

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

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A tragedy at Sugarloaf Mountain required help from UMCVFD. See Local News on page 6.



Speaker Ryan has a connection to PHS. Check it out in School News on page 7.



Coach Kevin Dorsey celebrated Alex Carbonell's hundredth win at the annual Dorsey Duals. Read about the other successes in Youth Sports on page 8.



Groundhogs are better for weather predictions than for horses. Find out how in Yeas and Neighs on page 10.

Superintendent Offers Reassurances but No Firm Date on PHS Renovation

By Link Hoewing

In a public meeting before the Poolesville Commissioners marked by civil dialog and wide-ranging discussions on topics including magnet programs and the potential for a new high school building, Montgomery County Superintendent Jack Smith offered reassurances but no firm long-term commitments on most matters that were discussed.

Before a standing-room-only crowd of concerned citizens at Poolesville Town Hall, Chief Operating Officer Andrew Zuckerman started the evening off with a brief overview presentation. In it, he said that Montgomery County is in a "transition year" for its schools, facing a wave of growth in the student population of secondary schools. In contrast, he remarked that growth in Poolesville's student population is "holding steady," with projected declines in the middle and elementary schools, and flat levels of growth at the high school.



MCPS Superintendent Dr. Jack R. Smith, Chief Operating Officer Andrew Zuckerman, Essie McGuire, the Executive Director in the office of the Chief Operating Officer, and Seth Adams, Director Office of Construction.

He said that Superintendent Smith had instituted a "greenfield planning" look at the way the capital improvements budget (CIP) is developed and how schools are assessed for improvements, maintenance, and upgrades. Historically, about a third of the CIP is committed to "modernization,"

Zuckerman said, but in the latest CIP, almost forty-five percent is focused on schools with high levels of student population growth. The old system of assessing schools for investment called "FACTS" was found to be too rigid and incapable of including the wide

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PHS Athletic Director Ross Retiring

By Rande Davis

Ed Ross will be stepping down as athletic director of PHS on January 31. With thirty-six years in Montgomery County Public Schools behind him, it is his reflections on so many wonderful relationships that flash through his mind the most. Of those, it is partnerships with his coaching staff and community leaders that he credits for a very robust and successful athletic department. Success beyond simply wins and losses, measured as much by meeting the needs of the whole student. It might be said that if teachers feed the brain, athletic directors and coaches feed the spirit. Ross has always understood that the very essence of team sports is the development of the esprit de corps of athletes which results in building a strong, positive school high school experience not just for the students, but for parents and the community as well.

The heart and soul of his success at Poolesville were his talents in serving the needs of the coaches and players first, knowing that coaches need help to build a framework to serve the entire student, not just the player.

Ross first came to Poolesville in 2009 after being athletic director at Watkins Mill. Starting out in 1982 as an industrial arts teacher, he was selected to coach the football team at Bethesda-Chevy Chase High School. Later, he would shift his teaching to computer science.

He looks upon his time at PHS as "right from the start, being the best move of my career." When asked why his time here has been so appreciated, he is reminded of the incredible dedication of the PHS Boosters Club, generally, and the leadership of "amazing volunteers" like Jeff Oyer

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Ed Ross announced his decision to retire from MCPS after thirty-six years as a teacher, coach, and athletic director.

Family Album



Poolesville's book club, Social Ladies Enjoying Reading, had a Facetime interview with Susan Meissner, the author of A Fall of Marigolds, during their last book discussion. Clare Bachman, Kathe Mooney, Gina Beck, Cathy Bupp, Brenda Sneed, Gabi Jacobs, Karen Ward, Faith Etheridge, and Lori Gruber.



Barnesville's Ben Daughtry received the Lions Club's Melvin Jones Foundation Award, the highest honor within Lionism, from King Lion Milton Andrews.



Left: Katy Hansen and Rachel Neff from Great and Small Therapeutic Riding with Milton Andrews at the Monocacy Lions Club meeting.



Right: Men of St. Peter's serving the mission dinner in Frederick: Alf Andreassen, Steve Horvath, Thomas Wolz, and Elliot Friedman.



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Local News

Upcounty Prevention Network Hosts Marijuana Alert

By Susan Petro

Local laws and enforcement rules are changing in regards to marijuana usage and possession. Many parents are concerned about how their children may be affected. As questions abounded, local Community Outreach Officer, Doug Tressler, realized the community needed more information than just he could provide. Tressler and members of the UPN Network combined forces to hold a Marijuana Alert meeting on January 18 in the John Poole Middle School all-purpose room. A panel of experts was on hand to provide information and answer questions.

The evening began with Montgomery County's assistant states attorney, George E. Simms, III. Simms summarized exactly how Maryland Senate Bill 364 relates to area teenagers and adults. The law makes possession ten grams or less of marijuana a civil instead of a criminal offense. Individuals found to possess ten grams or less will now receive a citation similar to a traffic ticket rather than face arrest. Simms describes ten grams as approximately one finger width of marijuana across the bottom of a baggie. All fines received as a result of these citations will be directed to mental health services.

Those possessing more than ten grams still face arrest. Additionally, the law does not decriminalize possession of drug paraphernalia; however, the goals and preference for today's juvenile offenders is to educate rather than prosecute. Selling marijuana is

still a felony. The only exceptions are legal Medical Marijuana dispensaries which are just now opening in small numbers across the state. Rules and regulations are extremely rigid for these dispensaries, and youth will not have access to these facilities.

Montgomery County Police Lt. Sheila Sugrue of Montgomery County's Special Victim's Investigative Unit stated that even though possession of small amounts of marijuana is no longer a criminal offense, it is still illegal and will at a minimum result in the expenditure of time and money for both the offending juvenile and his or her parents. The division will make efforts to determine what the youth's needs are and make recommendations accordingly. Sugrue said that many times there are underlying conditions that lead youth to make poor decisions or abuse drugs. The ultimate goal is to redirect youth and provide help with any underlying conditions before drug use becomes a serious issue. Again, education and intervention are key goals, and Montgomery County has many treatment options available.

Sugrue urged parents who are looking for services and treatment options for their youth to check out infomontgomery.org. This site offers a wealth of resources for mental health services, substance abuse, anger management, truancy, gangs, and other issues that affect area residents and families.

Andy Jillson, a Certified Addiction Counselor from Montgomery County's Adolescent Substance Abuse Prevention Program (ASAPP), has many years of experience working with area youth. At the meeting, Jillson described many of the harmful effects marijuana use causes to the still-developing brains of teenagers. Jillson emphasized that even though marijuana usage has been

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Commentary

Tradeoffs

By John Clayton

Where will Amazon base the second headquarters it wants to build? It already has one in Seattle, but it needs another. This is known as HQ2, a purported five-billion-dollar venture that will deliver fifty thousand jobs to the winning site. The Washington-metropolitan area has three locations in the running after the first cut: D.C., Northern Virginia, and Montgomery County. Governor Hogan is all in, and the state is throwing big incentives in Amazon's way. This is of course on the heels of the Who-Lost-Discovery-Communications blame game after that company decided to leave Silver Spring for office space in Manhattan and Knoxville, Tennessee (ouch). Montgomery County officials such as County Executive Ike Leggett and the county council are also working to attract Amazon.

The county locations are the White Flint and another North Bethesda area that Leggett has referred to as the Pike District (just north of White Flint) according to an article in *Bethesda Magazine*. White Flint is also owned by Lerner Enterprises which is the same family that owns the Washington Nationals. If HQ2 ends up at White Flint and Bryce Harper ends up playing for the Seattle Mariners, I'm going to be very suspicious and demand that Robert Mueller investigate when he finishes what he's doing now.

What would be the impact on open land and the Agricultural Reserve? Leggett alluded to the need to preserve open space in an earlier *Bethesda Magazine* article, while addressing a group of real estate agents, and that's great, but the pressure on housing and roads will be substantial with this highly-desirable influx of jobs to our area. There aren't many areas left in the county in which to build new homes. Anything that creates opportunities for development puts pressure on open land. Hopefully, the county council will maintain its resolve to protect the Ag Reserve from development.

Affordable housing is another issue. This is always a problem in a prosperous county such as ours, and if a new 50,000-employee headquarters pops up, there will be upward pressure on the cost of housing, especially with the higher salaries Amazon is expected

to pay. I would assume a lot of workers would move further out into Maryland, to Frederick County and beyond. What is the impact on commuter routes, on rail, and on future road building? Hogan already intends to expand I-270 up to Frederick which sounds like a timely idea that might be part of a solution if HQ2 arrives.

What happens if Amazon chooses Northern Virginia? Fairfax is a possibility, and Loudoun County would also appear to be in the mix. Would this reopen the debate over the idea of a second crossing over the Potomac River to connect new roads into the Ag Reserve? Would Amazon weigh in on Virginia's long-running advocacy for roads and a new crossing to carry Maryland workers to jobs in the Old Dominion? Would the *Washington Post*, which reminds its readers incessantly that it is owned by the owner of Amazon, ramp up support for a new bridge? What if the Redskins move to Virginia? Would Dan Snyder support a new crossing as long as it didn't go through his yard in Potomac? That highlights another point: If a bridge is built, they aren't going to build roads through developed areas. It will be out here.

Communities around the country that have bid on HQ2 are also discussing the pros and cons of such a massive change. One concern of several communities is the permanent change in the style and character of an area of their city. On a positive note, it was pointed out that Amazon had merged its buildings into the Seattle downtown and its employees patronize local businesses, rather than isolating it into a self-contained suburban campus where no one ever has to leave to eat lunch or get his or her dry cleaning done. Fairly generic concerns from various cities included housing prices (real estate agents have no problem with this), increased gentrification, a general purpose boom cycle followed by a bust, and eventual higher taxes to pay for all those incentives offered to seduce Amazon in.

The net effect of all this gloom and doom, of course, is that lots of places still want HQ2, and why wouldn't they? The problems are all growth problems. I can't believe that the Washington area can't absorb Amazon regardless of which of the three locations may get chosen. People generally agree that growth problems are good problems, as long as they keep them out of the Ag Reserve.

Rande(m) Thoughts

Mr. Smith Goes To Poolesville

By Rande Davis

The highly-anticipated visit by Montgomery County Public School Superintendent Dr. Jack R. Smith before the Poolesville commissioners fortunately ended better than I had feared. As I stated in my January 12 column, the newfound policy of basing school infrastructure decisions on population changes had the potential of being a real threat to our high school, not just in forestalling a new school or even in getting needed repairs; my greatest fear is having the school closed.

Superintendent Smith and MCPS Chief Operating Officer, Andrew Zuckerman, along with an impressive and professional staff, outlined the new CIP policy in a very clear presentation, boldly taking on all questions right up to the last one raised. I found the team empathetic, open, and for the most part, quite frank in their assessments of our school's future—a future at least as far as the eye can see. After that, who knows? In today's world, the horizon is not much more than six years, at best. This

exponentially-changing world does not allow much more than that. My first takeaway from the meeting was: Phew, we have some breathing room. While a new school is not something any student in our cluster can hope for within their entire school experience, renovation may finally come, at least in parts.

The most promising hope from the meeting was that the magnet programs do not appear to be immediately threatened, but it is also very true that we do not "own" them and they could be moved any time in the future. Without them, the school population will not exceed much more than six or seven hundred students.

This much I truly believe: Poolesville's educational future will be dependent on three things: Parent, community, and town leaders' proactive involvement in the full budgeting process and their ability to influence decision-makers; the willingness of the county leaders (both school and county government officials) to fully recognize the special unique strengths which the community offers from its location in the Ag Reserve; and, perhaps the hardest, getting MCPS leadership to understand just how PHS, and only PHS, can add to the educational experience of the county in a most profound and unique way—

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Published and Edited by

John Clayton and Rande Davis

John Clayton
Production
Financial
301.349.0071

jclayton@monocacymonocle.com

Rande Davis
Advertising
Circulation
301.509.9232
rdavis@monocacymonocle.com

Dominique Agnew
Copyediting
dqagnew@gmail.com

editor@monocacymonocle.com
advertising@monocacymonocle.com
www.monocacymonocle.com

Monocacy Press, LLC
John Clayton, President
Rande Davis, Vice President
P.O. Box 372
Barnesville, MD 20838-0372
301.349.0071

Contributing Writers

Dominique Agnew
dqagnew@gmail.com

Andie Devynck
andie@frederickhealingarts.com

Link Hoewing
linkhoe@aol.com

Maureen O'Connell
mafoconnell@msn.com

Susan Petro
bsusan424@gmail.com

Heidi Rosvold-Brenholtz
Heidi@HealthyEdit.com

Jeffrey S. Stuart
sark10@juno.com

Jack Toomey
jackt21262@aol.com

Ingeborg Westfall
ingeborg560@comcast.net

Contributing Photographer

Terri Pitts
terri.pitts@gmail.com

Layout and Graphics
AnyArt Solutions LLC
sales@AnyArtSolutions.com

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Tidbits

Special Bolivian "Ambassadors"

On January 18, ten upper elementary students from the Butler Montessori School visited the Bolivian Embassy in preparation for their upcoming trip to New York as Bolivian Delegates in the Montessori Model UN Conference. While there, they took a group photo with the ambassador and his wife and toured the embassy. They were invited by the ambassador to return for a celebration marking the seventh anniversary of the renaming of Bolivia to "Plurinational Republic of Bolivia" which includes recognition of the thirty-six indigenous tribes of Brazil. It was a very special evening for the students!

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Butler Montessori students visited the Bolivian Embassy. Bertha Castillo, Spanish teacher, Ken Kamezawa, Bella Major, Wyatt Maines, Cassie Rajaomanera, Madeleine Neigh, Sra. Canedo, Amb. Pablo Canedo, Meghan Pelkey, Adam Yachin, Murilo Abdallah, Aitan Yachin, David Kulick, and Ms. Giovanna.

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PHS Athletic Director Ross Retiring

and Kevin Carmack, specifically. "I see both of these men as anyone's dream of what is needed from the volunteers. Jeff is a get-it-done coordinator, one of the most selfless people I have ever worked with. Kevin is one of the hardest-working volunteers, willing to do whatever it takes, as well."

As he leaves to redirect the "last dozen years of his career," he looks to move into the private school athletic arena.

While I probed his contributions to the sports program, he deflected by praising Gina Grubb, his assistant. "I was really pleased to learn that she was named my interim replacement. Coming from Poolesville, she truly loves and understands Poolesville, she will work endlessly to make sure the community is proud of this school."

The feeling is mutual. Coach Grubb told the *Monocle*, "It has been a

pleasure working with Ed over the past nine years. He is a genuine and caring person who always looks to support his coaches, athletes, students, booster club, and community members in every capacity. His passion for our school and community was evident throughout his years here at PHS. He has worked tirelessly to make tremendous improvements for our athletic facility to be one of the top in the county. The impact that he has made on Poolesville will be remembered forever.

"On a personal note, I will definitely miss Ed: Our daily talks regarding coaching, sharing life stories, and sharing athletic stories; his knowledge of how to continue to grow and learn professionally and personally will always be remembered. I know I will always have a lifelong friend."

Football coach Dave Murray speaks for the other coaches, "Mr. Ross has always been a great mentor, leader, teacher, co-worker, and friend. He's constantly challeng-

ing me to find more ways to develop my program and better serve my kids. His enthusiasm, pride, and honest approach are some of the things I will miss most. He leads by example and is visible in the hallways and on the fields. He's organized, honest, and an effective communicator. One of his best traits as the athletic director is his ability to listen and give honest feedback."

Past Booster Club president, Jeff Oyer, shared his perspective on Ross, "The PHS Athletic Booster Club has had a great working relationship with Ed since he arrived. It was obvious from the beginning that he had the same goals in mind as the Booster Club which was to do everything possible to make sure our student-athletes and coaches had all of the support they needed to develop and maintain highly-successful and competitive teams. I am confident that Poolesville has one of, if not the best-run, athletic departments in Montgomery County, and Ed has been a great leader in making that happen.

There have been many challenges through the years, but commend Ed for always fighting for what is best for the program and its athletes. The partnerships he has formed with the Booster Club and the community have been invaluable, and we have accomplished a great deal during his tenure. Ed should be very proud of that fact. We are grateful for the time that he was here, and we will miss him greatly. We consider him a good friend for life."

One legacy he leaves the school is its Athletic Hall of Fame. Ed was reading up on the history of PHS and reviewing pictures of past athletics when the notion of establishing a Hall of Fame came to mind. It recognizes not just superb athletes but non-player coaches and community supporters.

A very successful person once said the key to success is learning how to make others successful. Ross has exemplified that concept by helping coaches and players succeed, remembering at all times those who mentored him early in his life.

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Local News

UMCVFD Busy With Wrecks and Mountain Rescue

By Jack Toomey

The Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department has been particularly busy lately responding to weather-related calls for service and the usual mixture of calls for house fires, fire alarms, and wrecks.

In the January 12 edition of the *Monocle*, readers learned that twice within three days the department responded to Ten Mile Creek on Old Baltimore Road where a ford crosses the road. The creek had become clogged with ice and at least two carloads of people had to be rescued by various means.

On January 11 at about 3:00 p.m., firefighters from UMCVFD were called to a particularly serious wreck on Darnestown Road at the Seneca Creek bridge. A Dodge truck was waiting to make a left turn into the parking lot of the state park when a Mercedes struck a Prius that was behind the truck. The Prius was crushed and the Mercedes suffered extensive damage. Both lanes of the road were closed for an hour while police investigated.

Earlier that day, the company was dispatched to Sugarloaf Mountain for a rescue in the Devil's Kitchen section of the mountain. A hiker had fallen off of a rock cropping into a crevice and it took several firefighters using a basket to rescue the hiker. He was then carried to the parking lot of the Strong Mansion where a Maryland State Police helicopter had landed. The man was then flown to the shock trauma center in Baltimore. No information could be learned about his condition.



An accident at the Charles Elgin Bridge near Seneca Creek on January 11.

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School News

PHS Global Sophomores Visit U.S. Capitol and Meet Local and National Representatives

By Melody Zhang

On January 10 and 11, the Global sophomores of PHS visited the United States Capitol right in our backyard, Washington, D.C. This visit is a pivotal field trip for Global Ecology students every year as they study and read about national, state, and local government in their tenth grade global courses.

For the students, their day started off with an of introduction video to Congress in the Capitol Visitor Center. The students then were able to meet with and ask questions of various people involved at the Capitol, such as previous PHS Global Alumni and current employees at the Capitol, Democratic Representative John Delaney, and Maryland Senator Ben Cardin. According to tenth grade government teacher Timothy Short, Delaney, representing Maryland's Sixth Congressional District, consistently makes an effort to interact with PHS students and "has personally met our students in the Visitor Center for the last three years."

The groups were then able to peek into the gallery of the Senate and witness the Senate legislatures in action from the second floor viewing platform. One group listened to Minority Leader Chuck Schumer discuss comprehensive immigration reform and the Deferred Action for Childhood Arrivals (DACA) policy, while others observed Republican senators debate human trafficking problems.

One very special experience for both the students and teacher chaperones was meeting current Speaker of the United States House of Representatives, Paul Ryan. Before the trip, Ryan's nephew and PHS Global sophomore, Aidan Olcott, was able to get Mr. Short in touch with Ryan's office to set up a visit with the students.

They met on the speaker's balcony overlooking the National Mall, right outside the chambers while Congress was in session. Ryan was able to stop for a few moments to shake hands with the students, answer a couple of questions, and snap a few photos. The encounter was very "kind and casual," yet many students still felt star struck at the same time. Their tour guide at the time remarked that it was rare for Ryan to be able to bring guests out on the balcony, especially groups of forty-five people, while Congress was actively in session.

Short noted that the students were thrilled with the experience of meeting with Ryan. Not only that but the students represented Poolesville very well, according to the tour guides from the Capitol who noted that they "were extremely well-mannered and behaved."

Global sophomore Abby Gordon summed up her satisfaction from this trip, "I liked this field trip because it was so relevant to us in our social studies class." Overall, the trip proved to be a success for the Global Ecology students and trip coordinators, Timothy Short and Mary Adah. The students able to witness the government that they learn about in class firsthand, and they also experienced rare and exciting interactions with notable U.S. Congressmen.



PHS Global sophomores visited the U.S. Capitol.

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Youth Sports

Carbonell, Kresslein, Trent Led Poolesville in Dorsey Duals

By Jeff Stuart

The Third Annual Dorsey Duals Wrestling Tournament on January 12 and 13 got off to a dramatic start with five bouts going on five mats.

In the very first match of the tournament, the Falcons junior 113-pounder Alex Carbonell claimed the hundredth victory of his career, pinning Jason Kim of St. James in 3:12. Carbonell went 9-0 in the tournament winning the tournament lower weight Most Valuable Wrestler title. He won every match by fall or by forfeit. Sophomore Xavier Kresslein, 160 pounds, also posted a 9-0 mark for the Falcons, winning the Most Valuable Wrestler for the upper weights. Poolesville's 195-pound senior Dillon Trent, also went 9-0, winning all matches by fall or by forfeit. Poolesville (8-1) finished second in the team standings. Max Hull (132), Colin Savage (138), Sam Hull (145), Ray Kinzie (152), and Kieran Barney (182) all won by fall in the opener against St. James, a 57-22 win, as did Kresslein and Trent. Trent pinned his opponent in just twenty-nine seconds.

The Oakdale Bears took the overall team title, barely beating the host squad, 36-33. The Bears beat Bullis, 42-25, in their final match to finish 9-0. Century finished in third, 7-2. Other teams included Blake, Glenelg, Great Mills, Pomoco West Mountain, and St. Charles. South Carroll and Central (Pennsylvania) both canceled.

The Bears' Wyatt McKoy, 9-0, at 132 pounds, earned the individual award for most falls in the least amount of time.

The Dorsey Duals tournament had a great atmosphere. There were some terrific wrestling and tremendous support from those who worked, staffed, and supported the concession stands and hospitality room for coaches and officials. Nearly fifty local businesses and individuals combined to help sponsor this event.

Coach Kevin Dorsey, for whom the tournament is named, has mentored hundreds of student-athletes as the wrestling coach at Poolesville since 2005, including now five wrestlers who accumulated one hundred or more wins in their career. The first of those, Robert Winning, said, "Kevin taught me and others to never give up and to outwork your opponent. These qualities transcend wrestling."

"Our community has benefited and continues to benefit from his generosity and friendship," said former Booster Club President, Jeff Oyer.

"Kevin inspires everyone around him to pursue their life endeavors with his be-proud-of-your-work-and-never-quit-until-the-job-is-finished perspective," said athletic director Ed Ross.

Anyone interested in making a contribution to assist Kevin and his wife Dawn in covering living and medical expenses related to ALS should please visit: www.ppfinc.org/recipients-page/kevin-dorsey.



The 3rd Annual Dorsey Duals Wrestling Tournament took place on January 12 and 13.

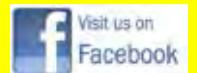
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WEEKEND MASS SCHEDULE

Saturday at 5 pm / Sunday at 8, 9:30, 11 am
Confession Saturday at 4:15 pm

Monday - Friday Mass & Rosary at 9 am

Adoration & Devotions on First Friday & Saturday

Marian talk with Wine & Cheese
February 3 @ 6 pm

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Things To Do

Poolesville Area Senior Center (PASC Events – Poolesville Baptist Church)

Pickleball: Monday, Wednesday, and Friday: 9:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

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

SAVE THE DATE:

February 11

SCA's Potluck Dinner

The Sugarloaf Citizens' Association will hold its Annual Member Potluck, a fun opportunity for old members to reconnect and for new and prospective members to see what we are about—not to mention to sample some first-rate fried chicken! Admission: A dish or drink of your choosing. *Gothic Barn at Linden Farm, 20900 Martinsburg Rd., Dickerson.* 5:30 p.m.

January 26

An Adventure Awaits You

Please join us at the library as we explore and learn about new places. We will be using a Google Expedition Kit to travel on our virtual adventure. Virtual reality viewers will allow us to see and learn about exciting new locations. This program is geared towards children ages 8+. *Maggie Nightingale Library.* 1:30 p.m.

PHS Varsity Sports Home Game

Boys' basketball. Magruder. 7:15 p.m.

January 29

PHS Varsity Sports Home Game

Boys' basketball. Sherwood. 7:15 p.m.

Maggie Nightingale Library Book Discussion

Enjoy and discuss *Transatlantic* by Colum McCann. Copies will be available at the Circulation Desk. *Maggie Nightingale Library.* 7:00 p.m.

January 31

PHS Varsity Sports Home Game

Girls' basketball. Rockville. 7:15 p.m.

Streetscape Charrette

The Poolesville Commissioners have approved a contract with a professional planning firm, ARRO, to assist in developing the Fisher Avenue Streetscape Plan. The focus will be the Commercial Zone and will include the Willard property across from Dollar General. *Town Hall.* 7:30 p.m.

February 1

PACC Breakfast Networking Event

Coffee and refreshments. Guest speaker: Roger Hayden. *Hayden Legal*

Services (across from Turning Point Real Estate). 8:00 a.m.

American Legion Post 247 Meeting

Open to all veterans. *Old Town Hall and Bank Museum.* 7:30 p.m.

Family Storytime

These 25-30 minute programs are designed to delight children of all ages. Filled with diverse stories and activities that promote and develop language skills and imagination. *Maggie Nightingale Library.* 10:30 a.m.

February 2

UMCVFD Bingo

Featuring cash and gift cards with door prizes. \$20 includes a game card with three chances to win in each game. *Firehouse at 19801 Beallsville Road, Beallsville.* Doors open: 5:30 p.m.; games start: 7:00 p.m.

February 2

The Blue Hearth Market Weekend

Great items for Valentine's Day! Friday and Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m.; Sunday: noon to 5:00 p.m.

February 7

Community Dinner

An evening of food, fun, and fellowship. The menu will include meat and vegetarian chili served over pasta and lots of homemade desserts. To request meal delivery, a ride, or more information, contact Lori Kocur at 240-994-8011. Free. *Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church.* 5:30 to 7:00 p.m.

February 8

Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce Annual Meeting

Free for members; \$20.00 for guests. *St. Mary's Pavilion, Barnesville.* 7:00 p.m.: networking with heavy appetizers; meeting at 8:00 p.m.

February 9

PHS Varsity Sports Home Game

Girls' basketball. Gaithersburg. 7:15 p.m.

February 10

PASC Special Event: 3rd Annual Valentine Dinner Dance and Fundraiser

A community event to benefit PASC. Cash bar, silent auction, meal catered by Simply Fresh, semi-formal event. Must be at least 21. The \$60.00 per person ticket must be purchased by February 2. For tickets, call St. Peter's Parish Hall. 6:00 p.m. to 11:00 p.m.

Want to appear in Things To Do?

Send it along to

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Market Minute

Focus On: Poolesville, Dickerson, and Northwestern Montgomery County Housing Market | December 2017

Units Sold	Active Inventory	Median Sale Price	Days On Market
44	139	\$417,500	46

Local activity was down a little in December but the market is coming up fast.

If you're thinking about listing your home in the Spring, it's time to start getting ready: The Spring market starts earlier than you think.

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Yeas and Neighs

Combatting Tunnel Vision: An Enlightened Approach to Managing Groundhogs and Horses

By Andie Devynck

With Groundhog Day just around the corner, it's natural to sing the praises of our adorable woodland neighbor. Who doesn't love the way they waddle, or sit on their hind legs, rising up and down like periscopes from underneath the backyard hostas and between the flower pots? Then, of course, there's Puxatawney Phil's vaunted ability to predict winter's end (next week, Friday, February 2) just by casting a shadow—or not. The downside of these critters, though, is not just that they eat many of our precious flowers and vegetables, but something far more damaging: Stepping unwittingly—and especially at speed—into the entrances and exits of groundhog lairs can break a horse's leg, and quite possibly an owner's heart with it.

One expert happens to live at least fifty miles away; Lezlie Carter, a long-time equestrian and resident of Davidsonville, Maryland, offers us her anecdotes about and advice on dealing with groundhogs. Raised in a beach community in nearby Bay Ridge, her childhood dream was to have horses on her own farm. She was twenty-four and single when she moved onto her one-hundred-acre property just west of Annapolis. Despite having a full-time job running her communications business in downtown Washington, D.C., and facing the incredulity of family and friends, she began her life as a gentlewoman farmer.

Among the plethora of lessons Lezlie needed to learn—and fast!—was how to manage groundhogs, the bane of every working farmer and

backyard gardener alike. At first, she tried filling their burrows with dirt. "There is an entrance hole leading to an underground tunnel that goes very deep and then stretches out for long distances," she explained, "sometimes branching out and leading to one or more exit holes. You can dump large amounts of soil in one end and, after the next rain, there it is again. They're impossible to block and they go on forever!"

Lezlie turned to older neighbors for advice. "Shoot 'em!" was the answer she heard time and time again. "Gotta shoot 'em regular, too," one farmer told her, "cuz others move right in and build all new holes and tunnels." Possessing more of a Buddhist nature, she was not pleased with the friendly advice she got. Yet a question remained: Why do new groundhogs dig their own set of tunnels instead of using the ones already there? "Because groundhogs are very picky," her neighbor explained. "A new troop won't use the old troop's burrows." This left Lezlie wondering what good it would do her to eliminate the groundhogs she already had just to have new ones move in and add another set of holes to boot?

Instead, Lezlie innovated, ultimately creating a solution that was both less deadly and more effective. She marked the few groundhog holes that were in her pasture areas by sticking a tall fencepost into the hole. She then put a tire around the entrance to further identify it as well as to help hold the pole up. The horses became visually aware of the marked holes and avoided them. Additionally, her resident groundhogs, being territorial, did not allow new groundhogs on the property anywhere their own burrows already existed.

Lezlie claims that, in her forty years of keeping horses in those pastures, there has never been an injury due to stepping in a groundhog hole. She says

Continued on page 12.

Streetscape Charrette Wednesday, January 31, 2018 Poolesville Town Hall - 7:30 PM

The Poolesville Commissioners have approved a contract with a professional planning firm, ARRO, to assist in developing the Fisher Avenue Streetscape Plan. This project strives to thoughtfully create a downtown feel that encompasses safety, traffic, and walkability, all in keeping with the character that is unique to Poolesville.

The focus will be the Commercial Zone and will include the Willard property that garnered much public attention in the past. As requested, during those meetings, the Planning Commission will hold a charrette-type work session to receive public input.

This is a great opportunity to be involved in protecting, maintaining, and enhancing our downtown in a positive way.

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Continued from page 4.

Mr. Smith Goes to Poolesville

something alluded to by Dr. Smith himself with a statement that shows he “gets us.”

First, he found the notion of combining our school renovation requirements with our general community infrastructure needs to bring in additional funds beyond the MCPS budget very intriguing. Imagine a high school that includes a true community center, senior lifestyle assistance, local medical care, 24/7 building access, educational training, and entertainment—truly, a new kind of high school. Secondly, he stated up front his interest in augmenting county agricultural studies in secondary education at Poolesville, perhaps in the form similar to a magnet program. Dr. Smith, potentially to our benefit, is a visionary.

If the county were to succeed in making agricultural education at the secondary level, in all of its forms, as significant and as prominent nationally as it has other magnet categories (like STEM), Poolesville, the Ag Reserve, and Montgomery County could become a showcase nationally and even internationally for demonstrating the way forward not only in our state and nation but worldwide. The combination of global science and ag studies could be pure dynamite. Imagine that! Poolesville leading the world in ag high school education. I have found in life there really are only two things that matter, breath and a fighting chance. Mr. Smith’s visit, at a minimum, shows we have some breathing room, but just as importantly, we may just have a fighting chance.

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The Bygone Days of White's Ferry



This is one of the earliest pictures of White's Ferry as a powered ferryboat. Prior to that, boatmen used poles to push it across the Potomac River.

Continued from page 10.

Combatting Tunnel Vision: An Enlightened Approach to Managing Groundhogs and Horses

the number of groundhogs she has remains more or less constant, and she has yet to see a new groundhog hole anywhere. As an added benefit, her troop included for a few years a member with a hankering for a better view. This groundhog enjoyed climbing to the top of the pole in his hole and staying there for a while, surveying his kingdom. Lezlie remembers what an amusing sight it was for the kids and adults who came for lessons, "They all got a big kick out of that little guy."

When spring arrives, and you are confronted with a groundhog invasion, consider adopting Lezlie's approach of "live and let live," and instead of picking up the gun, grab the shovel instead.

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Please join us for one of our upcoming classes or services at Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church.

Come every week or come when you can.

<p><u>"Good Grief: Coping with Loss"</u> Led by Joan Carroll Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. (weekly from 2/13 – 3/20)</p>	<p><u>Men's Group: "Living our Beliefs"</u> Led by Ray Hoewing & Scott McGrew Tuesdays at 7:30 p.m. (1st and 3rd Tuesdays each month)</p>
<p><u>"The Holy Bible: Faith and History"</u> Led by Ralph Hitchens Sundays at 9:15 a.m. (weekly from 2/11 – 3/18)</p>	<p><u>"Raising Kids Who Turn Out Right"</u> Led by Kirsten Lewis Sundays at 3:00 p.m. (bi-weekly from 2/11 – 3/25)</p>

Sunday School for All Ages – Sundays at 9:15 a.m.
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Two Upcoming Events
At the Sugarloaf Citizens' Association

Sugarloaf Citizens' Association will hold its **Annual Member Potluck** on **Sunday, February 11** at 5:30 in the historic Gothic Barn at Linden Farm. This is always a fun opportunity for old members to reconnect and for new and prospective members to join in and see what we are about—not to mention to sample some first-rate fried chicken!

Bring a pot-luck dish to share. Beer, wine, and soft drinks will be provided.
*Location: Linden Farm,
 20900 Martinsburg Road, Dickerson.*

In addition, our **Mid-Winter Garden Dreams** gathering will be the following **Sunday, February 18**, from 1:00 to 3:00 at the same location. All manner of gardener—whether vegetable, flower, shrub or tree—is welcome to join in. We will share garden wisdom, troubleshoot your thorniest problems and reveal our favorite tomato/bean/pepper, etc. species for local gardens. Bring along plant, seed and tool catalogs, favorite books or tools, or surplus pots and starter trays if you are so inclined. Warm drinks and yummy snacks provided. All real or would-be gardeners welcome!

Go Green! Consider bringing your own cup and utensils.

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Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present Crime

Burglary: 17000 block of Hughes Road.

Thefts: 17500 block of Christer Street, 20200 block of McNamara Road, 15100 block of Springfield Road.

DUI Arrest: 16800 block of White's Store Road.

Past Crime

1922

The mystery surrounding the disappearance of Frank Brown of Poolesville was resolved when his body was found floating in the Potomac River. The back of his head was found to be crushed. Sheriff Alvie Moxley and Deputies Gingell and Howard arrested the dead man's wife and charged her with murder. They also charged her brother Maurice Nokes of Leesburg. Later, authorities learned that Brown had been struck on the head with an ax while he was sleeping in his house near Edwards Ferry.

Dr. John Smith, who was connected to the U.S. Army Medical School, pled guilty before Judge Riggs on a charge of assault. The incident happened in Gaithersburg. It was revealed that Marion Selby, a Gaithersburg youth, had sworn out a warrant for Dr. Smith. Selby testified that he and Dr. Smith got into an argument over a chicken

and, during the altercation, Smith knocked him down. On the other hand, Smith told the judge that he was defending himself over a series of insults by Selby.

Four young Washingtonians who went to Glen Echo Park for a day of fun ended up getting arrested by Deputies Gingell and Howard. The deputies had approached the young men and had warned them to behave themselves. The lads then assaulted the deputies, knocking them down.

Arthur Hurley of Washington left Gaithersburg in his automobile and was driving south on the Frederick Road when he became blinded and confused by the headlights of an auto heading in the opposite direction. He swerved off of the roadway and struck a tree. The occupants of a passing auto stopped and loaded Hurley into their car and took him to Sibley Hospital in Washington where he was pronounced dead.

Milton Burdette of Barnesville was arrested after he fired shots at George Kemp who was walking along the railroad tracks. Burdette did not deny firing the shots but said he did so to scare off Burdette who had been causing trouble. Sheriff Moxley came to Barnesville and, while investigating the incident, also arrested Kemp's wife and sister on charges of disorderly conduct.

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

Continued from page 5.

Tidbits

Local West Virginia University Student Earns Honor

Dmitri Agnew, of Boyds, has been named to the President's List at West Virginia University for the fall 2017 semester. A student must achieve a 4.0 grade point average to be named to the President's List. Agnew is a sophomore majoring in Mining Engineering.

West Virginia University is the premier land-grant institution in the twenty-first century and delivers high-quality education, excels in discovery and innovation, models a culture of diversity and inclusion, promotes health and vitality, and builds pathways for the exchange of knowledge and opportunity between the state, the nation, and the world. Founded in 1867, WVU is home to more than 30,000 students and has nearly 200,000 graduates shaping our world each day.

Cat Gone

Patsy Smallwood needs help finding her lost, large, black cat, last seen near the Tama I neighborhood in Poolesville. Since the cat is quite skittish, it would be best to call her first and not approach the cat directly. She can be reached at 301-606-2634 or by calling the Poolesville Veterinary Clinic at 301-972-7705.

Remembrances

Samuel Darby Price

Samuel Darby Price passed away on January 13 at Frederick Memorial Hospital after a courageous battle with complications from diabetes. Darby was the son of Lawrence Hilton Price, Jr. (deceased) and Ida Lutz Jones Price (and R.P. Brown deceased) Brown of Frederick, Maryland.

After graduating from Poolesville High School in 1972, Darby went to work for the Hiltons in Barnesville and started his career in well drilling. He continued to drill for many years, attaining the level of Certified Master Driller. Not only could Darby drill the well, but he could also locate it using his divining rods.

A joyous man, Darby could often be seen in his red suit during the holiday season helping Santa bring cheer to adults and children alike. To those who knew Darby, bringing cheer and joy to all was not just a seasonal occupation but a core belief that he practiced throughout his life.

Darby enjoyed the outdoors. He enjoyed hunting; fishing; tending his garden, his irises, and his tomatoes; and tooling around in his '95 Jeep.

Darby Price was the fifth of ten children. He was a big man with a big smile and a big heart—a gentle giant. His brother, not sure what number, William, told how Darby was always quick to help. He tells of one time, "We were driving down the road and saw some friends trying to get a piano into their house—they were doing that head-scratching thing, when you don't have a clue as to how to proceed. Darby looked at me and said, 'Let's help them.' We backed up, he grabbed the heavy end of the piano, and I got the light end, and we picked it up and put it into the living room. He was strong and graceful with his strength. Darby saw a problem and did something to resolve it. He wasn't asked, he just helped."

Darby was a founding member of the Miller Lite Brigade, a light-hearted group of friends, and Concrete Pig Off, another Barnesville group dedicated to restoring jeeps. CPO recently helped restore his Jeep to like-new condition.

In addition to his mother, Darby is survived by his siblings, Skip and Virginia Price, Jane and Jim Parsley, Mike and Kathy Price, Sue (deceased) and Bob Ricketson, Jack and Joyce Price, Betsy and John Lynch, William Price and Cherry Barr, Ed and Kathy Price, and Vince and DeEtte Price. Darby had two children, Sam and Denice; three grandchildren, Brittney, Cameron, and Domonick; and one great-grandchild, Derek. There are lots of nephews, nieces, cousins, and innumerable people whose lives he touched. Darby was married three times to Laure, Marjory, and Beth. He was pre-deceased by one nephew, Andy Parsley.

In lieu of flowers, please make donations to the American Diabetes Association.



Samuel Darby Price

Leonard Howard Roberson

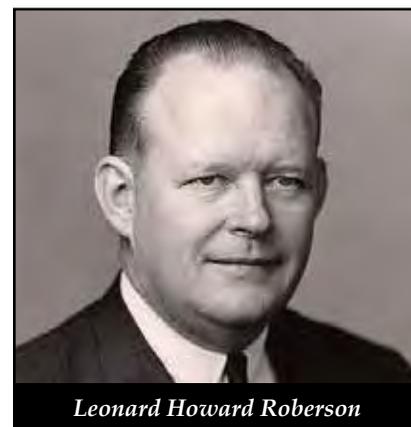
Leonard Howard Roberson, 97, died on January 11, 2018. He was the loving husband of Trannie Mae Roberson.

Born on January 4, 1921, in Dickerson, he was the son of the late Howard Calvin and Mary Elizabeth (Bussard) Roberson. He joined the army and then worked for C&P Telephone, and he retired in 1983.

Surviving besides his wife are five children: Alan Roberson, Milton Roberson, Steven Roberson, Susan Smith, Judy Roberson, and Karen Blank; nine grandchildren; and seventeen great-grandchildren.

Leonard was preceded in death by one sister, Anna Elizabeth Roberson-Wiseman.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Montgomery Hospice, Casey House, 1355 Piccard Dr., Rockville, MD 20850 (montgomeryhospice.org).



Leonard Howard Roberson



Remembrances

Earl B. Dillehay

Earl B. Dillehay, 75, of Boyds, died on January 10, 2018. He was the husband of Kathleen Dianne Dillehay.

Born on February 28, 1942, in Boyds, Earl was the son of the late Earl B. and Margie (Bennett) Dillehay, Sr.

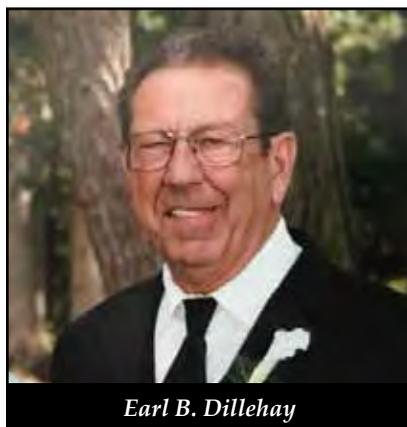
Earl, also known by "Dilly" to many of his friends, worked as a farm machinery mechanic for over sixty years, for thirty-five of those he was self-employed with Dilly's Repair. Earl was a farmer at heart for over twenty years, most recently raising cattle, making hay, mowing grass, and riding his tractors. He was always there to help anyone that had problems with their farm and lawn equipment.

Earl spent his entire life in the Boyds area and was known and loved by many in the surrounding community. Earl was a longtime member of the Boyds Civic Association and the Boyds Federal Credit Union. He enjoyed traveling, the outdoors, fellowship, and, of course, Western movies.

Earl was a loving husband, father, and grandfather to his wife of fifty years and to his son and grandchildren.

He is also survived by Bryan Lee Dillehay and wife Heidi, of Mt. Airy; one sister, Catherine Woodfield of Damascus; and three grandchildren, Brody, Mackenzie, and Aubrie Dillehay.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to Autism Speaks (autismspeaks.org).



Earl B. Dillehay

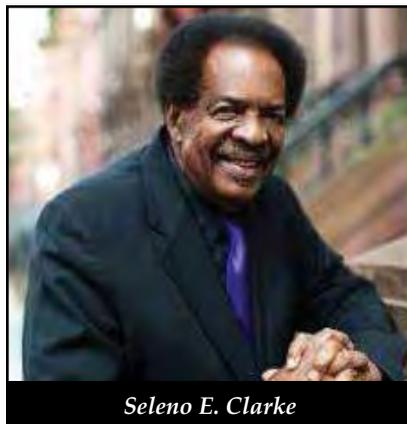
Selene E. Clarke

Selene E. Clarke, legendary jazz musician from Poolesville, was born on September, 1930 and passed away on December 28.

He was the son of the late Rev. Millard E. Clarke and mother Beulah. His love life partner was Brenda "BJ" Chapman. He was preceded in death by brothers James, Douglas, Donald, Gilbert, Barney, and his sister Peggy Williams. He is survived by three devoted children, Little Sal, Serena, and Adrienne; one grandson, Sean; as well as sister-in-law June Clarke, brother-in-law Hosea Williams, and daughter-in-law Eurydice Crocker.

A U.S. Army veteran, he began his musical career in New York City in 1954. He began his illustrious career as a saxophonist in all of the clubs in the Harlem loop, including the famed Apollo Theater. As he toured all over the world, with recent tours in Vancouver Canada and Berlin, Germany, he brought with him memories of performing with other legends including Count Basie, George Benson, and many others in the jazz community. Switching from saxophonist, he mastered the Hammond B-3 organ in the 1960s, adding a gospel flavor that truly pumped up soul jazz.

George Benson was also the producer of Selene's quintet CD called "Diversity". This extraordinary recording expresses both the roots of his creative vision and his exhilarating contemporary sound. He was a very influential musician whose success was not only measured by this amazing and award-winning music career and recording contracts, but also by his legacy of mentorship to so many young and upcoming musicians.



Selene E. Clarke

Continued from page 6.

UMCVFD Busy With Wrecks and Mountain Rescue

The day before, a two-car crash on White's Ferry Road near Morrow Drive brought personnel from UMCVFD to the scene. Both vehicles were destroyed and personnel assisted with their care.

Zachary Aaron Kresslein

Zachary Aaron Kresslein of Poolesville passed away on January 16 in Asheville, North Carolina, at the age of 17.

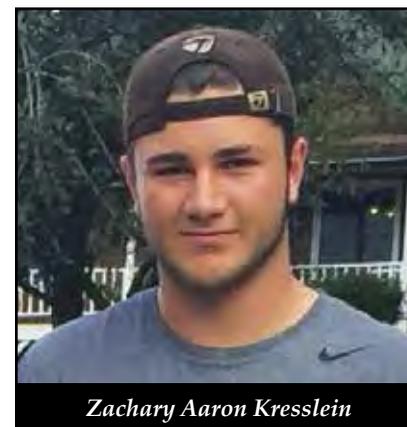
Zack was born on August 22, 2000, to Michael and Kimberli Kresslein. He was the oldest of their three children. He was intelligent, athletic, free-spirited, personable, and popular with his friends. His passions included baseball, football, cars, technology, cooking, jet skiing, snowboarding, and his pet pitbull, Roscoe.

Zack recently attended Winston Churchill High School in Potomac. Though his education was temporarily derailed by his battle with substance abuse, he nevertheless finished his high school education online and graduated early, earning his high school diploma in the fall of 2017 at barely seventeen years old. At the time of his death, he was in recovery in Asheville, North Carolina and was scheduled to begin classes at the University of North Carolina at Asheville this spring semester.

Zack is survived by his parents, his brother, Xavier (16), his sister, Katarina (9), his maternal grandparents, Lionel and Flora Griffis, his uncle, Charles Kresslein, and cousins, Charlie and Nicholas, as well as many other extended family and friends. Zack is welcomed in heaven by his paternal grandparents, Charles and Patricia Kresslein.

Zack's family will receive friends at two locations: Saints Peter & Paul Antiochian Orthodox Christian Church, 10620 River Rd., Potomac, MD 20854 on Friday, January 26 from 5:00 to 8:00 p.m., and Hilton Funeral Home, 22111 Beallsville Rd. (Rt. 109), Barnesville, MD 20838 on Saturday, January 27 from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Funeral services will be held on Sunday, January 28, at 1:00 p.m. at Our Lady of Mercy Catholic Church, 9200 Kentsdale Drive, Potomac, MD 20854.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be sent to Shatterproof, a nonprofit dedicated to ending the devastation addiction causes families. Donations may be made online (www.shatterproof.org) or by direct mail to Shatterproof, 101 Merritt 7 Corporate Park, 1st Floor, Norwalk, CT 06851.



Zachary Aaron Kresslein

Ruth W. Grubb

Ruth W. Grubb, 97, formerly of Beallsville, passed away quietly on January 12, 2018.

Born November 25, 1920, in Burkes Garden, Virginia, she was the daughter of the late Edward Johnson and Ida Lake (Neal) Wynne. She was the wife of the late J. Edgar Grubb to whom she was married for forty-three years. Ruth was preceded in death by three sisters, Eula Luhn, Ida Neal, and Ethel Wynne; and four brothers, Buford, Ralph, Hubert, and Wylie Wynne. She graduated from Poolesville High School in 1938 and worked at the Naval Hospital in Bethesda from 1945 to 1965.

After her retirement, she and her husband started a quite successful nursery business selling beautiful flowers and plants. She was a life member of Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church where she was a member of the Crafty Ladies and Gents and always helped with apple-butter making. In addition, she was a life member of the Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department Ladies' Auxiliary and of the Rebekahs, a branch of the Independent Order of Odd Fellows.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in memory of Ruth Grubb to Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church, PO Box 358, Poolesville, MD 20837 or to the UMCVFD Auxiliary, 19801 Beallsville Road, Beallsville, MD 20839.



Ruth W. Grubb

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Continued from page 3.

Upcounty Prevention Network Hosts Marijuana Alert

decriminalized, that doesn't mean it is safe to use, especially in individuals who use on a regular basis.

According to Jillson, teenage brains appear more susceptible to long-term damage than adults older than the mid-twenties. Short-term effects on developing brains include a poor attention span, short-term memory loss, learning difficulties, and decreased decision-making abilities. The ability to be mindful is diminished. Long-term effects include poor school performance, higher dropout rates, greater unemployment, low self-esteem, and increased risk of addiction to other drugs.

The biggest takeaways from the meeting are that laws and opinions about marijuana usage are evolving; however, substance abuse in any form for today's youth is dangerous and consequential. There are many treatment and diversion options available in Montgomery County, and parents are urged to reach out for help if they suspect their child or another child needs help.

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Continued from page 1.

Superintendent Offers Reassurances but No Firm Date on PHS Renovation

range of factors that influence student learning in the classroom and school building as a whole. A new process, the Key Facility Indicators (KFI) program, has been developed that the superintendent believes will more accurately assess the physical condition of schools and how they affect student learning and will not lean as heavily on student population.

After the presentation, the superintendent and his attending staff focused first on a set of questions put together by the commissioners. One question centered on the fact that the operating budget does not allow for any real assessment of the funding devoted to each school in terms of instructional materials, elective programs, and the like. Zuckerman said initially that there are “no plans to remove programs” in Poolesville schools and the focus is to ensure that the “programs we do have here thrive.”

Superintendent Smith elaborated on this statement. He said there are no program changes in the FY19 or FY20 budget for Poolesville schools but admitted that what happens beyond those dates is subject to a number of unpredictable forces. Given Poolesville’s location in the Ag Reserve, serious consideration is being given to creating an agriculture program and curriculum for PHS. He closed by saying he could not see how we can help grow good, educated citizens in Poolesville’s schools “without an equitable set of programs.”

A second question concerned the impact that a flat level of student population growth in Poolesville might have on possible renovation. One particular concern was the establishment of a new high school (known as the Crown Project) in northern Gaithersburg and whether that might draw students away from Poolesville’s high school which relies on magnet program students to maintain its student population.

Superintendent Smith said he did not see Crown as a threat. “There is a threshold you have to staff to ensure student opportunity,” he explained and suggested that student population levels are not the sole driver of operating support and staffing for schools. The new KFI program includes a focus on better projecting school population trends that focuses not just on the “macro” level but also on the regional and local levels. “Access precedes achievement,” he said, suggesting that all students need access to good staff and learning opportunities to succeed.

During this discussion, Commissioner Valaree Dickerson raised the question of realigning school boundaries to help ensure that Poolesville’s student population does not decline and to help other nearby clusters cope with growth.

Superintendent Smith said in response that the “cluster has been pretty sacrosanct,” meaning the boundaries around each school district have been very resistant to change. He went on to add that the school board now recognizes that cluster boundaries “do need to be considered” in the context of dealing with growth in particular. If an adjacent cluster can be helped by looking at boundaries, “We need to look at the issue.”

On the question of whether any changes are being considered that might affect Poolesville High School’s high rankings on student performance, Superintendent Smith and his staff were reassuring. They recognized the importance of the magnet programs to the school and said no changes were being considered to alter or diminish those programs.

Commissioner Jerry Klobukowski pointed out that in a place like Poolesville where the high school is so central to much of the community’s life, the idea of designing a high school and its facilities so it can also serve as a community center seems to have a lot of potential. This approach could also attract more support for renovating the school from other segments of the county government since such a facility could help serve the needs of other populations.

Superintendent Smith was enthusiastic about the idea. He said that he “absolutely supports the idea of building joint community-school buildings.” He also went on to talk about the importance of modern digital technology in helping schools like Poolesville that are more remote to provide a wider range of opportunities for its students. He was firm in saying that the county has to do more to provide “digital options” to its students. “It has to happen,” he said.

One concern that was raised during the meeting was that despite all of the reassurances, the threat that has loomed over Poolesville High School still remains. There have been periodic threats at various times to close the school or one of the elementary schools. Overall, the comments from the superintendent and his staff concerning the new KFI process were reassuring on this front. The KFI is broad in scope and is not excessively keyed to student population. It should help PHS to have a better chance of being renovated in the not-too-distant future.

In the closing discussion, Superintendent Smith added that the school board and its decisions on the new KFI policy are critical to helping Poolesville’s

schools. The new policy is being vetted now and input on it from the Poolesville cluster will be vital. December 1 is the date when the new CIP budget will be adopted and between now and then, the cluster needs to make its voice heard both at the school board and with his team.

In summing up the meeting, Commission President Jim Brown saw a number of good outcomes. “The Poolesville cluster will exist as is for the foreseeable future from what I heard. The superintendent said he was unable to see PHS not being a whole school magnet. The new evaluation system was instituted, in part, to give more fairness and weight to condition issues as opposed to capacity.” In offering this positive assessment, however, he also remarked that the superintendent said that the cluster must do a lot of work to help ensure good outcomes for Poolesville schools. “He also gave us a clear timeline for the rollout of the evaluation process, school assessment, and CIP development.”

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Pets and Their Humans

Adapted by Peter H. Eeg, BSc, DVM, CVLF

Our pets are our best friends in many cases. We love them, care for them, and consider them members of the family. From the time we fall in love with them as puppies and kittens to the end of their days, our relationship grows and changes.

Understanding how dogs and cats see and deal with their relationship to us and the humans in our world is not completely known, even by the best-trained veterinary animal behaviorists. There are volumes of books, articles, and clinical data that tries to make sense of the intricate dance that people participate in on a daily basis with their pets. It is important to note that dogs and cats have repeatable patterns of responses to physical and sensory (see, hear, smell) input from their housemates and their world. Unfortunately, the people who care and love these amazing creatures are the least consistent when it comes to repeatable patterns of responses to physical and sensory input from other people, their pets, and the world around them. This often leads to behavior issues for the pet.

Think of it this way. If you have a friend that every time you say or do a specific action reacts differently, sometimes happy, sometimes sad, sometimes angry, sometimes scared towards you, you would have great concerns and apprehension when interacting with this friend. They would have difficulty understanding your changing responses to them.

Typically when you or your human friends are inconsistent in behavioral response to your pet, the pet starts to make up his own mind as to how to respond. These responses are typically not what you would expect and can sometime lead to stress and problems dealing with the pet. These "abnormal" behavior responses from the pet as we see them can multiply and eventually create a serious management problem for you as the owner.

It is also very common for people to be completely "clueless" as to how their pets may interact with strange humans or other animals. These humans have never given their pets any groundwork behavior cues to go by, yet take them out into situations where they are forced to make independent behavioral responses. While your pet may have managed to get a general understanding of their "human pack" behavior at home, they will likely be unprepared for uncontrolled interactions with strange humans, pets, and the big world. When their response is to jump, pull, bark, growl, or release bodily fluids, their human(s) act totally surprised that this behavior has occurred. The typical response from the owner is to raise his or her voice and utter completely rational statements (to themselves), "NO, BAD DOG, STOP THAT." What the dog behaviorally inferred from you is Aggression in your voice, high intensity to the situation, and a defensive posture. What the dog heard is, "BLAH, BLAH BLAH, BLAH BLAH." This makes the dog think that he/she behaviorally responded correctly since its human is behaving that way; therefore, the dog should increase its efforts at that behavior. This creates a behavioral feedback loop between the owner and the pet that only reinforces and magnifies the negative behavior.

This does not have to be the end point that is all too often the outcome when new pet owners fail to understand the very complex behavior dance they are doing with their pets.

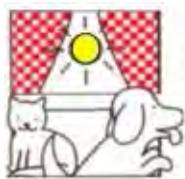
Simple steps can be taken at the start of the relationship to help reduce or eliminate chronic and potentially dangerous behaviors from your pet.

Take your new pet (puppy, kitten, young adult animal, senior citizen) to your veterinarian as soon you get him or her. Your veterinarian can often see early signs of behavior issues. In some cases, there are medical conditions that can affect behavior.

Ask your veterinarian for his/her recommendation on a good general training book for your pet (this includes cats). Then actually read the book and take preemptive action to get your pet well and consistently "bad behavior" proofed.

See your veterinarian as a source of information and guidance on behavior issues between you and your pet throughout your relationship. When it comes to relationships and behavior with your pet(s), there are no silly questions. The sooner you ask about a behavior concern, the faster it can be controlled or eliminated.

Most importantly, think before you expose your pet to a new or unknown situation or environment. Ask yourself if you know how your pet will respond to new behavior experiences and what you expect from your pet. If you do not have a ready answer then it is probably not a good idea to take your pet into that situation.



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