in 1961 and had lived there ever since. Smith was an eccentric but much-loved lady about town. She held various jobs such as school-bus driver, gas station employee, and newspaper delivery person. She heated her home with a woodstove and, well into her eighties, chopped wood for the stove.

The day after the fire, former friends of Neville Smith stopped by the scene to reminisce and to extend condolences to the new owners. One onlooker said, "In a way, I'm glad that Neville wasn't here to see this." The loss was estimated at \$325,000.



The fire moved too swiftly for the firefighters to save this home.

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Letter to the Editor

To the editor:

The steering committee of the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project is grateful to the *Monocacy Monocle* for its coverage (Rande[m] Thoughts: Commemorating a Dark Day) of the November 3 soil collection ceremony at the site where George Peck was lynched in 1880. Indeed, we are grateful to the community of Poolesville and its willingness to face the shameful history of lynching in this country. This willingness was apparent in all the community support we received in planning for the ceremony, as well as in the large number of people who attended.

In talking about lynching, however, the *Monocacy Monocle* stated that "He [George Peck] was caught in the act of assaulting a child dairymaid while she was milking a cow..." Though this is stated as fact, the very point is that George Peck was never allowed the privilege of due process and the opportunity to be heard on the allegations against him. Instead, his life was taken in an act of racial terrorism. The simple assertion of "alleged" in the statement would have been an opportunity to provide Mr. Peck the presumption of innocence to which he was entitled but never received.

On behalf of the steering committee of the Montgomery County Lynching Memorial Project,

Deborah J. DeMille-Wagman

Continued from page 4.

Autumn Adventures along the C&O Canal: Part One

a rock formation in Montgomery County that contained the type of rock he wanted to use to construct and erect columns at the Capitol (now Statuary Hall). This rock has been called "Potomac marble," "calico rock," or "Potomac breccia." The rock is a multi-colored conglomerate of the Triassic period and consists of rounded quartz and limestone pebbles cemented in a calcareous matrix. Paul had done research to determine if the stone for the columns came from Loudoun County, Virginia or from somewhere else. Paul's research found that the stone most likely came from Montgomery County. There is no evidence so far stating that it has come from anywhere else.

Paul's research also found that Samuel Clapham of Loudoun County owned the land along the Potomac River in Montgomery County that had a large rock overhang down to the river containing the rock Latrobe sought. Clapham leased this property to the government from 1816 to 1817 for the purpose of quarrying.

Paul obtained a copy of a National Intelligencer article dated January 24, 1817, in which Latrobe described the location of the quarry: "The Potomac, breaking through the Cotocktin [sic] mountain, crosses the Breccia until it meets the Monocasy [sic] under the S.E. side of the valley; it then turns suddenly to the S.W. and again enters the Breccia leaving a large mass on the Maryland side (the east side) of the river, by far the highest part of this irregular compound. It immediately turns to the S.E. and at Conrad's Ferry (now called White's Ferry) leaves the Breccia finally. On this high mass in Maryland, in which the quarry is opened, lies a deep blue stratified limestone and upon the limestone, a vast mass of alluvial soil. On raising the blocks of Breccia in horizontal mass of 100 to 150 tons, it is found, that it breaks indifferently through the pebble or through the cement."

What was once a large rock formation overhang down to the river is gone and now there is a hollow opening of the quarry pit going back into the hillside. Beneath the quarry is the C&O Canal prism about one hundred feet straight down. There are drill marks in some of the blocks at the quarry and in some of the blocks lying loose in the canal prism.

As a result of visiting this quarry, I am now pursuing having a historical sign erected by the National Park Service to tell the history of the quarry and to mark the location. Paul has agreed to help with the text that will go on the sign.

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Local News

Four Arrested in Gang-Related Murder

By Jack Toomey

In late November, a hiker called the police and reported that he had found a body in a wooded area near the 25700 block of Old Hundred Road between Comus and Hyattstown.

Montgomery County Police and homicide detectives investigated and determined that the deceased individual was Sara Gutierrez-Villatoro, age 19, of Washington. She had been shot to death.

Detectives learned that Gutierrez-Villatoro was associated with the 18th Street Gang but had developed a relationship with a member of a rival gang. When gang leaders heard of her betrayal, they authorized her murder. Several gang members were seen searching for Gutierrez-Villatoro near an address in Washington. They had made it clear that they were looking for a girl to kill. Detectives determined that Gutierrez-Villatoro had been taken to the location on Old Hundred Road and murdered there.

After further investigation, police charged four people with first degree murder: Jonathan Rivera-Escobar, Geovany Dominguez-Escobar, Jordan Moreno, and Rigoberto Machado. Three are from the District, and Rivero-Escobar lives in Silver Spring. All four were reportedly members of the 18th Street Gang.

Continued from page 4.

Uh-Oh, It's Prediction Time

have their fans and their detractors, that for some reason your public criticism of them is important is way too self-indulgent. In a small town, with varying tastes, personal opinion is of little value. Despite this, I predict: facebookers will still engage in letting us all know of any shortcoming, momentary or otherwise, they find in our local businesses. How dare our business owners not be perfect!

As we come to the close of 2020, I expect all restaurants to be still operating, we will still be a Norman Rockwell community, and while I cannot predict it, I only hope that sometime before next Christmas, the good commissioners of Barnesville will come to their (common) senses and find some way to keep the nativity crèche that has graced their town (going back as far as fifty years). To be fair, the crèche has not been used consistently as much in the more recent years. The graciousness of our shared humanity should be able to overcome an exaggerated concern of a small town appearing to push its religious preference.

Fun Fact...

Is it the beginning of the new decade? Was the year 2000 the beginning of the new millennium? Was it even the beginning of the second millennium? Sorry, but no! Because there is no Year Zero (neither in B.C. nor in A.D.), counting must begin with the Year One. This is where it's handy to have ten fingers. Begin counting with Year One, then Two, then Three, etc. The tenth year is Year Ten. If you celebrated a new decade on December 31/January 1, you were one year early--but don't despair! That doesn't mean you can't celebrate the New Decade again at the correct time at midnight of December 31, 2020.

Do you have an interesting story to share? Send it along to editor@monocacymonocle.com



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Tidbits

The 2019 Holiday Lighting Awards

In making the awards, town recreation director Cathy Bupp noted that there were six awards for residences and one for businesses in town. The town is divided in half along Fisher Avenue and awards are given to contemporary and traditional lighting displays on single family homes and on a townhouse for each half of town. This year's winners are Sandy Prather and Robert and Brittney Woods for townhouses; Stephen and Cathy Kenly, and Jason and Dawn Stanford for traditional single-family decorations; and Jerome and Michele Hobart, and the Cooke family for contemporary single-family decorations. The winning business this year is the Calleva Farm Store.

Fifteenth Grandchild Born

On December 23, Alice Hardwick Carpenter gave birth to her third child, Tyson Joseph. He weighed six pounds, four ounces and was eighteen inches long with a head already replete with blond hair. The lad is the fifteenth grandchild for Poolesville's Joseph and Pat Hardwick. Grandpa reports that rumor has it that the doctor slapped Tyson's bottom and Tyson (just to show him who is boss) slapped him right back. All are doing fine.



Tyson Joseph Carpenter—
number fifteen.

PES Students Help with Toys for WUMCO

Students from Poolesville Elementary School not only collected Christmas toys for those in need serviced by WUMCO but also helped put the gift packages together. Helping others is always a great lesson to learn and never too early in life.

Award-Winning Is An Understatement

Fine Earth Landscaping, LLC has been an award-winning landscape design and installation firm for years, but 2019 was truly a banner year for them. Just to make their point, the company and its leadership staff posed with a picture showing all the awards they won for various projects in 2019. We counted fourteen in all mounted awards, including at least two gold medal awards. Congrats to the team for their outstanding year of achievement.



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"You are my Son."

Continued from page 1.

Commissioners Select New Town Manager

that living locally would be preferred, it was not made a requirement for the job.

In other business at the meeting, the 2019 holiday lighting awards were announced by Cathy Bupp. There were six awards for residences and one for businesses in town. The town is divided in half along Fisher Avenue and awards are given to contemporary and traditional lighting displays on single family homes and on a townhouse for each half of town. This year's winners are Sandy Prather, and Robert and Brittney Woods for townhouses, Stephen and Cathy Kenly, and Jason and Dawn Stanford, for traditional single-family decorations, and Jerome and Michele Hobart, and the Cooke family for contemporary single-family decorations. The winning business this year is the Calleva Farm Store.

In a previous meeting, the commissioners had been approached and asked to consider making a grant to local parents who are trying to organize a post-prom party in Poolesville. Since a number of PHS students live down county, the parents asked for support for a bus to pick up teens at the prom venue, the Rockville Hilton, at 11:00 p.m., drive them to Poolesville, and then transport them back to Rockville at approximately 5:00 a.m. The commissioners approved a grant of \$2,500 to support the rental of two buses.

Bernie Mihm, a co-owner of the local Fine Earth landscaping company, appeared to discuss a new county ordinance regulating and significantly restricting the use of various pesticides and herbicides. In opening the discussion, Klobukowski pointed out that ordinances like these passed by the county do not automatically apply to the town unless the town decides to adopt them or incorporate them in the town's regulations.

Mihm said that the State of Maryland already regulates his activities regarding pesticides and herbicides, including requiring training of all employees using such chemicals, inspections of company facilities, and reporting requirements. He also said that modern landscaping companies do not simply spray wholesale over an entire lawn. They instead employ spot spraying, identifying an infestation and applying chemicals only where needed. The chemicals used today are far less toxic than those applied in previous years and are also diluted so that about ninety percent of the liquid used is water. The commissioners seemed to be in agreement with Mihm to not move forward with adopting the county's regulations.

Finally, the commissioners heard from Town Engineer John Strong. He discussed a recommendation from the Parks Board that a tennis court at Stevens Park be configured as a pickleball court. Local seniors have been pushing for more pickleball facilities. Strong said the conversion, including nets and line painting, would cost close to \$12,000. The work could not be done until spring, and the estimate assumes that no repair work would be needed on the existing court. The commissioners unanimously approved the funding for the conversion.



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Things To Do

Poolesville Area Senior Center

All events at 17750 W. Willard Road, Poolesville

Pickleball: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 8:30 a.m.

Zumba Gold: Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

Mahjong: Thursdays, Room 129, 10:00 a.m.

Chair/Slow Flow Yoga: Mondays, 11:00 am in the café

The Blue Hearth is open every weekend.

January 12

Sugarloaf Citizens' Association's Winter Potluck Party

Bring your favorite dish to share; bring a friend. SCA is serving fried chicken and soft drinks; beer/wine for \$2.00. *Linden Farm.* 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

January 14

Nightingale Library: Pokémon 101

What is a Pokémon? Learn the basics about Pokémon and the history behind the phenomenon. You'll learn the eighteen different types of Pokémon and be introduced to some of the 800+ Pokémon in existence. Teens and elementary school age. 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.

PHS Varsity Home Game

Wrestling. Wheaton. 6:15 p.m.

January 15

Planning Commission Meeting

Poolesville Town Hall. 7:30 p.m.

January 16

Nightingale Library: Storytime

This half-hour program is designed to delight children. Pre-school and kindergarten. 10:30 a.m.

Nightingale Library: Senior Book Club

This month's book is *When I Found You*. Copies are available at the Circulation Desk. This discussion group meets off-site. Meet at the library or call ahead to learn where the group will meet next. 7:00 p.m.

January 17

PHS Varsity Home Game

Girls' basketball. Seneca Valley. 7:15 p.m.

January 18

Nightingale Library: Read to a Dog

Come and practice your reading with our library dog who listens patiently while you read to him! Recommended for first, second, and third graders who want to improve their reading confidence. 2:30 p.m.

January 21

Nightingale Library: Sensory-Friendly Storytime

Registration required. Sensory-friendly storytime is for children who prefer smaller groups due to sensory processing disorders including those on the autism spectrum, with ADHD, and other special needs. 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

PASC: Pizza and Movie Night

The Tomorrow Man. Room 129, 17750 West Willard Road, Poolesville. 6:00 p.m.



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Would you like to announce a meeting, club, or upcoming event in **Things to Do**?
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Youth Sports

Bocce Is the New Team on the Block

By Jeff Stuart

Many MCPS high schools have begun to offer a new winter team sport option in the last two years. That sport is bocce. It is part of the corollary athletics program that offers students who have never been on a varsity or junior varsity team an opportunity to participate on a competitive athletics team. The program provides students an opportunity to participate in social activities, meet new friends, and enjoy friendly competition.

"This is the first year PHS has ever fielded a bocce team," said coach Tom Lang. "We tried to get a team together four years ago but couldn't field a team. There were no tryouts for the team. We had an information meeting and also tried to specifically target students we felt would be great fits for the team and students who would benefit from the experience."



The brand-spankin' new Falcon bocce team: Hallie Maytin, Nicole Davis, Sean McCue, Nico Carillo, Justin Fisher, Alex Quigley, and Peyton Reed. Not pictured: Bradyn Bliss, Alaina Shields.

Bocce is related to the many boules games of Europe (such as lawn bowling and pétanque) in which teams roll or toss their boules/balls towards a target ball. It is played on a twelve-foot by sixty-foot court laid out on the floor of the main gymnasium. Each side has four balls. Usually one set of balls rolled by one team is green and one set of balls rolled by one team is red. The object is to come closest to a smaller white target ball called the jack, or pallino in Italian. That ball is rolled out first. Displacing an opponent's ball with an effective strike to push it out of point range or striking the pallino is sometimes an effective strategy.

Four players from each team participate in a frame, each of whom rolls one bocce ball from the same end of the court. When all balls have been thrown, the referee measures the distance of the balls from the pallino. Each team's ball that is closer to the target ball than the nearest ball of the opposing team, scores one point. The maximum, then, is four points a frame. At the end of the frame, all players walk to the other end of the court to begin the next frame. Sets are played to a set point total of sixteen or until a time limit of thirty minutes has elapsed. The first team to win two sets is the match winner.

My first experience watching bocce was at the PHS home game against Rockville on January 3. It was an incredibly-friendly environment, and the sportsmanship displayed by the players on both teams and the fans as well was outstanding. The spectators, including PHS basketball players and coaches, athletic director Gina Grubb, and Principal Mark Carothers, were entertained.

The bocce players for Poolesville are Peyton Reed, Justin Fisher, Hallie Maytin, Alaina Shields, Sean McCue, Nicole Davis, Bradyn Bliss, Nico Carillo, and Alex Quigley.

"I was asked to join the team by one of my friend's parents because there were not enough players to form a team," said Nicole Davis. "I had played once

Continued on page 18.



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Over 235 faithful supporters have renewed their memberships or become new members so far. Memberships are still coming in every day, and we are waiting for yours! Please consider how much you can contribute to our mission of assisting those in need in our community.

WUMCO Wednesdays

You can support WUMCO and a local restaurant at the same time! The **Watershed Café** on the **SECOND Wednesday** of each month. The next date is **February 12, 2020**; and the **Mexican Grill** on the **THIRD Wednesday** of each month. The next date is **January 15, 2020**. Both of these fine Poolesville restaurants will donate 10% of their income to WUMCO. Please join us at Watershed Café for breakfast, lunch, or dinner and at the Mexican Grill for lunch, dinner, or delivery!

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Questions?

Please write Adam DeBaugh at wumco2@gmail.com or call the WUMCO office.

Garden

Happy New Year

By Maureen O'Connell

It is a new year for us and a new year for the garden. Of course, "the garden" means different things to different people. Whether you are a seasoned gardener planning to refresh a perennial border or brighten up a patio or front stoop, or a new gardener in a new home with a blank-slate backyard, now is the time to do some research. There are no garden chores to take your time, and new garden catalogues are already arriving in the mail.

The dormant garden is now in its skeleton form which allows you to see its bare bones without the distraction of multiple flower shapes, scents, and color. Winter, whether the garden is bare or buried in snow, is the perfect time to think about your landscape's overall design. You see it in a new light. This season shows off your garden's geometry, its balance, and its relationship to buildings, fence lines, or surrounding woodlands. Do you need more evergreens to soften and brighten the garden, to provide shelter



Bleeding Heart
Dicentra spectabilis 'Alba.'



Witch Hazel 'Diane.'

Photos courtesy of White Flower Farm.

for birds, or to hide objectionable views? Has a tree grown too close to utility lines and does it need to be trimmed? Do some sheds and fences need repairs?

In my garden articles this past year, I have discussed various topics: low-maintenance plants; gardening without chemicals harmful to the environment; the importance of trees to the ecosystem; and native plants. Every year, horticulturists introduce new plants or variations of old classics that are more low-maintenance, more disease-resistant, and more tolerant of changing climatic conditions. Study the new catalogues now to find plants,

trees, and shrubs that can improve your gardens and also protect wildlife and the environment.

I have said many times that a garden lives in a state of evolution; the best gardens are not static. My garden in Barnesville is about forty years old. Some plants, such as my *Rosa rugosa* 'Blanc Double de Coubert' and 'Rose-raie de l'Hay' are more than thirty years old, and some others have come and gone. My stars are my peonies, daylilies, *Coreopsis* 'Moonbeam,' and the old-fashioned white Bleeding Heart *Dicentra spectabilis* 'Alba.' White Flower Farm says that its common name, Bleeding Heart, is about as

accurate as calling an ermine a white weasel. Every year, I plant several new plants as experiments—some make it; some don't. It is "survival of the fittest"—and sometimes pure luck. Last year's new entries were two Witch Hazels 'Diane' and 'Arnold Promise' and the perennial flowering plant *Alstroemeria* 'Inca Ice.' They are both thriving.

I will call my new challenge this year: The Return of the Rose. When I first moved to Barnesville, I fell in love with the rose—old roses, hybrid teas, grandifloras, and David Austin's English roses. Over time, I acquired ninety-eight rose bushes, and they were beyond compare, but they only existed because, every Saturday, I would spray them with insecticides and fungicides, heavily fertilize them, and faithfully water them. Their beauty was at the cost of the environment, so I stopped helping them to live; they had to survive without me. Eventually, they all died. I still miss their presence in my garden very much. Three years ago when I was in London, I visited David Austin's gardens in Wolverhampton, about two hours from London. I spoke with their horticulturists about the difficulty of growing

Continued on page 15.



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Continued from page 1.

Mary: Regal in All Respects

by a gold locket-watch hanging around her neck, a gift from her aunt on her sweet sixteenth birthday. She could have been Queen Mary.

Mary Fyffe Chiswell lived in the house her grandfather built. It still stands two doors north of Poolesville Baptist Church. She bought it in 1923 and lived there until her death. She lived away from Poolesville for only brief periods of time, the first being when she left to begin her lifelong vocation. "When I left Poolesville to attend Normal School to become a teacher, I was following the inspiration of those, like Betty Griffith, who taught me in school," said Mary. She crammed two years of study into one before finishing at Towson College. At the time of our interview, Mary was the oldest living alumna of Towson University.

As she jam-packed her trunk to go off to college in far-away Baltimore, her parents told her that she would not be able to come back before Christmas. "I remember celebrating Thanksgiving at my uncle's farm. I took a trolley to Ellicott City and then rode a horse and buggy out to his farm."

Mary taught elementary school (mostly second grade in Poolesville) from 1919 to 1964. She started in a much bigger school in Darnestown. The building had twenty rooms. Darnestown was too far to commute, so she, like the other teachers, boarded. She eventually came back to Poolesville. Most of her friends preferred to be closer to the District of Columbia for the cultural opportunities of the day like the theater, library, etc. For Mary, her passion for her hometown brought her back to Poolesville.

Most teachers were single, and for those teaching in the Poolesville area, their social lives really centered around getting together with fellow teachers. "We would do our fancy work (needlepoint, knitting, etc.), talk, share homemade pies and cookies, and have a good time sharing each other's company," reminisced Mary. A big deal would have been the field trips to Rockville where baseball and soccer were the games of the day.

The classrooms almost always had about twenty-three kids in them, although she remembers when one class had fifty-two. They assigned a teacher's helper in those situations.

Most of the ladies married local men. Mary was no different, marrying Mr. Chiswell in 1936. He worked in Washington at the time.

Her husband was not big on travel, preferring to play golf and bowl; however, he encouraged Mary to travel—and travel she did. She joined the Frederick Travel Club and over the years visited pretty much all of the United States. She traveled by automobile and train, reveling in the industrial tours that were very popular back then. She fondly remembers going to glass factories, watching how potato chips were made, and other such tours. She also has fond memories of the Chicago World's Fair and recalls a demonstration on how automobiles were made.

She left the country once on a cruise to Bermuda only to be challenged by Hurricane Cleo. Though the ship tilted a lot, the hurricane was not up to the match with Mary.

As she related the stories of her life and travels, the secret to her long life emerged unspoken as she radiated a vibrant, youthful zest for life, fully engaged, exhibiting genuine optimism. Asked how she did it, she replied, "My mother gave me advice when I first started living on my own in Poolesville. She said, 'Always remember that it is a small town and everybody knows each other. Many families are married to one another, so never, ever talk badly about any person since you do not know how they may be related.'"

Mary spoke in a beautiful southern accent. It always reminded me of the upscale, southern drawl in *Gone with the Wind* but with a modified Maryland tone. The only clue to her longevity that she can attribute to a physical reason is that her mom was a great cook. "The food was fresh, homemade, and we had plenty of it," she recalled.

We had to prod her about talking of any bad times. She finally relented with a small sigh that seemed to say, "Okay, just one thing bad." She had a rough time when the Poolesville National Bank closed its doors in the 1920s. "Everyone said to get your money out, but we kept it in there anyway. The day I found out was at a time we were planning a trip to Rockville to buy a new daybed. I was told I could forget about the trip because no one was able to get money out of the bank. We finally settled on getting back some money at twenty-three percent of our savings."

Then she quickly left the negative and resumed remembering fond things of the past. A lifelong member of St. Peter's Episcopal Church, she remembers her mom baking the bread and cutting off the crust for communion. Mary lived in

what up until very recently was St. Peter's rectory. She recalled that the blackberry wine for communion was homemade and chuckled when remembering that the sexton at the time was often accused of sampling it when cleaning the church. She can still recall having the job of turning the hand pump to make the organ work.

Physically, Mary has only suffered some broken bones over the years. When she broke her hip, her time to travel came to an end; however, she greatly enjoyed getting together with friends and appreciated when so many of her past students would drop in just to say hello.

Following my interview with her, friends and family stopped by with gifts and cards in celebration of her upcoming 103rd birthday. When they did, Mary had a very special gift for them. It was a rare, warm, and beautiful present. It was the gift of Mary's presence. When I left Mary, I had to ask permission for a kiss. She laughed robustly when she said, "Of course."

Fun Fact...

Mary's Thanksgiving trip to her uncle's farm by trolley likely occurred on the Kensington Railway branch. The Kensington Railway began service in May 1895 as an extension of the Capital Traction Company (CTCo) line terminating at Chevy Chase Lake. It ran via Connecticut Avenue and Kensington Parkway to the bank in Kensington near the B&O Railroad Station. In 1902, the Montgomery Electric Light and Railway was chartered to extend the Kensington Railway to Ellicott City.

As automobiles and buses rose in popularity and availability, trolleys began their descent into the history books, and by 1935, they were pretty much gone from Montgomery County.

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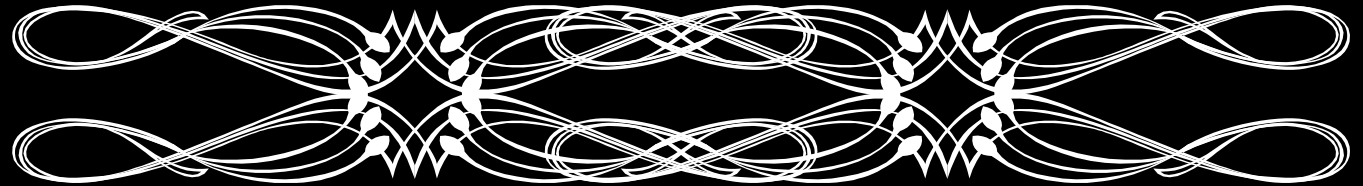
Wilbur Day Watkins



Bruce John Wooden



Katherine Michelle Zajdel



Continued from page 12.

Happy New Year

roses in the Washington, D.C. area. England does not have many of the diseases and pests that attack our roses. They recommended one of their new roses, 'Olivia Rose Austin.' It was hailed as highly disease- and pest-resistant. I planted three in three different locations. The one in morning sun and dappled afternoon sun is thriving. The others in full sun and full shade did not do very well at all. When I return to London in early spring, I shall again visit David Austin's gardens to see if there are any

new introductions that might adapt to our weather. We shall see.

This year marks the fortieth anniversary of the creation of Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve. Its ninety-three thousand acres are dedicated to the preservation of farmland and rural space in the northwestern part of the county; however, this treasured land is not immune to new challenges to its continued existence. It is up to all of us to protect it, for when it is gone, it is gone for good. There is no turning back. Let us all move into this new year determined to do all we can do to save our planet. It takes just one step at a time, however small.

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Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present Crimes

DUI Arrest: 19900 block of Dowden Circle.

Vandalism: 21800 block of Beallsville Road, 17200 block of Spates Hill Road.

Theft: 21000 block of Clarksburg Road.

The Alcohol Holiday Task Force completed its seventh week of operation recently. Its members were drawn from all of the Maryland police departments nearby. So far, 256 people have been arrested for DUI. It was noted that this total was made only by the task force and does not include those made by patrol officers.

Past Crime: 1970

A Swedish diplomat received a formal apology from the State Department after he claimed that he had been "roughed up" by officers. The man had just left a party at the home of Dean Acheson when he was stopped for speeding on Connecticut Avenue. He said that officers twisted his arm and treated him rudely. Chef James McAuliffe said that the man had been driving at a high speed and had refused to stop when officers had activated their lights and sirens. When they had finally stopped him, he had called the officers "pigs" and had refused to show a driver's license. The diplomat had run out into the road and had tried to flag down other motorists in an attempt to get witnesses and that was when officers had had to drag him back to the curb. McAuliffe said, "He was playing a game of cat and mouse."

Kyle Winston Sherill, 31, of Dickerson, was arrested by county police after the kidnapping of a six-year-old girl from a Montgomery County shopping center. He had taken the girl to his car where he molested her. Investigation led to a series of kidnappings that Sherill had committed across the country. Eventually, he was sentenced to fifty years in prison for his crimes. In 1993, after being released from prison, he kidnapped another girl and, while being pursued by Ohio police, died in a head-on collision with a truck.

Montgomery County officers spotted two cars drag racing on Randolph Road at about 12:40 a.m. They gave chase and within a few minutes came upon one of the cars smashed into a tree. The other car had escaped. Officers tried lifesaving efforts, but they were futile, and Bruce Prior, 21, was pronounced dead at the scene.

Local police, aided by officers from Prince George's and Fairfax Counties, raided a farm

on Clopper Road and came away with a huge haul of marijuana, hashish, LSD, and other assorted drugs. Also found were several handguns. Police made eight arrests and announced that the raid had put a major dent into the drug distribution problem in the county.

County police were seeking the burglars who broke into the Lone Oak Elementary School and stole twenty-three gerbils. Police said that the gerbils were the property of the second grade class and had been raised by the children the whole year.

Some of the material in this column was obtained from the archives of the Washington Post.

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Remembrances

Mary Katherine Cowdery

Mary Katherine Cowdery, 89, of Boyds, passed away on December 27, 2019. A lifelong resident of Montgomery County, she was born on December 13, 1930 in Darnestown.

Mary Katherine was the loving wife to the late William Everett Cowdery, and the daughter to the late Charles Loring Lowery and Mary Katherine Ricketts.

She was a strong courageous mother and a wonderful caring grandmother and great-grandmother. She enjoyed gardening, traveling, and hosting family events.

Survivors include four daughters, Sally Fink (Randy) of Ijamsville, Wanda Cole (Ed) of Ocean View, Delaware, Mary Clinedinst (David) of Adamstown, and Terrie May (Dale) of Boyds; seven grandchildren, Kasey Channell, Kelli Fink, Kimberly Day, Brooke Clinedinst, Brittany Clinedinst, Michaila Webb, and Sabrina May; three great-grandchildren, Kaylee Carder, Drew Channell, and Brody Channell; and one sister, Pearl May (Sally) Roberts of Mt. Airy.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Darnestown Presbyterian Church Building Fund.



Mary Katherine Cowdery

Sidney W. Earle, Jr.

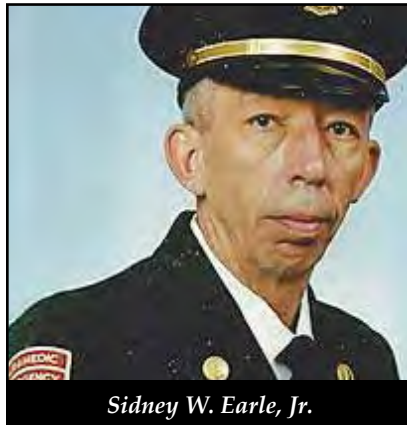
Sidney W. Earle, 81, of Barnesville, died on January 3, 2020 at his residence. He was the husband of the late Elizabeth Lorraine Earle.

Born on January 24, 1938, in Washington, D.C., he was the son of the late Sidney W. and Helen V. (Kilgour) Earle.

Sam served his country proudly in the United States Army and was a career firefighter and paramedic with Montgomery County Fire and Rescue Service.

He is survived by his daughter, Lorraine "Lorrie" Earle of Barnesville, and three sisters, Lillian Earle of Frostburg, Helen Holmes of Laurel, and Charlene Earle of Frostburg.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that contributions be made to the funeral home to help with funeral expenses.



Sidney W. Earle, Jr.



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**We can't be sure, but it was reported
that the lead deer had a red nose.**

Photo by Terri Pitts.

*Do you have an unusual or funny picture of an pet or animal?
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Continued from page 11.

Bocce Is the New Team on the Block

before. It is really fun. It is exciting. This year so far we are kind of getting used to it. We have only had a few practices. The Rockville game was the first game I played in this year. We practice twice a week. We practice just like we are in a game only we play against each other. There are no special drills or anything. It has been fun so far."

"My friends told me about it," said Alex Quigley, "so I decided to join the team. I learned how to play at the first practice a few weeks ago. It is really fun. Games are really suspenseful towards the end. This game was craziest. It came down to overtime. The fact that we are starting something new is really nice."

"My dad told me they were trying to field a team," said Justin Fisher. When asked if he was having fun, he answered, "Yes, I am. This is the first time I have played bocce, the very first time. The Rockville match was really close and exciting."

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Celebrating 31 Years of Service

The Good, the Bad, and the Smelly about Essential Oils and Your Pet

By Peter H. Eeg, BSc, DVM, CVLF

Essential oils and the diffusers used with them are gaining in popularity, but they may not be safe for your pets. Essential oil diffusers release molecules of the essential oils into the air that you and your pets inhale and touch. There are many claims about their health benefits but no proven research.

Essential oils don't pair well with cats and birds. Birds are very sensitive to essential oils due to air sacs in their bones in which the oils can concentrate. Dogs have a bit more tolerance but can suffer skin irritation and liver damage. Cats lack an essential enzyme in their livers making these essential oils toxic to their health.

Many people have seen ads that invite you to apply the essential oils to the earflaps of dogs and cats. Cats, especially, groom themselves constantly and will lick and swallow the applied oils. This can potentially cause oral irritation, gastrointestinal upset, or organ injury. Most dangerous to your furry friend is the potential for the oils to cause some severe liver problems.

The oils are often dispersed via diffusers. There are actually different types of diffusers on the market, and you will want to make sure you use a passive-style of diffuser for yourself in a room which your pets cannot access. Passive diffusers simply absorb the oils and off-gas them into the environment.

It's the active diffusers you'll want to avoid. They expel micro droplets of the oil, and your dog, kitty, or bird friends ingest that material as it settles onto their fur and feathers. They can groom and preen it off themselves, and that's where they can get into health problems.

Symptoms to be on the lookout for if your furry pals get into the essential oils:

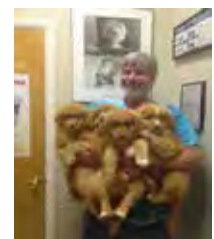
- drooling
- depression
- ataxia (wobbliness)
- low body temperature
- vomiting
- loss of appetite
- respiratory distress
- convulsions
- tremors
- diarrhea
- low heart rate

Discuss the use of essential oils in your home and around your pets with your veterinarian so that you can keep them safe.

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