

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Biweekly Newspaper

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Steve Orsini Retires as PHS Baseball Coach

By Jeff Stuart

Steve Orsini is retiring as Poolesville's varsity baseball coach. Orsini coached football and baseball in Montgomery County for thirty-seven years and at PHS for fifteen years. During his tenure as coach, his baseball teams were ranked third in the metropolitan area and won a state championship in 2017, two region championships, and five division titles. He was named *Gazette* Coach of the Year in 2014. Four of his players went on to play at the Division I level in college, two got scholarships to Division I schools, and one played at junior college.

"Coach Orsini was a huge supporter of the entire PHS athletic program," said athletic director Gina Grubb. "He brought positive leadership to his student-athletes, and we thank him for his tireless efforts while serving as our head coach."

"Coach Orsini has always been a class act as a coach and a teacher," said Will Gant, athletic director at

Continued on page 16.



Coach Steve Orsini coached football and baseball in Montgomery County schools for thirty-seven years and at PHS for fifteen years.



Bassett's thanked their employees with a special party. See more pictures in Family Album on page 2.



These athletes broke a decade-old record. Details in Tidbits on page 8.



Volunteers working for an "Agri-Culture" of Caring. Dig into the details in AgNews on page 9.



Like a rainbow over the stadium, the future looks good for the Falcons. See Youth Sports on page 15.

An Unprecedented Back-to-School at Poolesville High School

By Christina Raskin

It has been almost two years since students have stepped foot in the brick-and-mortar setting with virtual education becoming commonplace as the coronavirus pandemic raged across the nation. On August 31, 2021, Maryland's largest school district welcomed back 161,000 students to a five-day-a-week fully-in-person schooling experience, giving many students across the county hope for a traditional learning experience. Nearly a month after the first day of school, the 2021-2022 school year is now in full swing at Poolesville High School (PHS); students are now seen roaming once-barren hallways and populating previously-empty classrooms. Though a semblance of normalcy has returned with the in-person

back-to-school season, many students still find themselves adjusting to the transition from virtual education. As all stakeholders redefine their view of "traditional schooling," students and staff quickly adapt to a new form of learning, reminiscing on old traditions while looking forward to new experiences.

Helen Mengistu, a member of the Class of 2022 and the Science Math and Computer Science (SMCS) House, expressed her excitement to return to the school building after an almost two-year hiatus. A resident of the Gaithersburg region, Mengistu had limited interaction with the Poolesville area prior to her enrollment in the school through the magnet program in

ninth grade. She now considers herself an engaged member of the town, taking part in various community events such as Poolesville Day and the Poolesville Tree Lighting Ceremony. As described by Helen, the closure of PHS made her feel disconnected, not only from her peers, but also from the community she cherishes as a second home. "I've always considered myself to be a social butterfly," she said, "so the return to school was definitely a good thing in my book." Mengistu described the first day of school as a whirlwind—a flurry of first-day-of-school activities compounded by reuniting with estranged friends.

Continued on page 5.

Family Album



American Legion Post 247 members Jerry Klobukowski (navy) and Katie Purswell (army) greeted punkin' chunkers at Lewis Orchards.



Scout Troop 496 and Patrol 2027 held their annual awards celebration at the Izaak Walton League of America, in Poolesville.



Lewis Orchards is hosting its annual punkin' chunkin' event on October 9 from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. Funds raised by customers shooting the pumpkin cannon at a target in a pond will benefit Poolesville's American Legion Post 247. Hit the target and win \$100.



Bassett's thanked their loyal employees with a private party in appreciation for their extra dedication during these pandemic times.



Town Government

Town Wrestles with How to Hold the Annual Holiday Lighting Ceremony

By Link Hoewing

The commissioners focused on how to hold the annual Holiday Lighting Ceremony at their October 4 meeting. Based on the discussion, it does not appear the event will be cancelled. Instead, the issue on the table is how to hold the event in such a way as to minimize activities where people are gathered closely together and could potentially spread the COVID virus more easily.

Town Manager Tony Tomasello outlined a staff memo prepared by Events Coordinator Cathy Bupp. It offered several options ranging from a highly-restricted event with few activities to one that would be more akin to the events of the recent past. In previous years, an ice skating “rink” was set up for kids, multiple food booths were available, ice sculpting was on display, and a holiday train ride for kids ran starting at Poolesville Town Hall. Crowds as large as a thousand or more attended the Holiday Lighting Ceremony in recent years.

Tomasello noted that a mid-ground option would be to eliminate activities where people tend to gather close together, such as the train ride. Caroling, “flipping the switch” on the lights, and possibly Santa visiting by riding by on his fire truck would still be a part of the scaled-down event.

Commissioner Martin Radigan pointed out that it appears that infection rates are coming down and asked whether it might not be possible to delay a final decision for a month to see how things looked at that time. Tomasello added that some activities—such as ice skating—need to be scheduled some time in advance. Even if the town waited to decide for some weeks, it would likely not be possible at that time to schedule more activities if it seemed warranted. He went on to say that while an expanded event might not be possible, the town is at least trying to hold the event and make it as enjoyable as possible.

Commissioner Jim Brown said that outside events should be possible, and he wondered why significant restrictions on the lighting ceremony would be considered given that the town had just held a successful Poolesville Day. The Holiday Lighting Ceremony is “one of our most cherished events,” and the town should move ahead while “encouraging everyone to be on their best behavior.”

In the end, it appears the lighting ceremony will be held with a scaled-down set of activities. Tomasello said that while it may not be possible to delay scheduling some activities in coming weeks, it still is worth keeping an eye on things so additional events could be added if possible and warranted.

The commissioners also discussed a grant from the Maryland State Energy Administration to study making the town’s streetlighting system more efficient. The town already has been converting the streetlights to LEDs which are more energy efficient and don’t need to be replaced as often.

In explaining the grant proposal, Tomasello explained that while the town has made great progress in converting the streetlights to energy-efficient LEDs, the electric company, Potomac Edison, has refused to allow metering on the lights. It charges a flat fee for each pole, so even if the town has greatly reduced energy usage by converting to LEDs, it sees no benefits in terms of lower energy costs.

The new grant would be in two phases. First, there would be a planning grant of \$26,000 to study how best to power and meter the streetlights. Solar panels could be used to power the lights, and while they might not be able to entirely run the lights during extended periods of low sunlight and at night, they could help offset power needed from the grid. Meters would ensure that any needed power from the electric company would be used efficiently and would be paid for only on an actual usage basis.

Tomasello explained that there are number of ways to install meters and solar panels, ranging from doing so on a pole-by-pole basis to setting up a “community solar panel system” where a large number of panels would be installed in one location to run all light poles. The study would look at all of the options and come up with recommendations.

A second grant of some \$40,000 would help with construction costs. Tomasello said that even with such a grant, actual capital costs to convert the streetlight system to the new technology would be expensive and would require a commitment from the state for a long-term grant.

A representative from the state, Khalid Malik, said it is hoped that a new system could cut annual costs for streetlighting in half from \$7,000 to \$3,500.

Continued on page 7.



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Rande(m) Thoughts Rockland Farm Reframes Past Demands

By Rande Davis

The process to reopen White's Ferry remains a slow, tedious legal exercise with no expectation of a resolution prior to the Leesburg County Board of Supervisors' decision on eminent domain, perhaps by December. Even then there is sure to be additional legal wrangling and disputes that will keep the ferry closed well into the spring of 2022.

Since the *Monocle* published an opinion piece by Chuck Kuhn, the new owner of White's Ferry in our September 24 issue, it was only fair to provide the same opportunity to the Devlin family of Rockland Farm.

In the letter, there is an offer to have the ferry operate while negotiations continue without expectation of payment during that process. The offer seems simple enough, except that the offer is nearly a year too late. The demand originally was for a payment of \$18,000 per month during negotiations with a clause stating that any negotiated agreement reached could be rescinded unilaterally by Rockland Farm with little or no notice. The Browns and the Kuhns are only interested in a negotiation that ends the matter of the public landing once and for all. No strings attached.

After nearly a full year of non-operation, the cost to reopen the ferry will be extremely high, and without any assurance of success in the negotiation process, it is an amount far too high for the Kuhns to gamble on reaching an agreement, especially as past experience does not bode well for successful negotiations.

The letter speaks of an agreement in the 1950s as though it had been an agreement by White's Ferry to lease the land on the Virginia side from Rockland. It was not. The agreement was to allow the ferry to place a pole in the pasture above the riverbank to which a cable would be raised to hold the cable line from its previous position. The agreement was not a landing lease since both parties, the county, and state had always considered the shoreline a public landing. Due to inadequate survey records from 1880, the current court was not able to specifically verify that the spot now used is exactly the area the state determined a public landing.

The state has long recognized the

shoreline as a public landing. How can we be sure? Consider that, last fall, the public road from Route 15 to the landing was repaved at a cost that can be estimated to be close to \$200,000. Either the State of Virginia repaved a public road to a public landing or paid for a very expensive new private driveway to Rockland Farm. Clearly, they did not see it that way then, and our expectation is they will not see it that way this coming December. Eminent domain in this instance is less a taking of land than it is a restating of a decision made nearly 150 years ago, and one which all parties have understood.

It's not up to us to decide what's fair, but Rockland Farm was offered \$400,000 for a parcel of land less than 7,000 square feet, land that has no value since it is in a high flood zone which disallows farming or building. For any infringement to the past agreement in the 1950s, Rockland Farm has already received \$100,000 to compensate them.

Why Rockland Farm is holding out for compensation amounts deemed far too excessive by two unrelated and independent private entities may be more understood by watching an episode of My Legacy List (www.mylegacylist.com). Be sure to watch Season 2, Episode 1, the episode on Rockland Farm, entitled "Six Generations of Stuff." Rockland Farm is not an inexpensive land to own. Clearly the struggle to maintain it within the family becomes quite apparent in watching this show. We appreciate the desire for a family to want to keep a farm in the family, especially one that has been so for over two hundred years.

How much compensation from White's Ferry is part of their plan to keep the property cannot be ascertained. In watching the show, it is doubtful revenue from the ferry will be enough. A member of the Rockland Farm family is Peter Brown, the CEO of Renaissance Technologies Corp., a firm described by *Forbes Magazine* as one of the most successful hedge funds in the world, and an individual who, according to the same magazine, is compensated \$100,000,000 annually.

The public, especially those living on this side of the Potomac, have been inconvenienced long enough. We expect the Loudoun County Board of Supervisors will do the right thing and reestablish its predecessor's intention of a public landing for what Mr. Ed Brown used to proudly claim to be a service for "the convenience and pleasure of the public."

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Letter to The Editor Rockland Farm Offers White's Ferry Use of Virginia Landing for Free While Deal Is Worked Out

By Libby Devlin, Owner White's Ferry Virginia Landing and Rockland Farm

White's Ferry is important to people on both sides of the Potomac. It is certainly important to my family which owns the Virginia landing. We read with interest the report in the September 24 issue headlined, "Arbitration to Settle White's Ferry Dispute Rejected."

I want to take a moment to introduce myself and my family. I am Libby Devlin, one of the owners of Rockland Farm where the White's Ferry Virginia Landing is located. Rockland has been in our family for six generations, and the ferry has been part of our farm for as long as I can remember. The original agreement with White's Ferry to use Rockland Farm as the Virginia landing was negotiated in the late 1940s and signed in 1952 by my grandparents. Now that Rockland is my home and I am the custodian of its

unique history, it is important that White's Ferry remain part of our farm. This is precisely why we have offered so many different options to both the previous and the new owners of the ferry to come to a resolution. We even offered to give either Montgomery or Loudoun County a permanent easement of our landing so that the ferry would open again.

When White's Ferry began using the current Virginia landing, there was very little traffic; however, there was always the expectation by both parties that White's Ferry would compensate Rockland Farm for its use. Historically, the ferry was established to transport local farm commodities across the river. Somehow over the years, the original intent of the 1952 contract diminished, even as the ferry expanded to carry hundreds of vehicles per day. I don't believe my grandparents ever imagined that White's Ferry would see traffic volume as high as eight hundred cars per day! Clearly, the ferry has grown and expanded to become a route for commuters instead of one for farm vehicles. While we welcome this progress, we believe the 1952 agreement between Rockland and White's Ferry is outdated. We want to bring the antiquated contract that my grandparents

Continued on page 5.

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An Unprecedented Back-to-School at Poolesville High School

Though certainly a transition, Helen quickly found herself a new routine, finding opportunities for fulfilling social experiences while still adhering to mask mandates and social distancing guidelines.

A member of the Class of 2024 Global Ecology Studies Program, Grace Minano Lopez, detailed her academic experience as more "challenging" than expected. Like many of the sophomore class, the 2021-2022 school year marks the first time in which she has stepped foot on the Poolesville campus. Lopez and her peers must not only redevelop time management skills lost during quarantine but acclimate to life as a sophomore without a traditional freshman experience. "After almost a year and a half of break, it has been hard, especially how learning content last year isn't the same as now," Lopez explained, expressing the difficulties which accompany such stark changes in teaching and learning styles; however,

Lopez attested that her classes have found rhythm as more and more weeks passed and has high hopes for what the rest of the academic year will hold.

Administration and faculty of Poolesville High School are also experiencing growing pains with the "new normal" of the educational landscape. Teachers must quickly learn how to educate students amidst a global pandemic, many of whom have not sat in a classroom since March 2020. Principal Mark Carothers has overseen PHS throughout the closure of the school to its reopening, guiding students through tumultuous times by reinforcing the ideals of Falcon Unity despite separation. Carothers admitted that the transition has not been without struggle for all involved but maintained that a "school is not a school without the lively energy brought by its students." Despite the struggles which renavigation into normal brings, Principal Carothers confidently stated that the return of students reconnected the school with its purpose.

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Rockland Farm Offers White's Ferry Use of Virginia Landing for Free While Deal Is Worked Out

signed up to date, giving Rockland Farm fair compensation for the use of its land.

Since White's Ferry breached the 1952 contract seventeen years ago, we have allowed the ferry to continue to operate on our property while we tried to negotiate updated terms, attempted mediation, and ultimately won a court judgement which determined that White's Ferry needed permission to access our land. Upon learning of the court's ruling, we immediately reached out to White's Ferry to negotiate an interim arrangement to keep the ferry operating while a longer-term contract could be established, even offering to let the ferry keep running for free for a ninety-day period while negotiations progressed. Rockland Farm never once shut down the ferry even though it received zero compensation while White's Ferry made millions.

White's Ferry could be running today if the owner would agree to talk to us about a fair resolution—but White's Ferry has flatly refused every different offer we have put on the table without even a counteroffer, thereby keeping it out of operation for more than nine months now.

As the new owners continue to reject our offers, there is every indication that they are seeking to use the heavy hand of government to take our private, historic property from us for their own profit.

The idea of entering into binding arbitration is not without risk to Rockland Farm, but we offered it as a way to get the ferry open sooner. Unfortunately, White's Ferry's owners would prefer to wait for government officials to attempt to condemn our land; a process which can take months and has its own legal hurdles to overcome. My family and I will continue to work tirelessly to come up with ideas that get the ferry running and are fair to both sides—but so long as the ferry owner thinks that the government will do his bidding, he has no reason to come to the table.



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Senior News

Poolesville Seniors Present Virtual and In-Person Outdoor Programs

For the months of October and November, Poolesville Seniors is offering a variety of programs that will meet community needs for exercise, information, and socialization. Visit their website, poolesvilleseniors.org, or call 301-875-7701 for more information and to register for the Zoom link for each program. All virtual events are open to the entire community.

Due to the recent increase in COVID cases, Poolesville Seniors is suspending its in-person indoor activities. Please understand that we are planning our extended calendar in a rapidly-changing environment and are doing our best to safeguard the health of our audience and our program providers. We hope to see you at our virtual events and back in person when conditions improve.

Watch for the return of our social-distanced, outdoor Pop-up Walks on the C&O Canal.

Mondays

Tai-Chi with Maureen Ivusic. 10:45 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Wednesdays

Chair Yoga with Twyla Insalaco. 11:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. No class 10/6 or 10/13.

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

Trivia Game Night

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

Fridays

Breath-Mind-Body with Kathy

Jankowski. 12:00 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. Please register for each Friday class.

October 14

Paranormal Poolesville

Join haunted places explorer Lennon Gross and folklore enthusiast Christine Rai to hear about their book project researching spooky tales of the mysterious or supernatural and to explore the Ag Reserve's shadowy side. They'll also be sharing some of their favorite local spots and stories, as well as how you can support their efforts. 7:00 p.m.

October 21

Historic Ag Reserve Properties with Kenny Sholes

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

October 25

PS Book Club: *The Boys in the Boat*

Sign up for our next book club discussion of *The Boys in the Boat* by Daniel James Brown. This non-fiction novel tells the tale of the University of Washington's 1936 eight-oar rowing team that stunned the world at the 1936 Berlin Olympics. The novel draws on the diaries and journals of the boys in the rowing crew. 7:00 p.m.

October 28

Author Discussion: *A Little Birdie Told Me...*

Matthew Papuchis discusses his book, *A Little Birdie Told Me...A Journey to Find Hope, Happiness, and the Wings to Fly*. The author will share his excerpts and insights gleaned from his journey through the pandemic. 7:00 p.m.

November 4

Planets, and More Planets!

Join physics and astronomy professor, NASA Solar Ambassador, and director of the Montgomery College Astronomical Observatory, Carrie Fitzgerald, when she brings us her exciting

Continued on page 7.

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Town Wrestles with How to Hold the Annual Holiday Lighting Ceremony

He did acknowledge that there is no commitment from Potomac Edison to agree to a new, metered billing system, but the hope is that the study will provide the grounds to press for an agreement to move to such a system.

In order to get the first phase grant, the town has to match it with \$6,000 of its own money. The consensus among the commissioners was to move ahead with the grant.

In his town manager's report, Tomasello said that complaints about trash collection had dropped significantly. Even so, a notice has been posted for citizens to watch for a new survey that will come out soon, requesting their opinions about trash service and about options for the service. The contract with Bates Trucking will end in eight months, and the survey information would be useful in considering a new contract.

Continued from page 6.

Senior News

presentation "Planets, and More Planets!" on the search for alien worlds in our galaxy. 7:00 p.m.

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

Fun Fact...

The sweet calm sunshine of October, now
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- William Cullen Bryant
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Tidbits

Piranhas Set New Relay Records

On July 24, 2021, both the girls' and boys' 200m open medley relay records on the Poolesville Piranhas Swim Team were broken.

The girls' record, last set in 2010, fell to Lina Abzakh (backstroke), Avery Ye

(breaststroke), Anna Bodmer (butterfly), and Maggie Rose Rook (freestyle).

The boys' record was last set in 2018 and was broken by Jonathan Ye (backstroke), Michael Williams (breaststroke), Daniel Lowell (butterfly), and Nicholas Lowell (freestyle).

Mysteries and Legends of the Ag Reserve

Montgomery County's Agricultural Reserve is rich in natural resources,

history, and folklore, including spooky tales of the mysterious or supernatural. Haunted places explorer Lennon Gross and folklore enthusiast Christine Rai are currently researching and exploring the Reserve's shadowy side for a book project. They are soliciting contributions from Agricultural Reserve residents and visitors who have personally experienced or heard stories of the paranormal, bizarre, or inexplicable for possible inclusion in their book. They are open to tales of haunted places, strange creatures, UFOs, legends, or any phenomena that can't be fully explained with logic and science.

Find out more and share your story by contacting them at MLARcontactus@gmail.com or by joining their facebook group Mysteries and Legends of the Ag Reserve.

Lennon Gross, a graduate student focusing in Museum Studies, was raised in the Agricultural Reserve and is an avid enthusiast of all things paranormal.

Christine Rai is a college professor and writer who lives in the Agricultural Reserve. She is passionate about folklore and exploring local history. Learn more at christinera.com/about.



A new relay record was set: Jonathan Ye (backstroke), Michael Williams (breaststroke), Daniel Lowell (butterfly), and Nicholas Lowell (freestyle).

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AgNews

Community FarmShare Puts Down Roots

By Jennifer Freeman

"I haven't had fresh food like this in over two years," one of our clients, Sue, told me after she had received her first two weeks of fresh produce from the farm. "My doctor told me all of my health indicators for diabetes are getting better," she reported a few months later.

From another client, Mary, we heard, "I've lived here twenty-two years, and this is the first time I felt like someone cared about me in this community."

Community FarmShare, a local nonprofit, was born from a desire to nurture an "Agri-Culture of Caring" in the Upcounty and beyond.

Why and How Community FarmShare?

During the height of the pandemic, there was a great need to get large quantities of food out to as many people as possible as often as possible. This necessitated the need for largely shelf-stable food (remember the scenes of long lines of cars with open trunks and boxes being put in them?). How can you prepare a healthy meal with shelf-stable foods if you don't have the healthy fresh produce to make it so? Besides the TV scenes of long lines of cars, early on, we were also shown images of farmers tossing tons of first quality food away. Our distribution channels were shut down back then; the chain reaction that ensued laid bare a food system in need of repair.

Community FarmShare was started by asking if, on a very grassroots level, there was a way to bring healthy food to those who needed it most, and at the same time, help to build up a resilient local food system.

In my "previous life," I had worked in international community development programs, and last summer I could feel that same old energy starting to stir. I had spent most of my career living overseas, setting up microfinance banks in remote towns in the Balkans. I had been part of a pretty grassroots bunch back then, typically arriving in a village, solo, with my oversized backpack where I'd look for the main drag, and keep my ears perked for anyone speaking some English or looking foreign, like me. I had needed a translator first to help me find a hotel for the night. The following weeks were spent finding a branch location, hiring/training staff to open the microfinance bank, and beginning to offer micro-loans within a few months. The goal had been to provide fair access to finance to those who couldn't access credit from the standard commercial banks.

Fast forward a few years and I've settled happily in the Ag Reserve on a cozy little homestead, complete with named chickens, an oversized veg garden, and a couple rescue ponies. I absolutely love this community. Things were as they should be in the beginning of 2020—then COVID happened. Like many, I found my way to volunteer at one of the consolidation food hubs that fabulously sprang up, pretty much overnight, to provide food to those in need. We filled boxes by the hundreds, then the thousands. From time to time, a few crates of fresh produce would come in from a local farm—an absolute delight: bags of spinach, bunches of collards, heirloom tomatoes (the ones that still have taste), and carrots, sometimes including a brushing of the Earth's soil.

Delivering boxes of food those days when there was farm produce was different. People's eyes shone, smiles were almost giddy, and there was an "oooohhh" preceding the "thank you."

Living out in farm country, yet so close to communities in need of healthy fresh produce, I drifted back to my access-to-finance days and wondered what an access-to-food program would look like, grassroots style—but not just food, I meant real food—the kind that still has nutrients, was harvested that day,



Michael Protas of One Acre Farm.



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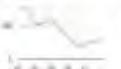


Focus On: Poolesville, Dickerson, and Northwestern Montgomery County Housing Market August 2021

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Continued on page 17.

Garden

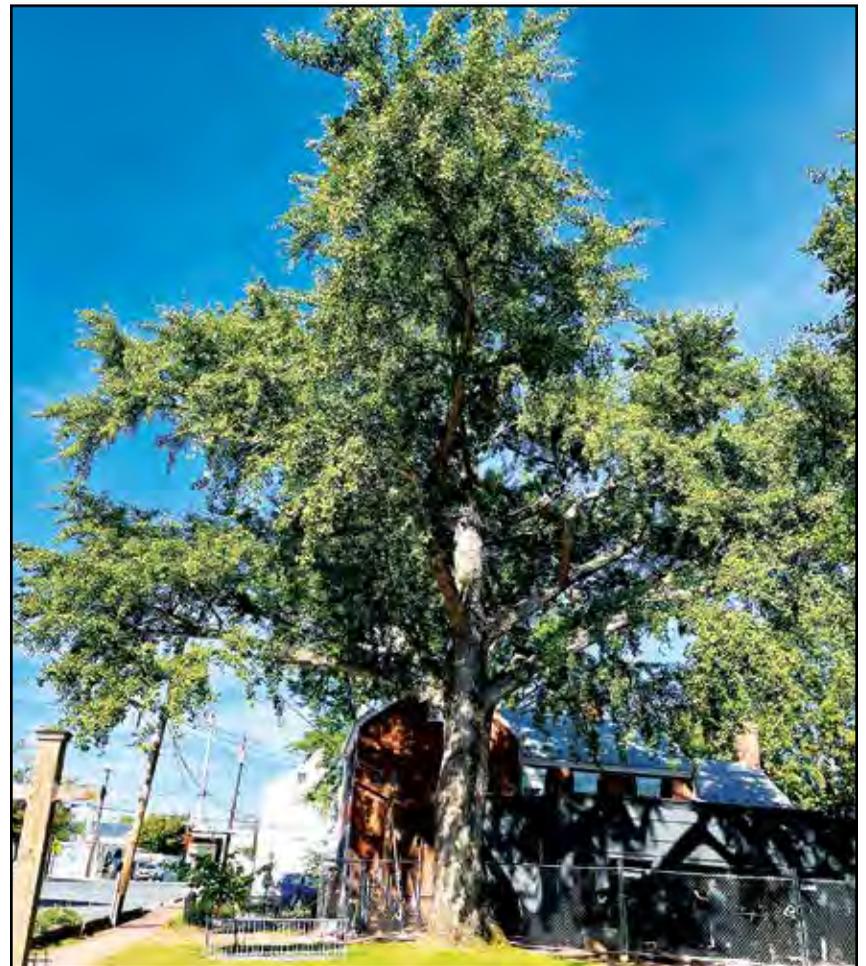
A Tree That Outlived the Dinosaurs

By Maureen O'Connell

The next time you are in Poolesville visiting Locals for a coffee and a muffin, take a moment to stand in front of the handsome red brick house (the old Stevens House built in 1864 and soon to be the home of the new Locals restaurant) and admire the two very tall, sturdy trees with their fan-shaped leaves on each side of the house. In 2010, these two trees were chosen as co-Champion Trees. They belong to one of the oldest living tree species in the world, Ginkgo biloba, a tree native to China, which first appeared over 290 million years ago. It is also known as the maidenhair tree. It is the sole survivor of this ancient group of trees that dates back to the time even before the dinosaurs roamed the Earth. This species is known as a "living fossil." Scientists have found the secret of how the ginkgo can live that long: the tree makes protective chemicals that fend off diseases, drought, and other environmental stresses. Unlike humans, animals, plants, and other trees, its genes are not programmed to trigger inexorable decline when its youth is over. They can stay virtually immortal and thriving. They are biologically unique! Paleobotanists have concluded that the modern ginkgo tree has "barely changed" throughout its long history. Has this tree slurped from the fabled spring from which a drink could halt the aging process, the Fountain of Youth? The trees also are resistant to most pests, as their leaves are not particularly favorable to pests.

Another interesting feature, adding to their longevity, is the tree's resistance to the effects of fire. Their bark and leaves are thought to secrete a fire-retardant sap. There have been much speculation and folklore on this subject. Several years ago, I visited Japan and I heard many stories firsthand, lending truth to many of these claims. In 1923, Tokyo was devastated by a powerful earthquake and resulting firestorm. Many ancient temples were heavily damaged. I visited the oldest temple, Senso-ji, which was built in AD 645. It was severely damaged in the earthquake, and almost razed to the ground by bombing raids during World

Continued on page 11



Ginkgo biloba tree towering over Locals.

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Continued from page 8.

Tidbits

Scout Patrol 2027 Camps at Seneca Schoolhouse



Troop 2027: Scoutmaster Zoe Welsh, and scouts Lily Welsh, Jade Tiemann, Lily McCaskill, Amelie Garrison, Elizabeth Reed, Madeleine Highfill, and Ava Shelburne. Not pictured is Greta Jauch.

Scouts in Troop 496, Patrol 2027 combined their monthly campout adventure with helping clear the grounds at the historic Seneca Schoolhouse on River Road. The school is part of the Historic Medley District, Inc.'s (HMD) locally-based historic sites. HMD is also the guardian of the John Poole House Trading Post and the Old Town Hall and Bank Museum.

The young women were also given some history lessons on the schoolhouse as they were encouraged to wear period clothing while in the school.

Continued from page 10.

A Tree That Outlived the Dinosaurs

War II. It was completely rebuilt after the war, thanks to numerous donations. Amazingly, another temple in the city made it through the massive blaze unscathed; it was surrounded by ginkgo trees. The Imperial Palace was partially protected from extensive damage by the many ginkgo trees on the palace's grounds. The most famous account of the tree's fire resistance occurred twenty-two years after the earthquake and less than a half mile from the epicenter of the Hiroshima atomic blast: The ginkgo tree was tested again, but this time by a man-made force, radiation. When Hiroshima was destroyed, the sixteen thousand ginkgo trees that were planted there after the Tokyo earthquake were thriving. Upon the bomb's impact, the bark and leaves of many of the ginkgo trees were scarred and burnt. Many thought that the trees could not survive, but once again, they rebounded with cells that were somehow still living within the trees. These cells continued to grow and heal.

The Ginkgo biloba is the official tree of the Tokyo Metropolitan District. Its leaf is one of the symbols of the city. To the residents of Tokyo, this tree is a symbol of hope and resilience.

If you want to plant a great looking tree with an amazing history in your yard, the Ginkgo biloba is for you. Its mature size can reach a height of twenty-five to fifty feet with a spread of twenty-five to thirty-five feet, so choose your planting location carefully. Considering its possible life span of one thousand years, you might also want to remember your lifespan. The tree's fruit is dioecious, meaning that male and female flowers are borne on separate trees. The fruit is a fleshy, brownish orange about the size of a cherry. The tree won't produce fruit until it is about twenty years old, but once it does, it makes up for this by producing prodigiously. For homeowners, you should probably plant the male variety, as the fruit has a very pungent, stinky smell.

In a garden in downtown Frederick lives one of the largest ginkgo trees in the United States. It was named a National Champion Tree in 1983; it lost this distinction in 2006 when it was hit by lightning and its height was reduced. The ginkgo tree is lovely most of the year, but October is the month in which it shines. Its fan-shaped leaves transform from a brilliant green hue to a perfect shade of gold. The window for this display is very short, maybe just a day or two, so keep your eye on the ginkgo trees at Locals, and you will be treated to their annual show.

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Poolesville Day

- Poolesville Day was a great success for our town and for WUMCO. We gave out free stuff (mugs, tee shirts magnet, etc.), sold old Poolesville street signs, and met lots of great friends and supporters. Thank you for coming out!

OktoberFest/HarvestFest Cancelled

- It has been decided to cancel OktoberFest (aka HarvestFest) this year; however...

The Scarecrow Contest Is Still On!

- The annual scarecrow contest is still happening. "They're Coming!" Families, businesses, organizations, and groups of friends can enter the scarecrow contest and have your scarecrow on display on Whalen Commons. Watch www.wumcohelp.org for registration information soon!

Finally

- Please become a member of YOUR food pantry and financial assistance program. Send a check to: P.O. Box 247, Poolesville, MD 20837 or donate online at www.wumcohelp.org/Membership.html. Thank you!

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Things to Do

WUMCO Scarecrow Contest

The annual WUMCO Scarecrow Contest is underway. Be sure to stop by Whalen Commons, review the entries, and vote for your favorite residential and business submissions. Voting can be done at wumco.org

Markoff's Haunted Forest

One of America's top-ranked Halloween venues, Markoff's Haunted Forest offers much to do while waiting to enter. Open all weekends in October.

October 8

PHS Varsity Home Game

Football vs Catoclin. 6:30 p.m.

October 9

UMCVFD BBQ Platters and Sandwiches

Pulled pork and beef sandwich platters with coleslaw and baked beans. *Fire Hall in Beallsville.* 11:00 a.m. until sold out.

PHS Varsity Home Game

Girls' soccer vs Kennedy. 11:45 a.m.

Pumpkin Cannon to Benefit Poolesville's American Legion Post 247

Stop by Lewis Orchards to take your turn at firing a pumpkin five hundred yards at a target in the pond. This fun pumpkin cannon event is a Lewis Orchards-sponsored fundraiser for our local American Legion Post. Raffle tickets available for gift certificates to many area restaurants. Enjoy the day, get some pumpkins, apples, fall décor, and more while there. *Lewis Orchards, Peach Tree Road.* 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

October 11

PHS Varsity Home Game

Field Hockey vs Magruder. 7:00 p.m.

October 13

PHS Varsity Home Games

Boys' soccer vs Springbrook. 7:15 p.m.

Girls' volleyball vs Kennedy. 6:30 p.m.

October 15 and 16

St. Peter's Limited Edition Fall Rummage Sale

Toys, games, puzzles, and kids' books; baby items and clothing; fun Halloween decorations and costumes;

Thanksgiving décor and flowers; and live plants and sporting goods. *St. Peter's Church.* Friday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

October 16

PHS Varsity Home Games

Boys' soccer vs Quince Orchard. 10:00 a.m.

Girls' soccer vs Quince Orchard. 12:00 p.m.

October 19

PHS Varsity Home Game

Field Hockey vs Whitman. 6:00 p.m.

October 20

PHS Varsity Home Games

Girls' soccer vs Gaithersburg. 5:30 p.m.

Boys' soccer vs. Gaithersburg. 7:15 p.m.

October 22

PHS Varsity Home Game

Football vs Kennedy. 6:30 p.m.

October 23

Come Explore with Us

Don't miss this special opportunity to discover the grounds, outbuildings, and exteriors of some of the most captivating historic properties of the Ag Reserve: Montevideo, Lindenwood, Solomon Simpson Plantation, and Mt. Carmel.

Your ticket provides you full access to the grounds of these historic homes between the hours of 12:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m. Drive your own vehicle and stay as little or long as you like at each property. Explore on your own or attend the talks about the history of each house (schedule and additional details will be provided at check-in at 11:30 a.m. at the John Poole House). Masks are highly encouraged outdoors and required for entering any structure.

Get your tickets before the tour sells out! Space is limited. All proceeds benefit the Historic Medley District, Inc. *Starts at John Poole House.* 11:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

October 28

Chamber Network Night at Cugini's

The PACC will be hosting a gathering at Cugini's Restaurant on the outdoor patio for current and past PACC members. The chamber will provide pizza, and there will be a cash bar. Chamber members or prospective members should register on the PACC website.

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Youth Sports

Falcons Hope to Continue Playing Solid Football

By Jeff Stuart

A rainbow appeared at the south end of the Poolesville High School stadium prior to Poolesville's second home game of the season on September 17. A good omen, perhaps, because the Falcons dominated Watkins Mill, 34-6, despite the fact that Watkins Mill scored rather easily on its opening drive, going sixty-eight yards to take a 7-0 lead. The first Falcon drive seemed to have stalled out with a fourth down and three facing them at midfield, but Coach Nazzaro opted to go for it on fourth down, and the Falcons converted with junior quarterback Ashton Gaddis avoiding a sack and rambling for five yards and a first down. The Falcons converted another fourth down and three with a pass to Dylan Lemarr, and with forty seconds left in the first quarter, Evan Taylor ran twenty yards for a touchdown. Avi Godsey's kick was good, and the Falcons took the lead. They never looked back. Senior Adam Barkdoll scored on a twenty-yard run. Gaddis completed a fourteen-yard touchdown pass to senior Jaylen Riggs, with thirty-six seconds left in the half, and senior Mike Sofelkanik intercepted a pass and scored a touchdown just thirty seconds later to end the half with an exclamation point. The Falcons had a 27-6 lead. Barkdoll scored on a nine-yard run late in the fourth to close it out.



Adam Barkdoll (8), Jackson Barney (54), Diesel Anderson (50), Isaac Fenny (7), Henry Brill (26), Dylan Lemarr (88), Jaylen Riggs (12), Michael Sofelkanik (1), Zavier Ahmad (76), Daniel Lian (20), and Logan Marsh (4).

Taylor and Barkdoll were Offensive Players of the Game. Lemarr (defensive) and Avi Godsey (special teams) were also selected the Poolesville Football Players of the Game.

"So far this has been one of the most exhilarating football seasons I have ever played in in my life," said senior right guard and middle linebacker Diesel Anderson at a Tuesday afternoon practice after that game. "This is probably one of the best teams if not the best team Poolesville has put together in the last decade. We can do something really special with this team, I think. As for a personal highlight. I have had a lot of good plays, I think, but tackling the Watkins Mill quarterback for a fourteen-yard sack last Friday night was a big one for me. I felt the stands. I felt the cheers out there making the tackle. It was really good to feel the support of my town and my community."

"We started off great," said senior wide receiver and defensive back Logan Marsh. "These two wins will build momentum for us later in the season. I know

Continued on page 17

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Continued from page 1.

Steve Orsini Retires as PHS Baseball Coach

Gaithersburg High School. "I had the pleasure of seeing him coach for many years. His teams were always well prepared and disciplined. He has been a tremendous asset to the Poolesville community for a long time."

"I would just like to thank Coach Orsini for all that he has done for my boys," said Jody Pearre, father of Hunter, a 2014 graduate, Brady, a 2018 graduate, and current sophomore Luke Pearre. "He gave them the opportunity to play baseball and enjoy the game and raised their level of competition. I was able to see Hunter win the first ever region baseball championship under Coach Orsini in 2014. I was then fortunate enough to see Brady win the state championship in 2017. Coach Orsini has left the program in a good place when he chose to let someone else take over and enjoy his family and friends. I think he is a good man and a good father. Also, he is a good role model for all these kids in Poolesville. He has done a lot of good things, and we appreciate it. He didn't do it for just my kids. He did it for all the kids in Poolesville. This is a chance for the community to say thanks. PHS hasn't won a lot of state championships or region championships in men's sports, so that was nice to see."

At Good Counsel High School, Orsini was selected to play in the 1976 Shriner All Star football game at the University of Maryland. He was named All County. At Montgomery College, he was named Maryland All JUCO, and as an inside linebacker at Lock Haven University, he was elected to the LHU Hall of Fame in 2012.

A 1980 graduate of LHU, he never missed a game in his two seasons as a Bald Eagle. As a co-captain on the 1979 team, he helped Lock Haven to a 9-2 season which included a 9-0 Pennsylvania State Athletic mark and a 6-0 PSAC West run. The team finished first in the conference. Following the 1979 season, Orsini was named First Team All-Conference and was named to the ECAC All-Star Team. Orsini is ranked third and seventh on Lock Haven's all-time single-season unassisted tackle list with 121 and 106, respectively.

"I played football, basketball, and baseball in high school," said Orsini. "I started in football and baseball as a sophomore all three years. Loved baseball and football."

I coached football at Good Counsel for two years then moved on to Einstein under Jamie Hunter. We built that program into a 500 team. Then I moved to Seneca Valley when Terry Changuris became the head coach, and after a year there I went to Watkins Mill under Ken Brace. That's when I started coaching baseball JV. I coached there about nine years, JV baseball and varsity football. Poolesville opened up when Larry Hurd took the job at Clarksburg." Orsini was the head football coach at Poolesville for six years until his children began playing travel baseball/softball. "Ted Gardiner hired me as his JV baseball coach. Ted resigned varsity, and I took over." He also coached club baseball with the Hustlers, the KMS Baseball Academy, and the 5 Star Baseball organization.

"I liked the competitiveness of coaching, and I liked helping kids stay in school. Sports did that for me, and I wanted to do the same for others."

"I played and studied the game. I took clinics, there were private conferences, and I visited practices and I read. You can never stop studying the game. You have to be organized and have a schedule for practice. Never hope something will happen—prepare. I wanted to put my players in a position to win. A very wise person told me, 'Hope is not a strategy.' I tried to teach the players that everything is a competition, so play hard and have fun. My best memories are when the players come back and talk about their big wins. I hope they remember me as a player's coach. My father was a role model. He was a great coach."

"I think the success of Poolesville baseball came from Bill Cartwright, my JV coach who I brought on after coaching his son. He took over the reins of running our summer and fall baseball programs, so our baseball kids played baseball all year long. There was always somewhere that our kids from Poolesville could play. The kids that played travel ball did that. The kids that chose not to were able to play for Poolesville Athletic Association baseball under Coach Cartwright. He did a tremendous job."

"Ryan d'Amillio came on the year of the state championship. He scouted the teams that we were playing, Huntington and Chesapeake, so we knew everything that those players were doing when they hit the ball the last ten at bats. That was a huge advantage to us in positioning our outfielders and infielders and in knowing what pitches to throw."

"Mike Nessel, who also coached football with me, came out and helped with the infield. Mark Gorres came on and helped with the outfield. Both did great jobs. James Witt was probably my righthand man. I can't say enough about him. I was the bad guy to his good guy. The kids really hovered around him. He kept them in check and kept things loose. Even now, he stays in touch with a lot of kids on facebook and things like that. He was a guy that I would go to if I was

unsure about something. I could trust him to give me a flat-out straight answer even when he knew I might not like it. He always told me the truth. He could fix anything that was broken. He worked the kids through the drills we needed them to do. When a kid's physical expired during the playoffs and he couldn't play, he laid everything out. 'This is what we are going to do and this is how we are going to do it, and everything will work out.' We ended up winning that game. We pitched someone we didn't want to pitch. We got the physical we needed to and went on from there."

"Thanks to the parents who worked with us, like Victor Convers who kept score for six years while his boys, Chris and Matt, were playing for us. I was fortunate enough to work with all these people. I want to thank them publicly for all that they did for me and the kids. It was a class program. I am very proud of what we accomplished."

Although Orsini will step down from coaching, he will continue to teach at Poolesville in the special education department.

"It's been the greatest experience," said Orsini. "The players, parents, community, teachers, athletic directors, and administration have all been so supportive of me and the program's commitment to excellence. It's a coach's dream to coach talented players whose entire focus is to improve and play as a team. It was an honor to coach these fine young men."

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Remembrance

Doris Marie Hough

Doris Marie Hough, 90, of Dickerson, passed away on September 26, 2021. She was the loving wife of the late Jack Hough.

Born January 19, 1931 in Dickerson, she was the daughter of the late William G. and Betty E. (Harding) Warfield.

Doris retired from Montgomery County Public Schools after thirty-two years of driving a school bus. She was also a server/manager at Comus Inn for many years. While doing those two jobs, she and her late husband owned and operated Comus Orchard.

Doris is survived by her son, Mike (Eleanor) of Adamstown; one daughter, Sue (Mike) of Jefferson; three grandchildren, Walter Hough, Amy Cole (Tony), and Zach Helmick (Alyson); one great-granddaughter, Jaden; and one sister, Betty Warfield Dunlap.

Doris was preceded in death by one son, Mark, and twelve brothers and sisters.



Doris Marie Hough



Continued from page 9.

Community FarmShare Puts Down Roots

transported only a few miles, has unbelievable taste, the kind of vegetables only our local farmers can grow, the type of produce that most low-income food insecure families could not afford, or it simply didn't even exist in their neighborhoods. Then on the producers' side, what would it look like to pay farmers so they could have a fair incentive to continue to expand their local food production which benefits all eaters? I wanted to create a resilient local food system!

Community FarmShare unfolded along a simple three-step process: seek donations from caring individuals who like to see the most impact from their donation; pay the farmers for their produce (thus supporting a resilient local food system); and deliver the weekly bags of fresh healthy produce to families in need.

Out of this concept, a web of hundreds of people are now connected—the hundreds of people we serve throughout the full agricultural season, our partner farms all over the county (One Acre Farm, the Garden at Madison Fields, Amaranth Acres, Query Mill, Common Root Farm, Blueberry Gardens, Sandy Spring Gardens), our dozen dedicated volunteers, our community organization partners who linked us to families most in need (special shout-out to WUMCO Help!), and our more than two hundred individual donors who have brought the program to life through generous donations. Our volunteers who deliver the produce are the heart of our work, as they get to know the families and learn their stories, cares, and needs when delivering the produce. Likewise, our farm partners have been an incredible joy to work with and learn from. They grow truly the best fresh produce this county has to offer.

Despite the learning curve this year as Community FarmShare metamorphosed from vision to reality, our pilot program year worked. With our new nonprofit status now in hand, we are looking forward to doubling our impact in 2022.

Please visit our website (www.communityfarmshare.org) and help support our mission. Please note: Community FarmShare is committed to ensuring that your donation has the most impact. Our low overhead cost is funded through a separate revenue base, meaning one hundred percent of your donation goes to healthy produce grown by our local farmers.

Continued from page 15.

Falcons Hope to Continue Playing Solid Football

we took a hard loss to B-CC in the first game, but it was a close game. Hard fought, but we bounced back with a couple of wins. The crowd this year is really into it. They have been really loud. We can really feel it. It gets us up. I would like to give a shout out to Barkdoll and Gaddis. They have played great for us." Logan was selected player of the game in the season opener against B-CC.

"For me, the biggest thing so far is that we are still winning," began senior tight end and defensive end Riggs, "despite losing two of our very good players due to COVID protocols, Logan Marsh, our best wide receiver, and Luke Pappano, who is very good on the defensive line. It will be good to get them back. I think we are playing the best we can. We just have to work harder than everybody else because we have such small numbers compared to everyone else. They have a lot more backup. Magruder and Rockville should be pretty competitive games for us. I am looking forward to those games. We will just keep going and working harder than everyone else."

"Obviously we wanted to go undefeated and win every game," said senior wide receiver and defensive end Dylan Lemarr, "but I still think the sky is the limit for this team. I think we can do a lot of good things. I never played with the Friday night lights thing last year. There were no fans. I think it is a great experience. The crowd really showed up to support us. For me, I think Michael Sofelkanik's pick six against Wootton was probably the best highlight so far this season. I always point to whichever game is next. I am ready to compete. Everybody underestimates us. Last season was tough. I think we could have gone pretty far last year. I am glad we had a short season in the spring. Beating Clarksburg was great. I don't think they expected us to come out and play as hard as we did, and we competed with them. They were bigger than us and had more numbers, but we just worked harder and wanted it more."

On September 24 at Rockville, the Falcons lost 28-20 after trailing 14-12 at the half. Gaddis threw touchdown passes to Sofelkanik, Riggs, and Barkdoll. Taylor rushed for ninety-five yards. Lemarr, Barkdoll and Sofelkanik had interceptions for PHS.

On Homecoming, October 1, against Magruder, the Falcons cruised to a 25-0 win. It was their first win over Magruder in a while and their first shutout in many years. With great defense, there was plenty to celebrate. The Falcons scored first on a touchdown pass to Garrett Howell in the first half. In the third quarter, Taylor scored on a short run, and in the fourth, Barkdoll scored on a fifteen-yard run, and Taylor scored again on a thirteen-yard run.

Other seniors are Logan Marsh, Isaac Feny, Daniel Lian, Henry Brill, Jackson Barney, Jayden Walker, and Zavier Ahmed.

Other juniors are Garrett Howell, Max Stempler, Sam Stempler, Evan Taylor, Seamus Brennan, Jack Feys, Nicholas Pioli, Ian Rodriguez and Luke Pappano.

Seth Lemarr is a sophomore.

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Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

Present Crime

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Past Crime: 1935 to 1940

A controversial rule that affected only police officers was rescinded by the county commissioners. The rule, which proved greatly unpopular, denied police officers the right to consume

alcoholic beverages while off duty. A delegation of sergeants appeared before the commissioners and complained that no other county employees were included in the rule and that there was no evidence that any officers had acted in a disorderly fashion.

The first arrests in a major drive against gamblers and numbers writers resulted in three Bethesda residents being convicted of writing numbers. Bethesda detectives testified that they had placed bets with the group and had initialed the backs of the numbers slips. County officials hailed the quick

work of the police and urged them to continue their work.

Nearly one hundred dog owners were cited by a special police task force for failing to obtain dog licenses for their dogs. It had come to the attention of county officials that a large number of citizens were ignoring the law and a six-month grace period was given. Since police patrol officers had other things to do, a special group of emergency officers was sworn in to enforce the dog law.

County police were called on to enforce another law that was the product of the Great Depression. The county had been overrun with hucksters and door-to-door salesmen trying to sell fruits, vegetables, oysters, coal, and poultry. People who grew their own goods were exempt from the law. Police were ordered to stop

hucksters and people who had set up roadside stands and to determine if they had the proper licenses. The sale of coal was a particular problem since many people had no other way to heat their homes, and local coal dealers were being cut out of the sales by the hucksters who came to town with their own coal.

Detectives from Washington, Baltimore, and Montgomery Counties continued to investigate the murders of two Capitol Transit employees that were killed in a robbery at their office at Chevy Chase Lake. The case, one of the most infamous cases in county history, remains unsolved but is still under investigation eighty-five years later.

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



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- Rose G. Kingsley, The Autumn Garden

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Your Dog's Personality Changes with Age, Study Finds. Here's How.

Article adapted by Peter H. Eeg, DVM

As with their human owners, dogs' personalities change as they age, but some traits stay the same. All pet parents know that their pets in older age aren't the same as they were as puppies, but owners often can't pinpoint the exact personality changes brought on by the passage of time.

A study published recently in Scientific Reports attempts to map out those changes and finds that there are some personality traits, such as attraction to novel experiences, the desire to explore, and the urge to run around, that seem to change for most dogs with age.

"Similar to humans, dog personality is both stable and malleable," said the study's lead author, Borbála Turcsán, a research fellow at Eötvös Loránd University in Budapest, Hungary. "Dogs that are active and curious when young will remain active and curious when they get old, but only compared to other dogs. A dog's personality changes over time, and, on average, every dog becomes less active and less curious as they get older."

To study how dogs' personalities might change with time, Turcsán and her colleagues recruited 217 border collies who were participants in the Clever Dog Database in Vienna. The dogs' ages at the beginning of the study were 6 months to 15 years old.

At the outset, the dogs were evaluated using a series of tests known as the Vienna Dog Personality Test. Four years later, the researchers invited dogs that were still alive, along with their owners, back to the lab for retesting. Thirty-seven dogs (and their owners) showed up.

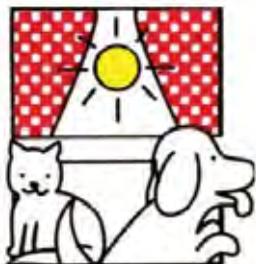
Included in the tests were:

- Exploration test
- Frustration test
- Novel object test
- Ball playing test
- Obedience test
- Problem-solving test

When the researchers compared the dogs, they found that the most active and curious ones in the first test were still the most active and curious ones four years later but that, individually, they were less active and curious than they had been. Overall, the researchers found that the dogs' attentiveness and ability to solve problems changed a lot during life, improving up until about 6 years of age and then remaining stable. The novelty-seeking trait didn't change much in early life, but then, when the dogs were 3, their curiosity about novel objects and situations started to decline.

The study's findings may not apply equally to all breeds, Houtpt said. "They used the smartest breed to study, and [the downward trends], when it comes to diminution and novelty-seeking, might be different with beagles, for example."

There was some good news for dog owners, Houtpt said. "Dogs get less active with age, and that should give hope to the people who have puppies that are too active, and while they become less oriented to problem-solving and novelty-seeking as they get older, they remain obedient and social, which is probably the most important thing for owners."



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