

# The Monocacy

# MONOCLE

*Keeping an Eye on Local News*

*A Biweekly Newspaper*

June 5, 2020 • Volume XVI, Number 6

## *First Tranche of Funding for New High School Approved*

By Link Hoewing

In late May, the County Council approved a capital improvements budget for the coming fiscal year (which starts on July 1) that includes the first installment of five years of funding needed to pay for the construction of a new high school. The new school is expected to cost at least \$70 million and is projected for completion by 2024. The Fair Access Committee (FAC) for the Upcounty, which has been leading the fight for both a new high school and co-located facilities at the school (including a community/senior center and clinic/wellness center), hailed the approval as “historic.” In more than twenty years of advocacy, the high school has repeatedly been placed on and removed from “modernization” lists, but actual funding has never been proposed much less approved.

The FAC noted that District 1 Councilmember Andrew Friedson was

instrumental in pushing for the now-approved funding. Other councilmembers—including Education Committee chair Craig Rice, Hans Riemer, and Tom Hucker—were also active supporters. The outcome is not only historic but was hard won. The committee started its work nearly two years ago and, even in the latter stages of reviewing the capital improvements budget, there were suggestions that some projects, including Poolesville High School, be delayed due to funding constraints. The fact that funding was approved is a testament to the effective work of the committee, the strong support of the community, and the leadership of key councilmembers. In the end, the committee made a compelling, thoughtful, and well supported argument supporting the need for a new high school.

Design work and planning for the new high school has already been approved using funds from this fiscal



*Surveyors on school property. Is this a sign of good things to come?*

Continued on page 11.



*Celebrating the opening of dining at a restaurant, even if it has to be outside. See Family Album on page 2.*



*Mason Island from a view the Union troops would have had during the Civil War. Learn more about our area's history from In Your Own Backyard on page 6.*



*Symbolic of a new dawn of hope as restaurants take the first steps to return to dining in, we present beautiful area sunrises on page 10.*



*Up close and personal with PHS senior softball player, Alaina Shields, on page 12.*

## *Seneca Academy Closure Averted, Joins Georgetown Hill Early School Group*

By Rande Davis

After facing severe challenges, uncertainty, and potential closure, the administration of Darnestown's Seneca Academy was very pleased to announce that the institution will not close but will be joining the Georgetown Hill Early School Group family, with twelve locations in Montgomery and Frederick Counties.

What seemed to be the story of the demise of a private school due to the impact of COVID-19 pressures turned into a story of determination and

Continued on page 15.



*With the dog days of summer just ahead, Seneca Academy basks in the cool knowledge that the school will open again this fall.*

# Family Album



Families were pleased to dine out at Cugini's new outdoor dining area.



The Town of Barnesville saluted graduates everywhere, from pre-school and kindergarten all the way to the college level. Tracey Slotta (Town Clerk) and Holly Larisch (Commissioner) set up the banner.



Bassett's Eric Rose was thrilled to be able to welcome outdoor dining customers.



At Cugini's, it was cheers all around, even from behind a mask.



Bassett's customers can dine safely at a proper distance in Bassett's tightly controlled new "dining room."



Bassett's parking lot in the rear was converted into a dining area.



Some of the very first people to dine outdoors at Cugini's were greeted by owner Barbi Stull (right).



Dr. Eeg and crew are ready to meet the challenge of the times but were still upstaged by the dog without a mask.

## Town Government

### Poolesville's FY 21 Budget Approved amid Continuing Focus on the Pandemic

By Link Hoewing

The Town of Poolesville commissioners voted to approve the FY 21 budget amid public unrest in many areas and the continued impact of the coronavirus. Commission President Kerri Cook offered brief remarks at the start of the June 1 meeting concerning the sadness gripping the country and asked for a moment of silence.

The first order of business was the adoption of the FY 21 budget. Town Manager Seth Rivard said he did not need to go over the budget again since the commissioners had discussed it numerous times. He also said there were no public comments regarding the budget and proposed no further changes from those discussed and approved at the previous (May 18) meeting.

The only substantive point discussed concerned the allocation of \$30,000 proposed in the budget to support the work of a "grants manager." Professional grant writers are hired by governments and nonprofits to prepare and submit grant proposals for funding support of various programs. These professionals know the ins and outs of grant writing and can be more successful in securing grant funding than those with little experience in writing such proposals. Rivard supported the proposed allocation saying that, with many grants, an 80/20 funding split is included, meaning the town would only pay twenty percent of the entire funding allocation while the funding entity (often the state) pays the other eighty percent. He said success in obtaining such grants could be very important because, in the wake of the current economic slowdown, "we need to look for new resources."

Commissioner Jerry Klobukowski questioned spending money in this way. He noted that the town will likely have to consider paying more to Bates Trucking for dealing with recyclables and wondered whether that might not be a better place to put the money. None of the other commissioners supported his view, and the budget was approved without change by a 4 to 1 vote with Klobukowski voting against it. He did not specify why he voted no.

The commissioners then took up a proposed proclamation to observe National Gun Violence Awareness Day on the first Friday of June. The proclamation is a simple one, declaring that the day be devoted to "honor(ing) and remember(ing) all victims and survivors of gun violence." Commissioner Valaree Dickerson said she wanted to be clear that "we are not taking a political stance one way or the other" by offering this proclamation. It is supposed to promote a "day of understanding" and not "a statement in any way on legal gun ownership."

Commissioner Jim Brown said, "I don't feel our residents have made their views about this topic clear." He added that the topic can be construed "as a political issue" even though no one would support violence against others of any kind. He concluded that the town has "never taken a political stance like this" and made it clear he would vote against the proclamation.

As the discussion went on, it became clear that the proposed proclamation did not originate locally but instead was brought to the commission by an outside party. Klobukowski had been asked by the mayor of another town to bring it to the commission to see if there would be any support. He said it was not meant to be political.

The proclamation was approved in a 4 to 1 vote with Brown voting against it.

Tom Kettler, a president of Kettler-Forlines Homes, which is building new homes in the Reserve at Brightwell Crossing development, asked the commissioners to support his efforts to ameliorate some of the impacts the nearby Beauty Spot trash facility is having on residents in his company's development. He said the extremely bright lights and the noise of heavy machinery starting up as early as 7:00 a.m. are affecting nearby residents. He has been trying to work with the county to install LED lights which are aimed differently and are less glaring, and to change Saturday hours for the facility so activity starts later in the morning. He has not had much success, so he wanted the commissioners to consider sending a supporting letter to the county. Kettler added that he is also planning on building an eight-foot-high wall and planting evergreens to provide more shielding for residents.

Cook said she is willing to help but pointed out that she does not "want to send the message that we don't support the Beauty Spot." She said that they had

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## Rande(m) Thoughts Shaken to Our Core

By Rande Davis

Sometimes single events can galvanize and change the entire world—sometimes for good, sometimes for evil. Many of these seemingly small and geographically limited events, can be, nevertheless, like a stone thrown into a river that ripples until it shakes an entire ocean. Two events come quickly to mind: The crucifixion of Jesus on the small land mass of Mt. Calvary and the assassination of King Ferdinand of Austria which ignited the global conflagration of World War I.

The killing of George Floyd in Minneapolis has the potential to be such an event, an event of such profound importance that the world will not remain indifferent or untouched. As horrific as the video of Floyd's death is, it may sound naïve, even perverse, to think that more good than bad may still emerge.

In a very diabolical way, not since September 11, 2001 has a video united all Americans more in a shared sense of horror and outrage. This surely is the epitome of police brutality, at a level all readily understand. No ambiguity apparent.

The intense outrage felt by the African American community could not be more understandable. Surely their personal need to express that outrage in protest touches the hearts of all people of good will. Regrettably, that justifiable outrage is quickly turning into something else, and it is downright frightening.

As the rest of the nation and perhaps eventually the entire world begins to be engulfed in heated reaction to current events, my heart has the need to express something I have felt strongly at a local level. Now more than ever, I feel the need to turn my gaze more to ourselves than dwell on the national scene. I feel that need every time local events seem to awkwardly separate us. That divide is felt whenever discussion of past race relations is brought to our attention with

discussions, for example, of the integration of Poolesville High School. It's felt in the confusion of not just separate church services but in the dearth of diversity within our sanctuaries. It is felt every time a separation occurs socially, most times privately, other times publicly. I felt it very poignantly during the discussion and events surrounding the recent public acknowledgement of the 1880 lynching of an African American here in Poolesville. With public smiles and warm words spoken, so much is glossed over. I sense an underlining divide that can only be understood when a newfound level of frankness emerges. While we are all honest with one another, I no longer believe we are being frank with one another. I cannot speak for others, only for myself. All the while being honest, I still know I have fallen short in frankness. For me, it is fear of being misunderstood or labeled something that in my heart I know I am not. For others, it might be fear of unintentionally and wrongly being perceived as rude or insulting.

A few days ago, someone anonymously placed a series of protest signs along Whalen Commons stressing the importance of those of us who are white to address the issues of Black Lives Matter. That the racial tensions have reached not just the big cities but even our small town showed me that the small stone thrown into the river ripples even into Poolesville. When that happens, you know something is far bigger than you imagine.

I do not know where all this is going, but I look forward to bringing together a group of friends of both races to explore ways we, as neighbors and friends, may better understand each other's perspectives. From this dialogue, perhaps there will come a message of hope and understanding we could share with the whole community.

In the meantime, let us all honor the memory of George Floyd with shared acknowledgement of the wrong done to him through a process of peace, understanding, and justice. Let us live more than ever as **one nation under God, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all.**

## Mystery History

### Poolesville Trivia Pursuit: Mission Impossible

By Rande Davis

#### The Civil War Era

In the May 24 edition of the *Monocle* (still available online at [monocacy-monocle.com](http://monocacy-monocle.com)), we introduced a challenging new family game to help pass the time during the quarantine from the invisible enemy: Poolesville Trivia Pursuit: Mission Impossible. It is a fun family game with very challenging questions about our region's history. The questions were selected for their high level of difficulty—even the most seasoned readers may not be able to answer most questions. The objective is to have fun, not necessarily by getting the answer correct but to discover historical stories sure to intrigue, entertain, and educate.

Warning: In this game, getting one in four right, gives you an A grade.

Rules: Each player provides an answer. Then the group votes for which answer is considered most likely to be correct.

Pledge of Honor: Do not go to the answer page before anyone else in the family. It will be more fun for all in the group to read the answers together.

*Good luck!*

1. A freed Poolesville slave had his most prized and essential possession, a horse, taken from him by Union troops. Why did they do it, and what famous person gifted him a replacement?
2. When Confederate troops surrounded the Presbyterian Church and took the Union troops inside prisoner at gunpoint, why did the northerners know no harm would come to them?
3. As slaves sought freedom by leaving the South to head to the North, they began to congregate in a nearby location under the protection of a Union general. Who was the general and what is the name of the community that survives even today?
4. What was the name of a recently-restored building that was central to the life of local African American families from the Civil War Era right up to today?

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## Fun Fact...

On school integration: "We conclude that, in the field of public education, the doctrine of 'separate but equal' has no place. Separate educational facilities are inherently unequal."

—U.S. Supreme Court ruling: *Brown v. Board of Education* in Topeka, Kansas. May 17, 1954.

## Garden

### The American Chestnut Tree

By Maureen O'Connell

In the April 30, 2020 issue of *New York Times Magazine*, there was an article by Gabriel Popkin entitled "Can Genetic Engineering Bring Back the American Chestnut?" This tree helped build industrial America before a blight wiped out an estimated three billion or more of them. The author questioned whether we should embrace tinkering with nature in order to revive the tree's lost glory. The dilemma of this discussion has been debated for many years: On the plus side, GMO crops raise agricultural productivity and reduce the need for (environmentally harmful) pesticides; on the negative side, these altered plants might also pose hazards to human health from toxicity and an increased risk of allergies. Pollen produced by these plants could be toxic and harmful to insects that transfer it between plants. I have not recently thought about the chestnut blight; I knew of it, but I did not know the specifics of the disease. Upon some research, I explored its relationship to viruses. Sadly, the world is suddenly aware of a new virus, the SARS-CoV-2 novel coronavirus and its devastating toll on human health and the global economy.



*New life for the American Chestnut Tree.*

While the most familiar viruses cause diseases in humans—HIV-1, swine flu, hepatitis, Ebola, dengue fever, yellow fever, polio, smallpox, rabies, and meningitis, to name a few—there are thousands of viruses that infect organisms on every level, from plants and animals all the way down to microbes. In simple terms, a virus is a submicroscopic infectious agent that replicates only inside the living cell of an organism. It is spread in many ways. One transmission pathway is through vectors that are organisms that serve as living shuttles carrying the disease-causing bacteria, viruses, and parasites from one person or animal to another. The feet, fur, and feathers of the many animals, birds, and insects that walk across a fungus-infected branch or tree trunk carry the disease to other trees, and the infestation continues.

The American chestnut tree dominated the eastern hardwood forests with an estimated three to four billion trees across more than thirty million acres. Known as the "redwoods" of the East, they grew fast and big, reaching one hundred feet in height with a diameter of three-to-five feet and an average age of two-to-three centuries. The wood was strong and extremely rot-resistant, and it was used for everything from barn timbers to pianos, split rail fences, fine furniture, flooring, and railroad ties. The nuts, or chestnuts, as many as six thousand from a single tree, were a perfect food for wildlife from turkeys to bears. What would Christmas be without "chestnuts roasting on an open fire"? Where would the village smithy stand in Henry Wadsworth Longfellow's poem "The Village Blacksmith": "Under a spreading chestnut tree the village smithy stands."

The chestnut blight was accidentally introduced to North America around 1904 by the parasitic fungus *Cryphonectria parasitica*. Naturally found in south-east Asia, it came to the United States from a shipment to New York City of Japanese chestnut trees for commercial purposes. The blight was first noticed on chestnut trees at the Bronx Zoo. Just like the Japanese knotweed, which I talked about in my last article, the *C. parasitica* fungus was not a problem for the

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## In Your Own Backyard

### Civil War along the C&O Canal: A Hillside Discovery

By Jon Wolz

*Note: This article begins a three-part series on the Civil War along the C&O Canal.*

Last December, on a walk on the C&O Canal returning from Benjamin Latrobe's marble quarry up on the hillside at Milepost 38, I noticed, near Culvert 63, at mile 38.72, high on the steep hillside, a rock impression that looked similar to the marble quarry rock impression. On subsequent walks by that location I looked up at it and even took photos of it from the towpath. The canal at this location has water in it, so my desire to climb the hill had to wait until the water receded or until I could come up with another idea on how to cross the canal.



*An old quarry where the 99th PA Infantry was positioned above White's Ford on October 12, 1862 as the Confederates approached the ford after their raid on Chambersburg, Pennsylvania.*

One morning late in March, I called Steve Horvath and asked if he would like to meet me at the Dickerson Conservation Park parking lot by the canal. I told him of my desire to climb that hill. I had a pair of rubber knee boots for him to wear and a pair for myself. We met at the parking lot in the early afternoon and put on the boots. We walked down the towpath to beyond Milepost 39 and crossed the watered canal. Fortunately, our boots were high enough, so our lower legs and feet did not get wet, and we did not sink into the mud of the canal. I led the way, following a deer path along the side of the canal and then the path turned up the steep hill. One bad step or slip, and we would have fallen down that hill into the canal. We reached the spot and found a ledge about seventy-five feet long and about thirty feet wide. The red sandstone rock walls appeared to be cut out in blocks, but I could not detect any drill marks. Most of the rocks were covered in thick green moss. Was this an old abandoned quarry? I noticed small rock rubble and disturbed earth on the upriver side of the hill near where I was standing.

Steve seemed as if he wanted to move on, so I suggested to him that he climb to the top and see what he could see. I sat on the ground and continued looking at the rocks and looking down at the view: the canal and towpath below, the tip of upper Mason Island, the Potomac, White's Ford, and Virginia. I continued wondering if I was at a quarry or if this was a natural formation. I thought about the historical wayside sign up the towpath at mile 39.17 titled, "White's Ford—A Civil War Crossing and a Desperate Escape." White's Ford is really at mile 38.8 on the canal, and I have found the location misidentified in different books. The historical sign mentions three Confederate crossings during the Civil War and describes in detail the crossing led by Confederate Maj. Gen. Jeb Stuart that occurred on October 12, 1862.

Why did Stuart and his men cross White's Ford from Maryland to Virginia on that date? After the Battle of Antietam on September 17, 1862, the Union Army of the Potomac under Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan failed to pursue the Confederate Army of Northern Virginia, commanded by Gen. Robert E. Lee back into

Continued on page 18.

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**The American Chestnut Tree**

chestnut trees in Japan; they had a built-in resistance. As the blight took hold, it went on a rampage, spreading from Maine to Georgia; by the 1950s, the American chestnut tree's destruction was complete.

How does the blight kill the chestnut tree? Allow me to give you a very simple and non-scientific explanation. The fungus enters a tree's wound (caused by the environment or mechanical injury), grows in and under the bark, and eventually kills the cambium all the way

around a twig, branch, or trunk. A canker develops in the region of dead bark. It completely encircles the stem, cutting off the flow of water up from the roots to the leaves and the flow of sugar down from the leaves to the roots, eventually killing the tree. The blight fungus hosts a wide range of viruses and sets up virus/host and virus/virus interactions.

Can the American chestnut tree be restored to American forests? Mature trees have been virtually extinct for decades. Today, there are many ongoing restoration programs throughout the U.S. After many years of work breeding chestnut trees, the American Chestnut Foundation (ACF), a partner with the U.S. Forest Service, announced in March of this year that it is close to being able to make a blight-resistant American chestnut tree. Isaak Walton League (IWL) chapters throughout the U.S., in partnership with the ACF, are planting seeds from select mother trees as part of the nationwide program for breeding blight-resistant trees. The Bethesda-Chevy Chase chapter of the IWL in Poolesville is an active participant. There are several routes to arrive at this juncture. A basic tenet of breeding resistance is a concept known as back crossing. You cross American and Chinese trees, then breed successive generations back to the desired American parent, eventually winnowing out the undesired Chinese characteristics, shrubby growth, for example, but keeping its disease resistance. Genetically engineered trees is another avenue that scientists are exploring. Some critics believe that this tinkering would hold too many short-term and long-term risks. They say that this is not restoration but dangerous experimentation. Do we have a moral obligation to take these risks into consideration when we make decisions about intervening?

Chestnut blight and the good virus. Are there any good viruses? There are many great symbiotic partnerships in science. A research team from West Virginia has been collecting samples of the chestnut blight fungus to search for strains of the virus that helps chestnuts. They found a helpful organism called a hypovirus. It entwines with the fungus, infecting it and weakening it. With the virus's help, trees had time to react by growing a protective bark layer over the canker. Is this the hope for a potential recovery of the American chestnut tree? This tree is a historic and beloved part of America's landscape. While no single intervention can completely eradicate chestnut blight, the science of breeding, biotechnology, and biocontrol together offer our best hope of rescuing this iconic tree.



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**Poolesville Trivia Pursuit: Mission Impossible**

5. Kings and queens, foreign leaders worldwide, both tyrants and the benevolent, were very familiar with Poolesville during the Civil War. Why?
6. This man from Poolesville left town, headed to Virginia, and ended up organizing a Confederate cavalry. What was the designation of the regiment, what was its nickname, and under which locally-renowned general did the rebels often fight?
7. After the war, he united with a local doctor to start a warehouse business across the river. He also bought an important local business that survives even today, and his partner is the namesake of one of Poolesville's major roads. Can you name the man, the business, and the partner?
8. One of the greatest orators in American history was killed nearby in battle, and his corpse was brought to Poolesville. Who was he, why was he so unique, and who was his best friend in life?
9. Just days before the harsh fate of the man in number eight, he relaxed in the company of this famous friend. Where were they, and who was with them?
10. This structure of high importance to area residents became nothing more than firewood for Union troops.
11. What is the name of one of the oldest, simplest, and most popular childhood games that had its origins in single-room schools like our Seneca Schoolhouse?
12. This trivia game was created in a house once owned by a freed slave woman who had her water supply abruptly cut off by a neighbor, even though he was very religious. Why?

Answers can be found on page 13.

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J.D. Kuhlman

Continued from page 3.

**Poolesville’s FY 21 Budget Approved amid Continuing Focus on the Pandemic**

been working with the county to try and preserve services at the facility; all local trash receiving facilities in the county—including one that existed until recently in Damascus—have closed.

Brown said that he could see no harm in Kettler’s request. “I don’t think there will be any pushback from the county if we ask for reasonable accommodations.”

In the end, the commissioners agree to send a letter to the county requesting a later starting time on Saturdays as well as supporting the suggestions Kettler has made for different types and configurations of lighting.

As has been the case in recent meetings, discussion then turned to a focus on COVID-19 and how the town is managing its activities during the pandemic. Rivard remarked that the county has entered Phase I with limited opening of some activities and services. Regarding opening town facilities to the public, Gaithersburg is waiting until June 14 while some other jurisdictions are starting to open this week. He said that he knows town hall is really a public space but that he prefers to be cautious and wait until June 19 to reopen so proper planning can be done. He also plans to bring back all staff starting June 15. The commissioners did not object to his plans.

Regarding the annual summer camp, after delaying a potential start until July 6, it was discovered that only private camps are being allowed to open in the county with strict limits, and that all county-run camps have been cancelled. The commissioners decided to cancel the town’s camp program for this year.

With regard to the July Friday on the Commons events, the commissioners decided to cancel the July 10 event and to wait a while longer to determine whether there is any way to safely schedule the July 24 event which is the annual “Wine Down in the Park” gala that is well attended.

Rivard next mentioned that recycling programs throughout the U. S. have been threatened by the refusal of many countries that have taken plastic and paper recycling to continue to do so. These countries say that much of the recycling sent to them is “dirty” or not well sorted and that these countries are forced to take materials they can recycle with those they cannot, leaving them with mountains of refuse. The costs of taking recycling is rising everywhere, and the town’s refuse contractor, Bates Trucking, has asked the town for an increase in funding to cover the higher costs of handling recycling. The town produces two hundred tons of recycling waste. While the contract does not provide for changes for higher reimbursement, the unexpected nature of the costs would mean Bates might prevail in legal action. The commissioners by 4 to 1—with Klobukowski voting against—voted to increase the payment to Bates by \$26,000.

Finally, Brown observed that two Zoning Text Amendments (changes to town zoning ordinances) are scheduled for the next meeting: one dealing with prohibitions concerning twenty-four-hour businesses, the other a proposed change in how forest conservation requirements apply to a local the property of a local resident. He asked, “What’s the rush for these ZTAs?” When he received no response from other commissioners said that it is “bad for the town to push these through right now” and declared that he would oppose bringing them up for a vote.



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***Phase I of COVID-19 Recovery: A New Dawn***

*As we begin Phase I of recovery, we celebrate a new dawn by sharing these spectacular sunrise pictures from our region by Terri Pitts.*



Continued from page 1.

**First Tranche of Funding for New High School Approved**

year. A contract for more than \$3 million was awarded to VMDO Architects by the school system in April, and surveying work has begun.

Although capital improvements programs are planned using a six-year planning window, they are funded year by year. While the \$6.5 million funding approved for this fiscal year is important, the FAC wants local citizens to be aware that we must remain vigilant to ensure that funding in future years is approved as well.

As part of its effort to ensure that support for the new high school and needed county facilities remains strong, the FAC sent a questionnaire to all Board of Education (BOE) candidates running in the primary on June 2. There are three seats open on the BOE: At-large, District 2, and District 4. District 2 incumbent Rebecca Smondrowski and District 4 incumbent Shebra Evans filed for re-election. At-large board member Jeanette Dixon announced in December that she would not seek re-election. Thirteen candidates filed to run for the at-large seat.

The FAC's mission is to ensure that residents in the Upcounty are treated fairly and on par with other areas in terms of investment in schools and facilities and in the availability of programs funded and operated by the county government. In its view, this mission includes not only working to influence government leaders to make needed investments and fund needed programs in the area but also working to ensure that those elected to office are supportive of the needs of the region.

The questionnaire asked candidates to answer nine questions regarding their positions on key issues, most focused on how they would act to help ensure that a new high school is built, that support continues for the high school's magnet programs, and that new co-located county facilities are built, including a community center/senior center and a clinic/wellness center.

The FAC reviewed the answers of the candidates and recommended that Upcounty residents support Sunil Dasgupta for the at-large seat and Shebra Evans for the District 2 seat in the primary. In District 4, only two candidates are running in the primary, so there is no primary vote in that case. The two top candidates who win in the primary for both the at-large and Districts 2 and 4 seats will face off in the general election in November.

Kevin Schramm, president of the FAC, said he thinks the committee's decision to recommend candidates it believes Upcounty residents should support is a natural extension of the work that has been done to enhance the visibility and influence of our area with county leaders. "With the strong backing of the community, we believe the work of the Fair Access Committee has fundamentally changed the way county leaders view our area," Schramm said. "The county often ignored or gave scant attention to the needs of our area, the lack of investment in our high school being the prime example. We have now secured approval in this year's budget for the start of construction of a new high school, and the county now ranks Poolesville High School as a 'major capital project.' We are getting their attention and respect; and working to elect Board of Education members who we believe really understand and support our needs is another important part of that process."

The committee released a voters' guide on May 21 regarding the BOE candidates. The guide included the FAC's endorsements for the BOE primary elections as well as information about all BOE candidates and their responses to the questionnaire.

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## Youth Sports

### Alaina Shields: Softball and Bocce

By Jeff Stuart

#### What have been your major highlights in softball?

I think one of my major achievements was learning to bunt. I was always pretty fast, so being able to use that skill and become a good bunter was really fun. Some people don't like to bunt, but I really love it because I am able to get on base pretty often and contribute to the team. I played the outfield, too, but Head Coach Laurie Wohnhas and Assistant Coach Richard Wyne really helped me grow as an infielder. Making that transition to a new position was challenging, but I do love playing second.



Senior Alaina Shields

#### Tell readers about your coaches and teammates and the Poolesville experience.

Coach Wohn and Coach Wyne are probably the best coaches I have ever had. Wohn was always so supportive of us. She was able to push us out of our comfort zone and make us a better. Wyne was always the person to bring us together as a team and support us when we were off or down on ourselves. He also supplied the sunflower seeds. They were a necessity. I felt I really improved as a player under them, something I don't think I would have done under anyone else.

The team is so much fun to play on. Everyone is so supportive. Even those who are not playing in the game are so excited and engaged. I think it was weird losing so many seniors last year, but this year's seniors, Jenna Stroud, Holly Raines, Jess Convers, Sammi Kellogg, and Hallie Maytin, are some of my best friends. We have played together since we were freshmen.

When I started high school softball, I was really scared. I doubted myself. I would get down and compound my mistakes. It was really difficult, but I was able to build confidence and learned to really love the sport again. Of course, it feels good to do well, and we did well last season, but it felt even better to have fun with the team. We did so well last season, so we were all looking forward to this season. I am especially disappointed that it got cut short.

I just want to say thank you to the Poolesville softball team. It was such a great team. I am going to miss my teammates and coaches so much. I love my team.

#### How competitive are you on a scale from one to ten?

I think I am 1 an eight. I can definitely get pretty competitive, but winning is not everything. As a team, we always support each other's accomplishments. If a player on the other team got a really good hit or made a good play, we congratulated them, too.

#### What are your main motivations for doing athletics?

I came into softball because I loved the sport, but now it is more to be a part of the team. It is really uplifting. It is a great environment. We get down, we are able to reset as a team and get over our mistakes.

#### How do you handle stress and pressure?

When I have a lot on my plate, I try to accomplish the small tasks first before moving on to the bigger things. Softball is all about pressure though. I used to really let the pressure get to me, but this past season I was able to just clear my head and focus on what I was doing and try and let myself focus on mistakes after a game versus during.

#### Do you have any pregame rituals, superstitions?

There are season rituals. Coach Wyne brings a selection of sunflower seeds to every game, which always include Ranch and BBQ, and we decorate Coach Wohn's house. Every year, we choose a theme, and then really late at night we go to decorate her house in that theme while we have a water fight. Some themes include "Alice in Wohn-derland" and "Where is Wohn-do?" or "Wohn-der Woman."

Continued on page 15.

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Photo by Susan Petro

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## Poolesville Trivia Pursuit: Mission Impossible Answers

1. Uncle Watty Owens and his wife Polly made cakes to sell to Union troops garrisoned near the location of John Poole Middle School. He transported the cakes by wagon pulled by his horse. He had obtained the horse when it was in a near-death, swayback condition from Union troops who had discarded it as useless. He eventually nursed it back to health. As other Union troops later came through Poolesville on the way to Gettysburg, they spotted the now-healthy horse with a Union brand and took it back from him. In total despair and at a loss as to what to do, he turned to a white friend from church. That friend wrote the story about the loss of the horse in a letter, explaining to the recipient that the horse had been assisting the war effort and asking the recipient to replace this horse with a new one. Uncle Watty then hand-delivered the letter and waited patiently for an answer. Soon the response came to him while he waited outside the White House. President Lincoln responded to Uncle Watty's request with a signed letter ordering the Quartermaster General of the United States Army to issue him a new horse.
2. As they huddled for Sunday services, the small contingent of about fifty Union troops was encircled by Confederate soldiers. The Yankees felt helpless but relieved when the pastor boldly announced to the congregation not to be concerned. "I know these boys, and do not despair, they will not harm you." As the rebels outside were largely Poolesville men, the pastor knew them personally and, in making his proclamation, he essentially got them to agree in advance not to do them harm. The Union soldiers were marched out to Conrad's Ferry and released unharmed.
3. General Stone. The African-American community began a post-slave life in the area we now know as Jerusalem (near the Beauty Spot and the Jerusalem Baptist Church). Many of them chose to not head north for a new life but rather to stay here to enjoy the sanctuary of the Union leader. Many not only ended up staying, some of the families resided there for generations with some of their descendants still living there today.
4. Loving Charity Lodge Hall. It's part of the Warren Historical Site at the corner of Martinsburg Road and White's Ferry Road. It served as the educational and recreational facility for generations of local African American families.
5. News from the war came to Washington via a telegraph line from Poolesville. As newspaper journalists read the telegraphed reports, they would dateline the information as coming from Poolesville. As war news was dispatched throughout the country and then reported worldwide, Poolesville was automatically cited in the papers as the site from which the story emanated even though the battles and events did not occur there.
6. The 35th Virginia Calvary, nicknamed the Comanches, was made up mostly of Poolesville area and Frederick men. They often fought with Gen. Jubal Early who is the namesake of White's Ferry boats.
7. The man was Elijah Viers White. In 1866, he bought Conrad's Ferry, which now operates as White's Ferry, and his partner was Dr. Wootton.
8. Colonel Edward Baker was the sitting senator from Oregon. He was the only sitting member of Congress to die fighting in the Civil War. He began his political career beating Abe Lincoln as the two men competed in an election in Illinois for a seat in Congress. The two men thereafter became so close that Abe's second son, Edward, was named after him.
9. Just days before arriving in Poolesville, Baker, Lincoln, his wife Mary Todd, and the Lincoln children relaxed informally on the White House lawn. The exalted orator recited an original poem to Mary Todd and presented her with a bouquet of flowers. His namesake Edward Lincoln was there. When the news that Baker had been killed at the Battle of Ball's Bluff reached Lincoln through telegraph from Poolesville, it was told that Lincoln fell grievously silent for a long five minutes, unable to speak or move. Slowly, he rose and, without saying a word, painfully left the room, leaving the others to wonder what the sorrowful news had been.
10. Chapel at Monocacy Cemetery, the original St. Peter's Church.
11. Hot Potato. When schoolchildren entered in the morning, they often brought a potato for lunch. They would place it on the pot-bellied stove, and by the time lunch was offered, the potato was hot and ready to eat. Upon passing them out to the children, a great game was created.



Photos courtesy of Heritage Montgomery.

*Above left: Loving Charity Hall in 2012. Above right, after renovation in 2020.*

*The building was constructed in 1914. It was a lodge for the General Grand and Accepted Order of Brothers and Sisters of Love and Charity. The building was part of an historic African-American community called Martinsburg, Montgomery County, Maryland. The Warren Historic Site Committee, Inc. and Heritage Montgomery were the recipients of a 2020 Maryland Preservation Award. The award, which was presented by the Maryland Historical Trust, recognized outstanding efforts in historic preservation for Loving Charity Hall. It is also one of the last sites in Maryland to retain all three of the original structures—church, school, and community hall—that were the heart of flourishing African-American communities of the late-nineteenth/early twentieth centuries.*

12. The woman used water from a neighbor's home to make moonshine to sell. When the neighbor, a local Presbyterian minister discovered what she had been doing, he cut her off.

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Continued from page 12.

### Alaina Shields: Softball and Bocce

Before every inning, the catcher throws down to second base. Playing second, I back up Jenna Stroud, senior captain, at shortstop. She catches the ball and throws it back to me. Then we high five the pitcher before the first batter comes up. I love it.

### What are your hobbies or interests outside of athletics or PHS?

I am in a program called the Civil Air Patrol, it's an air force auxiliary that I have been in since I was twelve. I am a captain in the Bethesda-Chevy Chase Composite Squadron and am currently one of four cadets planning a boot-camp-like summer program. I will be leading over 250 other twelve-to-eighteen-year-olds. I have actually flown a plane.

### Are you involved in any other extracurricular activities at Poolesville?

I have been a part of the Mock Trial Team for all four years, and the captain for the past two. We have had three undefeated regular seasons. I also was one of the founding members of the PHS bocce team! It was an awesome experience. I'm so glad we were finally able to get a team together. I had never played bocce. Another senior on the softball team, Hallie Maytin, was also a member of the bocce team, so it was cool. It was so much fun.

### Where do you plan to go to college?

I will be attending the University of North Carolina Chapel Hill as a Morehead Cain Scholar. It is a full ride merit scholarship, but I am receiving a gap-year stipend and hope to travel abroad. I want to go to Indonesia/South Asia. I am looking for volunteer organizations to work for. I also want to travel some around the U.S., but then I will be going to North Carolina in the fall of 2021. I found out that I had gotten the scholarship during our first scrimmage game this season against Clarksburg. It was a nice moment. Another Senior, Jenna Stroud, is attending NC State for college, so we will be, like, ten miles apart which is pretty cool.

"Alaina has been a valuable member of the team since her freshman year," said Coach Wohnhas. "She has always put the good of the team first. A perfect example is that Alaina is always willing to sacrifice a bunt so runners on base can advance and have a chance to score. She never complains about this role because she understands what is best for our team. North Carolina is her dream school."

Continued from page 1.

### Seneca Academy Closure Averted, Joins Georgetown Hill Early School Group

dedication. After supporters raised \$150,000 toward saving the school from closure, discussions emerged with Georgetown Hill Early School. The result is that Seneca Academy joined the educational group.

For forty years, Georgetown Hill has been dedicated to caring for children through innovation and leadership in early childhood education. The partnership will allow the new arrangement to continue and expand Seneca Academy's mission of "providing an engaging, inquiry-based education in a nurturing environment, while solidifying our long-term sustainability," said Jennifer Serenyi, Board Chairperson. "Georgetown Hill and Seneca Academy will be strong and nimble enough to quickly adapt to the changing demands in preschool and elementary education."

Directing comments to parents and supporters of the school, Serenyi said, "Once again, I would like to thank you for the support you have shown to the entire Seneca Academy community, and particularly to our staff during this difficult time. Despite the many uncertainties we face, we continue to be optimistic about the future and Seneca Academy's next chapter."

Do you or someone you know have a special announcement or milestone you would like to share with our readers?

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## Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

### Present Crime

**Assault:** 21100 block of Westerly Road.

**Theft:** 17600 block of Kohlhoos Road, 18000 block of Cattail Road, 17100 block of Titus Way.

**Vandalism:** 19200 block of Wootton Avenue, 18900 block of Fisher Avenue.

### Past Crime: 1890 to 1899

Leroy Jackson, a habitual criminal, had served a short term in the county jail. After he was released, he was hired by Deputy Sheriff Selby to help around the jail kitchen. After Jackson was discharged, it was noticed that twelve new blankets were missing. Acting on a hunch, Selby obtained a search warrant and went to Jackson's residence where the blankets were found. It was also discovered that Jackson had stolen Mrs. Connell's wristwatch. She was a matron at the jail. Jackson was escorted back to the jail to await his trial.

Armistead Taylor and John Alfred Brown, both convicted of the murder of the Rosensteins at their store at Slidell, were hanged in the courtyard of the Rockville jail. Both had been arrested for beating Mr. and Mrs. Rosenstein to death; the Rosensteins had kept a small country store at Slidell for years. Four deputies escorted the condemned men to the scaffold at 10:00 a.m., and shortly afterwards, Sheriff Thompson sprang the trap door and the men fell to their deaths. In a last-minute appeal, Taylor had claimed that Brown was innocent and that he alone had committed the crime. His plea was brushed off as the statements of a desperate man.

The fine residence of General Drum on the Rockville Road was broken into, and a quantity of expensive jewelry was stolen. Officer Murphy of the

Mounted Patrol of the D.C. Police force saw John Newell, a petty thief, acting in a suspicious manner. He was searched and the jewelry was found. Newell was described as a peculiar man whose left arm was crippled in a mining accident in Pennsylvania. Newell then turned to a life of crime and chose the Maryland and D.C. area as his home.

Little Frederick Eslin, a boy of the age of six, was in the habit of playing on the train tracks in the vicinity of his home in Washington. He and his friends made a game of standing on the tracks until the last second as a locomotive would approach. They would then jump out of the way, causing much annoyance for the train crews. One day, engineer Collins was making good speed when he saw the boys on the tracks. He blew his whistle, and somehow young Eslin fell as if struck by a thrown object. The police found that Eslin was dead, having been struck in the head by a piece of coal. B&O Railroad authorities reported that Collins was at Boyds awaiting his next assignment. Sheriff Thompson was notified by telegram, and he found Collins asleep in his engine. He roused the man, arrested him, and took him to Rockville. Later, a D.C. detective came to Rockville and took custody of Collins who denied having thrown any coal.

The brother of the Rockville mayor was run over and killed by an electric car at Kensington. The engineer and conductor thought that they had hit a pile of brush that youngsters often would place on the tracks. They stopped their car and discovered that a man was in two pieces. It was surmised that Harry England had fallen asleep on the tracks and did not hear the car coming. A coroner's jury was convened on the spot, and a ruling of accidental death was returned.

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

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## Fun Fact...

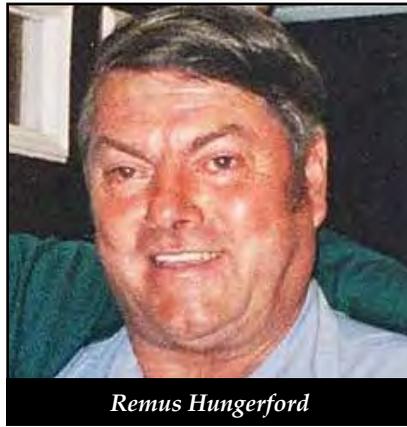
June was most likely named for the Roman goddess Juno, patroness of marriage and the well-being of women. Another interpretation says that the name came from the Latin *juvenis*, "young people," who were celebrated at this time.

The first day of summer arrives with the solstice on Saturday, June 20, 2020 at 5:44 p.m. EDT. For those of us in the Northern Hemisphere, this marks the longest day of the year when the sun passes over the Tropic of Cancer, the northernmost point at which the sun's rays are directly overhead.

## Remembrance

### Remus Hungerford

Remus Hungerford passed peacefully in his home on May 15, 2020, with his wife and family at his side. He is survived by his beloved wife, Carol; his brother Charles Edward Hungerford; his three children, Peggy Sue Bancroft, Mark Hungerford, and Matthew Hungerford; ten grandchildren; twelve great-grandchildren; and many nephews and nieces.



Remus Hungerford

He was preceded in death by his mother, Earva Mathias Hungerford, and father, James Thomas Hungerford; three children, Walter Remus Hungerford, Jr., Dewayne Hungerford, and Wayne Hungerford; his sister, Betty Lou Hungerford, and three brothers, Roger Hungerford, James "Gordon" Hungerford, and Allen Hungerford; and grandsons, Brandon Hungerford and Michael Bancroft, and granddaughter Janice Bancroft.

"Remus" was known for his exceptional hard work ethic, innovation, resourcefulness, and fair business practices. Remus was a self-made man. At a young age, Remus, with his independent and entrepreneurial spirit, taught himself many skills which led him to become a successful businessman. As an example, he taught himself how to operate a bulldozer at twelve years of age. In 1951, Remus and his brothers worked at their father's sawmill, Hungerford Mill. They subsequently opened two additional sawmills. In 1958, Remus opened Hungerford Brothers Excavation, Inc., expanding his business operations. In 2002, he opened Remus Hungerford Company, Inc., providing sawmill and excavation services, and business rental sites. He built his first home on Black Rock Road in Germantown and two subsequent homes in Boyds. At sixty-seven years of age, he laid the brick for his final home.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to Shriners Hospitals for Children.



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## Fun Fact...

*It is the month of June,  
The month of leaves and roses,  
When pleasant sights salute  
the eyes,  
And pleasant scents the noses.*

—N. P. Willis (1807-1867)

*Ah, happy day, refuse to go!  
Hang in the heavens forever so!  
Forever in midafternoon,  
Ah, happy day of happy June!*

—Harriet Elizabeth Prescott  
Spofford, American writer  
(1835-1921)

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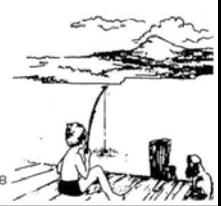
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Continued from page 6.

### Civil War along the C&O Canal: A Hillside Discovery

Virginia. Lee had planned to raid the North again after he hadn't achieved all of his objectives during the Maryland Campaign in September. Lee asked Maj. Gen. Jeb Stuart to lead a raid to Chambersburg, Pennsylvania for the primary purpose of destroying a railroad bridge.

Stuart's Chambersburg Raid was a Confederate States Army cavalry raid into Maryland and Pennsylvania on October 10 to 12, 1862 during the American Civil War. It became known as Stuart's "second ride around McClellan" because it duplicated Stuart's reconnaissance ride completely around the Union Army of the Potomac under Maj. Gen. George B. McClellan during the Peninsula Campaign.

Stuart took 1,800 men and a four-cannon light artillery battery on the raid. Stuart crossed into Maryland on October 10, crossing the Potomac River at McCoy's Ferry (mile 110.2 on the canal). They raided Mercersburg and Chambersburg, Pennsylvania as well as other Pennsylvania locations along their way. Stuart knew that his ride north to Pennsylvania had been reported to the Union Army, so he decided to return south and cross the Potomac at a different location east of the Union Army.

On their trip north through Maryland to Pennsylvania and back from Hyattstown, Maryland to Virginia, they were guided by Poolesville resident Capt. Benjamin S. White. White was a leading merchant in Poolesville before the war. While in Pennsylvania, they were guided by Pennsylvanians Hugh and Alexander Logan who also led the troops all the way down to Hyattstown,

Maryland before turning guide responsibilities back over to Captain White on the morning of October 12. Also, on the morning of October 12, scouts reported to Stuart that Union Brig. Gen. George Stoneman was guarding the four Potomac River fords from Edwards Ferry to the Mouth of the Monocacy River. From Hyattstown, the Confederates moved towards Barnesville and then towards Poolesville. Union soldiers occupied Sugarloaf Mountain, and the signal station reported Stuart's troop movement.

Stuart followed the advice of Captain White to avoid Stoneman's troops by using White's Ford. When they marched two miles towards Poolesville, Captain White had them turn off onto a little-used road that turned west that was about three miles from the mouth of the Monocacy River. Union Brigadier General Pleasonton had determined that the Confederates would cross at Hauling's Ford near the mouth of the Monocacy River. Stuart ended up occupying the road up to the Little Monocacy River and the high bluff at the Little Monocacy River looking down on Pleasonton's troops. The high bluff can be seen today near Milepost 42 on the canal.

Pleasanton initially was deceived by the blue uniforms taken in Chambersburg that the Confederates were wearing. Pleasanton ordered his men to fire when the Confederates charged from a short distance away. Then he withdrew his men to engage in a long-range rifle fire exchange with Stuart's sharpshooters and Maj. John Pelham's cannon. As this was occurring, Col. W.H.F. Lee led a brigade and the captured horses onto a farm road to White's Ford. Pleasanton was convinced that Stuart wanted to cross at Hauling's Ford, so he waited for reinforcements without attacking the Confederates.

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### Here Comes the First COVID-19 Summer of Fun

By Peter H. Eeg, BSc, DVM, CVLF

Okay then, so we have never had a summer that has begun with all the humans and their furry friends inside. The virus is still around; our dogs and cats are very unlikely to catch or spread the virus to humans. We now think that droplets from coughing and sneezing are the main pathways to transmission. Our government agencies are all over the place with respect to openings, returning to more activities, and beginning the return to the new normal. How do we help our pets manage the new normal with us?

The big take home message is to begin to return to normal with your pets gradually. I would recommend continuing your walks and play time around the house. I would not take your pets to new areas with lots of people and other animals for the next 6-8 weeks. Let us see how the COVID-19 behaves now that we are starting to get back into action.

Unexpected interactions between your pets and other pets can lead to closer contact with you and their humans. Think twice before you decide to bring your pets into a group setting.

Wildlife is right now more present in the area because of the reduced human activity. This will take a moment for the wildlife to realize that we have begun to invade their world again. This can put your pets at closer interaction with the wild animals in your area. For safety's sake, keep your dogs on leashes. Keep your cats in the house or closer to home.

Take your time to reintroduce your furry friends to the lifestyle they were accustomed to during the "before times". Waiting is not a bad thing. Pay attention to the news. Keep yourselves and your pets safe. We have a way to go before a new regular routine is present. Be safe and good luck.



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