

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

February 21, 2020 • Volume XV, Number 23



Gina Beck got the seniors dancing until the cows came home, or until 11:00 p.m., whichever came last! See pictures on page 2.



A tornado ripped the galvanized metal barn roof off as if the metal were giant rolls of toilet paper. Whose barn sustained the damage? Mystery solved on page 4.



Dollar General's Mark Hay with a new Monocle display at the store. See Tidbits on page 7 for more delectable, ahem, tidbits.



Nick Zehnle set an impressive record. Check it out in Youth Sports on page 12.

Sugarloaf Store Murder Suspect Identified by DNA, Shot to Death by Police in Virginia Beach

By Jack Toomey

On a cold and snowy day in March 1992, a customer walked into the Sugarloaf Mountain Store on Comus Road and found the owner/shopkeeper dead on the floor. Police homicide detectives quickly responded and determined that the victim, James Essel, had been killed by twenty-nine stab wounds. A witness was located who had seen an unfamiliar car in the parking lot of the store at about the time of the murder.

Essel had come to the United States from Ghana in 1959 and opened the store in 1990. He quickly made friends in the community. In those days of the proliferation of convenience stores, he wanted to keep the establishment as a handy spot to drop in for a cup of coffee, a cold drink, or a few essentials. His customers ranged from nearby residents to those on their way to somewhere else. Essel usually worked from 7:00 a.m. to 8:00 p.m., but most



Sugarloaf Mountain Market at the time of the murder.

Photo by Montgomery County Police.

agreed that he enjoyed the human interaction with his customers. In the two years that he had owned the store, Essel had made many friends and was willing to extend credit to people he

knew. Ironically, he had chosen the site because he had wanted to escape the crime of the city.

Continued on page 13.

Fair Access Committee Testifies before the County Council

By Link Hoewing

Two advocates for the Fair Access Committee—Jim Brown, a member of the committee, and Gail Lee, speaking on behalf of the Poolesville Chamber of Commerce—testified on February 5 before the Montgomery County Council in support of a new high school and co-located county facilities. The council is holding hearings for the next few weeks on the county executive's budget proposals, including the capital spending program. Included in the county executive's budget is funding for a major investment in the high school and for a study of the co-located county facilities the Fair Access Committee has been promoting.

Gail Lee spoke first and began by thanking County Executive Marc Elrich, Andrew Friedson, the District 1

councilmember who represents much of the Upcounty, Craig Rice, the chair of the council Committee on Education, and Jack Smith, the MCPS superintendent for showing "real leadership and support for our area in Western Montgomery County." She noted that there is plenty of evidence to support the investments proposed by the Fair Access Committee, including a recent healthcare outcomes zip code study that ranked the Poolesville zip code last. "A healthy community is a thriving community," she said, pointing to the need for more convenient access to healthcare services.

Lee also pointed out the many successes of the high school and its students in supporting the request for major capital spending on the



Commissioner Jim Brown testified on behalf of a new school for Poolesville.

school building. She emphasized the importance of a community center as

Continued on page 17.

Family Album



Dave and Sarah Ashley, Woody and Lisa Hilton.



*Seated: Grace Shepherd, Charles Glass, and George Coakley.
Standing: Grace Routheir Williams, Leigh Platt, Melissa Rose,
Maria Briançon, and Cora Coakley.*



Mary Pat Wilson, Susan Smith, Mary Conlon, Emily Lloyd, and Gail Lee.

PAAC Valentine's Day Dinner



*Bob and Catherine Beliveau, Gayl and Joel Tjornehoj,
and Steve and Tammy Lightcap.*



*Standing: Tom Kettler and Kathy Mooney, Jim and Gabi Brown. Seated:
Craig and Val Dickerson, Skip and Faith Etheridge, and Georges Jacob.*



*Seated: Reneta Funk, Debra Fling, Joy and Tom McCartin. Standing,
Teresa Witt, Carolyn Birley, and Dan Santucci.*



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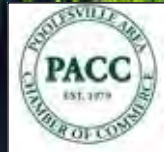
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Garden

Australia Is Burning

By Maureen O'Connell

For the past several months, the world has sadly watched the devastating scenes of the wildfires raging through Australia. At least twenty-eight people have died nationwide, and in the state of New South Wales alone, more than three thousand homes have been destroyed or damaged. So far, 17.9 million acres of land have burned across Australia's six states, resulting in loss of habitat and food for wildlife; over one billion mammals, birds, and reptiles have been killed.

Wildfires are nothing new to Australia, but this summer season has been unprecedented in size and intensity. The nation is experiencing one of its worst droughts in decades, and the heat in December broke the record for the highest temperatures nationwide. These fire conditions are further fueled by strong winds. As with any natural disaster, scientists are investigating the causes of the fire. There are several natural causes such as human negligence or lightning strikes. One cannot solely blame climate change and rising greenhouse emissions—but climate change has definitely worsened the scope and impact of natural disasters like fires and floods. In Australia, as in the United States, climate change has become a partisan issue. Australia's economy is highly dependent on coal mining and its exports. The government of Prime Minister Scott Morrison has failed to reduce carbon dioxide emissions which trap heat that is released into the atmosphere. Its politics are influenced by Australia's long mining history and its powerful coal lobby.

There is another auxiliary factor "adding fuel to the fire." Just under three quarters of Australia's forests are eucalyptus, with the rest a mix of acacia and others, including some rainforest. The eucalyptus, commonly known as the gum tree, has an ancient relationship with fire; it thrives in Australia's fire-prone environment, having adapted and evolved over sixty million years. It is a very fast-growing evergreen native to Australia. It is used to reduce symptoms of the common cold, congestion, and coughs. It is also in creams and ointments for relieving

muscle and joint pains. The eucalyptus tree is prone to fire, while at the same time, it needs fire to survive and spread. Its oil makes its extremely flammable; its fallen leaves create a carpet of flammable material; its bark peels off in long streamers that drop to the ground and provide more fuel for fires. It is sometimes referred to as the "gasoline tree." As the fire needs the tree, the tree needs the fire to survive and spread. Woody capsules, known as gumnuts, technically a fruit, protect the tree's seeds. When a fire sweeps the forest, the gumnuts act as insulation and eventually open up, showering the seeds onto beds of ash, and the process of regeneration begins. This year, this action has been slowed, and in some cases, stopped, as amid the recent prolonged drought, the trees have been starved of carbon and are therefore not as healthy as usual.

Another side effect of the fires and the loss of eucalyptus trees is the effect on wildlife, especially the koalas. They depend solely on the leaves of the tree for their diet and source of water. They also lose their habitat, as they live high up in the leaves of the tree. The koala is the only mammal, other than the greater glider and the ring tail possum, that can survive on a diet of eucalyptus leaves, which are extremely toxic, containing high levels of poisonous cyanide compounds. An adult koala eats about two pounds of leaves each day.

There are estimates that roughly thirty thousand koalas have been killed or injured in the fires. It was sickening to see in the newspapers the black, charred carcasses of koalas of all ages covering the floors of the forests. Their long-term survival rests with the government and its policies on forest clearing, fire management, and climate change.

Australia has been separated from the rest of the world by oceans for thirty million years. Its indigenous wildlife has evolved separately, and many species can be found nowhere else on the planet. If these species are lost from Australia, they will be lost from the planet. The lemurs in Madagascar face the same situation. Fire is a natural part of the Australian ecosystem, but today's circumstances are far from normal. The plants of the forest will recover; the koalas hopefully will return to their pre-fire numbers, but it will be a slow, long, and expensive process. How much longer can the planet survive today's many, many assaults on nature?

Local News

Area Tornado Inflicts Heavy Damage At Calleva

By Rande Davis

The high winds and tornado-like weather event on February 7 brought trees down throughout the area, blocking many roadways. Nowhere was the damage greater than at the Calleva Farm and summer camp in Dickerson, off of Martinsburg Road.

Calleva is also the site of the nationally-famous Markoff's Haunted Forest. Nick (Chief) and Mary Markoff were staying in a farm cottage at the site when, at around 7:30 a.m., the winds noticeably picked up and trees began to fall very close to the house. It was when a tree branch smashed a side window that the danger of the situation became apparent.

Mary Markoff said that the incident passed by so quickly—"it seemed to be over in a minute—that the realization of the danger did not occur until it was actually over. A building immediately outside the cottage and less than fifty feet away had two trees blown over in such an odd way; one of them fell down brushing slightly up against the



Metal roofing and insulation dotted the field and trees after a tornado touched down at Calleva farm.

width of the building while another fell against the depth barricading the structure on two sides without either tree doing any real damage. Other than a broken window, a collapsed roof on the front porch of the cottage was the only serious damage to the house.

The equestrian barn on the property was not so fortunate. The high winds swept through the surrounding pasture, knocking over the landmark water tower windmill, flattening a hay pen, and, as if lifting a sail off a boat, the tornado removed the galvanized metal roof from the frame of the barn, scattering it through the immediate woods, as if giant rolls of toilet paper had been rolled out and spread throughout the area. Pieces of the

Continued on page 9.

The Monocacy MONOCLE

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Send it along to editor@monocacymonocle.com

Town Government

Confusing Commission Agenda Leads to Lengthy Meeting

By Link Hoewing

The commissioners had a lengthy agenda at their February 18 meeting, and the discussion was often confusing and extended. The item that commanded the most attention was a request by local landowner Jennifer Beaulieu to change a forest conservation easement or agreement that applies to her land.

Beaulieu owns fifteen acres of land at the corner of Tom Fox Avenue and Hughes Road. She has lived in town for many years and wanted to have a home in town so she could send her son to Poolesville High School. In 2013, she bought the fifteen-acre property and applied for a permit to build a home. At the time, her land was zoned rural, and she could only build one home and the land could not be subdivided.

State laws apply forest conservation rules to properties that are over 40,000 square feet and, as a result, Beaulieu was required to reserve 8.4 acres of her land for "forest retention." She agreed to an "easement" for the forested areas to be preserved and filed the agreement with the town.

At the tie, the Planning Commission was reviewing the zoning of some properties in town to allow for more houses to be built on some lands that were close to existing developments. The intent has been to create "transitional lots" that allow for more houses on lands that are small parcels near developments that already have large numbers of homes.

The Planning Commission finished the rezoning process just around the time that Beaulieu had filed her easement agreement. It was not clear at the commissioners' meeting why, but the rezoning proposal did not include changes in how the forest conservation rules would apply to Beaulieu's property. In theory, since the number of homes that could be built on the newly-rezoned land had increased, the amount of land reserved for forest conservation should have been reduced.

Once the property was rezoned to allow for more houses to be built, Beaulieu applied to subdivide her property. As Beaulieu's attorney Roger Hayden explained, the newly-rezoned land should only have been required to preserve 5.3 acres of land, according to the state requirements, but Beaulieu agreed to preserve approximately 6.8 acres of land, including some increased forest "buffering" near existing homes.

The Planning Commission had worked over many months and had four public meetings to come up with the revised plan with its modified forest conservation easement. Strangely, planning commissioners were not asked to present their plan or explain and defend their actions before the commissioners, and the placement of the item on the agenda seemed to leave commissioners confused and uninformed.

As town attorney Jay Gullo explained, the issue for the commissioners is one of policy. The creation of the new zoning on the land owned by Beaulieu was "purposeful." As part of the process of rezoning, the application of forest conservation requirements should have been modified. The commissioners need to decide how they want to treat the applicant and whether the forest conservation requirements should be modified. In doing so, they are setting a precedent for the future. As Hayden noted, Beaulieu "has been a good steward of the land and negotiated in good faith." He urged the commissioners not to dismiss her willingness to work with both the town and nearby landowners to accommodate all concerns.

In discussing the proposal, Commissioner Kerri Cook said she was "truly torn" about how to approach the issue. She acknowledged that Beaulieu had tried to work fairly with both the town and nearby homeowners. At the same time, she asked, "What is the town getting out of this proposal?" She said the town has often expressed concerns about open lands in the Ag Reserve but needed to be just as focused about such lands within the town's borders.

Commissioner Valaree Dickerson said she too was feeling torn about the issue. She said she wants to ensure all residents "are being treated fairly," including Beaulieu who has been a resident for a long time and raised her son in Poolesville.

In the end, the commissioners decided to table the issue, and it will be discussed at the next commissioners' meeting on March 2.

Continued on page 17.

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Local News

Poolesville Man Held after Trying to Rob Urbana Bank

By Jack Toomey

A fifty-six-year-old Poolesville man was arrested by Frederick County deputies after he tried to rob a Bank of America branch on Worthington Drive. Police said that at about 10:00 a.m., a man entered the bank wearing a hoodie pulled down over his face and asked for the time. He then approached one of the tellers with what appeared to be a handgun and threw a bag onto the counter and demanded that the teller fill it with cash. Unfortunately for him, he picked a new teller who was in training and had no access to cash. She asked for assistance, and that is when the suspect thought better of his plan, left the bank, and got into his car parked out front.

Frederick County deputies obtained a description of the suspect and his car and within a few minutes found both in a Park and Ride on Route 75. Inside the car, police found a pellet gun, a bag resembling that used in the bank, and clothing that had been worn in the bank. Police then arrested Jerry Lee Tolbert, Jr. of the 17200 block of Elmer School Road in Poolesville. He was taken to headquarters but felt ill and told deputies that he had just taken an injection of heroin. He was treated at a hospital and then was returned to police headquarters. He made no statements and asked for an attorney.

Police noticed that Tolbert was wearing an ankle bracelet because he was on probation for an offense in Montgomery County.

Tolbert was charged with Armed Robbery, Assault, Reckless Endangerment, and Use of a Firearm in Commission of a Felony. He was held at the Frederick County Detention Center in lieu of bail.



Jerry Lee Tolbert, Jr.

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Tidbits

Dancing to Help WUMCO

The support WUMCO receives from the community is what makes its great work possible. Well known for its food bank services, the organization provides many other services to those in need in the area, including transportation to medical services, assistance in paying electric and heating bills, and making sure area families have a full and wonderful holiday season through the provision of food for dinner and Christmas gifts for the children. Recently, Poolesville High School students dedicated its food drive last fall to benefit the food bank (they kindly held onto the food for a few months since WUMCO's shelves were full after the Scouting for Food initiative). The students collected over 1,400 pounds of food! Also, thanks go to Hope Garden Ballet Academy for its night to support WUMCO on Friday, February 7. The students performed for guests, parents, and grandparents and collected 183 pounds of food and a \$40 donation.

Military Enlistment a Family Matter

Maximus Knight, a junior at Poolesville High School, will carry on a proud family tradition by enlisting in the U. S. Army through its delayed entry program and will attend basic training this summer at Ft. Still, Oklahoma.



PHS student Maximus Knight was sworn into the U.S. Army by his brother Lt. James Knight.

Maximus's grandfather, Jim Knight, served in the U.S. Air Force, his father, Matt, retired from the U.S. Navy, his sister Sarah Lapine served in the navy, and brother, James Knight, is an active-duty officer in the U.S. Army. The young man recently flew to Iowa so that his big brother, James, could have the honor of swearing him in. Maximus is the son of Matt and Kathy Knight of Poolesville and grandson of Jim and Annabell Knight also of Poolesville.

MES Students Visit Udvar-Hazy Smithsonian Museum

Monocacy Elementary School made an all-student field trip to the Steven F. Udvar-Hazy Smithsonian Museum which proved to be educational and exciting



Monocacy Elementary School on a field trip to the Udvar-Hazy Smithsonian Museum in Virginia.

Continued on page 15.



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- Pope Francis

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Continued from page 4.

Area Tornado Inflicts Heavy Damage at Calleva

metal roof filled the bushes and got caught in trees, many of which had already been sheared halfway up. The basic structure of the barn appeared to withstand the thrust of the tornado winds, but it will take the Markoffs a full assessment to understand the total damage.

The horses were pastured at the time of the storm burst, but other than being frightened, they were not hurt. While the farm's mini-horses were in the barn, none of them were hurt either. The immediate action after the wind burst was to clear the roads on the property.

Area fans of Markoff's Haunted Forest will be pleased to learn that the theme attraction had less damage and it seems it could be more easily restored, but the ropes course used in their summer camps confidence and leadership programs was heavily damaged.

Matt Markoff wrote to staff that the tornado demonstrated just how impressive the power of nature can be—in just fifteen minutes—significantly changing the landscape of the farm. "While we can be overwhelmed by the destruction, I am just so extremely grateful that nobody was hurt. Our initial immediate tasks were to secure animals and repair fences, making sure the animals cannot get hurt on downed debris, and then open roadways so that we have access to all areas around the farm that need attention."

As the cleanup process, handled by staff and many volunteers from the community, began in earnest from February 17 to 20, Matt Markoff also said, "Fortunately, the public outpouring of goodwill has been so graciously communicated with so many Calleva staff that what seems so challenging, feels very doable. Before we bring in the cavalry (volunteers), we need to make sure the farm is safe and know where we can best use these volunteers." Scores of individuals and groups like the Poolesville American Legion came to assist in the initial three-day effort to break the logjam of obstruction so that the rebuilding process could commence.

In looking to the future, the Markoffs will not just be re-erecting what was once there. They are taking the opportunity to build better with purpose and design. Calleva staff was given the positive message to make the best of a terrible situation. "Get out of your comfort zone, think outside of the box, and let's make an adventure of it."



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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.

Do not miss out on the annual PASC Cherry Blossom Luncheon Cruise. Remember, while the cruise is on April 4, reservations need to be in by March 2. \$97.00 per person. See PASC ad on page 14 this issue for details.

February 25

Nightingale Library Special Event

Sensory-friendly storytime, preschool and kindergarten, babies and toddlers, for children who prefer smaller groups due to sensory processing disorders, including autism spectrum and ADHD, and other special needs. Registration required. 4:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.

February 25

Tween Book Club

Teens, elementary school age. Discuss a new title each month. Copies of this month's book are available at the circulation desk. *Maggie Nightingale Library*. 7:00 to 8:00 p.m.

February 26

Maggie Nightingale Special Event

Book signing: Local author Conceição Araújo Andrade. Her latest work,

Stories of My Azorean Grandmother, tells oral stories from her grandmother. 6:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

March 2

Poolesville Commissioners' Meeting

Poolesville Town Hall. 7:30 p.m.

March 5

PACC Network Event

Poolesville Town Hall. 7:30 a.m. to 8:00 a.m.

American Legion Post 247

All area veterans encouraged to attend and join. Meeting at *Calleva offices in Poolesville* (next to Anytime Fitness). 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Andrew Friedson Coffee Public Discussion

Poolesville Elementary All-Purpose Room. 7:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

March 6

UMCVFD Auxiliary Bingo

Featuring cash and gift cards with door prizes. Enjoy an evening of fun while helping to support your local fire department. Bring a friend! Admission is \$20 which includes a game card with three chances to win in each game. Call 301-916-3375 for questions. *UMCVFD Firehouse, 19801 Beallsville Road, Beallsville*. Doors open 5:30 p.m.; games begin 7:00 p.m.

March 10

BOE Candidates Forum

Poolesville Baptist Church. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Have a meeting, club, or upcoming event to announce in **Things to Do?**
editor@monocacymonocle.com



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Local News

SCA Hosts Meeting on Fly Ash Removal From Genon Energy Facility

By Rande Davis

On February 8, Genon Energy, owner of the coal-burning power plant in Dickerson, held a joint public meeting with the Sugarloaf Citizens' Association at the Linden Farm on Martinsburg Road regarding the long-term process of removing an estimated five million tons of fly ash from the facility. Fly ash is a byproduct of the coal-burning process and must be stored in a securely-lined and -capped area to safeguard against any toxic waste leaching into the groundwater. It is also a material that is used in producing cement and some wall board.

Genon has entered into a long-term agreement with Lehigh Cement in Pennsylvania for the latter to purchase the ash currently stored in Dickerson and is considered enough to supply the company with their need for the substance from between ten and fifteen years.

SCA considers the removal of the ash from our area as a positive decision and hosted the meeting so their members and other persons from the public could learn more about the process, obtain details about its impact on the area, and to have any questions or issues answered by the company.

Peter Heimlicher, environmental compliance specialist from Genon Energy, reported that it will take up to fifteen years, using between forty and sixty dump trucks, making up to three trips per day from Dickerson to Lehigh Cement in Pennsylvania to remove all the fly ash. Dan Baker, of Powell Bloom Company, supplier to the cement industry reported that the trucks travel on Route 28/Route 85 to Frederick Route 15 north. Mr. Baker provided the details of safety and environmental compliance protocol followed by the firm that will ensure that each load is safely secured within the covered truck beds and that the sides of the trucks are washed prior to leaving the facility to remove ash residue.

The method of using removal by truck was selected for its efficiency over railroad, as the latter requires a distance greater than two hundred miles to be

cost effective. While governmental jurisdictions elsewhere have to use tax dollars to remove such ash, in this instance, the removal will not cost the public as Lehigh Cement Co. will be purchasing the material. Genon Energy has been working closely with the Maryland Department of the Environment and federal government in adhering to its regulations of the process and will be closely monitored by them throughout.

The trucks will not deliver the fly ash on weekends or holidays, and all shipments will cease by dusk. SCA did have two requests of Genon by asking for their endorsement of its request to the State Highway Administration for a new stop sign to be placed in the south bound lane on Route 28 just before the railroad trestle in Dickerson in the south lane. SCA expects the sign to help control the level of truck speed traversing the town. Genon agreed to endorse the request. SCA also asked for a public monitoring system covering the delivery process per truck to better monitor compliance with regulations of the trucks. Genon stated they are looking into various systems to do so but did not commit to a GPS-based system, the stated preference of SCA.

Genon's Dickerson facility produces about ten percent of the energy it has in the past by reducing ash production from 91,000 tons a year to around an estimated 6,000 tons currently. Ninety percent of the time, the facility is not producing energy, with only production thirty days last year.

Fun Fact...

Fly ash is the finely divided residue that results from the combustion of pulverized coal and is transported from the combustion chamber by exhaust gases. About 500 power plants in the U.S. burn over a billion tons of coal each year. These plants generate about 140 million tons of waste annually, including fly ash, bottom ash, and scrubber sludge. Fly ash can be used in concrete production, as a substitute material for Portland cement.

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Youth Sports

For Nick Zehnle and PHS Hoops, A Shining Moment

By Jeff Stuart

On Monday, February 3, at Poolesville High School, senior forward Nick Zehnle made all eighteen of his free throw attempts against Northwest, helping the Falcons erase much of an early seventeen-point deficit and make the game competitive in the fourth quarter.

"Any time I step up to the line, I just try to stay clearheaded and focused," said Nick. "It's great I got eighteen in a row, but I would have liked to have gotten the win. This season has been really fun. We have definitely come together as a team. We try hard every night, and I believe we will get our first win in one of the next two games."

Is Nick's eighteen for eighteen free throw mark a school record? Probably, but it's hard to verify. In any case, it was an outstanding and memorable performance. Just getting to the line that many times involves a lot of skill and effort. The Falcons, as a team, had a twenty-point third quarter deficit against Northwest and scored eighteen in the final period to make the Jaguars sweat a bit.

"I think this season has had a lot of ups and downs," said senior guard Frankie Willard. "In our first game, Brunswick hit a three-pointer at the buzzer to beat us. That really brought the team down, but we regrouped and kept our heads up and continued to fight every single game. I think we have grown as a team. We have a lot of talent, and I am really optimistic about the future of this team. The great thing about this team is that, win or lose, we all have each other's back. Inside and outside the locker room, we all stand up for each other."

"I have definitely seen improvement," said senior guard Max Fisher. "We have come together. We started the season very raw and very young. We are still looking to get that win, but I feel it is coming. My favorite moment was when center Kaseem Wilds-Satterfield got a layup in the final seconds against Clarksburg. He doesn't get to play that often, so when he did and got that



Seniors: Nick Zehnle, Max Fisher, Frankie Willard, and Zac Goldstein.

layup, it was huge for him and for us." Kaseem is a junior, but this is his first year at Poolesville.

"My four years of basketball have been great," said senior forward Eamon Murphy. "I have made a lot of friends. The teams over the years have been fun to play on. It has been a good experience. Both Coach Hurd and Coach Kramek have been good influences on me, both on the court and outside of basketball. I think we have lot of young talent. Our sophomores, Jeremiah Oyer, Dylan LeMarr, Jaylen Riggs, and Matthew Griffith have really stepped up this year.

Continued on page 14.

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Continued from page 1.

Sugarloaf Store Murder Suspect Identified by DNA, Shot to Death by Police in Virginia Beach

DNA technology was in its infancy at the time; however, detectives collected enough DNA to enter it into a national database. No matches were found. The Monocacy Monocle featured two stories about the unsolved case in the past fifteen years hoping to help police solve the case. Although some promising leads were received, no arrests were made. In one instance, the late attorney William Roberts contacted me and relayed valuable information about an acquaintance who had a similar car as used by the killer.

Time went by, and the case languished in the offices of the police Major Crimes Unit. Meanwhile, advances in DNA technology were made. County police had become adept at performing familial DNA investigation and began an investigation using the DNA left at the Sugarloaf Store scene. Familial DNA testing involves obtaining the DNA profile of a relative sometimes as distant as a third

or fourth cousin and then investigating the family tree of that person until they get a perfect match. In this case, the DNA investigation took over a year.

Officer Steve Smurgasky, an officer on loan to the Cold Case Squad, took the case and painstakingly used online tools and his own intuition to narrow his search to two people but found that one was deceased. Finally, the DNA left at the murder scene was identified as that of Hans Huitz, 51, who apparently had lived in the northern Virginia suburbs at the time of the murder.

Detectives traced Huitz to Virginia Beach where they obtained a DNA sample from him. Within a day, an expert positively identified the DNA at the Sugarloaf Mountain store scene as that of Huitz. At 6:30 a.m. on February 12, Montgomery County detectives and the United States Marshals Service went to an address in Virginia Beach and found Huitz in a car preparing to leave. A standoff ensued which ended with Huitz drawing a gun and a Montgomery County detective firing a shot that killed Huitz.

The final line in both *Monocle* stories from 2012 and 2018 ended with: "Who Killed James Essel?" Now we know.

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Continued from page 12.

For Nick Zehnle and PHS Hoops, A Shining Moment

They have all played good minutes this year, so I think the future is bright for our program here."

"I see a lot of improvement from our first practices 'til now," said junior Liam Murphy. "It seems like the team is really coming together and growing a lot. I am looking forward to next year. All of us except for a couple of guys have come up through PAA, and we know each other."

"Yeah, I have had a good time," said senior center Zac Goldstein. "You know the losses don't really define us or how the season has gone. We are still a brotherhood. We still all love hanging out with each other. We have fun at the practices and at the games. I loved playing Damascus every time. It is one of my favorite rivalries. They have a kid on their team that is just as big as I am, so every time we get to play each other, it is always a good matchup."

Colin Gross and Brad Whitman are juniors. The head coach is Kenny Kramek.

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Continued from page 7.

Tidbits

for both the children and the staff/chaperones. They learned about parts of the airplane through hands-on activities in the STEAM Lab and even made their own planes! After exploring the Observation Tower where they could see for miles and miles, the group's tour guides taught them about the history of hundreds of gliders, helicopters, airplanes, and famous pilots. They finished the day with an exciting scavenger hunt for airplanes with cool animal names.

Dollar General Helps Monocle Readers

A number of our readers rely on the Dollar General store in Poolesville to obtain their issue of the *Monocacy Monocle*. Recently, the store reconfigured its checkout area which ended up removing the newspaper from the checkout counter, leaving only two display possibilities. One was a cramped space reserved for other magazines for sale, the other, placement on the newsstand leaving the newspaper out of sight and out of mind for customers. Mark Hay, the store manager, knew of the popularity of the newspaper based on how quickly they would go in the original

position and decided to work with the *Monocle* to come up with a solution that would not only improve the number of copies circulated through the store but would prove very convenient to readers. He agreed to a two-pocket floor display to be placed out front so that exiting customers can readily grab a free copy to take home. The display stand has a sign that thanks the customer for shopping at Dollar General—and we say thank you to George for helping us come up with a great solution to our readers' dilemma.

PASC Special Program on the CCC

The Poolesville Area Senior Center (PASC) will be presenting a program on the Civilian Conservation Corps on March 18 at 1:30 p.m. at the Family Life Center, 17550 W. Willard Rd.

Ranger Erik Ledbetter will portray George Richter, Jr., of Germantown, a young enrollee in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC) in 1935, and likely one of the first Upcounty environmentalists.

The Civilian Conservation Corps was a voluntary public work relief program that operated from 1933 to 1942 for unemployed, unmarried men. The CCC was a major part of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's New Deal that

provided manual labor jobs related to the conservation and development of natural resources on rural lands owned by the federal, state, and local governments. The CCC also led to a greater public awareness and appreciation of the outdoors and the nation's natural resources, and the continued need for a carefully-planned, comprehensive national program for the protection

and development of natural resources. Be entertained and learn more about George Richter, Jr., the CCC, and the origins of conservation efforts in the Upcounty. You'll hear a first-person account of hijinks, hard work, danger, and adventure as the boys of Mr. Roosevelt's Tree Army built Maryland's state parks for a dollar a day during the Great Depression.

Fun Fact...

The word "March" comes from the Roman "Martius". This was originally the first month of the Roman calendar and was named after Mars, the god of war.

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Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present Crime

Acupuncturist Charged With Sex Crime

MCPD officers charged Sang Kim, 50, owner of Acupuncture Cure in Poolesville, with committing a fourth-degree sexual offense for inappropriately touching an adult female patient during an appointment.

In late August 2019, the victim arrived for an appointment with Kim at Acupuncture Cure located at 20010 Fisher Avenue. During the appointment, the victim was instructed to remove her clothing (except her underwear) and to put on a medical gown that opened in the front. Kim allegedly touched the victim inappropriately and without her consent while she was on an exam table.

Assault: 18200 block of McKernon Way, 15400 block of Barnesville Road.

Burglary: 17300 block of West Willard Road.

Theft: 17700 block of Moore Road, 23400 block of PeachTree Road, 15600 block of Barnesville Road.

Vandalism: 16700 block of Elmer School Road.

Past Crime: 1973

A twenty-20 year -old resident of 8500 16th Street in Silver Spring was discovered murdered in an elevator by a resident who had summoned the elevator to the lobby. Police were able to determine that the victim, Linda Yost, had been out for the evening and had last been seen at a night spot on Georgia Avenue. Forty-seven years later, the case remains unsolved.

A Montgomery County officer was shot and wounded during a wild chase that began in Greenbelt when a man was stopped by a Prince George's

County officer. The driver was asked about discrepancies in his New York license and then drove away. The chase heated up on the Beltway with several departments in pursuit. The car was finally stopped in Spencerville in the far northeast part of the county, and Officer Thomas Critcheon was shot in the leg by the suspect who. He was apprehended and sentenced to prison. Critcheon had just been recognized by the county for saving the life of a Soviet diplomat during Storm Agnes.

Montgomery County pPolice issued a warning to residents whose homes were for sale. During the past week, the same man had knocked on the door where "For Sale" signs were posted and asked to look around. In both cases, the man raped the housewife who was home alone. Police suggested that female real estate agentss not work alone until the rapist was caught.

A Nnaval officer stationed at the Walter Reed Hospital dental lab was arrested and charged with manslaughter after he killed his next -door neighbor who apparently mistook the house for his own. The seventy-eight-78 year -old victim had gone out for a walk at about 1:30 a.m. and, upon return, apparently mistook the neighbor's house for his own. The navy man heard noises and, thinking that a burglary was trying to break into his house, retrieved his shotgun from a closet and fired through the front doored.

County police chased a Washington man into the District after he had robbed the Sew and Save Store in Wheaton. When the suspect bailed out of his car near the 800 block of Beach Drive, NW, police shot him twice. He was already wanted for armed robbery in the District.

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

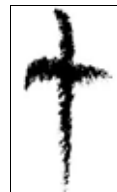
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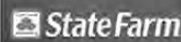
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Continued from page 1.

Fair Access Committee Testifies before the County Council

well to the business community which she was representing. "We are a chamber with mostly home-based businesses," she said. "A community center would provide a place for local businesses to schedule events, teach classes, and truly help support our entire community to include our business community. We are the only area of Montgomery County without these facilities." In closing, Lee said, "Our area, to include our students, seniors, and community members, [has] been left behind for too long," urging the council to support the CIP requests made by the county executive.

Jim Brown appeared next. Brown too began his testimony by thanking Councilmembers Friedson and Rice for their support and guidance and said that the committee has been "very pleased by how we have been received by the entire council." He also mentioned the strong support of the county executive in his budget proposals.

Brown said, "Through its work, the (Fair Access) Committee has demonstrated that despite promises made when the Ag Reserve was established, the county has, for many years, ignored the need for investments in our area in a new high school and in the kinds of facilities and services that are available to most other residents in the county, resulting in a 'services desert.' Many have suffered in the western county, including an isolated and aging senior population, and the lack of nearby access to healthcare for our residents has contributed to last-in-the-county health outcomes."

He then pointed to the hard work residents and leaders in the Upcounty had put into making up for the lack of county support through initiatives such as WUMCO's volunteer transportation program that takes citizens in need to the doctor and the launching and initial town funding of a senior citizen committee. He said, "We value community initiative, but we can't do it alone—and we should not have to. The county has built community centers and senior centers throughout the county and in many places has established clinics and wellness centers. They are a part of the service portfolio the county offers to its citizens. It's well past time that western county residents are treated on par with citizens elsewhere in the county."

In speaking with several councilmembers and representatives from the county executive's office afterwards, it was apparent that the testimony of Lee and Brown was well received. The council will hold several more weeks of hearings, and the various council committees will deliberate on their portions of the budget program. In May, the council will hold final votes on the budget, and it should become clear by then how the funding proposals supported by the Fair Access Committee will have fared.

Continued from page 17.

Confusing Commission Agenda Leads to Lengthy Meeting

The commissioners also considered two proposals that have been discussed before and have been reviewed by the Planning Commission. First, a text amendment was discussed that would prohibit most businesses from operating for twenty-four hours. It would exempt "membership" organizations from the requirement and ATMs and gas pumps. It would also exempt afterhours medical care facilities.

Commissioner Jim Brown called the proposal "spot zoning" and "anti-business." He said, "If you don't want a gas station in town, just be up front about it." The proposal has to go to a public hearing and, while Brown clearly has reservations, all five commissioners voted to allow it to be subject to public comment.

The commissioners also considered a zoning text change that would extensively regulate the location and siting of any future gas station. The proposal would, among other things, prohibit the siting of a gas station within six hundred feet of a public school. The commissioners only briefly discussed the matter and again voted unanimously to schedule it for a public hearing.

Finally, Town Manager Seth Rivard laid out the timeline for the consideration of the coming fiscal year's town budget. He proposed that the commissioners meet on Saturday, March 7 to review and discuss a proposed budget. During April, the commissioners will hold public hearings on the budget. At the May 18 commissioners' meeting, the budget will be set for a vote and final approval. The commissioners agreed to the schedule.

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Do Your Pets Feel Pain Like You Do?

The Short Answer Is: YES!

By Peter H. Eeg, BSc, DVM, CVLF

According to studies in *Psychology Today*, the idea that dogs and cats don't experience pain like we do is a MYTH. This stems from the fact that dogs and cats HIDE their pain. Our canine and feline friends have inherited an instinct to hide any pain that is caused by injuries or infirmity. In the wild, an animal that is injured or infirm is vulnerable to attack, and there is a survival advantage to acting like nothing is wrong even when pain is present. They suppress many of the more obvious signals of pain and injury to protect themselves and their social standing in their packs (your household). They hide their pain to appear to be more in control of the situation. Unfortunately, because of this, it is often difficult for humans to recognize when their furry friends are hurting.

Very simply, if your four-legged buddies are acting differently than they usually do, like limping or refusing to eat their regular food, there is likely some pain component that is uncomfortable enough that they cannot hide it. Pets that show behavior changes, such as where they sleep or lack of normal play, may also be showing they are feeling discomfort.

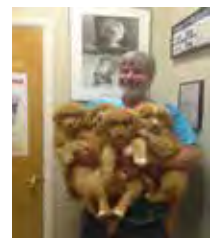
The simple truth is that you may not know that your dog or cat is in pain as he may be trying to hide it. If you notice changes to the normal activity or movements of your fine furred friends, have them examined by your veterinarian. Your veterinarian is trained to identify pain and discomfort in animals that would otherwise not show outward signs. There are great medications specifically designed for pets to control or eliminate pain. Do not use medications from your own medicine cabinet unless instructed to by your veterinarian.

Every creature deserves the right to live pain free and happy in her life.

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