

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Monthly Newspaper

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WWII Pilot from Poolesville Honored in France

By Rande Davis

A Poolesville man will be honored with a special display in a museum near Brittany, France commemorating his courage in protecting members of the French Resistance during World War II. His story is remarkable and one that we have told in a Mystery History in the June 10, 2016 issue of the *Monocle*. Now there is an updated tribute to him and to that story coming from France.

Recently, Isabelle Guillermic, a representative of a French historical association, contacted the *Monocle* seeking to reach family of a World War II American pilot Norman Davis Hersberger. Hersberger, a son of Poolesville, was of interest to them as they wanted more information about him to pay tribute for his courage and heroic actions as one of nearly 1,200 such pilots whose planes crashed in France from 1939 to 1945. As we will



Poolesville's Norman Davis Hersberger piloted this type of plane in France during WWII.

recall below, the downed airmen, although found and protected by the French Resistance, were eventually captured by the Nazis, and through amazing courage, despite enduring horrific Nazi attempts to find out about the names of the resistance, Mr. Hersberger never betrayed them.

Later this month, a special display honoring him will open at a local museum which will be sponsored by the Association Bretonne du Souvenir Aérien 39-45 (ABSA 39-45), (the Breton Association of Air Remembrance). The

Continued on page 23.

Commissioners Discuss Proposed Trails Plan and More Grant Proposals at March Meetings

By Link Hoewing

At their March meetings, the commissioners of the Town of Poolesville discussed a proposed plan for additional trails in the town submitted by a special committee set up by the Planning Commission. They also heard the last of numerous grant requests that were submitted ahead of their March 22 meeting where they would make revisions to a draft FY 26 budget that will be considered in April.

Town Manager Wade Yost and Assistant Town Manager Niles Anderegg provided an overview of the new draft trails plan at the March 3 commissioners' meeting. It was noted that the 1990 Master Plan for the town included a plan for trails throughout the town. The new draft plan adopts much of the original plan but makes some revisions and proposes some extensions of previously-proposed trails.

Anderegg said that the goals of the new plan were to increase connectivity throughout the town so that people could walk to various neighborhoods, helping to reduce barriers and to encourage more community activity. The new plan also improves safety at various points along the trails. He emphasized that this is a draft plan and a vision for the future; it is not intended to provide an assessment of priorities or costs for the proposals. Setting priorities and assessing potential costs will be part of the process going forward, including educating the public about the proposals that the plan advocates.

Commissioner Ed Reed kicked off a discussion about the recent traffic fatality that occurred near Partnership Road. It has long been apparent to

residents in the area that Route 107 leading up to Partnership Road is dangerous. Route 107 has a number of blind curves and sudden dips that obscure the vision of drivers. The way Partnership Road intersects with Route 107 creates a dangerous situation, especially since the intersection is on a sharp turn.

His wife, Erika, had written to the Department of Transportation and had already received a response. The DOT offered to post signs on the approach to Partnership Road cautioning about the upcoming intersection. The department also said it would post fifteen-mile-per-hour signs to emphasize the upcoming dangerous intersection. Reed said the department promised to install the new signs on

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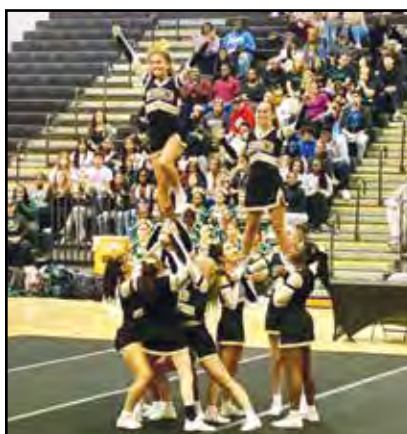
This lad sang "O Danny Boy" for a special group of Poolesvillians. See more pictures on page 2.



This young man was recognized as a hero! Find out who and why on page 5.



Councilperson Balcombe (right) congratulated these folks for winning a rather unusual boat race. Details on page 14.



Let's cheer for these acrobatic young ladies. More on page 18.

Family Album



I.D. Hudson wanted St. Patrick to hear his confession. The revered clergyman declined since there would not have been enough time to do that and also play bingo.



"Sean-nós" singer, Dennis Conley.



Roger Brenholtz and I.D. Hudson, the Dynamite Duo of bingo calling.



Left: St. Patrick visited Bassett's Restaurant.

ST. PATRICK CAME TO POOLSVILLE



Barbie Stull welcomed St. Patrick to Cugini's. Guinness all around!



Organizers of the PASC bingo shenanigans: Tookie Gentilcore, Maria Briançon, president of PASC, and volunteer Maureen Dahlen.



Poolesville Seniors received a special blessing from St. Patrick.



PASC St. Patrick's Day bingo.

Local News

Local K9 Competition
To Raise Funds to
Provide Essential
Protective Vests

By Rande Davis

Now in its fourth year, Iron Dog, an exciting competition of search and rescue dogs, will again be hosted by USPCA Region 3 in Dickerson. Iron Dog 2025 will bring in fifty to sixty working K9 dog teams from across the country with local, state, and federal teams competing. The event will be held on a three-mile course with fourteen obstacles along the way, including mud pits, water crossings, hill climbs, K9 apprehension, bomb sniffing, and more.

After the first year, the event turned into a charity event for Spike's K9 Fund which was founded by retired Navy SEAL Team 6 member, James Hatch. Hatch was also a K9 handler on the teams. Hatch's career ended when an AK-47 round blew his femur apart. Hatch's favorite K9 was named Spike, hence the name of the organization.

Spike's K9 Fund provides ballistic vests for working dogs across America and also helps with medical bills when departments or handlers cannot afford it. A list of other things they do can be found on their website: www.spikesk9fund.org

Spike's K9 Fund provided ballistic vests for all of MCP's K9s several years ago and also came through this past December when the dog of the organizer was in the hospital with a medical emergency and offered to cover any vet bills. Unfortunately, the dog, Monte, did not pull through and passed away.

Funds are raised through handler registrations, donations, raffles, and, new this year, sponsorships. People or businesses can now sponsor obstacles or the whole event. With certain sponsors, it guarantees the purchase of a ballistic vest with the sponsor's name embroidered on the side. The vests are all custom fitted for each dog and cost \$3,000 each. Currently, there is a list of close to a hundred K9s across the country waiting for a vest.

While the event itself is not open to the public due to restricted areas and lack of infrastructure to support spectators, donations from the public are most welcome.

Anyone wishing to donate, sponsor, or donate an item for the raffle can contact Spike's K9 Fund or Phil Brower at Phil.Brower@gmail.com.



Service K9 competition raises funds for protective vests.

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Rande(m) Thoughts Keeping a Vow, Decades Later

By Rande Davis

I have vowed not to bring national politics within these welcoming pages of the *Monocle*, as these bitter times are challenging enough to us all—no gain in adding to it. I bring the matter up now, not to discuss politics, but to offer hope for healing. I sorely miss the days when one's political opinions were generally honored and respected without such acidic reactions from others. It was so much easier when there was a general understanding that one's politics or sex life was not to be discussed in polite society. Better to keep things private and comfortable for all. Now, we can't escape either. If it is not one, it is disturbingly the other. It seems so naïve today, but John Clayton and I proudly proclaimed our friendship in making our partnership when starting the *Monocle*, while boldly proclaiming our differing political perspectives. That was over twenty years ago, yet it seems much longer than that now, more like a lifetime away.

My heart aches over friendships and family members drawn apart from seemingly irreconcilable differences over political opinions now. I think you might identify with my desire to find solace and space away from national politics. With that in mind, I came to reflect on my youth and a promise I made to myself then, unfulfilled until recently.

When I was a senior in high school in upstate New York, I joined a group of men from my church traveling for a silent weekend retreat to a monastery on the Hudson River. I grew up in a town smaller than Poolesville called Cornwall on the Hudson, so the idea of such a retreat registered quite well with me. As someone who has never been known for my reticence to speak, experiencing humbling quietness ended up having a powerful impact upon me. I like to joke that those few days of absolute silence challenged me so much, I considered, even as an Episcopalian, making individual confession just so I could talk. I discovered for the first time that when anyone distances him or herself from the sound of his/her own voice for even a few days, one's inner, more true voice, emerges. The phenomenon was so inspirationally invigorating that I vowed to

Continued on page 9.

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Noontime sun ray shining into the chapel at
Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York.

The Monocacy MONOCLE

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Local News

Montgomery County Individuals Recognized for Public Service and Heroism

By Rande Davis

On March 6, the Gen. William Smallwood Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution (SAR) held its quarterly meeting at the Mission BBQ in Germantown. The Smallwood chapter's members are compatriots of Revolutionary War veterans, and the chapter consists of members living in Montgomery County. The meeting awarded SAR medals and certificates for public service and heroism. Also at this meeting, a Sherwood High School ninth grader, Mataali Chopra, gave a talk titled "Anna Strong: The Silent Sentinel of the American Revolution." Mataali is competing in the Maryland State Society Sons of the American Revolution's Joseph Rumbaugh Historical Oration Contest. Anna Strong was a patriot and member of the historic Culper Spy Ring that was a network of American spies that operated during the Revolutionary War. Mataali is a Life Scout working on her Eagle Scout requirements. Mataali will represent the General Smallwood Chapter at the state competition on April 26 in Annapolis. Prizes for the oration contest include \$2,000 for first place, \$750 for second place, and \$600 for third place.

Chapter President Jon Wolz presented the medals and certificates to the awardees as Chapter Vice President Lucas Ginn read the citations out loud. The following are the individuals recognized for public service and heroism.



Hero Award Winners: SAR Vice President Brian Crane; SAR Oratorical Contest Winner, Mitaali Chopra (Sherwood High School); Emergency Medical Service, Avital Graves (MCFRS); Life Saving, Jason Woodman (PHS); Law Enforcement, Sgt. Patrick Kepp; Fire Safety, Battalion Chief Jason Light; and SAR Jon Wolz, SAR president.

Law Enforcement

Sgt. Patrick Kepp (MCPD) was intentionally struck by a reckless driver while on duty in 2023, resulting in the amputation of both of his legs. Despite his grievous injury, Kepp returned to police work in 2024 and is training officers on apprehending reckless and drunk drivers.

Life Saving

Jason Woodman (Eagle Scout) noticed a hockey teammate on the bench fall over this past spring. He skated across the ice, leapt over the wall, and removed his teammate's helmet. She was having a full seizure, was completely blacked out, and her airway was clogged. He cleared her airway, checked her breath, and placed her in recovery position. He then started yelling at people to clear the bench, to call 911, and to get an AED just in case. Jason's coach explained that Jason remained calm and in control during an incredibly chaotic emergency until the paramedics arrived. This teammate underwent two major brain surgeries in

Continued on page 7.

Basketball Camp

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Local Road Race Returns

The National Capital Velo Club will be hosting the twenty-ninth edition of the Poolesville Road Race on April 26, 2025. Races will take place throughout the day from approximately 8:00 a.m. to 6:00 p.m. All races will be staged from the Poolesville Baptist Church at 17550 W. Willard Road and will run in a circuit in a clockwise direction with a finish line near the intersection of Westerly and W. Willard Roads. The affected roads include: W. Willard Road between Wootton Avenue and W. Offut Road; W. Offut Road between W. Willard and Edwards Ferry Roads; Edwards Ferry Road between W. Offut and River Roads; River Road between Edwards Ferry and Elmer School Roads; Elmer School Road between River and Club Hollow Roads; Club Hollow Road between Elmer School and Edwards Ferry Roads; Edwards Ferry Road between Club Hollow and Westerly Roads; and Westerly Road between Edwards Ferry and W. Willard Roads.

Roads will remain open to traffic, but Montgomery County Police and members of our club will be monitoring intersections and creating rolling enclosures to protect the athletes as they proceed along the course.

We are once again incredibly grateful to the Town of Poolesville for hosting us, and we hope to see some of you over the course of the day. This race would not be possible without your gracious support. For more information and a course map, please visit www.bikereg.com/poolesvillerr

Senior News

Poolesville Seniors Present Virtual and In-Person Programs

Registration is required, but all events are open to the entire community and free unless otherwise noted. In case of bad weather or unusual circumstances, consult poolesvilleseniors.org. Most in-person events take place at Poolesville Presbyterian Church's Speer Hall at 17800 Elgin Road (Rte. 109).

April 1

Keeping People in Their Homes: Loss Mitigation Mortgage Program

Join independent mortgage banking consultant, Pat Taylor, to understand mortgages and the COVID-era programs that were developed to help keep people in their homes. *Poolesville Presbyterian Church Sanctuary*. 7:00 p.m.

April 2

Birthday Card Club Crafting Event

Volunteers will create handmade birthday cards to mail to the Poolesville Seniors Birthday Club members throughout the year. We provide supplies to decorate the cards. *Speer Hall*. 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Tour of Kingsbury's Orchard

Join Gene Kingsbury on a tour of the renowned Kingsbury's Orchard that was started in 1932 during the Great Depression. He will show us Kingsbury's extensive operation on his 118-year-old family farm and orchard. He will also discuss some of the latest developments in the fruit industry and many unique challenges facing growers in this region. *Kingsbury's Orchard, 19415 Peach Tree Road, Dickerson*. 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

April 3

Chair One Fitness with Deirdre

Join Deirdre, a certified Chair One Fitness Instructor for a chair-based dance program that delivers a musically-driven 45-minute, interactive workout that uplifts people through dance and fitness movements. *PES Cafeteria*. 7:00 p.m.

April 9

Trail Hike: Trail Hike Schaeffer Farm Area Part 1

Join this 5.5-mile trail hike. Meet at parking lot. 8:50 a.m.

Darts Social

Join the fun with easy darts games that anyone can play! We supply the darts;

you supply the nimble fingers and deadeye aim. *Speer Hall*. 2:15 p.m. to 4:15 p.m.

Social Media I: Beyond Facebook

Enjoy Jessica Wallach's first Social Media session providing an overview of social media platforms beyond facebook. *Speer Hall*. 7:00 p.m.

April 10

Hip-Hop Dance Class with Kim Harris

Get the party started! Learn one complete hip-hop dance each monthly session. *Speer Hall*. 6:30 p.m.

April 11

Movie Night: Conclave

Join us for this gripping and well-acted portrayal of cutthroat scheming and betrayals that can go into choosing a new pope for the Catholic Church. *Speer Hall*. 7:00 p.m.

April 16

Social Media II: Establishing Accounts and Posting

In this second session of Social Media, get hands-on support in setting up social media accounts that you learned about in the first class. *Speer Hall*. 7:00 p.m.

April 23

Digital Photography: Using Digital Cameras and Cell Phones for Photography

Jessica Wallach will help you get comfortable using digital cameras and smartphones to capture clear, memorable photos. *Speer Hall*. 2:30 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

April 24

Line Dancing w/Ashley Kelch

Enjoy a free evening of line dancing with basic instruction that builds up to more complicated moves. Join the fun, work out, and meet new people. *St. Peter's Episcopal Church*. 7:00 p.m.

April 25

Story Lifelines: Connection and Community with Noa Baum

Join master storyteller Noa Baum as she provides guided activities to lead attendees through the sharing and listening process of evoking memories to create stories from real events in your life that will inspire your listeners. *Poolesville Town Hall Meeting Room*. 10:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Weekly Events

Tuesdays, Wednesday,
Thursdays, Fridays

Outdoor Pickleball Open Play.
Stevens Park. 8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

Mondays

Seniors at the Barre. *Speer Hall*. 10:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m.

Ping Pong Afternoon. *Speer Hall*. 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

Tuesdays

Tai-Chi with Maureen Ivusic. *PMUMC and virtual*. 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Bridge. Snacks provided. Registration required. *Speer Hall*. 1:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Wednesdays

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

Trivia Game Night. If you love Trivia, come join a team with Poolesville Seniors on the first Wednesday of the month. For more information, email info@poolesvilleseniors.org. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

Thursdays

Mahjong with Terri Pearson. Beginner and seasoned players are welcome. *Speer Hall*. 10:00 a.m. to 12:30 p.m.

Knitting/Crochet Instruction and Support. *Poolesville Presbyterian Manse*. 4:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.

For more information or to register for any of the programs listed here, visit

Continued on page 7.

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Continued from page 5.

Montgomery County Individuals Recognized for Public Service and Heroism

September to correct her issue. Jason's decision to hold her head probably saved her from having a stroke.

Fire Safety

Battalion Chief Jason Light MCFRS served with MD Task Force 1—Montgomery County's premier search and rescue team—for eighteen years and deployed on numerous search and rescue missions throughout the United States. In August 2023, Light led seventy personnel from Task Force 1 on a mission to Maui in the aftermath of the wildfires that devastated Lahaina. He also led the 2022 Task Force 1 response to Hurricane Ian. In January 2025, Light was promoted to Battalion Chief and is Deputy Training Chief for MCFRS.

EMS

Avital Graves MCFRS is a program manager with the Mobile Integrated Health (MIH) Unit of MCFRS. MIH works with stakeholders throughout Montgomery County to identify frequent users of EMS services and to provide such individuals with resources and support that will reduce their dependence on 911 and EMS care. Graves specializes in geriatric care, which accounts for nearly seventy-five percent of MIH participants. She represents EMS on the county's Elder and Vulnerable Adult Abuse Task Force where she collaborates with a cross-agency team to develop responses to elder abuse. Graves also trains her fellow EMS clinicians on how to involve and work with Adult Protective Services when responding to calls where elder abuse and neglect may be an issue.

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Senior News

the Poolesville Seniors website: poolesvilleseniors.org and receive the link for virtual events or directions for in-person events. View recorded presentations on their YouTube channel. Contact 301-875-7701 or email info@poolesvilleseniors.org with questions.

Have an event you'd
like to list in the *Monocle*?

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Business Briefs

Dr. Duggirala Elected President of Maryland Academy of Family Physicians

The Maryland Academy of Family Physicians (MDAFP) has announced that Poolesville's Amar Duggirala, DO, MPH, FAAFP has been elected to serve as this year's president. MDAFP represents nearly 1,400 dedicated family physicians, residents, and medical students throughout the area.

Dr. Duggirala is a graduate of the Midwestern University-Arizona College of Osteopathic Medicine in Glendale, Arizona. In addition to completing his residency at Georgetown University/Providence Hospital Family Medicine Residency Program as Chief Resident, he was a Research Fellow and Clinical Instructor at University of Maryland Department of Family Medicine and Post-Doctoral Fellow at Johns Hopkins University Department of General Pediatrics. Dr. Duggirala also received his Master of Public Health with an emphasis in epidemiology from Johns Hopkins Bloomberg School of Public Health.

He is an outstanding board-certified family medicine physician and leader both in the community he practices in as well as in the physician community. He's served in various capacities on state commissions and within the Maryland Academy of Family Physicians, in addition to owning a family practice office where his expertise lies in pediatrics, care of chronic diseases, and preventative care medicine.

"Dr. Duggirala not only has experience, but he also has the kind of leadership skills we desire in a president," said Executive Director, Becky Wimmer. "His dedication to family medicine, relationships with patients, and extensive experience as an advocate, along with his leadership skills, are the traits we look for. We couldn't be more excited to have Dr. Duggirala lead this year's strategic initiatives."

Dr. Duggirala, Dr. Kate (Kirksey), and Dr. Groff have diversified medical training at world-renowned university hospitals, urban clinics, and small rural practices, in places as diverse as New York City, Arizona, Florida, Vietnam, Appalachia, Guatemala, and England.

The mission of the MDAFP is to support Maryland family physicians in their efforts to promote equity and optimize the health of our state's patients, families, and communities.

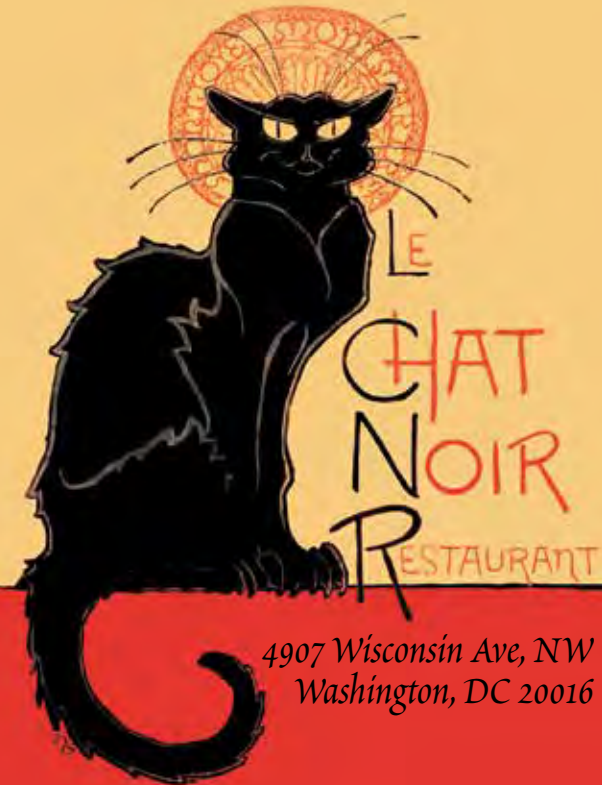
Stempler Joins First Heritage Mortgage

The Jeff Stempler Team (Jeff Stempler, Adam Barnes, and Jennifer Singh) now has a new home at First Heritage Mortgage. They are excited to be able to offer excellent residential mortgage rates through an extensive number of loan programs for first-time buyers, moving up buyers, investment and second home purchases, and refinances. You can still continue to reach them at: www.JeffStemplerTeam.com and 301-674-3975 for your mortgage needs. Licensed in Maryland, Virginia, Washington, D.C., Delaware, West Virginia, Pennsylvania, and Florida.



Dr. Stephanie McKenney Groff, DO, and Dr. Amar Duggirala, DO, at recent PACC breakfast meeting at Locals Restaurant in Poolesville.

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Send to editor@monocacymonocle.com

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Keeping a Vow, Decades Later

return to the monastery once a year for the rest of my life. As it happened, I did not go back to Holy Cross Monastery in West Park, New York for nearly forty years.

When I did, it was with another small group of men from St. Peter's Episcopal Church here in Poolesville about twenty-one years ago. Today, another two decades later, with social and political turmoil so riling, I decided it was time to go back again.

While politics today cannot be avoided, even within the sanctuary of our churches, at least the many centuries-long practice of monks having the sole duty to worship God seemed to appeal to me. It was like the voice of Victorinus, who carried a multitude of letters from the Irish to give to St. Patrick after his return to England, each saying, "We beg you, Holy Boy, to walk among us again." With this in mind, I headed north to the Hudson River to walk among the monks again. Like God himself, the monks always welcome someone's return, no matter how long it's been.

The monastery is a 123-year-old mansion with a commanding bell tower, piously overlooking the Hudson River from a hill surrounded by natural woods and secluded walking paths but having a clear view of the river and the Vanderbilt Mansion on the opposite hillside—an ironic juxtaposition to say the least. The winding path that leads to the river ends at a beach made up of what must be millions of small flat stones perfect for skipping. The passage of eons of years as evidenced by the thin smooth stones attests to the timelessness of the surroundings.

Well, what did I discover during this Lenten retreat? I found a place of peace and respite. I found reassurance that after more than twenty years since my last visit, with even the then-younger monks now gray, these men still assemble five times a day, day after day, to sing the psalms in Gregorian chant, healing the wounds of strife with sacred song—their loving grace and quiet, expressed so beautifully by their soulful sound unchanged by time or others. To be in the presence of persons of such true faith is most powerful. It makes this old guy, closing in on his eighth decade of life, rest assured, as witnessed through all the lives of all the monks, that they have the true message to us all. It is not the sound of their own voice that fuels them, but the sun's rays shining down upon them each noon as though directly from God. The experience gives an astounding visual to the phrase, let your light so shine.

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Garden

Vegetables, Flowers, Herbs, and Fruits Can All Be Friends

By Maureen O'Connell

Many home gardeners would like to have a flower garden, a vegetable garden, a fruit garden, and an herb garden, but they have a small backyard. A backyard often has many family demands placed upon it. You want a place to relax, a space for children and pets to play, and a garden area—simultaneously. Does everything have to be segregated to protect plants from being trampled, stray footballs, and boisterous dogs? No, not if you do a little homework and think outside of the box. Abandon these boundaries and mix all plants together.

Experiment. Start from the ground up. Fashion and format have changed. Homemade raised beds have replaced kitchen gardens. They are filled with a mixture of high-quality potting soil. They drain well and can be placed in a variety of locations, from the entrance to the house, a small portion of the parking area, to just outside the kitchen door. Raised beds are also useful for gardeners with limited mobility as they reduce the need to bend and can even be built on raised platforms for wheelchair access. Trellises are another alternate plant location. They can be placed in a corner of the patio near pots of plants such as cucumbers, zucchinis, or peas where they can gradually climb up to flower and grow. I don't have a large or even small vegetable garden. I have learned that vegetables need much less space than old gardening books led us to believe. I grow only a few vegetables, and they are the ones that I really like to eat and have the time to take care of. Grow smaller varieties in smaller spaces and pick them for eating when they are young. Be imaginative. Vertical space is untapped garden real estate. A simple garden table on the patio or just inside your front garden gate is very easy to take care of, and when you pass it daily, you will be moved to look after the plants that live there.

To say that plants need friends is not a folksy saying based on hearsay. There is an increasing body of scientific research that proves that growing specific plants together—companion plants—can reduce pests, boost growth, and even help wildlife. There are good companions and bad ones. Let us now look at why vegetables need friends and who they are. What are friends for?

Deterring pests: One of a gardener's biggest challenges is pests. You could spray pesticides, but most of my readers know my feelings about all "cides." Basil repels certain insects, such as thrips, and disorients moths that lay tomato hornworms.

Aphids are no friends to your crops! But aphids can't stand garlic. Plant it as a barrier and you have reduced one pest attack.

Plant nasturtium flowers close to kale, cabbage, broccoli, and any brassica plants, and they will lure hungry caterpillars away from eating your plants.

Other friends include mint, dill, borage, parsley, sage, tansy, lavender, and cilantro, rosemary, oregano, and catmint.

Some plants attract beneficial insects such as pollinating bees and tiny pest-eating wasps. Try to plant more "pollinator strips" (rows of pollinator-magnet plants) to encourage pollinators and pest predators.

Large plants provide shade for smaller plants. Tall plants can act as natural supports to lower-growing sprawling crops, such as cucumbers and peas.

Good friends can improve plant health and soil fertility.

No gardener likes to battle weeds in their gardens. Ask your "friends" to suppress these unwelcomed "crops."

Rethink your garden plans this year. Yes, you may want a flower garden, a vegetable garden, an herb garden, and a fruit garden—and you may be able to combine them: Who can happily live together and be good friends? When you have that answer, mix those plants together. The more time you spend interacting with your garden, the more you will learn from it, and the more you will enjoy it.



Garden friend witch hazel blooming in March in author's garden.



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PALM SUNDAY

Mass at 8:00AM & 10:45AM

HOLY THURSDAY - THE LORD' SUPPER

Mass on April 17, 2025 at 8:00PM

No morning Mass

GOOD FRIDAY

Stations of the Cross at 12:00PM

Veneration of the Cross at 8:00PM

No morning Mass

EASTER VIGIL MASS

Blessing of the food basket at 11:00AM

Confession at 11:30AM-1:00PM (or until done)

Easter Vigil Mass at 8:00PM

EASTER SUNDAY OF THE RESURRECTION OF THE LORD

Mass at 8:00AM, 10:00AM, 12:00PM

Easter Egg Hunt @ 1:00PM



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Focus on Business

Grove and Garnish: Eating Like a King (Or Queen) in the Ag Reserve

By Rande Davis

The seeds of creation of Grove and Garnish, a locally-based, chef-prepared, well-balanced meal service, extend beyond life's happenstances. One might say it was fate. How else to explain the truly amazing global journey taken by the owners, Gabriela Taylor and Joe Gurner, to have even met each other, much less getting married, starting a family by having a daughter, and forming a specialty business leaning into their diverse professional experiences.

Grove and Garnish is a cutting-edge meal preparation service that taps into the specific needs and desires of today's hardworking professionals, those possessing literally a taste for the best in food but no time to learn to cook with the quality they want nor the time to do so.

If you ever wanted to "eat like a king," Grove and Garnish is the service to have, literally. After all, Chef Joe has not only cooked for a few members of royalty along the way, he has done so for eight U.S. presidents and an astonishing number of celebrities. As the executive chef at the Kennedy Center, he was responsible for all food services for eleven years. His experience in international cuisine fuels his passion for quality and menu diversity. You might even think of him as your own personal celebrity chef, but one with a friendly and warm manner.



Gabriela Taylor and Chef Joe Gurner.

Joe grew up near Pittsburgh, where his passion then was as a southpaw baseball pitcher, and he completed his culinary education in Pennsylvania before beginning his career. He has learned and worked on both coasts of America, as a chef with Marriott, New York-based Restaurants Associates (the managers of Crossvines), and Sodexo, a food service company whose motto is: "We're not just about what's on your plate—we're about building healthier communities one meal at a time." His cuisine philosophy stems from that history of prioritizing quality, whole and fresh foods, and wide diversity, even international menu selections. Everything he cooks is with that purpose of quality, whether it's for his paid customers or for the meals he donates to others.

Gabriela has lived an international life, having been raised by a mother who was an ex-pat working for GE, resulting in her living in Mexico, Switzerland, France, Spain, Portugal, and even Dubai. She speaks four languages and got her degree in hospitality service from a college in Portugal. While Joe cooks and delivers the meals, she is the marketing, sales, and public relations expert for the business, building relations with her customers and the community.

Joe and Gabriela met each other while working for the Kennedy Center, were married in 2013, moved to Peach Tree Road in 2018, and operate the food service out of St. Peter's professional kitchen.

Grove and Garnish offers four meals per week that are ordered each Thursday and delivered on Tuesday. Their menu emphasizes fresh, whole, healthy foods, avoiding processed foods with nearly every single offering made from scratch

from Joe's immense experience and creativity. They source as much food as they can locally and are able to meet each customer's dietary needs with an astounding variety that offers unique meals daily. Their meals are prepared for adult customers, and they do not offer a kids' menu.

Customer Samantha Baker, told the *Monocle*, "Grove and Garnish is not only delicious and convenient but sustainable as well. I love how Joe is utilizing local products to create unique and beautiful meals."

Another customer, Cathy Bupp, said, "I really like the weeks we order Grove and Garnish, it's like eating in a five-star restaurant right in your own home. They offer a variety of choices, and the freshness and flavors are top notch. So far, everything I've had has been my favorite!"

The business mission of offering fresh foods and unique menu selections makes them a perfect fit for the residents of the Ag Reserve and beyond. The love and passion they have for their goal are also evident in their pleasure in becoming our neighbor and friend to the community. You can check them out at groveandgarnish.com.

Fun Fact...

listverse.com

Once poison was viewed as a legitimate weapon (which happened around 331 BC), the fear that a would-be murderer would try to slip something into the food or drink of their victim was very real. That gave rise to the thankless job of the food taster.

Unfortunately, the role of the ever-present cupbearers and food tasters has been mostly lost, but we do know some pretty strange things. Food tasters were present at every one of Henry VIII's feasts, and they spent the entire time on their knees. Given that a single feast could last hours, it had to be an excruciating job—and not just because of the fear of poison or the amount of food they would have been required to eat.

The job wasn't without perks, though, and we know that Henry VII rewarded his chief food taster, William Berryman, with an incredibly poetic gift. Mr. Berryman was gifted the lease of a tavern (called le Rose super le Hope) and a brewery in London. His rent? A single red rose presented to the court at midsummer.

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Continued from page 1.

Commissioners Discuss Proposed Trails Plan and More Grant Proposals at March Meetings

April 15, and officials from the DOT were planning a visit to the town on March 17 to do further assessments.

In their final piece of business at the March 3 meeting, the commissioners unanimously adopted the new fee schedule for various town permits and services that they have had under consideration for some time. The *Monocle* has covered these fees in detail in prior issues.

At their march 17 meeting, the commissioners heard from town staff that a proposal is being developed to construct and pay for a covered pavilion on Whalen Commons. The pavilion would be a tent structure on a platform that would be located near the bandstand. The proposal is being developed because of the costs of renting tents for so many town events that have been affected by extreme weather events.

During the public comments segment of the meeting, Tom McCaskill, a local resident, appeared to talk about the recent study of climate change and the town's water system that had been released by the Montgomery Countryside Alliance. McCaskill had met with town staff and commission president Jim Brown to discuss the study and had also reviewed some research that had been done by the town's hydrologist, Kathy Mihm. He appreciated the time the town had taken to meet with him. He is still concerned that climate change may have such an effect on our area that the town may not be able to support its residents' needs.

Brown said he appreciated Mr. McCaskill's willingness to meet with the town. The town is planning to have a meeting on April 21 that will be dedicated to discussing the town's water system. The town has studied its water system in great detail for many years and has a long history of data about most aspects of the water system, including three-year rolling averages of usage, rainfall levels, and measurements of the aquifer. The town wants to be very transparent; the proposed meeting will help provide all residents with solid information about the town's water system.

Two grant applicants appeared next to discuss their proposals. Brian McNally, a board member of Hope Garden Children's Ballet Theatre (HGCBT), noted that the organization is well known in the area and helps many young people become involved in the arts through dance. The group's dancers appear at a variety of venues and HGCBT wants to purchase some stage screening equipment to make their appearances more professional and visually attractive. The group is seeking approximately \$2,300 from the town to purchase frames and screens that can be used at a variety of venues.

David Therriault and Sandy Wright, the founders of Riverworks, the nonprofit that operates a variety of arts learning programs and is in the process of converting the over-two-hundred-year-old former Methodist Church on West Willard Road into an arts and performing arts center, appeared to request a grant of \$25,000 from the town. Wright explained that with their existing arts programs that are held at their Alden Farms location, Riverworks, has been receiving awards and notice from a variety of performing arts and humanities organizations. With the help of the community, our District 15 state delegation, our county council leaders, including Marilyn Balcombe, and the town government, Riverworks has raised more than \$1.7 million and is ready to begin construction and renovation of the Methodist Church. They plan to break ground this spring, and as Therriault put it, "This will be the year for the launch of the arts and performing arts center."

The commissioners thanked both HGCBT and Riverworks for their submissions and said they would discuss the grant proposals as part of their budget review on March 22.

Yost then pointed out that a number of boards and commissions had openings. Lexie Huber, who is currently on the planning commission, is seeking to be reappointed, and Pilar Garrett and Laura Eckert are seeking reappointment to the Board of Zoning Appeals. Two members of the Parks Board, Patrick Trainor and Doug McKinney, have resigned. McKinney served a total of twenty-one years on the Parks Board, Trainor served twelve years. With their retirements, there is an opening on the board for a full four-year term and one for a one-year term.

Finally, the commissioners voted to adopt the trails plan that they had been discussing for some time. There was some discussion initiated by Commissioner Sarah Paksima about open spaces behind the pond near John Poole Middle School. The land, including an area near the beaver dam along the pond's edge, is in a wetlands area and is quiet and beautiful. She was hoping to make the area

more accessible to the public. It was noted that the committee had looked at the idea of installing some sort of path in the area, but because of the terrain and the extensive wetlands, they thought it might be a costly proposition.

Commissioner Brian Bupp, who was also part of the trail committee and at one time chair of the Planning Commission, explained that the committee did not reject the idea of possibly finding some way in the future to build a trail of some sort. They just felt it was a costly proposition and needed more consideration.

Of Poetry and Prose

discoverpoetry.com

Calling the Roll

April calls,
Through spring time halls,
"Bluebird, crocus, violet,
Do you forget

To grow? To sing?"

Soon they answer to the call,
"Present early one and all,"
O the joy of spring!

— Annette Wynne

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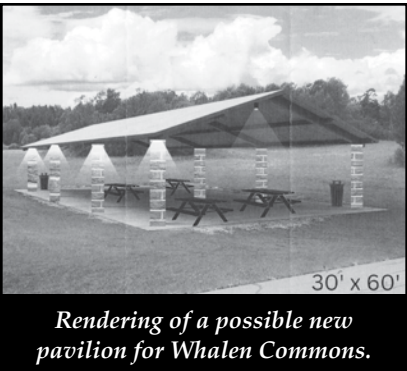
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Tidbits

Planning Commission Considers Whalen Commons Pavilion

Poolesville’s events coordinator, Tara Scholz, and parks superintendent, Preston King, have announced a proposal to the town Planning Commission for a permanently-covered pavilion for Whalen Commons. The structure as proposed would measure thirty feet by sixty feet and would be located parallel to the bandstand, approximately fifty to seventy-five yards in front of it. The cost, while not fully priced out yet, is expected to eventually be covered by no longer paying the \$40,000 in annual fees spent in renting tents and the manpower to put them up and take them down. It would also provide a permanent space for the use of the public.



Poolesville’s “Yacht Club” Takes First Place in Cardboard Boat Race



Poolesville team: Front row: Beth Parker, Stuart LeGrice, Marion Bona (captain), Lori Kocur, Claire Gunster-Kirby, Lee Bristol, Courtney Ives. Back row: Nancy Schultze, Roger Brenholtz, Tom Conlon, Eric Ives, and Bill McDonald.

On March 12, a dozen members of the Poolesville Seniors traveled to the MLK Jr. Swim Center in White Oak to compete against eight other teams, each of whom had built a cardboard boat for the contest. It’s important to note that the ingredients for a “cardboard boat” include not only cardboard, but also plastic bags and duct tape.

The Poolesville team had been building its boat since mid-January, meeting every Tuesday afternoon at the home of Eric and Courtney Ives. Each boat was allowed one rower/paddler to take the boat across the twenty-five-meter pool and back without capsizing or falling out. Lori Kocur was Poolesville’s boat “captain,” chosen for her experience with similar watercraft and her enthusiasm for the sport.

She made the run in 54.5 seconds, about half the time of the next fastest team. The event was sponsored by the Montgomery County Recreation Department, and Councilmember Marilyn Balcombe was there to cheer on all the teams.

Oh, Rory Boy, Your Pipes, Your Pipes Are Singing!

Rory McGill-Conley, 10, entertained area seniors at their recent St. Patrick’s Day bingo event held at Poolesville Baptist Church. The young man’s proud grandparents are Poolesville’s Dennis and Jill Conley. Although young, he is a seasoned, winning competitor in Irish dance, having participated in dancing, singing, and painting in feis (pronounced fesh) competitions all over the U.S. The term feis is often used to refer to Irish dancing competitions.

Continued on page 19.

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Things to Do

March 28

Varsity Home Games

Boys' tennis at Churchill at 3:30 p.m.
Girls' lacrosse vs. Kennedy at 7:00 p.m.
Boys' volleyball vs. Wheaton at 5:30 p.m.
Girls' volleyball vs. Wheaton at 7:00 p.m.

March 29

UMCVFD Annual Bunny Breakfast

Enjoy a delicious feast of pancakes, eggs, sausage, and bacon, a friendly atmosphere, and the satisfaction of giving back to your community. For more information, visit umcvfd.org or call 301-972-8719. Adults: \$13; age 3 to 17: \$10. *Beallsville Firehouse*. 7:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

April 1

Varsity Home Game

Girls' tennis vs. Sherwood at 3:30 p.m.

April 2

Varsity Home Games

Boys' volleyball vs. Northwest at 5:30 p.m.
Coed volleyball vs. Northwest at 7:00 p.m.

April 3

PACC Businesses Helping Businesses Grown

Breakfast meeting featuring Jonathan Harris of Nexthome Envision at *Locals Restaurant*. 8:00 a.m. to 9:30 a.m.

Varsity Home Games

Girls' tennis vs. Blair at 3:30 p.m.
Girls' lacrosse vs. Magruder at 7:00 p.m.

April 4

Varsity Home Game

Softball vs. Sherwood at 3:45 p.m.

UMCVFD Bingo

Bring your friends and family for a night of fun, food, and fantastic prizes! Every game supports our community and your local heroes at UMCVFD. Come hungry! Doors open: 5:30 p.m. Games: 7:00 p.m.

April 5

Varsity Home Games

Baseball vs. Sherwood at 2:00 p.m.
Boys' lacrosse vs. Rockville at noon

April 7

Varsity Home Games

Boys' lacrosse vs. Whitman at 7:15 p.m.
Girls' tennis vs B-CC at 3:30 p.m.

April 8

Village Piece Makers

Led by Anne Holte: themed quilts that honor friends, family, and freedom. *Poolesville Town Hall*. 7:30 p.m.

April 9

Varsity Home Games

Girls' tennis vs. Walter Johnson at 3:30 p.m.

Softball vs. Blake at 3:30 p.m.

Girls' lacrosse vs. Churchill at 7:00 p.m.

April 10

Varsity Home Game

Baseball vs. Damascus at 3:45 p.m.

April 11

Varsity Home Game

Boys' tennis vs. Northwest at 3:30 p.m.

April 12

Varsity Home Game

Baseball vs. Magruder at 2:00 p.m.

April 16

PACC Spring Sip and Paint Event

Includes all art supplies and one beer or wine. Register at poolesville-chamber.com. \$40. *Bassett's Restaurant*. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

April 22

Varsity Home Games

Softball vs. Quince Orchard at 3:45 p.m.
Girls' lacrosse vs. Damascus at 7:00 p.m.

April 23

Varsity Home Game

Boys' tennis vs. Wootton 3:30 p.m.

April 24

Varsity Home Games

Boys' volleyball vs. QO at 5:30 p.m.
Coed volleyball vs. QO at 7:00 p.m.

April 25 through 27

Countryside Artisan Spring Tour

Visit seventeen unique artisan and craft destinations. Meet the artists and see where they work. Visit countrysideartisans.com to download map.

April 26

Varsity Home Game

Softball vs. Watkins Mill at 2:00 p.m.

Sportsman Bonanza!

Social event includes meal, drinks, and beer. \$40 per person. Chance to win 21 prizes. Tickets and info at carrollmanorfire.org. *Carroll Manor Fire Co., 1809 Ballenger Creek Pike, Point of Rocks*. Doors open: 4:00 p.m.; dinner: 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

April 26 and 27

Mid-Atlantic Antique and Garden Festival

Timeless furnishings and vintage items, period pieces to modern fine art. *Aix-la-Chapelle Farm (site of former Landmade Brewing), Jerusalem Road, Poolesville*. Saturday: 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.; Sunday: 10:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

April 28

Varsity Home Games

Girls' tennis vs. Whitman at 3:30 p.m.

Girls' lacrosse vs. at 6:00 p.m.

April 29

Varsity Home Game

Baseball vs. Kennedy at 3:45 p.m.

April 30

PACC Networking Happy Hour

Open to members. No registration required. Cash bar, light snacks provided. Under the tent (weather permitting). *House of Poolesville*. 7:00 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.



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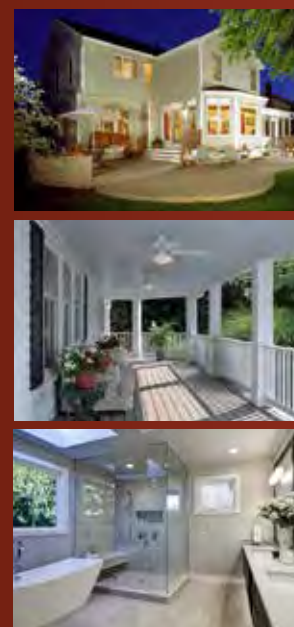
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Youth Sports

Falcon Cheerleaders
Excel at Home and
On the Road

By Jeff Stuart

“PHS cheer had a great year,” said head cheerleading coach Sophia Giarratano. “This fall season, we had eleven girls and one manager on the team. Seven were returners, and four were new to cheer. We cheered at all football games in addition to one varsity boys’ soccer, one varsity girls’ soccer, a few flag football games, one varsity field hockey, and one girls’ volleyball match held at JPMS. We also marched in the Poolesville Day Parade and performed at the bandshell in Whalen Commons later in the day. We had two pep rallies during the fall season as well. Our county competition was on October 26, 2024 at Montgomery Blair High School. We compete in division III which consists of nine teams. We placed sixth. The competition showcased stunting, tumbling, and spirited routines and gave fans an opportunity to support the teams.

For the winter season, we were down to nine girls in total. PHS did not have any home basketball games due to construction, so, for the first time, we traveled during winter season. Normally we would only attend home games. We also attended two wrestling matches. A few of the team members went to a bocce match to support the student athletes for their senior night. We had limited practice space with the construction, but we made the best of it. We are looking forward to the school being completed.

We welcomed Remy Anderson, PHS class of 2020, as our new co-coach. She has been a valuable addition to PHS cheer. I was Remy’s coach in 2019, my first year as a coach. I have enjoyed having her back. The team members love her as well.”

Senior captains Lizzie Lekan-Abioye, Katy Huynh, and Sofia Hersh returned. Other returners were senior Jillian Dove, junior Cailyn Deyo, and sophomores, Elayna Woods and Kacy Kang. Newcomers are sophomores, Danielle Lopez, Alana Tao, and Jaelynn Taylor. Freshman Christabel Lekan-Abioye, Sofia, and Kacy only participated during the fall season. Sofia is on the wrestling team, so she wrestled for the winter season. Freshman Ava Taborgar is the manager.



Back row: Jaelynn Taylor, Christabel Lekan-Abioye, and Danielle Lopez;
middle row: Cailyn Deyo, Elayna Woods, Kacy Kang, and Alana Tao;
front row: Lizzie Lekan-Abioye, Sofia Hersh, Katy Huynh, and Jillian Dove.



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behavior problems are
rarely because a child is
stupid, bad, or lazy ...



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Continued from page 14.

Tidbits

Rory embarked on his Irish dance journey under the guidance of Niall O'Leary of Dublin, Ireland before transitioning to District Irish Dance Academy under the tutelage of Joe Duffey, an original cast member of Riverdance with Michael Flatley. Rory recently performed for the Consul General of Ireland, Sarah Kavanaugh, at the University of South Florida.

Rory hails from Orlando, Florida but is currently living in Poolesville.

Name the Giraffe

The Maggie Nightingale Library is taking care of a very special papier-mâché giraffe for the Damascus Library while it is closed for renovations. It was donated decades ago by a Damascus Library volunteer who modeled the style after art he or she saw while traveling the world. The library needs help picking a name for the giraffe, so the Poolesville community is invited to suggest names. Send your suggestion by email to Remigio-Leonard@montgomerycountymd.gov.



Mascot for Maggie Nightingale Library.

Hail and Farewell to Father Kevin O'Reilly



Father Kevin celebrated his last Mass at St. Mary's after over seventeen years of service.

St. Mary's Catholic Church in Barnesville held a farewell gathering for Fr. Kevin O'Reilly at their pavilion in Barnesville on March 16. During Father's last mass as pastor of St. Mary's, the church was filled to capacity with loving and well-wishing congregants, as he now will be moving to retire in Florida. Father has served the church and community for over seventeen years. He received special recognition and appreciation from the Monocacy Lions Club as their chaplain and from the Knights of Columbus.

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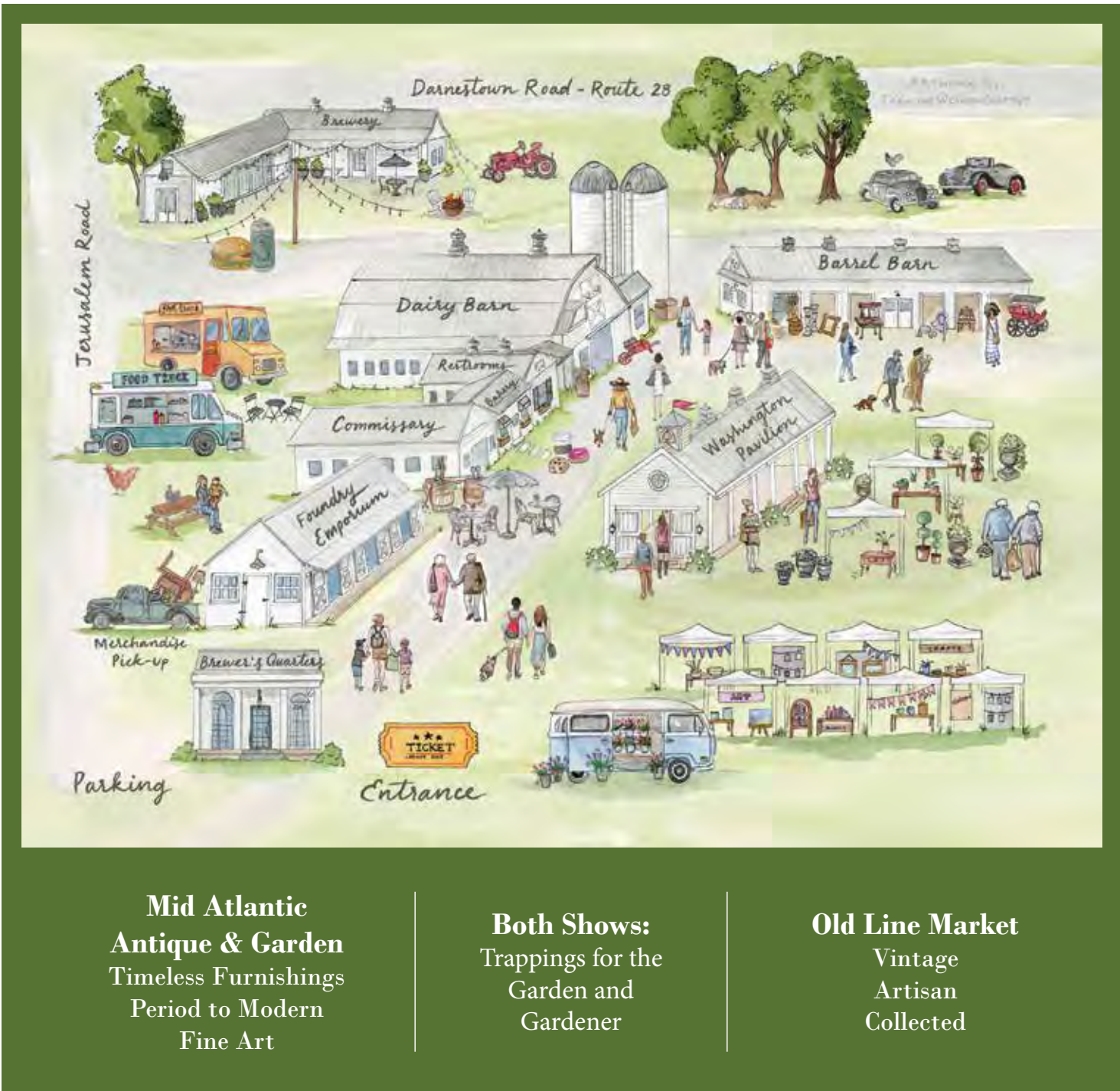
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GOOD FRIDAY
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TENEBRAE SERVICE

EASTER SUNDAY
 April 20
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 10:30 AM - FAMILY WORSHIP SERVICE

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Youth Sports

Falcon Bocce Team Advanced To the County Finals

By Jeff Stuart

In an exciting showdown at the Montgomery County Bocce Championship, Wootton High School emerged victorious, defeating Poolesville, 2-1, in the final match. The event, held at Watkins Mill High School on February 21, showcased the talent and sportsmanship of all eight teams that competed.

"I am very happy with our team's performance this year," said coach Greg Hand. "We had an undefeated regular season and finished second in the county championship. Our players always had a great strategy for their rolls and for what they were trying to do on the court. The players had a great attitude and encouraged each other during games. They always had positive interactions with the other teams we played and with our referees. I am proud to be a part of such a great group, and to coach them, along with assistant coach, Melissa Nagy."

"The season went really well," said junior Avery Savino. "The team won almost all our games, but that wasn't even the best part. We had a lot of new members join bocce this season, especially freshmen, so it was really wonderful to see them learn and improve as they played. It was also great to get to know new people, the atmosphere of the team is always very positive and encouraging. The highlight of the season for me was when we played against Damascus High School. That game in particular was especially fun, and getting to interact with the players from the other team was great! Overall, I think a team-season highlight was when we placed second for both the division and county matches. Winning second place was a wonderful experience. I'd like to give a shoutout to the team's coaches, Mr. Hand and Ms. Nagy, for always being so supportive and kind. I would also like to say thank you to the team as a whole: They're the best!"

"Overall, the season went pretty well," said sophomore Erica Frazin. "Our first game went extremely well, as did nearly every game after it. I really liked getting

to plan with other teammates and hear their strategies. Probably the best part of the experience was getting to see the other team's strategies and figure out how to counter them. I don't want to say I carried the other team members, but I definitely got some great rolls in this season, and so did everyone else. The best part about bocce is that it is more oriented on mental strategy than it is on physical skill. That is one of the reasons I joined the team: because I finally had a chance to show off my skills without having to work myself out. One of my favorite team members was Amelia because she really got me to understand the game and the strategies that often worked best. In the end, our success came in being able to adapt to other team's floors and react accordingly. Teamwork is a really big part of bocce, and I'm extremely happy to have been part of the experience."

Amelia Gough and Eleanor Breeden are seniors. Benjamin Hagley is a junior. Lily Gough and Logan Lamb are sophomores. Darren Booth, Hargun Malhotra, Adam Wolfson, and Sophia Li are freshmen.



2024 PHS Bocce Team.

St. Mary's Church
18230 Barnesville Road
Barnesville
stmaryonline.com
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See us on Facebook



Join us for Holy Week and Easter
Palm Sunday, March 24
Mass Saturday at 5 pm
Sunday at 8:30 & 10:30 am

Holy Thursday, March 28

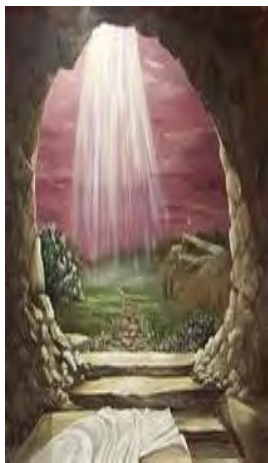
Morning Prayer at 9 am
Mass of the Last Supper at 7:30 pm
Adoration 8:30 - 11 pm

Good Friday, March 29

Morning Prayer at 9 am
Confession at Noon
Stations of the Cross at 3 pm
Service of the Lord's Passion at 7:30 pm

Holy Saturday, March 30

Easter Vigil at 8 pm



Easter Sunday, March 31

Sunrise Mass at 6:30 am

8:30 & 10:30 am - Mass

Easter Egg Hunt at 9:30 am

All are Welcome!

Continued from page 1.

WWII Pilot from Poolesville Honored in France

ABSA 39-45, whose president is Benoit Paquet, will be finishing a website in both French and English soon where you will be able to learn more about them and Mr. Hersberger.

Poolesville's French Connection

By Rande Davis

When Marshall and Edna Hersberger left their homesteading farm in Canada in the 1920s to move to Poolesville, their vision about the future did not include their baby boy, Norman, becoming a hero to the French Resistance.

Norman Davis Hersberger was born in Canada in 1919, but he and his three brothers, Marshall, Homer, and Wilson, were raised in Poolesville in a bungalow on West Willard Road. His family and friends always called him by his middle name, Davis, and upon graduating from Poolesville High School in 1938, he was still six years away from the day he would find himself parachuting from his Mustang fighter plane into enemy territory over Brittany, France.

It was the spring of 1944, just five weeks before D-Day, when the American pilot was rescued by the French Underground Resistance and hidden from the Nazis until they could pull off their planned escape to Spain. Davis was put "into hiding, using barns and villages, traveling by bicycle en route to Spain with the goal of reaching the American Embassy." French resistance leader, Jean-Claude Moussat, and his compatriots traveled with him to Paris, holed up in an apartment for two weeks, put him on a train to Spain only for Hersberger to be caught by the Nazis in Bordeaux, where he had planned to stay only one night.

Upon his capture, Hersberger was taken to Gestapo headquarters in Bayonne, France, for interrogation. Through the interrogation and torture, Davis Hersberger gave only his name, rank, and serial number. Hersberger told The Commercial Appeal (newspaper in Memphis, Tennessee) in 1994 that "the guy got so irritated that I wouldn't talk, he came from behind his desk and slapped me across the jaw. The next thing I knew was that I was on the floor." An enforcer was brought in, and Hersberger was beaten by cane until it finally broke. They then turned to a rubber hose and, finally, a nightstick in an effort to get him to talk.

"I don't know how long the beating lasted, but he must have gotten me in the head after all because the next thing I knew is that I woke up in a dark basement that had muddy puddles, a leak dripping from the ceiling, sharing a crowded cell on flea-infested straw pallets on the concrete."

For resistance leader Jean-Claude Moussat and his fellow fighters, it would not be until 1985 that they would finally have the chance to personally thank Davis Hersberger. Moussat met an American named Phillip Schnell who was in France because his daughter was a foreign exchange student. After hearing about Hersberger from Moussat, Mr. Schnell took it upon himself to research the whereabouts of Davis Hersberger. When he discovered he was from Poolesville, Maryland he contacted town hall, which in turn put him into to contact with Charles Elgin, Sr. Mr. Elgin knew the Hersberger family well, and he informed Mr. Schnell that Norman was always known by his middle name, Davis. From this inquiry, Mr. Schnell was finally able to put Moussat and Hersberger in contact with one another.

Moussat wrote Hersberger, "It was courageous to bear the torture of the Gestapo. Without your courageous silence, the members of our own group and network would have been captured and killed by the Gestapo." Hersberger wrote back to Moussat, "I am grateful for your aid in helping me attempt to escape to England. It's too bad it didn't work."

After World War II, Davis met and married Mary Eloise Shoaf from Covington, Tennessee where they resided and raised their two children. While Davis Hersberger passed away a few years ago, he remained very humble about his wartime experience, only saying during fiftieth anniversary ceremonies in 1994 that "the capture and refusal to talk were just part of his duties as a member of the U.S. armed forces."



1938 PHS graduate Norman Davis Hersberger as a young man and army pilot.



Château de la Berraye where he was held captive.

An amazing coincidence occurred when Hersberger was liberated from the Nazi Camp by Patton's Army. As it happened, another Poolesville man, Charles Bodmer, was with Patton's Army and he was a boyhood friend and baseball teammate of Hersberger. Incredibly, on that fateful day of liberation, both men, nearly four thousand miles from their homes, came face to face in the middle of the prison camp. They joyously celebrated together.

Bodmer, when parting from Hersberger that day, said to the hero-prisoner of war, "You are going home, but my war is not over yet. Please tell my wife, Fern, I am okay." Bodmer's division continued to liberate other death camps and pursued German SS troops into Austria. Shortly after the death of Bodmer in 2010, his son, Ed, came across a book in the library entitled, *The Liberators*, and there inside was a whole chapter about his dad's wartime experience in the 3rd Army, with new details. The *Monocle* will republish much of that chapter in our upcoming May issue. If you or others of your family and friends have any information to share about Norman D. Hersberger will and the ABSA 9-45, we would love to hear it.



Mr. Alain Moquet, the son of Auguste Moquet, who hid 2nd Lt. Norman Davis Hersberger and 2nd Lt. Albert G. Johnson at La Berraye-Caden.

Monocacy Critters



A Pileated woodpecker getting a snack.

Photo by I.J. Hudson

Youth Sports

Young Poolesville Poms Came Together Quickly

By Jeff Stuart

"This has been a substantial year of growth for the poms team," said Coach Adrienne Embrey, "not only in member participation, but also in skill set. We had seven new members with no prior pom experience, so getting them all up to speed to participate at a D1 level in competition took a lot of dedication and grit!"

"We had limited opportunity to perform since there were no home basketball games due to the gym being under construction. It's been amazing to see their progression. They made PHS proud at our D1 County Competition in February, and we were so excited to take home the Choreography Award at our first invitational. The choreography is created together by captains and coaches. We have an incredible team, and the bond they have in and outside of practice and performance is truly inspiring. They've built some long-lasting friendships. Some truly feel a sense of belonging they haven't felt before. There are good things on the horizon."



Rear: Zack Lemarr, Cynthia Momanyi, Jennifer Zhang, Sree Chinta, Hasini Pola, and Skylar Dash; front: Laya Suresh, Emily Ponciano, Julia Kolotev, Harshi Chinta, Sydney Tama-shashky, and Gauri Bhadrabahu.

"We had a really great season," said senior captain Julia Kolotev. "It is a unique team with so many girls new to poms competition. We did well from our first competitive event on through to the county meet. Overall, it was great to see everyone come together as quickly as we did. There were no home basketball games, but we did perform at Clarksburg during the regular season. That was a different environment, and it was fun for us. I really enjoyed marching in the parade at Poolesville Day, especially since we got rained out last year. It was great to see the town come out. I would like to give a shoutout to our freshmen this year: Jennifer Zhang, Sree Chinta, and Hasini Pola. They were just a joy to be around and a great addition. For me, as a senior, it was great to see the impact they had. I know they will do great in future seasons."

"We started in the fall and performed at all home football games," said junior captain Emily Ponciano. "We tried to make it enjoyable for our fans. It is fun for us to dance without the pressure of competition. When we get into competitions, we practice two hours a day, five to six days a week. We had two individual competitions in January at Seneca Valley and at Springbrook. In our first competition, we did our routine and then the judges gave us comments about our performance. They liked our style of our dance the most of all the schools participating. It gave us a real boost and hope for the later competitions. At the

Continued on page 27.

Holy Week & Easter Services



ALL are WELCOME!

Palm/Passion Sunday April 13

9:15-10:15 am
Sunday School

10:15-11:45 am
Nursery (6 mo-4 yr olds)

10:30 am
Palm/Passion Sunday Worship Service
In-Person & YouTube

Holy Thursday, April 17

7pm
Maundy Thursday Service with Communion
In-Person & YouTube

Easter Sunday, April 20

9:15-10:15 am
Sunday School

10:15-11:45 am
Nursery (6 months-4 year olds)

10:30 am
Easter Worship Service
In-Person & YouTube

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Continued from page 24.

Young Poolesville Poms Came Together Quickly


MCPS Division 1 Championship at Blair High School on February 1, we finished fifth. Our dance choreography was really fun. We really enjoyed it. I think we all came together, and I thoroughly enjoyed being on this team. We are a closeknit group. We usually do something creative with a Halloween theme at the Haunted Forest. That is my favorite non-school event. Shout out to our seniors. Julia, Zach LeMarr, and Harshita Chinta gave it their all for their last season. They always brought a smile to practice.”

“This season has been nothing short of amazing for our team,” said Coach Mayra Hayes. “With a mix of seasoned dancers and promising new talent, we are looking forward to the next season and excited to watch how this team evolves and continues to showcase their unique strengths on the dance floor.”

Skylar Dash, Laya Suresh, Sydney Tamashashky, and Gauri Bhadriraju are juniors. Cynthia Momanyi is a sophomore. Coaches Embrey and Hayes are co-coaches.

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- ✓ Ticket price of \$40 include all art supplies needed for your own creation & one beer/wine drink
- ✓ Space is limited.

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- ✓ PACC Networking & Happy Hour
- ✓ House of Poolesville 19611 Fisher Ave
- ✓ Wednesday April 30th 7PM – 9PM
- ✓ Registration not required
- ✓ Cash bar & complimentary light snacks
- ✓ Join us on the patio weather permitting



Holy Week

at
Poolesville Presbyterian Church

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE
April 18, 7:00 p.m.

EASTER SUNDAY WORSHIP SERVICE
April 20, 10:30 a.m.

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Remembrances

Anna J. Poole

Anna J. Poole, 84, of Frederick, passed away on February 24, 2025.

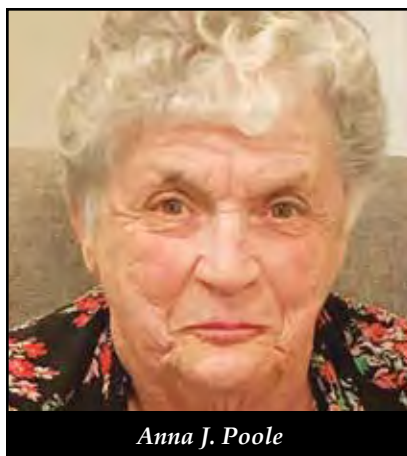
She was the loving wife of the late Francis Raymond Poole.

Born on July 10, 1940 in Maryland, she was the daughter of the late Russell James Rachel and Gladys Bell Poole.

Anna is survived by her son, Raymond R. Poole (Lisa); daughter, Donna R. Keys; one sister, Mildred L. Bodmer; six grandchildren; eleven great-grandchildren; special friend, Jim; special friend, Cathy; and numerous nieces and nephews.

She was predeceased in death by her brother, Russell W. Rachel; and son-in-law, Michael Keys.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks donations be made to the Frederick County Humane Society, 1786 N. Market St., Frederick, MD 21701 or Sugarloaf Mountain, Stronghold, Incorporated, 7901 Comus Road, Dickerson, MD 20842.



Anna J. Poole

Joseph Edward Murtha

Joseph Edward Murtha of Poolesville, age 82, died at home March 15, 2025, after having fought degenerative lung disease.

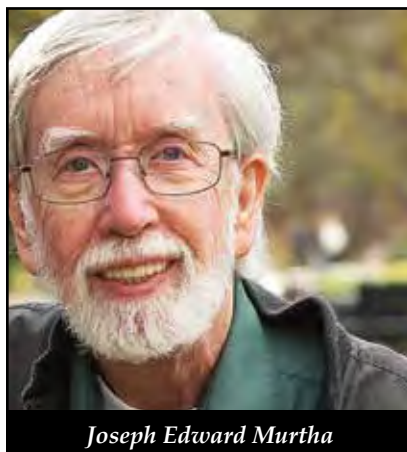
Joe was born December 30, 1942 in Brooklyn, New York to Edward and Eileen Murtha (née O'Meara) and was the only son out of ten children. Raised in the post-war era with Catholic school education, including Jesuit instruction at Brooklyn Prep, Joe showed early aptitude for science and technology, building radios. He served in the U.S. Army as a radar tech, was discharged in 1970, and transitioned to civilian life, pursuing education in electrical engineering at schools in Washington, D.C. and Maryland. During this time, he would meet his future wife, Brenda. They moved to Poolesville in 1974 and have been residents for over fifty years. In the 1970s, Joe started a career in the telecom industry with start-up Hekimian Laboratories, which was later acquired by Axel Johnson, Inc., and where he invented several patented devices and climbed the corporate ladder until retirement in 2001.

Joe was a cancer survivor who spent time with his growing family and continued to serve his local community through volunteer efforts. Honoring his patron saint, St. Joseph, he contributed carpentry projects to local schools and scouting groups. He was active in his church, St. Mary's Catholic Church and Shrine of Our Lady of Fatima in Barnesville, serving as lector, Eucharistic minister, and faith formation teacher. Joe was a member of the Holy Name Society and was very active within the Knights of Columbus (PGK, PFN, FDD) for over thirty years. Mr. Murtha found inspiration in the Holy Family and often volunteered to work with youth. In the 2020s, Joe's declining health provided an opportunity for him to step back and mentor a younger generation of volunteers.

Dad to five children and Pop to eleven grandchildren. Pop spent his remaining "bonus" time with his family, sharing his love of science, solving puzzles, judging cooking contests, and enjoying media about math and physics. Dad was once quoted as saying affectionately that parenting was "scary" and a "full-time job that never ends."

Joe is survived by his lovely bride of fifty-three years, Brenda; his awesome kids, Karan, Helen (Patrick), Andrew (Kristina), Elizabeth (Benjamin), and James; eleven fine grandkids: Rebeckah, Owen, Makenna, Regan, Mara, Kristian, Kaleb, McKenna, Teagan, Frances, and Waker; as well as his sisters Ann, Cathy, Virginia, Eleanor (Jim), Theresa, and brother-in-law Joseph.

Joseph was predeceased by his parents, Ed and Eileen; sisters, Eileen, Maureen, Joan, Barbara; and two brothers-in-law, Jim and Jack.



Joseph Edward Murtha

Jackie L. Phillips

Jack Phillips, 69, of Dickerson, passed away peacefully on March 17, 2025, surrounded by his loved ones. Born on January 8, 1956, in Bethesda, he was the beloved son of the late James A. and Annie V. (Marshall) Phillips of Barnesville.

Jack was a hardworking and loyal employee at Darnestown Management for thirty-seven years, where he became part of the Margruder family. An avid fisherman throughout his life, Jack found peace and joy on the water. His greatest joy was spending time creating memories with friends that will last forever.

Jack leaves a legacy of love and laughter. He will be dearly missed, but his spirit will live on in the hearts of those who loved him.

Jack is survived by his wife Anna, of 48 years; his son, Jackie L. Phillips, Jr.; two sisters, Nina Phillips (Richard Adams) and Nona Payne (Rick); and numerous nieces, nephews, and cousins who will remember him fondly. He was preceded in death by his brothers, Robert and Doug Phillips, and sister Judy Osbourn.

In lieu of flowers, the family requests that donations be made in Jack's memory to the American Cancer Society, supporting the fight against cancer that touched his life and so many others: donate.cancer.org.



Jackie L. Phillips

Margaret "Peggy" Muller Bjarno

Margaret "Peggy" Muller Bjarno of Boyds died February 22 at Holy Cross Germantown Hospital, surrounded by family. She is survived by her husband of twenty-two years, Hans Bjarno; her twin sister Kathy Noble (Allan); nieces, Lara Muller and Susanna Bindel; nephew Matthew Noble (Barbara); and great-nephew, Bradley Noble.

Peggy earned a Bachelor of Fine Arts from Alfred University in 1967 and then a master's degree in art education, also from Alfred University.

While at Alfred, she fulfilled a long-time dream and bought a horse, trail-riding it around the fields and wooded hills of the area. She taught art in public schools in Hornell, New York; Brookfield, Illinois; and Montgomery County. During the years when she was teaching, she exhibited and sold her drawings at the Chicago Art Institute, the Elaine Benson Gallery in Bridgehampton, New York, and several New York City galleries.

She eventually became the owner of Sir Speedy Printing and Graphics in Rockville. She was a member and one-time president of the Rockville Rotary, and a long-time member of Assemblage, an art group.

Peggy was an avid boater, buying her first boat as a fiftieth birthday present to herself. She soon moved up to a larger boat and became highly skilled at boat handling, ultimately teaching workshops offering other women the knowledge and confidence to take the helms of their own boats. In 2002, she and Hans bought a forty-three-foot trawler in Florida and began long distance cruising, up and down the Intracoastal Waterway from the Chesapeake Bay and its tributaries to the Florida Keys, following the seasons. They eventually sold their Rockville home and moved onto their boat full time, and after several years, they settled on New Bern, North Carolina as a good place to continue being live-aboard boaters. During their boating years, she was a member of the U.S. Coast Guard Auxiliary.

In 2018, she moved to Boyds. She was highly creative and skilled in many aspects of art and writing. Everything she did she did well, and she had very high standards. Peggy was beloved by many, and she had loyal friends from every phase of her life.



Margaret "Peggy" Muller Bjarno



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Microchip Company, 'Save This Life,' Ceases Operations and Leaves Thousands of Customers Stranded

Peter H. Eeg, DVM

Poolesville Veterinary Clinic only implants "Home Again" microchips. This is the largest company in the world.

Microchips are used worldwide as a means of reuniting lost pets with their owners. The chip, about the size of a grain of rice, is placed by a veterinarian or shelter employee under an animal's skin, usually around the shoulders. The pet's owner or the veterinary clinic registers the number and their contact information, typically with the company associated with the chip.

When a pet is found, a scanner is used to read the chip's number through a radio signal. The number can be matched to the pet's details via the associated registry. The owner can be reached if their contact details are up to date.

Save This Life has been in business since 2012, Texas state records show, and its chips are distributed nationally. The company touted its system as making information retrieval easier: Simply text the microchip code to the company, and it would contact the owner.

Complaints submitted to the Better Business Bureau stating difficulty communicating with Save This Life demonstrate that issues with the company date back more than a year. Things came to a head in January when veterinarians and clients noticed that the online form that gives users chip information started delivering an error message.

Save This Life has not posted any statement on its website or social media to respond to the concerns or to explain its situation. Texas state records show it having a "franchise tax involuntarily ended" status. This means Save This Life's right to conduct business in Texas "was ended as the result of a tax forfeiture or an administrative forfeiture by Texas Secretary of State."

On January 24, the American Animal Hospital Association removed Save This Life from a list of brands which searches connected registries to determine whether any have owner information on a given chip.

The U.S. pet microchipping industry has had multiple difficulties over the years. Competition among microchip companies led to chips having different radio frequency signals, a big problem before the advent of universal scanners that can detect multiple frequencies. Other parts of the world have adopted ISO standards wherein all chips use the same frequency, but there's no such uniformity in the American microchip marketplace.

Another obstacle is the lack of a central microchip registry. Though AAHA created a central lookup, not all chip companies participate.

A study presented in 2009 in the Journal of the American Veterinary Medical Association found that lost dogs with microchips were returned to their owners at more than twice the rate of dogs without chips.

The owner of the pet must then register the chip, sometimes for an additional fee, and keep their contact details current. When you have a microchip implanted in your furry pal, be sure to check it was registered by your veterinary clinic and that you are able to review and change any information.

In the absence of direction from Save This Life, we recommend that affected owners reregister their pets as soon as possible with a different company. The dozens of microchip registries to choose from can be narrowed down with the help of your current veterinary clinic. Reregistry itself is simple and can be done online or by phone. Some registries charge a fee, up to about \$30, but some are free.



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