

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

March 4, 2022 • Volume XVIII, Number 1



PACC's Hilary Schwab (right) presented a donation to Rich Norwood and Maria Briançon. See more pictures on page 2.



The grand opening of Poolesville's newest merchant went swimmingly. Details in Business Briefs on page 5.



PACC BOD gave out many special things. See Family album on page 2 and Focus on Business on page 8.



Sam Stempler is a champ! Details are on page 10.

Commissioners Focus on Town Staffing Issues

By Link Hoewing

At their February 2 meeting, the Town of Poolesville's commissioners discussed a report on employee salary and benefits issues. The report was presented by the consulting town manager, Tony Tomasello. He prepared it with the assistance of the HR consulting firm the town has hired.

Tomasello explained that the purpose of the study was to examine salaries and benefits for the town's employees as compared with those of other jurisdictions. He said that to the greatest extent possible, the town's compensations packages should be designed to ensure that Poolesville is offering competitive pay and benefits to its employees. This will not only help improve morale but will also help avoid needless loss of seasoned employees to other jurisdictions due to higher pay/benefits.

The report included information based on a survey of staff regarding their attitudes towards existing compensation and benefit programs, among other issues. As is common in such employee surveys, pay was an

oft-mentioned area of dissatisfaction. Some of the information gathered in the survey also relates directly to staffing levels, including issues with on-call policies (for some vital services, staff is placed on an "on-call" basis on weekends or holidays, in case of an emergency) and the "paradox," as Tomasello put it in his presentation, of using overtime compensation versus hiring additional staff. A total of about \$160,000 was paid in overtime last year and "relatively few staff are getting those dollars," Tomasello noted.

Aside from these issues, Tomasello said that staff responses in general indicated satisfaction with the workplace, especially with regard to relationships with co-workers. Despite this, results showed a high likelihood of staff leaving for higher pay.

The town currently has nineteen authorized positions. This is up from fourteen in the mid-2000s as positions have gradually been added. Plans currently are to hire an assistant town manager to help support the new town manager once he or she is brought on

board. Additional hourly/part-time help is employed by the town seasonally. The salary schedule for employees is adopted annually by the commission. Individual positions are assigned grades, but there is no step system within the grades which is common in many governments. Tomasello said that there is frequent collaboration and crossover between staffs in town which is highly beneficial.

Town staff are paid a base hourly compensation, plus overtime. Only the town manager is not paid on an hourly basis. Select staff (for example at the water plant) receive on-call pay, and some have a uniform and shoe allowance. The town has a health insurance plan (with a fifteen percent employee contribution), dental and vision plans (with a hundred percent employee contribution), an employer-funded 401(a) retirement plan at ten percent of pay, a defined contribution plan, an employee funded (pre-tax) 457 retirement plan, employer-funded life and

Continued on page 18.

PHS Swimmers Unstoppable Yet Again at States

By Jeff Stuart

The Poolesville High School boys' swimmers won their tenth consecutive 3A/2A/1A State Swimming and Diving Championship on Saturday, February 26 at the University of Maryland Eppley Recreation Center, a streak only interrupted by COVID in 2021. It was the tenth anniversary of their first win in 2012. The boys accumulated 372 points to 235 for runner-up Rockville. The girls finished second with 267 points. Rival Damascus narrowly finished first with 283. Several individual head-to-head matchups with Damascus were very close.

As they have done in claiming all ten titles, the boys won the opening event, the 200-yard medley relay. Andrei Hancu, junior, Ben Nachod, senior, Maxwell Chen, senior, and Konnor Chen, senior, beat their seed



2021-2022 PHS boys' swim team takes states for the tenth time in a row, blowing all other PHS records out of the water!

time by eight seconds and second place Patterson Mill High School by five seconds.

Poolesville won all three men's relay races, also winning the 200-yard

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Family Album

**PACC
ANNUAL MEETING**



Joel Tjornehoj, WUMCO board president, with Barbara Polak, vice president.



*Jonathan Adamson of
Madison Autism Foundation.*



Leni Barry of Shine on Together.



Jennifer Freeman of Community Farm Share, a service of free local produce and farm foods for residents who are food challenged.



Jeff Stempler and Gail Lee lead PACC's networking events.



Dr. Kate Kirksey (top left) joined Dr. Duggirala's family at the PACC Award event; top right, Mrs. Heshu Duggirala. Dr. Duggirala's sons, Rowen and Jetr, sat in front of them.

Tidbits

Care Packages for Ukrainian Refugees

Poolesville is a small town with a big heart and always here to help. Over the next two weeks, Val Dickerson will be spearheading a drive for donations of items needed by Ukrainian refugees. The packages will be shipped to Poland to be distributed among the refugees from Ukraine. While just a small gesture of kindness from our community, it is a way for people to be a part of the process and support those who need it the most right now.

The boxes will be 2'x 2' kits ready for immediate use. Items being collected are: fleece blankets (40" x 50"), Apple and Eve juice boxes, cup of noodles, Kind bars, children's underwear, soft pack baby food pouches or containers, and Band-Aid Hydro Seal heel pads.

The collection site will be at Anytime Fitness in the center of Poolesville. Please drop off your donations Saturday and Sunday, March 5 and 6, and March 11 and 12, from 9:00 a.m. to noon.

There is still a need for corporate sponsors to help ship the boxes. The goal is \$1,000. For any questions or to make a cash donation, call Valaree Dickerson at 240-688-7639.

Bocce Repeats as Division Champions



PHS Bocce Division Champs 2022

In just their second year of competition, Coach Tom Lang's Falcons (7-2) swept through the MCPS Division IV tournament with wins over Damascus, 2-1, Watkins Mill, 2-0, and Quince Orchard, 2-0.

PHS Student Awarded Oratorical Scholarship Funds

Faith Nu, Poolesville High School sophomore, was selected to represent Poolesville's Post 247 at American Legion's Maryland Region Oratorical. In her first time entering, she was awarded a \$100 scholarship and an Americana Legion Challenge coin. She considered this opportunity an excellent learning experience and was grateful that the faculty at the school were very cooperative in extending her class time to practice. She had the full support of PHS students and, of



Poolesville sophomore received certificate of honor and \$100 scholarship from representatives of the American Legion Maryland delegation.

Continued on page 15.

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Rande(m) Thoughts Giving it All You've Got

By Rande Davis

It's hard to believe how great our PHS swim teams have been. The PHS boys have just won their tenth consecutive 3A/2A/1A State Swimming and Diving Championship! There are so many words one might use to describe such an achievement, and each one falls short. My choice would be "giving it all you've got," but even that doesn't do it since devoted athletes often do that without achieving anything close to this record.

I can't explain it. After all, in ten years, there have been so many different athletes, but two things have remained constant: first, the amazing success over many decades of our youth swimmers, the Piranhas (my eldest daughter was one of them once); and the second is Coach Jon Leong. He would not readily accept the accolades he deserves, but a recent reflection of his on the team's success may give much insight.

"This year, the boys are going for the tenth straight state championship. They are very motivated to do so. Graduating this many boys is leaving huge shoes to fill next year, but we all understand that we have to focus on this season, so we'll get to that bridge later and enjoy the ride we are currently on."

One can read in that statement all you need for success. It's a call for focus, discipline, positive thinking, and dedication. In other words, "Give it all you've got."

The swim team's success gives rise to thoughts of another team in town, a different kind of team: the town staff and personnel.

We don't see the day-to-day players at the water plant, but our town has a strong record of producing quality water, and when there is a mainline break, as recently occurred, it is generally fixed in record time.

Our administrative staff has proven to be superior. I got in trouble a while

back with Clerk Bobbie Evans when we mentioned her possible retirement this spring, so to clear the record on this and to keep me out of trouble, just say you didn't hear it from me. Maybe it's so, maybe isn't. One thing we know for sure is that she puts in the long hours, filled in as best she could during times when we didn't have a town manager, and has spent more than a couple of decades serving us while working out of various town halls and conditions.

Cathy Bupp, our rec director, is all over the place with her cheerful approach to making sure all those special events go over without a hitch, and now that the pandemic is seemingly winding down, you will find her back out and about making sure everything continues to run smoothly.

Then there is Preston King, director of Parks and Streets. I am certain most of us recognize him as one of the very nicest town staff that we have. There is a reason why the town parks staff succeeds in keeping our streets cleared from snow so quickly: Competition. They have a game-like desire to do better than the county every time, and every time they do. While Preston's personality exemplifies cheerfulness and quality dedication, it's his managerial skill that I appreciate the most.

Since I live on Whalen Commons, I often see his crew at work on various projects, from preparing for special events to just making sure all is trim, clean, and beautiful. Typical of their work ethic, they put up and take down tents with military-like precision. Watching Preston lead them reminds me of some of the best military sergeants and officers I have served with. He's a marine and it means a lot, not just for the obvious patriotic reasons but for having that get'er done attitude.

I bring up all this as the town is currently finalizing salaries and employee regulations. When you are the best, you get the best. We know Poolesville is the best, so we deserve the best, and they deserve the best compensation package possible. I hope the commissioners are as generous to our fine public servants as they can be. For those who give it all they've got, let's give them all we are capable of.

Local News

Fire Destroys Home in Remote Area

By Jack Toomey

A windswept fire destroyed a house in the 21110 block of Beallsville Road on the afternoon of February 19. The home is located at least a mile from Beallsville Road on a private road in a wooded section about halfway between Beallsville and Barnesville.

A neighbor reported seeing smoke coming from the house and then called the fire department. Fire companies

from Montgomery, Frederick, and Loudoun Counties responded and fought the fire. Crews were hampered by strong winds and the fact that the area is not equipped with hydrants. The fire could be seen from as far away as the Tuscarora area of Frederick County. Police closed Beallsville Road (Route 109) for at least six hours.

Pete Perringer, a spokesperson for Montgomery County Fire, said that the house had previously been destroyed by fire ten years ago and then completely rebuilt. He said that, in the recent fire, damage would exceed \$2.5 million and that the house was a total loss. Fire investigators said that

Continued on page 12.



Local home is a total loss after another fire in Dickerson.

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Fun Fact...

discoverpoetry.com

Every One Knows March's Way

Every one knows March's way,
Rushing, blowing, night and day,
Rushing, blowing, day and night,
Not a single flower in sight,
Not a bud upon a tree,

But wait until the end and see
When March is packed at last to go,
Every twig will start to grow—
All in a trice, before you know.

— Annette Wynne

Business Briefs

Calleva Opens Potomac River Supply store

The Poolesville Chamber of Commerce and Poolesville Town Commissioners welcomed Poolesville's newest retail store: Potomac River Supply. Following the formal ribbon-cutting event in the morning, the store showcased its product line throughout a day of raffle prizes and some of Calleva's favorite baked goods.

Sam Stone, director of the store, joined Calleva's River School last year and has been kayaking for nearly fifteen years, working at various places throughout the nation in paddling schools. Originally from Maine, he has worked in Wyoming and California.

The store is two-pronged with the retail location at 19366 Fisher Avenue and a vibrant online presence. The advantage of the local store is that customers have a chance to try items prior to purchase.

The store staff are experienced paddlers and are there to assist both kayaking beginners as well as the experienced. They sell leading brands such as Pyranha, Waka, Jackson, Dagger, and Liquidlogic. Of course, there's also a large selection of paddles (Werner), immersion research outerwear, helmets, and safety equipment. The Calleva River School offers the complete kayaking experience from whitewater river to sea and includes whitewater rafting for the less committed.

Poolesville is an ideal location with its proximity to the Potomac River and its presence in the Ag Reserve, providing the full outdoor experience for customers coming from outside of town.

Jamisons Present New Additions!

Congrats to Brian and Arden on their twins, William David and Calvin George, born on February 21. Not sure which is the oldest, but whoever it is, he will be sure to remind the other throughout their lives.

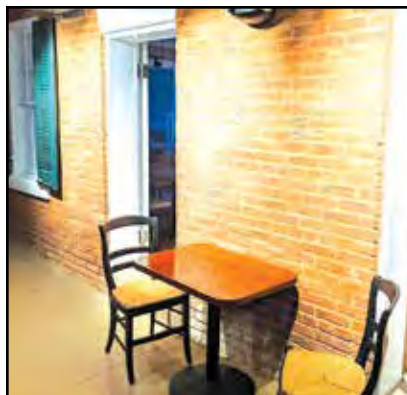
Locals: Countdown Begins!

Yep, the big day is getting closer and closer! Word on the street is that there will be a soft opening sometime in March, probably at the end, meaning that while the full menu will not be

Continued on page 7.



Calleva River School Manager and local kayaking legend, Tom McEwan, cut the ribbon for the grand opening of Calleva's new retail store, Potomac River Supply. Tom Kettler, president of PACC (left), and Sam Stone, director of store.



Your table is now reserved at Locals this March.

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Senior News

Poolesville Seniors Presents Virtual and In-Person Programs

Visit the Poolesville Seniors website, poolesvilleseniors.org, to see their wide variety of virtual programs that are open to the entire community.

Weekly Events

Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays

Indoor Pickle Ball

Fully vaccinated players are welcome, and masks are required in accordance with Montgomery County regulations. *Family Life Center, Poolesville Baptist Church.* 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Mondays

Tai-Chi with Maureen Ivusic. 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Virtual.

Wednesdays

Chair Yoga with Twyla Insalaco. 11:00 a.m. Virtual.

Zumba Gold with Karen McPhatter. 1:00 p.m. to 2:00 p.m. Virtual.

Trivia Game Night

If you love Trivia, come join a team with Poolesville Seniors. For more information, email info@poolesvilleseniors.org. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

Thursdays

Mahjong with Joyce Kral. Fully-vaccinated beginner and seasoned players are welcome in person. Masks are recommended. *Poolesville Presbyterian Church's Speer Hall.* 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Fridays

Breath-Mind-Body with Kathy Jankowski. 12:00 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. Please register for each Friday class. Virtual.

March 3

Small Engine Repair

Want to know how small gas-powered engines really work or how to maintain and repair one? Join Kevin Thomas as he walks us through the workings of a small internal combustion engine, describing some of the common problems and their fixes. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 10

Edible Garden Girl

Join Hilary Schwab, the Edible Garden Girl, as she tempts our taste buds with her Zesty Zucchini dishes. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 17

Historic Properties with Kenny Sholes

Join Kenny and the Poolesville Seniors as we continue our exploration of the historic homes and properties in the Agricultural Reserve. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 21

PS Book Club

The PS Book Club will be discussing *The Hour of the Witch* by award-winning American author Chris Bojhalian. This historical novel confronts Puritan society from the perspective of twenty-four-year-old Mary Deerfield. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 24

Off the Beaten Path: The Richness of Richmond

Travel expert Barbara Paulson will lead us on a virtual tour of Richmond, Virginia. We will discover the largest collection of Fabergé eggs this side of Moscow, visit one of the best public gardens in the U.S., hear some Civil War stories, and more! 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

March 31

Make Your Own Chocolates with Chocolate and Chi

Maureen Ivusic of Chocolate and Chi

Continued on page 7.

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Continued from page 5.

Business Briefs

offered at first, they will open with a limited breakfast and luncheon menu to get things rolling.

Hilton to Retire!

Don't panic all of you who have your funeral plans all set. We are talking about Lisa here, not Woody. Lisa retired on March 3 from Poolesville Family Practice after twenty-seven years. She has been a registered nurse for thirty-eight years with eleven years at Shady Grove Adventist and the rest in Poolesville. Woody is indeed retiring in a sense though. After six years as a volunteer with the Poolesville Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, he has decided to "retire" from that role.

Continued from page 6.

Senior News

will tell us about the health and nutrition advantages of making your own chocolates, especially for certain health conditions. Learn just how easy chocolate making can be with the right combination of ingredients. DIY kit available for purchase. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

April 7

Meet the Poolesville Independent Order of Odd Fellows

Join Poolesville residents and IOOF Grand Lodge of Maryland Grand Secretary, Laura Teate, and Deputy Grand Master, Jeff Teate. These Poolesville Odd Fellows will recount the history of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows and its mission: The betterment of man. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

For more information or to register for any of the programs listed here and receive the Zoom link for each, visit the Poolesville Seniors website: poolesvilleseniors.org. Many of these presentations are also streamed live on their Facebook page and recorded for later viewing on YouTube. Did you know that you don't need a computer to participate? You can join the Zoom presentation using your smartphone or just listen in using the local telephone number from Zoom and the Poolesville Seniors meeting ID and Password. Call or text them at 301-875-7701 to learn how.

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Focus on Business

PACC Selects Annual Community Service Award at Annual Meeting

By Rande Davis

The Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce (PACC) held its annual meeting at the Poolesville Town Hall on February 24. Originating in 1979, the PACC's special event is traditionally a dinner gala, but due to COVID restrictions, it was scaled back.

The membership of PACC is at a record high of 136 members. Any business still not a member can visit its website to join. Among the various services available through PACC is a monthly networking event called Businesses Helping Businesses Grow, held every first Thursday of the month. The program was organized by Gail Lee (Gail Lee Homes) and Jeff Stempler (First Home Mortgage).

A highlight of this annual event is the selection of a chamber member for the PACC Community Service Award. Begun in 2002, with the first recipients Jane and Fred Stearns of WUMCO, the award recognizes persons who have served the community "above and beyond" either through their organization or as volunteers within the community.

This year's recipient of the Community Service Award was Dr. Amar Duggirala of Poolesville Family Practice. Dr. Duggirala, along with Dr. Kate Kirksey, operates Poolesville Family Practice, located next to the Mexican Grill. Dr. Duggirala first came to Poolesville in 2006. When vaccines were in short supply and residents had to travel outside of our area to get the shot, he succeeded in getting vaccines and COVID-19 tests approved for his practice. He opened a temporary, separate clinic to handle the large demand, and he and his staff were remarkable in their professional effort to bring the needed medical vaccines to us.

Dr. Duggirala is a member of Poolesville Green and is the treasurer of the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, active statewide and on a national basis.

PACC also awarded donations from proceeds of its annual Poolesville Day 5K to: Community Farm Share which organizes the distribution of fresh local produce to neighboring families experiencing food insecurity in our area; Madison House Autism Foundation, focusing on the lifespan challenges and opportunities concerning adults with autism; Poolesville Seniors, an active living organization for area seniors; Shine on Together; and WUMCO, providing financial and food assistance to those in need.

Past recipients of the PACC Community Service Award were: Jane and Fred Stearns (2002), Chief George Hillard (2003), William R. Poole (2004), Maggie Nightingale (2004), Coach Mike Riley (2005), Kathy Mihm (2006), Roy and Betty Jean Selby (2007), Ray Hoewing (2008), Brice Halbrook and Bridget Burke (2010), Rande Davis (2011), Dr. D. Timothy Pike (2012), Paul Eddie Kuhlman (2013), Bernie Mihm (2014), Thomas Kettler (2015), Alex Markoff (2016), Valaree Dickerson (2017), Link Hoewing (2018), Faith Etheridge (2019), and Catherine Beliveau (2020).

The PACC Board of Directors: Tom Kettler, president (Kettler Forlines Homes); Dr. Tim Pike, vice president (Pike and Valega, DDS); Jeff Eck, treasurer (UMCVFD and Poolesville Town Commissioner); Roger Hayden, secretary (Hayden Legal Services LLC); Hilary Schwab, past president (Hilary Schwab Photography); Olivia Murphy (Calleva); Charlie Jamison (Jamison Real Estate); Jim Brown (Turning Point Real Estate); and Cathy Bupp (Town of Poolesville), executive secretary. Woody Hilton of Hilton Funeral Home retired from the board this year after six years of service.



PACC president Tom Kettler and Dr. Amar Duggirala, Community Service Award recipient.

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Email tom@tjtarchitects.com for Proposal Documents
Contract Awarded to Lowest Qualified Bidder

A pre-proposal site meeting and inspection will be held on March 24, 2022 from 11:00 a.m. to noon.

Garden

Bonsai for Beginners

By Maureen O'Connell

As we enter the third month of 2022, let's look at some new plants for your house and a new hobby for you. In 1982, I visited Maui, the second largest Hawaiian Island. While there, I bought a small dwarf schefflera (Hawaiian Umbrella Tree) bonsai tree. Although it is not considered a "true" bonsai tree, it is one of the most popular types of indoor bonsai. I carefully carried him in a box onto the plane and stored him in the overhead storage bin. He was about five years old and was living on a rock. Today, forty years later, he is now forty-five years old, and he lives on my kitchen counter next to the sink. He receives filtered sunlight, a medium amount of water and fertilizer, and an occasional leaf pruning. He is very healthy and beautiful and my oldest house plant. Amazing!



Author's Fukien Flowering Tea Tree Bonsai

The word "Bon-sai" is a Japanese term which, literally translated, means "planted in a container." This art form is derived from an ancient Chinese horticultural practice, part of which was then redeveloped under the influence of Japanese Zen Buddhism. It has been studied and refined over centuries, dating back to sixth-century Japan. Philosophically, this art form focuses on principles rooted in Japanese tradition: balance, simplicity, and harmony. The goal of growing a bonsai is to create a miniaturized but realistic representation of nature in the form of a tree. As in nature, some trees grow in harsh, rocky places and are dwarfed and gnarled throughout their existence. Bonsai trees are not genetically dwarfed plants; any tree species can be trained to be a bonsai. Through techniques of pinching buds, pruning, and wiring branches, the plant's healthy growth is redirected.

If you observe old trees in nature, you will see many variations in their styles of growth. They can grow upright or slanting, in groups, pairs, alone, out on plains, or clinging to the sides of mountains. They are found in many different types of environments. Wherever they grow, they are also affected by animals and diseases. All the stresses that nature places on trees are reflected in their shapes. There are five basic bonsai styles, and they derive their names from the tree's angle of growth: formal upright style, informal upright style (which depicts a tree in nature that has suffered from the elements), slanting style (ones that lean at an angle reaching for sunlight), semi-cascade style (hanging from the side of a cliff by the seashore or stream), and full cascade style. One modification of these five basic styles is called root-over-rock style. This is the style of my forty-five-year-old bonsai. In nature, when a seed lands in a crack in a rock and finds enough soil to survive, the plant's roots may eventually grow to spread among the thin layers of soil and moss across the rock. My tree exists solely now by its roots which are now completely encased in the lava rock. The oldest bonsai tree in the world is said to be over one thousand years old. This Ficus retusa linn lives in the Crespi Bonsai Museum in Milan, Italy. How much can a bonsai tree cost? It depends on its age, size, and variety. The most expensive one is a centuries-old Pine which sold for \$1.3 million at the International Bonsai Convention in Takamatsu, Japan.

For 2022, consider buying a bonsai for your home; you might start a new hobby. Three years ago, I decided that it was well past time for me to buy another bonsai tree. Several garden centers and a few grocery stores sell small ones for about \$30 to \$50. I was not too impressed with the quality and health of the trees, so I checked online. There are many good bonsai nurseries throughout the country: Bonsai Outlet, Brussel's Bonsai, Bonsai of Brooklyn, and House of Bonsai. I chose Eastern Leaf in Chino, California, and I was very pleased with their selection of plants. They offer many varieties: Chinese Elm, Junipers, Flowering Satsuki Azaleas, Miniature Boxwood, Mini Ollie Olive Bonsai, Japanese Red Maple, Hemlock Bonsai, Mugo Pine Bonsai, Golden Gate Ficus, and the Carmona or Fukien Flowering Tree. I selected the tea tree. It was five to seven

Continued on page 16.

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Youth Sports

Resilient Wrestlers Find Success

By Jeff Stuart

From a thrilling victory at home in the season opener to another thrilling win at home in the Western Region Duals, the Poolesville wrestling team put together a solid season.

"We have some ups and downs," said coach Damian DeVriendt. "We got fourth place at the Boonsboro tournament. We had a two-week break in the season due to COVID stoppage. We came right back. In our Dorsey Duals, we got third. In the Springbrook Tournament, which was pretty loaded, we got fourth in that. All these tournaments were pretty loaded. We got on a little roll at the end of the year and got second in the Region Duals which we hosted. We lost only to Middletown, the state runner-ups. It was a heck of a run.

"In our Dorsey duals we brought in the West Virginia State Champs. They took all the team and individual hardware with them. They came in and took it.

"Kevin Fultz took second in the Boonsboro tournament and second at the Springbrook and goes into the county tournament as the favorite. In his freshman and sophomore year, he placed in the state tournament. Then we have Jackson Barney who started out as a JV champ his freshman year. Right now, he is ranked number two in the state in the 1A/2A division at 170.

"Then we have Sam Stempler, a junior, at 138. He is 25-3 going into the county tournament and is the second seed; and Diesel Anderson, another senior, has really stepped it up this year. He is 23-5, so I am expecting big things out of him the next three weeks. He was a very defensive wrestler, but now he has opened up his offensive. He has never qualified for the states, so that is the goal."



Rear: Nathanael Tao, Chris Tao, Damian DeVriendt, and Alana Tao.
Front: Sam Stempler, Zach Ransom, Racer Anderson, Joey Geehreng, Kevin Fultz, Jackson Barney, Diesel Anderson, and Chloe Maher.

"Mostly, it is pretty outstanding that we have actually been able to have the season this year," said senior Fultz, "and do the tournaments that we were able to. For about two weeks, we weren't able to wrestle, but COVID has started going down, and we have been able to have our tournaments and have a good season. I think one of our best matches as a team was against Winter's Mill in the region quarterfinals. We ended up only beating them by one point. It was a good match. Everyone wrestled really well. Our last bout, we had Diesel Anderson at 132. He ended up winning the match for us. This year, I had one opponent from Churchill that I wrestled twice. I beat him 5-0 the first time and by one point the second time. The first time we met at 160 in the semifinals at the Grapple at the Brook Tournament. In the dual meet, I weighed in at 152 and bumped up to wrestle him at 160 and beat him again. Looking at the counties, there is a wrestler from Blair that should be a tough opponent... I am looking to win it. That is my goal."

Fultz met that goal, defeating Blair's Junior Kin, 7-1, in the 145-pound County Wrestling Tournament final on Saturday, February 19 at Gaithersburg High School. He had more than one hundred career wins.

"My best moment of the season was the match against Churchill's Jaden Selby," said Barney, also a senior, "because that is a rivalry. I had won the match, and it

Continued on page 11.



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PACC's Special Event

Businesses Helping Businesses Grow! Networking event. First Thursday of each month. Various locations, check poolesvillechamber.com for specifics and guest presenter.

American Legion Poolesville Post 247

Member meeting held the first Thursday of each month at 7:00 p.m. at Calleva offices, 19366 Fisher Avenue.

March 7

Poolesville Commissioners' Meeting

Poolesville Town Hall. 7:30 p.m. Zoom link on town website.

Continued from page 10.

Resilient Wrestlers Find Success

was special because he was ranked above me, and I had lost the two years prior, and it went into overtime. I've known him since I was fourteen. It showed that hard work has really paid off. It really showed during that match. My favorite team memory is the Dorsey Duals. I love every tournament we do as a team, but Dorsey Duals brought us all together. It was both hard, because we faced tough teams, and fun. After the tournament, my friends and I would go back to my house, and we would just hang out and talk about the tournament. Hosting the region for the first time ever was incredible, too. That was a good moment.

"The only match I am looking forward to at the moment is the one with Selby. I am hoping to meet him in the finals at the county and to beat him one last time. Our opening match with Clarksburg, it was a close match, and our teammate Diesel Anderson won it in the last match. If he had lost, we would have lost as a team. To see everyone cheering him on—that was incredible. That got us off to a really good start to the season."

Barney took second place at the county tournament, losing to Selby in the 170-pound final.

"The personal highlight for me was beating a Springbrook kid," said senior Joey Geehring. "I definitely did not think I was going to win that match. I was at 170 for that match. He was ranked in the state, and I wasn't. I ended up pinning the guy, so it was

March 19

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a nice win on my part and nice to bring it home for the team. As a team, it was probably getting to the semi-finals of the region. We beat Winters Mill by a small margin, and fans were allowed to the region. It was nice to have people cheering us on. Currently I am the sixth seed in the county, so maybe I will get fifth place."

Joey actually did better than that. He took third place at 160 pounds in the county.

"I think pinning against Clarksburg to seal the win as a team really boosted my confidence," said senior Diesel Anderson. "The next week I placed third at the Boonsboro tournament. That was great for me. Hosting the regional duals was huge. It was great, in my senior year, to go out with something like that—and to be region runner-ups. I am seeded third in the county but hope to be county champ. I have my eye on a guy from Clarksburg. If I meet him in the finals, I am going to try to destroy him."

Diesel took fifth place at 132 pounds.

"I have been wrestling for fourteen years," said junior 138-pounder Sam Stempler. "I wrestled for Clarksburg Athletic Association before. My favorite moment of the season is Dorsey Duals. That is a really fun tournament. I think we could have done better as a team. We had a lot of injuries, but I think for the most part we did pretty good. Hosting the regionals was really big. I want to get first or second in the county this weekend."

Sam met his goal. He finished second. Zach Ransom, another junior, finished in sixth place at 152 pounds.

Ryan Gerstein, Isaac Feny, and Chloe Maher are also seniors.

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WUMCO Annual Meeting March 22

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March 22 at 7:00 pm via zoom.

Email info@wumcohelp.org for login information.

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Continued from page 4.

Fire Destroys Home in Remote Area

the homeowners had used the fireplace earlier in the day and that embers emained in the fireplace. Strong winds caused air to rush down the chimney and blow some live embers out of the fireplace onto living room furnishings which set off the fire.

The area was under a wind advisory on the day of the fire with strong northwest winds that brought down trees that blocked roads in some places.

The following statement was issued by the Worthington family, owners of

the home, through their daughter, Haley Worthington Mott:

"As we're going through this a second time, we know that many people are asking what they can do to help. We really appreciate the kind thoughts and gestures. What would comfort us most is having everyone check your fire alarms and change them out as necessary. Being aware that these things do happen and practicing fire safety gives everyone the best chance. My parents' positivity and ability to handle the situation again is inspirational. We're moving forward as a family one day at a time."

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Mystery History

The Bomber That Crashed Off Route 28

By Rande Davis

At ninety years old, Charlie Knill (now deceased) still could recall the tragic event from 1955. If it had happened to you, you would have found it hard to forget, too.

Mr. Knill, a lifelong dairy farmer in Montgomery County, was in Boyds, talking to a friend. It was late in the morning of February 8, and his desire for a good lunch was the topic at hand. That's when it happened.

A disturbing and extremely loud booming abruptly interrupted the congenial conversation. Overhead, an airplane had exploded, and in clear sight, Mr. Knill saw a parachute open and begin its descent to the ground. He immediately jumped into his paneled truck and headed out Barnesville Road, trying to stay within view of the parachute. As he approached Peach Tree Road, he saw a large piece of metal drifting, swinging side to side in the air, seemingly floating to the ground. Charlie continued along Peach Tree as the road made a turn to the left just before what is now the Bruce Wooden property. There, in the tall tree grove just to the left of the house, the parachute was ensnared with a pilot dangling just about twelve to fifteen feet above the ground. The site was horrid. The pilot was bleeding from severe wounds on one leg, and the other leg was completely severed.

Being one of the very first on the scene, Charlie moved his truck off the road to the tree grove so that he could climb on the roof to reach high enough to cut the pilot down. With the help of others, they brought the moaning pilot to the ground where local rescue paramedics came onto the scene to assist. Dr. Gordon Smith, a Barnesville physician, alerted about the crash, arrived in time to administer first aid and to provide some morphine to the crash victim.

The injured man turned out to be the co-pilot, Lt. Masaru Uyehara. He was from the Philippines and was in training to fly the B-57 jet bomber. The pilot, Capt. William S. Todd of White Plains, New York, was not as fortunate. Still strapped in the ejection seat, he had been decapitated and thrust into the earth about fifteen hundred feet from the crash scene.

Lieutenant Uyehara drifted down about three miles from the actual crash site. Another witness to the event, Guy V. Lewis, an off-duty county policeman, confirmed to the Frederick Post Mr. Knill's recollection. Mr. Lewis also reported that the plane backfired twice as it flew over his home. "I looked up just in time to see two trails of black smoke. Then it jetted two streams of white smoke and started to twist and turn crazily, and a parachute suddenly opened near it," reported Mr. Lewis.

A few weeks later, in an article in the *Washington Post*, more information came out about the survivor and the incident. Mr. Uyehara stated that "about five minutes after takeoff, we got our first indication of trouble. The plane pitched over on its left side and the nose dropped down. When we couldn't get the nose of the plane up, I asked Captain Todd if we should leave. He nodded and gave me the thumbs up to go."

"We were at about seven thousand feet [when I] jettisoned the canopy and ejected my seat. I thought I saw Captain Todd follow me. Then I hit the tail of the

Continued on page 15.

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In Your Own Backyard

Forgotten History of the Medley District: Part 2 of 3

By Jon Wolz

Growing corn and tobacco quickly depleted the soil in Montgomery County, including the farmland in western Montgomery County, also the number of acres of available land to clear in the county diminished. Population in Montgomery County was 18,003 in 1790, and by 1840, it had dropped to 14,666. The county's residents began emigrating farther west, looking for fertile lands beyond the Appalachian Mountains. In 1845, guano was first used in the county to supplement the soil, and agricultural crops rebounded. Growing tobacco diminished, being replaced by grains and hay.

Enslaved people in the county were 6,030 in 1790 and 5,135 by 1840. By 1850, the overall county population increased to 15,860, and the enslaved population decreased to 5,114. In 1850, the free people in the Medley District totaled 1,794. Of that total, there were 1,685 whites, 102 blacks, and three multi-racial people. There were 853 white males and 832 white females. Of the people of color that were free, there were sixty-two males and forty-seven females.

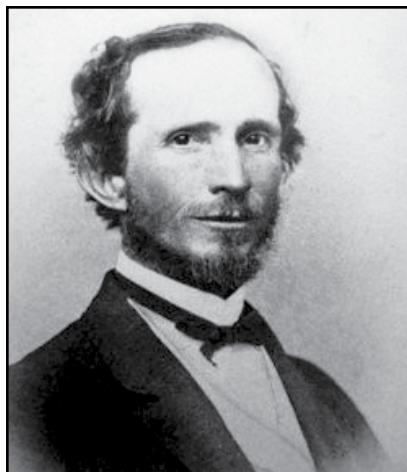
Only men had occupations indicated in the census. For white males, there were 199 farmers, forty-two laborers, thirteen carpenters, thirteen overseers, eleven shoemakers, ten teachers, ten millers, nine blacksmiths, eight merchants, seven tailors, seven physicians, six wheelwrights, four lockkeepers, four masons, four constables, three clergymen, three clerks, two cabinetmakers, two lawyers, two coopers, two manufacturers, and two millwrights. There were one each of the following: canaller, magistrate, saddler, tanner, bricklayer, stonecutter, ferryman, innkeeper, and surveyor.

There were 105 white children attending school. There were 144 whites over the age of twenty who could not read or write. There were twenty-five male and female white paupers.

Most of the whites were born in Maryland followed by Virginia. There were eleven from Washington, D.C., seven from Pennsylvania, four from Ohio, three from New York, two from Kentucky, two from Illinois, one each from Connecticut and Maine, twenty-five from Germany, eleven from Ireland, and three from England. Of the free people of color, all of them were born in Maryland, except for one person born in Washington, D.C.

Of the free blacks and multiracial people, there were twenty-nine laborers, two carpenters, a blacksmith, and a plasterer. None of the free blacks or multiracial people could read or write, and none of their children attended school. Some of the free blacks or multiracial people lived in homes of whites who also had enslaved people. There were fourteen blacks or multiracial families who lived in their own homes. Three people of color owned their own homes. Carpenter Robert Jenkins's real estate was valued at \$500 where he lived with his wife and their five children. Lydia Spencer's real estate was valued at \$300 and living with her was John Onley, who was a laborer, his wife, and their six children. Perry Jackson's real estate was valued at \$100 and living with him was his wife and their five children. There were 277 whites who owned real estate.

There were 1,330 enslaved people in the Medley District in 1850. There were 344 females between the ages of thirteen and ninety-five. There were 367 enslaved males between the ages of thirteen and eighty-five. There were 619 enslaved children under the age of thirteen. Of the enslaved people, eleven were multiracial males, of which eight were under the age of eleven. The other three were nineteen, thirty-two, and thirty-four years old. There were six enslaved female mulattoes ages eighty, twenty-six, twenty-five, four, three, and



Doctor Nicholas Chiswell Brewer was one of eight physicians living in the Medley District in 1850.

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Continued on page 16.

Continued from page 3.

Tidbits

course, all of our local veterans. The winner was a Damascus junior who has been involved in this event for the past three years.

The post considers her participation a double victory—one for her and one for the post. They look forward to entering again next year and hope other students will consider doing the same.

Poolesville Seniors Heart 'n' Soul Auction Huge Success

The Poolesville Seniors reported in a thank you note to area supporters that their auction had sixty-seven donors and earned a total of \$9,100 from 465 bids on eighty-one items. Although used as a replacement for their annual dinner dance, next year they hope to combine both events. Shine your shoes, limber up those legs, and practice. A year can go by quickly!

Continued from page 13.

The Bomber That Crashed Off Route 28

plane, and that's when I lost my leg. They tell me I'm the only person ever to survive a B-57 crash." Mr. Uyehara had started his air force career in 1951. He told the Post, "They told me I could stay in the air force when I get my artificial limb, but I think I'll try to get into the dental school at the University of Southern California."

Today, a small housing development has risen up just beyond the tall trees on Peach Tree Road. The tranquil setting defies the thought of such a tragic occurrence roughly sixty-seven years ago. Driving by there today, no one would ever guess what had happened there, but Charlie Knill never forgot.



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Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present Crime

Burglary: 19900 block of Briarley Hall Road.

Theft: 20000 block of Westerly Avenue, 17600 block of White's Ferry Road.

Past Crime: 1955 to 1959

Police Superintendent McAuliffe announced that officers would begin to use unmarked cars in traffic enforcement. Frequent complaints about speeding and reckless driving caused him to make the decision. Unmarked cars would only be used during daylight hours.

Shots from a police officer's revolver put an end to a six-mile, high-speed chase. Police said that two men had met in a bar in Washington and that one offered to drive the other man to Rockville. Instead, the passenger pulled a gun and robbed the owner of his car and took off. Officers Davis and Bodmer spotted the car and began chasing it. Davis leaned out the window and fired two shots, flattening a tire, and the car skidded to stop. It was then that police took the man into custody.

Two officers on patrol in Bethesda in the early morning hours discovered a

gas station that had been broken into. As they got out of their car, a man ran from the station and across the street. One of the officers opened fire, striking the burglar in the leg. He was found hiding under a parked car and later charged with burglary.

Two teens were arrested after a chase that led around the lower county. Officer Guilick spotted a stolen car on Bradley Boulevard and pursued it until more cruisers joined the chase. Guilick eventually fired two shots into the trunk of the car, causing the driver to swerve off the road. Guilick later said that the stolen car tried to force him off of the road and also collided with a car driven by a Washington man. One of the boys was taken to a hospital with a broken thigh while the other suffered cuts and abrasions.

After a two-day hunt, police captured a sixteen-year-old boy who had escaped from the psychiatric wing of the National Institutes of Health. The boy had been a patient there after being accused of setting over twenty fires of homes, sheds, and wooded areas. At least seventy officers participated in the search. Sergeant Denell, who sighted the boy in a wooded area, said that the boy was "tired, wet, and hungry."

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

Continued from page 9.

Bonsai for Beginners

years old and had been carefully trained to an S shape. It is potted in a ceramic pot in a bonsai soil mixture, and it sits on a pebble-lined humidity tray on the kitchen counter with its older bonsai friend. It measures about twelve inches high. It is very easy to maintain; I water it about three times

a week, fertilize it twice a month, and prune it to keep its S shape.

For more information about bonsai trees, plan a visit to the National Bonsai & Penjing Museum located on the grounds of the U.S. National Arboretum in D.C. It is the world's first and finest bonsai museum with multiple collections, pavilions, and gardens. It spectacularly highlights the living sculpture of bonsai.

Continued from page 1.

PHS Swimmers Unstoppable Yet Again at States

freestyle relay (Gordon Leeroy, senior, Nachod, Pacawat Luu, senior, and Orluke Borjigin, senior) and the 400-yard freestyle relay (Leeroy, Maxwell Chen, Konnor Chen, and Borjigin).

Senior Maxwell Chen won the men's 100-yard butterfly, claiming his third gold medal.

Poolesville finished with second and third place finishes in four events: the 200-yard freestyle (second Borjigin, third Leeroy); the 200-yard IM (second Maxwell Chen, third Davey Wang); the 500-yard freestyle (second Borjigin, third William Sheeran, sophomore); and the 100-yard backstroke (second Konnor Chen, third Andre Hancu, junior).

An individual second place finish went to Konnor Chen in the 50-yard freestyle.

Nachod finished third in the 100-yard breaststroke. Charlie Matia, junior, finished fourth.

Leeroy finished fourth in the 100-yard freestyle. Eric Wang finished fifth in the 50-yard freestyle.

The girls finished second in two relays: the 200-yard freestyle (Maggie Rose Rook, junior, Ruqayah Abouraya, sophomore, Lydia Wong, sophomore, and Avery Ye, junior) and the 400-yard freestyle (Rook, Anna Li, junior, Ruqayah, and Sophie Elliott, senior). They got third in the 200-yard medley (Harriet Gaughan, senior, Li, Ye, and Elliott).

The only first place finish for the girls was Anna Li taking first in the 200-yard IM. Li placed third in the 100-yard butterfly.

Elliott and Rook took second and third in the 200-yard freestyle and the 500-yard freestyle, respectively.

"The boys finished our 'Decade of Dominance' and were extremely proud and happy of their progress as the meet went on," said coach Jon Leong. "This group of seniors have swum together for the past ten years in various groups and clubs. Several of them swam for me when they were young in the advanced junior group at RMSC in Germantown. It was very nice to see such development and how they have grown and matured into the fine young men they are as they go off to college. The girls knew they had a challenge going into the meet, and to their credit, they more than rose to the occasion. Although we came up sixteen points short, they made up more points than we knew we had to. They chose to be leaders and held their heads high throughout the entire meet.

"Our seniors will be missed as nearly almost all of the boys' lineup was comprised of seniors, and Sophie and Harriet on the girls' side will be a big hole to fill. We are definitely going to have to rebuild after this class, and everyone has started thinking about next year's lineup already. Damascus, La Plata, Easton, Rockville, and the rest of the 3/2/1A schools better watch out."

Continued from page 14.

Forgotten History of the Medley District: Part 2 of 3

one. Enslaved males and females worked together in the fields. On small farms, owners would work in the fields, too. Also, free blacks and multiracial people worked on farms. In 1850, there were thirteen white overseers listed in the census. There were no blacks identified as overseers. There were 147 people who had enslaved people. Of that number, there were seven women. The largest number of enslaved people owned was fifty-nine by George Peter followed by Stephen White with thirty-five, and there were eight others who had between twenty and twenty-seven enslaved people. There were seventeen people who had one enslaved person. The lock-keeper at Lock 26, James Fitch, who was sixty-eight years old, had a fifteen-year-old female enslaved

person living with him. Others living in the lockhouse included his twenty-five-year-old wife and their four children with ages ranging from three to nine years old.

In 1850, there the following ages of enslaved people: Teens—males 109, females 85; 20-29—males 102, females 94; 30-39—males 56, females 70; 40-49—males 39, females 39; 50-59—males 22, females 26; 60-69—males 24, females 14; 70-79—males 10, females 12; 80-89—males 5, females 4; 90-99—males 0, females 1 (ninety-five years old).

There is a drop off after the age of twenty-nine in the 30-to-39-year-old age group. There were fewer men than women. Why was this? Did men escape by themselves? Did they die or were they sold out of the area? The same can be asked about the females in this age group. It was found that younger men tended to escape. If they had a wife or families, they left them behind.



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Remembrances

Peter Damian Mulcahy

Peter Damian Mulcahy, 64, of Dickerson, passed away on Saturday, February 19, 2022.

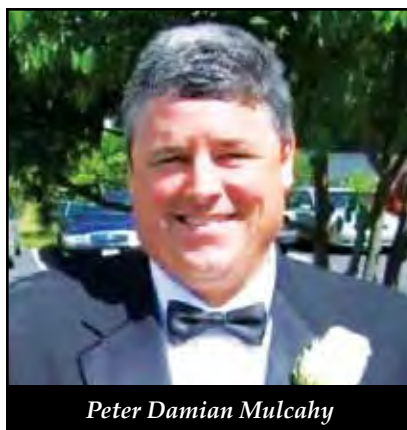
Peter was born on October 17, 1957, in Traverse City, Michigan. He was the son of the late David Edward and Jean Mary (Sculley) Mulcahy.

Peter was a devout Catholic and spent many hours in prayer and weekly adoration and was well known for sharing the message of God's Divine Mercy by highlighting and handing out books by St. Faustina Kowalska. Peter was the proud business owner of Mulcahy Brothers Painting Company which he and his wife Margherite built over many years of hard work and dedication. Peter passed his vast knowledge of the painting industry on to his son, Michael Mulcahy, who took over the day-to-day estimating in 2018 while Peter recovered from surgery. Peter happily transitioned to a more supporting role in the business so that he could spend as much time as possible with his children and grandchildren.

Peter is survived by his loving wife, Margherite Mulcahy; six children, Clare Thom (Jason), Joseph Mulcahy (Margaret), Michael Mulcahy (Sarah), David Mulcahy, Jean Herrera (Edwin), Frances Fortune; nine siblings, Christopher Mulcahy, Michael Mulcahy, Joseph Mulcahy, Mary Muzzarelli, Lucy Repovz, Theresa Mulcahy, David Mulcahy, Martha Ahluwalia, and Ann Mawby; and five grandchildren.

Along with his parents, Peter was preceded in death by one daughter, Mary Catherine Mulcahy; and three siblings, David James Mulcahy, Thomas Mulcahy, and his twin brother, Paul Mulcahy.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his memory to the Central Union Mission, 65 Massachusetts Avenue, NW, Washington, DC 20001.



Peter Damian Mulcahy

Sharon A. Wright

Sharon A. Wright (Shari) of Martinsburg, West Virginia, passed on February 17, 2022.

Shari was the loving and devoted wife of Aaron Wright. They shared a life of love and devotion to each other and a special love for and service to the Lord for over twenty-seven years.

Born on February 3, 1965 to her loving and caring parents, Gerry (deceased) and Peggy Morningstar in Poolesville. Shari was also a loving sister and lifelong friend to her brother Steven E. Morningstar and his wife RaNae of Poolesville.

Shari grew up and lived in Poolesville most of her life. She loved traveling the country and vacationing with her family, especially their yearly vacations to the beaches up and down the East Coast and especially Ocean City.

Shari and Aaron were married on September 23, 1995. Shari loved Aaron with all her heart, and Aaron was a loving and devoted husband. They shared a very special bond of love for each other and a love and devotion to the Lord that was the guiding light of both their lives.

Shari graduated from the University of Maryland with Honors in 1987. She was a Social Worker and Counselor for Disabled Individuals for many years. She was an extremely talented and creative artist and an avid reader, and she loved writing. She really enjoyed traveling, visiting zoos, aquariums, and museums. She loved flowers and being outdoors in nature and witnessing all of the wonders of God's creations here on Earth. She also loved animals of all kinds and especially all her pet cats and dogs throughout her life.

She was a very talented, smart, humorous person with a wonderful and welcoming personality ever since she was a little girl. She was an amazing wife, devoted daughter and granddaughter, caring sister, loving aunt, cherished niece and cousin, and such an encouragement and inspiration to everyone she ever knew.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Shari's memory to the Rockville Church of Christ, Attn: Rosanna Phelan, to further the work of the Lord's Kingdom.



Sharon A. Wright



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Continued from page 1.

Commissioners Focus on Town Staffing Issues

AD&D insurance plans, paid annual leave (tenure schedule; no carryover), and paid sick leave (one day per month with unlimited accrual as well as twenty-five percent of accrued sick leave payable at retirement).

The report included some data comparing Poolesville's employee pay and benefits system with that of other town governments (such as Berwyn Heights, Frederick, and Sykesville). One glaring difference is that most other governments offer dental and vision plans that are paid in substantial part by the government. Poolesville pays nothing towards the cost of such plans. Tomasello added that dental health in particular is important to overall employee health and said this is an issue the town should reconsider.

Tomasello said, with the glaring omission of the lack of support for dental and vision plans, that the town's benefits package is "generally sound" and appreciated by staff; however, the town has tended to view benefits programs as an added cost rather than a way to "control costs." Healthier employees mean less likelihood of absenteeism and accidents on the job. The town has an experienced work force and, while this provides many benefits, older employees inherently are at greater risk of injury.

The report included some comparative data between towns relating to salaries. Tomasello made clear that it is difficult with the data to make "apples to apples" comparisons because the positions and actual duties of various employee categories are not clear in many cases. Also, the data came directly from participants. Some towns did not participate and provide data. Salary levels in the report tend to be minimums, with few actual employees likely working at the rate quoted. Staff levels among the jurisdictions in particular are difficult to compare given differences in job requirements and the services each town decides to provide. Towns like Oakland, for example, which has only 2,000 residents, has twenty-four employees versus Poolesville which has around 5,600 residents and nineteen staff.

Tomasello said that the HR manual that he has been tasked with developing is tentatively scheduled for completion on March 7. It generally proposes amendments to bring several employment policies in line with basic/common provisions of other local governments. Examples include leave policy and benefits for non-participation in health insurance programs. All proposed changes are subject to commission review and approval.

Tomasello ended his presentation with a number of recommendations. The town should try to gather additional competitive salary data prior to committing to any changes and include local counties in the mix. He said that it is important to look at both salary levels and capacity (i.e., staff needed to get the jobs done and productivity) in order to make future pay and compensation decisions. He strongly urged the town to "establish a more precise salary schedule to be adopted with each annual budget" and "make the process transparent to employees by using a standard, annual COLA benchmark." The town should formalize on-call status, as needed, within the descriptions of the jobs and examine overtime use to determine whether it is at appropriate levels or whether more staff might be a better way to ensure services are provided efficiently and effectively. He strongly urged the town to consider contributing to dental and vision insurance for employees.

In other business conducted during the meeting, Lynn Schaeber appeared, representing parents who are working on the post prom party. She said the parents are trying to hold a live event and, at this juncture, are considering renting the High Point Farm for the party; however, costs are much higher this year, so the parents have not decided whether or not to rent the farm. If they do not go that route, the party will be held at the high school. Because of the higher costs this year, the parents have decided that they likely will not fund buses this year. Instead, they will devote their funding to making the party as fun and exciting as possible. The commissioners once again approved a grant of \$2,500 to support the post prom party.

The commissioners also considered a request from the town's trash and recycling contractor Bates for a 5.8% increase in the payments they receive from town. They argued in their letter that virtually every aspect of their operations, from hiring and keeping staff to dump fees, have increased. Fuel costs in particular have increased. The proposed increase would mean a jump from \$19 per month to \$21 per month per household.

Wade Yost said that switching to another contractor at this stage is impossible. No contractor would take the business at the payment levels in the existing contract with Bates. Yost reached out to three contractors who had bid last time for the contract in Poolesville to see how much they would charge for collecting trash and recycling. One of the companies he contacted has since gone out of business. One did not respond. The one company that did call back said they would need approximately \$36 per household to make it worth their while.

Based on the feedback Yost received, the commissioners approved the requested increase. It takes effect April 1, and the contract will expire in June.

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Five Tips to Help You Give Your Senior Pets Better Quality of Life

Peter H. Eeg, DVM

As our friends age, there are often issues that begin to be more common and create some troubling issues for the Pet Parents. Here are five tips to help you help your senior furry friends.

- 1. Consider the Use of Ramps:** If your dog or cat has increasing mobility issues that make get-ting up onto the bed, chair, sofa, or feeding area difficult, try adding a ramp or stairs so they do not have to jump or climb. This can also help prevent injuries as the older pet will have less opportunity to fall back, thereby injuring the back or rear legs.
- 2. Take Precautions to Prevent Injuries:** Older pets can begin to have trouble with balance and vision. Consider gating off stairways both upstairs and downstairs or adding safety mats to prevent slipping. You can also add rubber grippers to keep throw rugs from being slippery. Cover slick surfaces with yoga mats or extended runners to prevent slips, trips and falls.
- 3. Keep Your Pet Active:** Studies in people have conclusively shown that maintaining an active lifestyle with walks, swimming, and exercise activities will improve joint motion, reduce back pain, and improve balance. Exercise requirements actually increase as pets age due to muscle atrophy issues. If your furry friend has not been active for some time, it is important to gradually work into a routine. Start out with short distances of walking for your canine friends and short find-the-toy or chase-the-toy games for your feline friends. Gradually in-crease the time over several weeks as your pets' duration grows. If your pet needs to take a break, do not push them. Relax and hang out with them. It's good for your mental state also.
- 4. Stimulate Your Pets' Mind:** Aging pets can still learn new tricks (okay, one of my cats refuses to learn new tricks because she is above all that). Go ahead and teach them to shake hands, give a high five, ring a bell for food or to go outside, or one of many other tricks. The only limit is your mind and your pets' desire to have fun with you.
- 5. Keep Your Pet at a Healthy Weight:** Obesity in pets is very common in the United States. It makes getting around more difficult for your aging pets. It also places excess strain on joints and muscles that can exacerbate injuries and create pain. Helping your pet lose even a small amount of weight can make a major difference in their mobility and quality of life. Always check with your veterinarian before making any diet changes or activity changes for your senior furry friends.

These are just a few of many simple considerations to help your older pets have a better quality of life and give you a better enjoyment of having them in your lives.



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