

# The Monocacy

# MONOCLE

*A Chronicle of Our Lives: Past and Present for the Future*

*A Monthly Newspaper*

January 2026 • Volume XXI, Number 10



*Local girls from our local Daisy Scouts assisted in placing wreaths in honor of deceased veterans. See more pictures on page 2.*



*Brian Jamison discovered an absolutely amazing collection of art in an old barn. Find out what on page 5.*  
Photo by Colin Gbolie



*World War II Poolesville vet's ID bracelet found in an attic in France. The details are in Tidbits on page 11.*



*Waiting for Santa can make a tyke exhausted. Pictures from our annual Holiday Lighting Festival are on page 14.*

## National Park Service Plans Public Campsite at White's Ferry

By Jon Wolz

At the Canal Towns Partnership holiday luncheon, held on December 10 at the Bavarian Inn in Shepherdstown, West Virginia, C&O Canal Historical National Park ranger, Joshua Nolen announced that a contract has been issued regarding the cabins and future public campsite at White's Ferry. The cabins will be torn down and removed in January 2026. This is the first phase of turning the nineteen-acre site into a campsite for the public to use and enjoy.

The National Park Service (NPS) is in the process to reimagine future use of an approximately seventy-three-acre site within the Chesapeake & Ohio (C&O) Canal National Historical Park ("the park") at White's Ferry. Their goal is to provide new and enhanced public amenities and opportunities for group gathering and



*These cabins on the Potomac River will be torn down this month to prepare for a new recreational campsite.*

recreation along the Potomac River. The site, referred to as "the White's Ferry area" includes tracts 17-101 and 17-102 located in western Montgomery County and is generally bound by the Potomac River to the west, Federal property to the north, White's Ferry Road, River Road, and Federal property to the east, and Federal and private property

to the south. The site surrounds the private property where the White's Ferry "river crossing" operation and White's Ferry Store & Grill are located. The future of the river crossing operation is outside of the scope of the park property and is not located on Federal property.

**Continued on page 13.**

## Mark Carothers: A Man for All Reasons

By Rande Davis

If you grow up in a town named Slippery Rock, perhaps you subconsciously have a natural inclination to watch your step. For Mark Carothers, Poolesville High School principal, in maneuvering amongst the unsuspected challenges he has faced these past seven years—starting with COVID-19 and post-pandemic, through on-going reconstruction, accompanied by an expanding student enrollment—life at the helm has been very challenging. At times, it may have seemed a lot like trying to walk across a rushing stream with the rocks hidden just below the surface. For better or worse, Poolesville is a lot like Slippery Rock, Pennsylvania.

Even though the assignment at PHS, with its great academic record, must have been motivating at first, no one could have anticipated the difficulties it would bring. The good news is that

this "captain" of the ship has proven to be fully up to navigating through the storms.

Right from the beginning, life was Mark's greatest teacher. Born on his single mother's eighteenth birthday, he grew up in poverty, raised in a trailer park, in a family of two younger half-brothers and one half-sister. No one in his immediate or extended family had ever graduated college. Even though Slippery Rock High School was directly across the street from Slippery Rock University, the world of advanced education seemed much further away.

As he entered high school, he welcomed the safety and structure it provided, a respite from his home life. He even allowed himself to think of becoming a doctor. Quiet and reserved in the early years of high school, he

**Continued on page 9.**



*PHS principal Mark Carothers reflected on seven years at the helm of our high school.*



## Family Album



*The JPMS Leo Club (youth branch of the Lions Clubs) appreciated serving the meal for their elders.*



*The Odd Fellows' annual luncheon is a wonderful way to share the spirit of the season with friends.*



*Left: The Western Montgomery Baptist Church brought the spirit of the season to the annual Odd Fellows Christmas luncheon.*



*Clockwise from above: Over two hundred volunteers, from young scouts to senior citizens, placed memorial wreaths at the graves of veterans at Monocacy Cemetery.*





## Town Government

### Commissioners Discuss Agenda For the Year at First Meeting

By Link Hoewing

At their first meeting of the year on January 5, the commissioners of the Town of Poolesville discussed a lengthy list of items they need to tackle in the coming year. They also reviewed the list of commemorative events and months that the town will acknowledge by flying flags and putting displays on the electronic sign. They started this practice last year and adopted a policy for developing, each year, a list of commemorative events to acknowledge.

Before getting to the business items, however, the commissioners celebrated the winners of the annual Holiday Lighting Contest. This year, the contest had some new features. Citizens voted this year for each winner and had access to an online map that provided a drive-by view of all the homes or businesses registered to compete. The list of winners can be found in Tidbits on page 11.

The commissioners briefly discussed the White's Ferry rally. It was noted that some ten news organizations covered the event. Commission President Jim Brown said it does appear the media attention has spurred more discussions between the two parties, but we do not know if there is any real progress being made.

The commissioners also noted that Neal Tiemann had been approved to serve on the Board of Zoning Appeals.

The commissioners then turned to consideration of a letter submitted by Laura Wright and Riley Jamison regarding their property at 1641 Budd Road. They were requesting the release of certain provisions they agreed to in the annexation agreement for their property in 1989.

First, they asked that a Declaration of Property for Public Use that was promised on the property be considered complete. They pointed out that since the agreement was made, a Declaration of Property for Public Use for the benefit of the town was made around the entire perimeter of their farm bordering on Hughes Road, Willis Lane, and Budd Road and recorded in land plats.

Another of the terms of the Annexation Agreement provides that, upon request by the town, a quarter-acre well site should be deeded to the town with access provided on request. The owners said that since that agreement, the town decided to place a well on a nearby property instead of on their farm. They requested that this well deed be removed from the agreement.

Finally, the Annexation Agreement provides for certain conveyances and easements to facilitate storm drainage and construction of a storm water pond. Since that agreement was made, they said that the town has made other improvements that can handle storm drainage concerns, so this provision is no longer needed.

Wade Yost said that the staff only disagreed with removing the well site provision. He said it is a good idea to have in place other alternative well sites, although there is no immediate need for the site. He also said there are no plans for development on the property, so the storm drainage provisions are no longer needed.

The commissioners approved the staff recommendations.

Under a policy adopted a year ago, each year, the Poolesville commissioners consider a staff-generated list for the display of commemorative flags for the upcoming year. A majority of the Poolesville commissioners must vote affirmatively to adopt the proposed list. The list this year includes Black History Month, Women's History Month, Autism Month, Military and First Responders' Appreciation Month, Pride Month, POW/MIA Day, Hispanic Heritage Month, National Farmers' Day, and Native American Heritage Month.

During discussion, it was remarked upon that most of the commemorative flag celebrations were month-long events, but a few single-day commemorations were also included. It seems, based on the discussion, that Juneteenth will be added as a day to commemorate.

The commissioners unanimously approved the list.

The commissioners then turned to a review of a list of projects and activities they need to complete in the coming year. The list is a long one that begins in January when the town has to introduce new water capacity calculation/methodologies which will lead to a new allocation plan.

In January, the town also receives budget requests which start the process of developing a draft 2026 Budget and Tax Rate. The budget timeline includes

Continued on page 7.



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## Rande(m) Thoughts Did You See It?

By Rande Davis

Did you see our announcement about the new focus and direction of the *Monocle*? No? It was right there for all to see on our front page. Look at the front page again to find it. Go ahead, look now, I can wait.

Ha, you still didn't see it? Ever since our very first issue (March 5, 2004), right below the title of our newspaper, we boldly proclaimed, "Keeping an Eye on the News." I always liked joking that we are a small town, so we need to keep only one eye on the news. It's hard to let go of that phrase, but it is too limited to describe what this publication is all about.

Our new description says, "A Chronicle of Our Lives: Past and Present for the Future." A simpler but spot-on way to explain our mission. Look at it this way: It's like going from CBS *Evening News* to CBS *Sunday Morning*.

Don't get me wrong, we will still be covering the news. The big issues will still be covered factually. That role is too important to just drop. When I hear someone bemoan the action of the town commissioners by saying, "Why didn't they tell us first?" I know they are not a reader of the *Monocle*. We report on every commissioner meeting, so you can easily stay relevant on town matters, and what they do truly matters. It takes a lot to do so. I did it for ten years, and Link Hoewing has been doing a masterful job of reporting for twelve years. Think about it: He sits through two to three hours of town meetings, then must spend another two or three writing it up. That saves you so much time. If you are one who asks, "Why don't we have a supermarket?" or "Why can't White's Ferry open?" or "Where did the idea of all those new homes come from?" Then, simply put, you are not reading the *Monocle*. We will always be

there for you on all the key news. We may not be your first exposure to something important happening in the area, but we will be your most accurate.

Going forward, you will see the *Monocle* featuring special themes for most of our issues. The best example of this is our September 2024 special edition themed, "The Grande Dames of the Monocacy." I had the distinct honor and joy to have befriended so many of the most iconic women from our area. I interviewed and wrote their stories over the past twenty-two years. We reprinted those marvelous stories in an issue so special that it is a collector's item now. Next month, our theme will feature stories about many of our leaders and heroes from our Black community. Later, we will cover farming history and more. Stay tuned throughout 2026; we are planning many archival issues that you will want to keep forever. By the way, if you want to read the special edition of our women, you can find it—and all past issues—at [www.monocacymonocle.com](http://www.monocacymonocle.com).

One of the first and most pleasant discoveries I made when starting the *Monocle* is that everybody has a story—and not just a narrative—but a truly intriguing and often from an eye-popping angle. It's not just those among us now, but perhaps even more interesting are the people who came before us. It starts with John Poole, Jr. and continues right up to those who have left us more recently, like De Willard or Ed Brown.

We will feature all these people and events from our past and present, but one ingredient that makes it even more impactful is that it is all done in print. In print, it becomes something for the future. In print, it becomes a picture you put on the refrigerator or hold in your hands like clinging to a person or memory.

Sadly, one of the "news" features we will continue to publish is Remembrances. I cannot describe the level of honor we get from remembering those

Continued on right.

## Kolm's Corner



Continued from left.

who, just yesterday, walked among us. Each of them truly mattered and impacted us in ways we cannot truly measure. Theirs was truly a wonderful life. Like fellow actors in our shared play, they starred in their own way. A quick flash on social media doesn't give the heft their lives deserved.

I thank you so much for being one of our many loyal readers, and I especially thank those who advertise in the

*Monocle*. Most of our advertisers do so every single issue. They, more than most, understand our mission and appreciate our role in uplifting our community. To them, the economic benefit is fine, but it is being a partner in our journey that motivates them the most. Like you, they love our town and Upcounty community. Because of our advertisers, we exist, and to them, we say thank you, and so should you.

### The Monocacy MONOCLE

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## Local News

### *You Know about the Boston Tea Party— How about Poolesville's Tea Story?*

By Rande Davis

In 2015, when realtor Brian Jamison was tasked with cleaning up the grounds of a farm in Barnesville and preparing it for sale, his initial reaction to the project was of being completely overwhelmed by the scope of work. The farm was covered with mounds of trash, and his job was to remove all of it. At first, the clean-up was unremarkable—until he went into the barn. There, astonishingly, was a huge “mountain of crates” completely covered by trash. As he opened the crates to determine what they held, he was completely blown away by what he found.

Upon opening the stacks upon stacks of wooden crates, he discovered a most amazing collection of unbelievably beautiful pieces of what appeared to be art and carvings.

Although ordered to simply discard everything, he could not bring himself to just throw it all the way. His instincts, thank goodness, were spot on. His discovery was like finding boxes filled with the pieces of a giant jigsaw puzzle. Only this was no simple puzzle, but the building blocks to a genuine Tajik tea house that when completed could be a 20x12-foot open-air cafe. He eventually came to learn that the items he found were hand-crafted, hand-painted pieces made by over forty craftsmen.

He bought two fifty-three-foot trailers to store all the crates and placed them on various farms in and around Poolesville while he began his decade long research into his stunning find. His investigation finally got him in touch with University of Colorado professor Nate Jones, the author of a book about the story behind the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse, a gift to the Colorado city by its sister city Dushanbe, the capital of Tajikistan, in the late 1980s.

Brian bought Jones's book and contacted the author describing what he had found in an old barn in the Maryland countryside. Intrigued, the professor and his co-author, Kate Sector, came to Maryland to see his discovery firsthand. Amazingly, they confirmed that Brian's boxes of junk not only contained handmade pieces to an authentic Tajik teahouse, but it was made by the same craftsmen and artisans that made the Boulder Dushanbe teahouse.



*This is just a small part of  
the 20x12-foot Tajik Teahouse  
found in Barnesville.*

The mystery of how such an antiquity came to Barnesville is unclear. All that the previous farm owner remembered was that, sometime in 1995, a Russian landscaper was living in her barn, and he knew a man named Izatullo Khoshmukhamedov. The name was well known to people in Boulder. Then again, that's a name once heard not soon forgotten.

According to former farm owner, trucks “just showed up” one day in 1995 and started unloading all the crates into the barn with no prior notice or agreement,

Continued on page 24.

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## Senior News

### Poolesville Seniors Present Virtual and In-Person Programs

Visit the Poolesville Seniors' website, [poolesvilleseniors.org](http://poolesvilleseniors.org), to register for these and a wide variety of virtual and in-person events. Sign up at [poolesvilleseniors.org/email-list](http://poolesvilleseniors.org/email-list) to receive our weekly PS Postscript newsletter or call 301-875-7701. Most in-person events take place at *Poolesville Presbyterian Church's Speer Hall at 17800 Elgin Road (Rte. 109)*.

**Registration is required, but all events are open to the entire community and free unless otherwise noted.**

#### January 10

##### Continuing Hikes: Seneca Aqueduct Hike with Jon Wolz

Join Jon Wolz for a 4.5-mile continuing hike at Seneca Aqueduct. Please bring lunch or snacks, and water. Please sign up in advance if you are coming on the hike. *Parking lot on Riley's Lock Road.* 11:00 a.m.

#### January 12

##### Caregiver and Senior Services in Montgomery County Resource Event

Come join us to learn about a variety of Senior Services available to seniors, families, and caregivers in Montgomery County. *Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church.* 1:00 p.m. to 3:30 p.m.

#### PS Book Club:

##### One Summer by David Baldacci

Join our discussion of David Baldacci's *One Summer*. The narrative explores themes of love, loss, resilience, and the importance of family. Zoom. 7:00 p.m.

#### January 14

##### Woodworking Demonstration

Join us for a demonstration of artisan woodworking on a lathe. William

Price will demonstrate his skill at making bowls with local wood to a small group of eight in his barn. *21800 Beallsville Rd, Barnesville.* 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

#### Darts Social

We will supply the darts; you supply the nimble fingers and dead-eye aim. Registration is limited. *Speer Hall.* 2:30 p.m. to 4:30 p.m.

#### January 15

##### Trail Hike: Little Bennett Regional Park

Join a five-mile loop hike of natural trails starting on the Pine Grove Trail and proceed on the Sidewinder and Western Piedmont Trails. *Hyattstown Mill Rd.* parking lot. 10:00 a.m.

#### January 16

##### Movie Night: The Last Rodeo

Join us for our Friday evening movie, *The Last Rodeo*. Joe Wainright is a retired rodeo legend who once broke his neck while riding a bull. When his grandson needs costly surgery, Joe makes a daring decision to enter a high-stakes bull-riding competition to save his grandson with the \$750,000 prize. *Speer Hall.* 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.

#### January 20

##### Elvis and the Civil War

Join Civil War historian Brad Stone to learn how Elvis was influenced by the post-Civil War South, and how he would help pave the way for the post-World War II evolution of that region and the creation of a more united nation. *Sanctuary, 17800 Elgin Rd.* 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

#### January 21

##### An Invitation to Dine Out for Solo Seniors

Monthly gatherings of single seniors, men and women, and those otherwise looking for company while dining out. *Vasili's Kitchen, 705 Center Point Way, Gaithersburg.* 5:30 p.m.

#### January 23

##### Line Dancing with 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. *Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church.* 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

#### January 27

##### Hawaiian Luau Bingo

Hawaiian Luau Bingo with eleven games of bingo, Hawaiian trivia, a sing-along, refreshments, and prizes! Bring a friend or neighbor and feel free to wear your favorite luau gear. Open to all ages. *St. Peter's Episcopal Church.* 1:00 p.m. to 3:00 p.m.

#### Weekly and Monthly Events:

Visit [poolesvilleseniors.org](http://poolesvilleseniors.org) for details if you are interested in the following: Pickleball Indoor Open Play, Walking Club, Ping Pong, Tai-Chi, Bridge, Walking Club, Body Sculpting, Birthday Card Creation Club, Zumba Gold, Knitting and Crochet Instruction and Support, Let's Dance, Chair One Fitness with Deirdre, Cornhole, Mahjong with Terri Pearson.



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### Commissioners Discuss Agenda For the Year at First Meeting

commission work sessions in March, a public presentation about the draft budget on March 16, a public hearing on April 6, and a vote on adopting the budget on May 4. There are also two major loans the commissioners have to close on regarding enclosures for Wells 2 and 3 and the Westerly waterline replacement.

The list of projects also shows that the Flag Design Committee intends to have its work done and a new flag approved, so it can be used on Poolesville Day.

Periodically, the town reviews its code to determine if there are outdated provisions or any changes needed in zoning. The town attorney is already reviewing the code and will be providing input to staff if there are any changes needed. Due to state law changes, the town has to update its rules concerning the location of solar panels. Work has been moving forward on the proposal to create a new Cultural Arts District which will require changes in the code as well.

Elections will be taking place this year, as well, and the seats of Commissioner Sarah Paksima and Commission President Jim Brown will be open. Paksima said at the meeting that she is running for reelection.

The town has a number of upcoming projects that are significant for 2026, including the Streetscape Plan where construction is expected to begin, developing project plans to redesign the town's water system to make PFAS treatment more efficient and less costly, and biannual paving projects for roads in town, an \$800,000 project.

Additionally, the town—and its Fair Access Committee—have a number of efforts underway to address inequities in county services, including building a community center starting next year, the construction of a pool bubble, improvements in Rural Rustic Roads maintenance, and the reopening of White's Ferry.

The commissioners were not asked to approve these plans formally, but they are all now aware of the busy workload in the coming year.

Finally, Yost said that the town now has much more precise information about the "zones of influence" in the aquifer that affect how decisions are made about where to place wells and pumping levels in wells. The town also will have money in its budget to search for more well sites.



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## Local News

### Despite the Bitter Cold, Marylanders Rally to Open White's Ferry

By Rande Davis

This past December marked the fifth anniversary of the closure of the historic White's Ferry. While nothing on the horizon appears to be hopeful toward resolving the impasse, Poolesville's Fair Access Committee did not want the milestone to pass by without at least an acknowledgment of our continued frustration and dilemma.

On December 30, despite the biting cold and cutting winds, just over 150 concerned citizens rallied at the ferry landing with protest signs in hand. With signs such as "Reopen Poolesville's Main Street," "5 Years No Ferry, No Way," "Reopen the Ferry, get it Done!" the frustrated crowd shouted out their concern loudly as if to try awakening the landowner across the river.

Jim Brown welcomed the shivering group, although hope for a solution any time soon seemed dim at best. Speaking on the need to continue fighting for the opening of the ferry were county councilpersons Evan Glass, Andrew Friedson, and Marilyn Balcombe. State Delegate David Fraser-Hidalgo also spoke. To dramatize the issue, Dickens's *A Christmas Carol* was used as a model for a skit by various speakers in emulating the Ghosts of Christmas Past, Christmas Present, and Christmas Future to admonish the landowners and to rally the attendees.

Even though a combination of county, state, local government, and private donors have put up three million dollars for the two parties to come to an agreement no later than this coming July, the prospects for a solution are currently very unlikely. The primary cause of the impasse is Libby Devlin, still insisting on a per car payment (fifty cents) compensation arrangement. The past owner, the current owner (Kuhn family), and the county government have all rejected a per car arrangement, regardless of an actual amount, as an unworkable way forward. Instead, they favor a negotiated lump sum cash payment to resolve the issue. To date, the offer of \$1.5 million for the very small, totally unusable land, has proven unacceptable to Virginia's Rockland Farm family. The greater loser for not finding a solution will be the Virginia party as the Kuhn family will still have value in White's Ferry location with its popular White's Ferry Grill and other potential avenues open for possible revenue. The greatest losers are the commuters on both sides of the Potomac that used the ferry for decades and the businesses of the Town of Poolesville that benefitted from the pass-through traffic.

The headline story in this issue of the *Monocle* points to one such opportunity for revenue for the White's Ferry owners. The National Park Service is in the initial stages of developing a modest recreational campsite along the river adjacent to the landing. When that opens, the Kuhns—as well as the Town of Poolesville—will, at the very least, have the potential of recapturing some of the lost revenue from a closed ferry from the campers who will pass through Poolesville, and from possible new services offered to them from the ferry proprietor. It is unlikely any new venture at the landing could completely cover the financial loss to the town and private owners, but Devlin will be left alone with nothing at all.



The rally at White's Ferry.

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Continued from page 1.

Mark Carothers: A Man for All Reasons

grew into his own as a junior. Academically, he possessed a natural inclination toward math, so this moved him to consider being a math teacher.

He didn't participate as an athlete in school but enjoyed attending the games and understands the socialization benefits sports provide to all students. Later in life, he developed an enjoyment of running, and he has run in twelve marathons and completed a half-Ironman triathlon, mostly in support of raising almost \$50,000 for the Leukemia and Lymphoma Society in memory of his best friend.

In his senior year, he applied to several colleges but realistically his only viable path was to walk across the street and attend SRU. His plan was to begin at SRU, a reasonably-priced state university, and then transfer after his freshman year to Indiana University in Pennsylvania. Then something happened he had not anticipated. He came to like his life at the SRU with all its new friendships, so he chose to stay where he was most comfortable, his new home (not far) away from home.

He chose math education as his first major, but a calculus teacher who seemed to be someone who hated to teach, who didn't even seem to like the class, dampened Mark's spirit toward a math career. This opened his interest in history, particularly American History. Still, he had one more conversion of interest, settling on his final decision to pursue an English teaching career.

He obtained a master's degree in curriculum and instruction with an emphasis on educational leadership at McDaniel College in Westminster. His education and talent thrust him into leadership roles, first as an English resource teacher, becoming the head of the Magruder High School English department. An important and formative piece of his professional career was his seven years at Watkins Mill teaching English. Ultimately, this led to Mark filling in temporarily as assistant school administrator before being made the permanent replacement assistant administrator for Magruder.

He then got promoted as full time assistant principal at Damascus, followed that being named assistant principal at Clarksburg, and then on July 11, 2019, he had the "absolute blessing" to be appointed principal at PHS.

Poolesville has a stellar academic reputation, and if you ask him, he knows why. Although it may sound cliché, but "what truly makes PHS special is the students" is a heartfelt observation.

"The kids are amazing and very open and accepting people," he added. Mark points to an event during an orientation of incoming freshmen led by a panel of senior students as his example of this. "We had a panel of current high school students who were talking to incoming high schoolers. One of the senior students noted that 'Poolesville and surrounding community were very accepting and very welcoming, and no matter what your previous experience, you will find your people in this school, you will find your circle, you will be loved, and you will be supported.'" As principal, Mark tells us he was just sitting there getting goosebumps, because he couldn't think of a better compliment about the school.

One of the new rising ninth graders raised a hand and said something like, "You all keep talking about finding your people and finding your circle in the overall school community, but what if you don't want that. What if you just want to be left alone and keep to yourself?"

To this stark claim of preferring isolation, the senior student replied, "You know, I appreciate that. I would ask you, though, if that is what you want due to your previous school experiences, because if you have, I want you to know you will not have that experience here, and I tell you, regardless of how large or small you want your circle to be, you still will have your people, your circle, whether it is one or two others or ten to fifteen others." Mark was amazed and very proud of the maturity expressed by the senior in this response. "That was such a great answer off the cuff and just a wonderful message to send.

"That's an example of why I said, first and foremost, it is the students that make this school such a special place, primarily because of the way they treat one another. Of course, we have the same problems and issues as other high schools. Sometimes there is bullying, or disagreements, or altercations, but thankfully, for the most part, our students really are an accepting group."

Poolesville continues to grow, yet as it does it has become an even more local school. Originally, with the addition of many extra houses of education (Global Ecology, Humanities, Independent Studies Program, and Science, Math, and Computer Science), the student population was two-thirds from the immediate area, but now, with the increase in homes, forty-seven percent of the students reside locally. The current population is nearing the 1,500-student body the building was designed to handle. The good news is that the infrastructure was

Poolesville High School by the Numbers

- **Current Enrollment:** 1,374 students
  - 7.9% Black
  - 37.8% Asian
  - 10.5% Hispanic
  - 7.3% Multiracial
  - 26.3% White
- There are four magnet houses, three of which are criteria-based:
  - **Global Ecology**—25% of students
  - **Humanities**—16.5% of students
  - **Independent Studies Program**—41.2% of students
  - **Science, Math, Computer Science**—17.4% of students
- As discussed, our local population is growing. We have local students in all four of our magnet houses. **Students from our local area are 48.4% of our student population.**
- **We represent 17 high school clusters**, including our own.  
*(Note: this data was pulled in October, so some numbers may have changed)*

designed to be able to easily accommodate up to 1,800 students with only modest adjustments and additions.

If Mark had one rallying motto, it would be: "Good things happen in school when you let students lead. If they want to do something, our job is not to put up barriers but rather to find ways to make it work. That's not blindly saying yes to everything, but if we can sit down and have a conversation, and they come up with ideas that are unlikely to work, we can make alterations or adjustments." His leadership style is, instead of simply saying it is not going to work, he asks how about doing it a bit different. "If they feel they get a voice in the process, you get much more involvement from students."

Academics, for Mark, is not the only thing important in high school. "That's the important part for sure, you want to make sure students are learning, but students are only going to learn in an environment where they feel welcomed, accepted, and heard, and quite frankly, school needs to be fun, too. It's not all about the AP classes and the academic pressures, but high school is supposed to overall be a positive experience. We keep that as one of our guiding principles."

Carothers is a big supporter of sports in making school fun and what it can do to maximize the full high school experience. For example, student attendance at home games has gotten a whole new emphasis. Four years ago, he appointed student section leaders to improve support and the spirit that comes from sports. He meets with these leaders before every game. He tasks them to develop a special theme for each game. As an example, the night when the American Legion was on hand to unfold its 30x40-foot garrison flag during the playing of the National Anthem, the evening theme was selected to be Red, White, and Blue Night. The students came dressed in those patriotic colors for the theme night. Another example of a theme was in October during Breast Cancer Awareness Month; the students came to the game dressed in pink for homecoming. Neon Night had all the students dressed in fun, colorful clothes.

Because of the students, the staff is energized and dedicated. "I think it is because of the students and the motivations they bring that allows staff to always be willing to experiment and try things new."

When the pandemic hit, it didn't come with an instruction manual on how to handle it. "I knew we were going to have challenging days ahead, there was no history or precedents to look to, we only had our guiding principles to work with." I told the staff, "I want us to develop our own guiding principles to help support our decisions and our leadership, and whenever things get tough what can guide us are those principles and say, 'This is what is important.'"

These are the Five Guiding Principles created by the Instructional Leadership Team in the summer of 2021:

*We believe every student by design has the right to a well-rounded and rigorous education that prepares you for success in college/career and beyond.*

*We believe human connection is foundational to meaningful learning.*

*We embrace challenges as opportunities to reach individuals in the moment with innovative instruction and approaches.*



## Tidbits

### The Local SAR Recognized Wolz for Service

At the quarterly meeting of the Gen. William Smallwood Chapter of the Sons of the American Revolution, Patricia Wolz was awarded the Martha Washington Medal by chapter president Jon Wolz. This award was given in grateful recognition of her outstanding service to the Sons of the American Revolution.

### Hope Garden Staged a Magical A Winter's Eve Performance

"It's magic," came the quiet conclusion from a young boy in the audience last December, his whisper carrying more weight than any review. For Hope Garden Children's Ballet Theatre (HGCBT), that simple reaction captures the heart of *A Winter's Eve*—a production that returned this season with an expanded celebration of global traditions.

Produced by the Poolesville-based nonprofit and performed by children and teens training at Essence Studios, *A Winter's Eve* remains a two-act journey designed for families. The format builds on the previous year's warmly-received production, which blended storytelling, cultural exploration, and classical ballet into an accessible holiday experience for audiences of all ages.

Act I invited the audience to join a child, played by the gifted Lily Petrella, as she is led by her magical snowman, HGCBT Artistic Director Claire Jones, on an exploration of winter celebrations from various parts of the world.

Act II transitions into the familiar sparkle of *The Nutcracker*, focusing on the elegance and discipline of classical ballet. Audiences saw featured performances by a graceful Flower Queen (Alarica DeLongchamp), a gallant Cavalier (Sava Brizhik), and precise, yet ethereal Sugar Plum Fairies (matinee: Kate Borman; evening: Kendall Zimmerman).

Ms. Jones has described *A Winter's Eve* as a production built to welcome newcomers while still delighting seasoned ballet audiences—a balance that has helped the show become a seasonal tradition for many local families.

### Daniel-Jeffers Post 247 American Legion Gifted Town Employees for the Support



*Poolesville's town park and street crew was recognized and appreciated by the American Legion Post 247.*

The American Legion Post 247 extended its sincere thanks to the dedicated staff of the Poolesville Public Works Department for all their support through the year. Each employee was awarded fifty dollars for all they do. The post's deputy commander, Annette Howard, said, in presenting the gifts, "Your professionalism and behind-the-scenes service strengthen our town and support our community and veterans every day. We are truly grateful for all that you do."

Continued on page 11.



*The president of the local Sons of the Revolution, Jon Wolz, had the distinct honor of presenting an award of appreciation for service to his wife, Patricia Wolz.*



## Making Our History Come Alive

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Continued from page 10.

Tidbits

**Washington Post Recognized  
PHS Athlete**

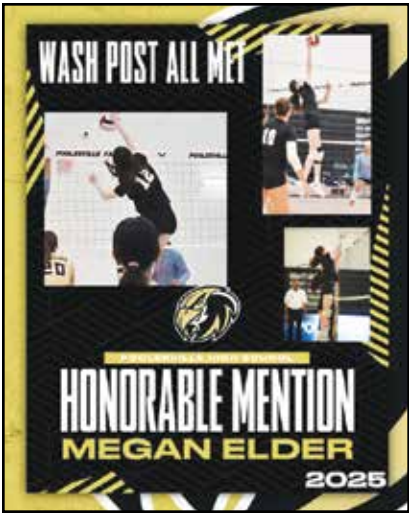
Congratulations to Megan Elder, PHS Girls' Volleyball 2025 *Washington Post* All-Met Honorable Mention.

**ID Bracelet of Poolesville War Hero  
Found in French Attic**

Monocle readers are familiar with our Mystery History of how a Poolesville veteran became a hero, recognized in a French museum. His name was Norman Davis Hersberger, a man whose heroism in France during World War II recently was honored with a special display in a museum to give honor to actions for what the French consider they owe him.

An update to his history is that his military ID bracelet was recently found. Eric Renaudeau's mother, the wife of Maurice Renaudeau, who witnessed Norman's airplane crash and helped him, passed away thirteen years ago. Eric recently discovered his ID bracelet in a box of the artist's paintbox inside an envelope. It has been stored away unopened all these many years.

Hersberger is a hero to the French because, after his plane crashed, and the French Resistance hid him away to get him to Spain then back to Poolesville, he was captured and imprisoned by the Nazi Gestapo. During his time in the prison camp, he never betrayed his French rescuers. This amazing story can be read in the April 2025 issue of the *Monocle* online.



Larry Bupp, Ed Reed, Patty Mitchel family, Cathy Wyne family, Jim Brown, Matt Cooke family, Alan Hobbs, and Sarah Paksima.

**Winners of the 2025 Town Holiday Decoration Contest**

**Griswold Award:** Matt Cooke, 17938 Bliss Drive.

**Misfit Toy Award:** Patty Mitchel, 19355 Hempstone Avenue.

**Home for the Holidays Award:** Geoff and Lindsay Hedrick, 17930 Bliss Drive.

**Candy Cane Lane Award:** Cathy Wyne, 19908 Spurrier Avenue.

**Merry Marketplace Award:** The Sweet Lemon.

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## Garden

### Garden Thoughts for a New Year

By Maureen O'Connell

We are now into January, the first month of the new year. It is traditional at this time to look over the events of the past year to see where we might change things to improve our health, our lifestyle, and our relationships. In the spirit of my column, let's not forget our gardens, and in the larger scope, our environment.

The sparseness of the winter landscape allows us to take a closer look and see it in its barebones state. It is as if the eye becomes keener with the loss of color. I find much inspiration in this landscape, even when it is at its bleakest—all earth tones and gray skies. Do you have plans to add a new garden or perhaps change or relocate an existing one? Are you realistic as to how much time you have to devote to a garden's maintenance? If your vegetable garden each year grows more weeds than vegetables, it might be time to cut its size in half or buy your tomatoes and green beans at your local garden stand. Have flowering thugs taken over your perennial flower patch? It might be in desperate need of change.

In planning garden and lawn areas around our homes, we usually consider first the aesthetics. While this is important, in 2026, let's try to improve our environment through careful gardening and landscaping guidelines. No matter what your beliefs are about the truth or fallacies of global warming, there is much that the homeowner can accomplish in his or her small corner of the planet to correct, many proven ecological problems. In our area, a good barometer of the health of the environment is the health of the Chesapeake Bay. While many improvements have been made in each of the bay states—Virginia, Maryland, and Pennsylvania—the bay is still seriously polluted. The biggest threat is nitrogen pollution—from fertilizers, animal waste, and other sources flowing into the bay. Back in our neighborhood, there are several things that you—as a landowner and gardener—can do.

**Plant trees.** They perform an invaluable service to the environment. They help remove carbon dioxide from the atmosphere, which helps to offset the damages from burning fossil fuels. Trees make our surroundings more beautiful. They produce fruits that provide food for birds and small wildlife.

We all need to use fewer toxic pesticides in our gardens and on our lawns. There are safer alternatives. "Better living through chemistry" is not always the answer. I admit that, many years ago, I used pesticides, fungicides, and fertilizers to keep my roses and many annuals and perennials lush and loaded with blossoms. I gave that up years ago. If a plant can't survive without my help, it has no place in my garden. Another way to work with and protect the environment is to design native plants in your garden. Native or indigenous plants naturally occur in the region in which they evolved. They have adapted to local soil, rainfall, temperature conditions, and have developed natural defenses to many insects and diseases. Because of these traits, they grow with minimal use of water, fertilizers, and pesticides. Do your homework. In the next few months, do some research into what you might like to plant around your house this spring.

**Don't forget the "birds of winter."** All birds are part of our environment. During the spring and summer months, many people don't give much thought to them and their survival. There are many grains, flowering seedpods, fruits, and sources of water to keep them well fed. Anyone who has observed birds in



*Sous gardener Winston.*

winter has to be impressed with their capacity to survive the fierce elements of freezing temperatures, snow and ice, but not all birds are fully "winterized," but there are true "snowbirds." Many of the birds of the winter are common backyard species that frequent urban and suburban habitats. The birds in your backyards need your help now to survive the winter. Their needs can be summed up in three little words: food, water, and cover.

Continued on page 26.

## MONOCACY MEME



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**Note:** Due to the wrong email in the December issue, please  
resend your memes to [rdavis@monocacymonocle.com](mailto:rdavis@monocacymonocle.com).

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Things to Do

January 9

PHS Varsity Home Game

Boys’ basketball vs. Seneca Valley at 7:15 p.m.

January 12

PHS Varsity Home Games

Bocce vs. Northwest at 3:30 p.m.  
Girls’ basketball vs. Watkins Mill at 7:15 p.m.

January 13

PHS Varsity Home Game

Wrestling vs. Einstein and Walter Johnson at 3:30 p.m.

January 14

PHS Varsity Home Game

Girls’ basketball vs. Quince Orchard at 7:15 p.m.

January 20

PHS Varsity Home Game

Boys’ basketball vs. Wheaton at 7:15 p.m.

January 22

PACC Networking and Happy Hour!

Song Dog Farm Distillery, 18100 Bucklodge Road, Boyds. 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

January 23

PHS Varsity Home Games

Bocce vs. Damascus at 3:30 p.m.  
Girls’ basketball vs. Einstein at 7:15 p.m.

January 28

PHS Varsity Home Game

Wrestling vs. Seneca Valley at 6:15 p.m.

January 30

PHS Varsity Home Game

Girls’ basketball vs. Damascus at 7:15 p.m.

Annual Chili Cookoff

To enter your chili in the contest, visit their Facebook page. Market at Deere Valley Farm. 2919 Dickerson Rd, Dickerson. 6:00 p.m.

February 2

PHS Varsity Home Game

Boys’ basketball vs. Northwest at 7:15 p.m.

February 3

PHS Varsity Home Game

Wrestling vs. Walt Whitman at 6:15 p.m.

February 4

PHS Varsity Home Game

Girls’ basketball vs. Clarksburg at 7:15 p.m.

February 5

PACC Annual Meeting and Dinner

Join them for an elegant dinner at Crossvines for members and their guests. Tickets will go on sale now and will sell out. For tickets, visit Poolesvillechamber.com. Cocktail hour, cash bar at 5:00 p.m. Brief meeting at 6:00 p.m. Dinner at 6:30 p.m.

Of Poetry and Prose

A New Year Wish

May every soul that touches thine  
Be it the slightest contact, get  
therefrom some good,  
Some little grace, one kindly thought,  
One aspiration yet unfelt; one bit  
of courage  
For the darkening sky, one gleam  
of faith.

—Anonymous

Continued from page 1.

National Park Service Plans Public Campsite at White’s Ferry

The White’s Ferry area is owned by the NPS and is managed by the C&O Canal National Historical Park unit of the NPS. The site includes open space, a picnic pavilion, a large parking lot, wooded areas, river access, structures, and access to private lands.

The White’s Ferry Area Development Concept Plan (Concept Plan) dated March 2023 presents ideas for the future development and uses of the White’s Ferry area. The White’s Ferry area came under the jurisdiction of the NPS in the early 1970s. The NPS acquired Tract 17-102 in 1972 from the Royal Atlas Corporation, followed by the acquisition of Tract 17-101 in 1974 from the White’s Ferry Sportsman Club (“the Club”). The NPS acquired Tract 17-101 through a deed that reserved in the Club certain rights of use and occupancy of the tract for a period of twenty-five years. The Club had continuously occupied the tract from before 1974 to 2021. The NPS is now exploring new future public uses of the north tract, which traditionally had been more accessible to the public, and the south tract, which until recently had been exclusively occupied by a private organization. The south tract currently has twenty cabins formerly used for recreation that the NPS will be removing.

The approximately nineteen-acre south tract is predominately wooded and contains twenty cabins formerly used for recreation linearly arranged along a one-lane unpaved access road known as Old River Road. Also, there are several outhouses standing associated with the cabins. The entrance to the south tract is along White’s Ferry Road opposite the north tract’s parking lot entrance. The entrance road has a locked gate. The access road continues south crossing a stream draining from the C&O Canal into the Potomac River and eventually provides vehicle access to a private property located adjacent to the west of the south tract. In the northern portion of the site, shaded open space is available east of the access road.

Potential visitor capacity for the south tract ranges from approximately 75 to 145 people, depending on what plans are agreed upon. Visitor capacity for the south tract was identified based on the campsite visitor capacity based on the following reasons: Visitor access and use of the south tract would be limited to those visitors using the campsites. A gate at the north end of the existing access road would help maintain campsite user privacy. Visitor capacity at the campsites could be implemented at the campsites through a recreation fee, reservation, and permit system.

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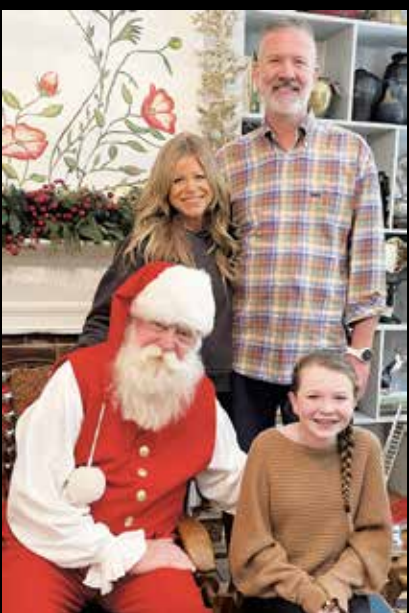




Our local GOP ladies joined in the fun and cause of gifts for those less fortunate in our area.



Above: Santa was tickled to see all the kids in their pajamas attending the UMCVFD Santa breakfast.



Santa made a stop at Sugar Pea Vintage.



The stalwart Ladies' Auxiliary served the public with smiles and well wishes.

# Christmas in Poolesville



Poolesville's annual Live Nativity was a solemn reminder of the reason for the season.



Town commissioners got a little help from their friends in lighting the town Christmas tree.



Santa's joyful elves at the Holiday Lighting Festival.



Business Briefs

New Thai Restaurant Opens in Poolesville



Commissioners, Jeff Eck and Jim Brown, Fon (Thai Commons staffer), Pang and Aof (owners), Tom Kettler, Alan Hobbs, and Allison Murray (owner of Healthy U), PACC Board Members.

The Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce recently hosted an official ribbon-cutting ceremony to celebrate the grand opening of the newest restaurant in Poolesville, Thai Commons. This event marked an exciting addition to the local dining scene. Owners Pang and Aof have brought their authentic Thai family recipes and culinary expertise to the community. Their restaurant, located in a newly-renovated space next to the Poolesville Veterinary Clinic, reflects their commitment to offering genuine Thai cuisine in a welcoming environment.

Currently, Thai Commons is in its soft opening phase. During this period, the owners recommend that customers place orders online as they continue to manage the initial stages of their business development and to ensure a smooth experience for all guests.

Poolesville Tire and Auto’s Tim Murrer Retires

Friends and fellow employees at Poolesville Tire and Auto wished Tim Murrer well as he retires. Tim has been the front office scheduler for thirteen years. He has been well regarded for his friendly and outgoing demeanor, and he is now headed to Florida.

Montgomery Magazine 2025 Reader’s Choice for County’s Best

Thrift Shop: Friendly Thrift Shop

Gift Shop and Boutique: Sweet Lemon

Florist: Stephanie’s Secret Garden

Veterinary: Poolesville Veterinary Clinic

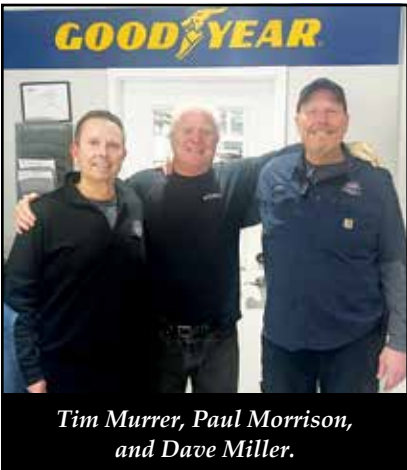
Senior Programing: Poolesville Area Senior Center

Plumbing: Poolesville Plumbing

Mortgage: Jeff Stempler Team

Lawn Care: Kuhlman Lawn Services

Heating: Don Hoffacker’s Air Conditioning and Heating



Tim Murrer, Paul Morrison, and Dave Miller.

Do you have any interesting local history to share with our readers?  
The Monocle welcomes your contribution.  
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2026

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[localsfarmmarket.com](http://localsfarmmarket.com) (order online!)



## Youth Sports

### Larger Crowds in the New Gym Boost Girls' Basketball

By Jeff Stuart

On December 19, the new gym at Poolesville High School was officially dedicated to the late Coack Fred Swick. Many members of the Swick family were on hand, gathered around speakers, Principal Mark Carothers and Athletic Director Gina Grubb, before the girls' basketball game against visiting Northwest. Several members of the 2018 State Championship Team were in attendance. The Falcons won the contest 33-20.

The players clearly enjoyed playing in front of a large and enthusiastic crowd, though the game was a bit of a struggle for them.

"The Northwest game was not a normal game for us," said junior Laney Franklin. "We did not play the best that we could have—but a win is a win. We learned how to work better together on certain things like following up on rebounds and running certain plays. We all worked hard together as a team.

"It is definitely a different environment playing and practicing in the new gym. Last year we were away every game at a different school, even as the home team. It is fun having a lot of fans in the stands—especially the little kids who will play here eventually.



2026 PHS Girls' Varsity Basketball Team.

"A personal highlight for me has been my rebounding. It has helped everybody move up and down the court. I can box people out. It is a fight down there. It is important to have good size and height. I got a lot of rebounds against Northwest, so I think that is my best game so far. I shut down their big offensive players down low. They were the best players on Northwest, so that helped our offense too.

"My shoutouts go to our senior point guard, Mehek Patnaik, she is good at pushing the ball up court and on the press, she can drive towards the hoop and shoot from the outside; junior Stella Volpe, when she gets fired up and is in the right mind set, she can carry us—last season and this season I have seen her make some amazing plays; and junior Emma Weyrauch, she has hit some short jumpers that have helped us win games, she scores in double digits.

"Overall, I think everyone is playing great and doing what they can to help the team. I am looking forward to more home games and to getting on a roll. Now that we have shown we can win and are winning more, I think, I hope more people will come out to watch us. The cheering and everything make everyone play better."

Continued on page 17.

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Continued from page 16.

### Larger Crowds in the New Gym Boost Girls' Basketball

"As a sophomore I never got to experience the old gym," said forward Charley Straniero, "but the new gym is nice, and it's big. I love how they dedicated it to Coach Swick because of how many lives he impacted.

"The Northwest game was physical and rough, but we pushed through. Our offense was a little bit off, but our defense helped us win the game.

"I was shocked to see how many people were there at the dedication. I think all of us were excited about that. It helped us. My shoutouts go to junior Carson Hartke, it was her first game back, she helped us on defense and scored a few points; sophomore AnnaMay Straniero scored a lot of points, she had a great game; and Laney locked down the post—that was big for us.

"Going forward, I am looking forward to winning some more games, and hopefully the fans will keep coming out to support us."

"It is nice to have a new gym," said Patnaik, "especially since, last year, all our games were away, so it is nice to

have our crowd pulling for us at actual home games. It is nice to have the community behind us.

"We came out slow against Northwest, but we picked it up at the end. It was fun playing in front of the large crowd that was there primarily for the dedication of the gym, but they were there for us as well, and we love that support. We play Northwest again. Hopefully, we will start off better offensively.

"We have a lot of new players this year coming up from JV because we had a lot of seniors leave last year. They are all adjusting to their new roles and doing well. I think we played our best game at Blair. We won 58-30 and had good ball movement. We scored a lot pretty early in the game. It was a nice rebound game for us since we lost our first game.

"My shoutouts go to Charley Straniero, she is a starter as a sophomore, she is good in the paint; and to our junior guards, Stella and Emma, they do a great job bringing the ball down; and to AnnaMay as well, she has been scoring a lot. As a senior looking back, I have always enjoyed the team dinners and bonding events, relaxing, and outside of the competitive environment."

On December 17, the Falcons won at Damascus, 45-30, and on December 22, just before the winter break, the Falcons won at Paint Branch, 52-9, picking up their fourth win of the season for a 4-2 record on the season so far.

Other seniors are Zoe Hornyak and Lila Snelson. Alina Vicinelly is a junior.

Haley Sherrill and Molly Schmidt are sophomores. Mackenzie Kavanaugh is a freshman. The coach is Kelsey Lewis.

The Falcons have home games on January 12 against Watkins Mill, January 14 against Quince Orchard, January 23 against Einstein, and January 30 against Damascus. They would love your continued support.

### Of Poetry and Prose

#### The New Year

Who comes dancing over the snow,  
His soft little feet all bare and rosy?

Open the door, though the wild  
wind blow,

Take the child in and make him cozy,  
Take him in and hold him dear,

Here is the wonderful glad New Year.

—Dinah M. Craik

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De San Martin

Alivia Gabrielle Tetlow



John Joseph Toomey, Jr.



Sharon Diane True



Judith Ann Twigger



Carol Lee Warfield



Eula C. Wilkes

John Francis  
Windolph, Jr.

### Afterglow

I'd like the memory of me to be a happy one.  
I'd like to leave an afterglow of smiles when life is done.  
I'd like to leave an echo whispering softly down the ways,  
Of happy times and laughing times and bright and sunny days.  
I'd like the tears of those who grieve, to dry before the sun;  
Of happy memories that I leave when life is done.

—Anonymous



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## Focus on Business

### The Oldest Businesses in Our Area: The Oldest Will Amaze You!

By Bernie Mihm, introduction by Rande Davis

Last year, the *Monocle* published an article about the oldest retail businesses in the area, and recently Bernie Mihm approached us with the suggestion that we do a report on the non-retail firms. Bernie is the owner of the award-winning firm, Fine Earth Landscape, founded in 1977. His nearly half century of providing the full range of landscape services is very impressive in its own right. Even Bernie was impressed by the top four, telling us, "Fine Earth is just a baby compared to the oldest continuously-operating business from Poolesville." When he offered to help us with the research, we were thrilled, and we and our readers are especially appreciative of his contribution. His countdown of the four oldest is as follows:

#### Founded 1950: Charles H. Jamison Real Estate

Charles H. Jamison started as a real estate broker and licensed livestock salesperson, with his wife, Laura Jamison, being the secretary and bookkeeper. In 1962, the Jamisons stopped the brokering of livestock and concentrated solely on real estate.

Charles traveled throughout Montgomery and Frederick Counties, selling properties in both jurisdictions. In the sixties and seventies, with the addition of real estate agents to their company, it was common for them to sell properties in Howard, Carroll, Washington, Frederick, and Montgomery Counties.

Charles H. Jamison was elected as a county commissioner and later county councilmember along with being a commissioner on the Park and Planning Commission while running his business. He was instrumental in locating COMSAT, the National Bureau of Standards (now the National Institute of Standards and Technology [NIST]) and Pepco to Montgomery County. He made available the wastewater treatment plant on Riffle Ford Road, allowing for the development of Germantown, and was president of the Montgomery County Board of Realtors. He was a charter member of the Monocacy Lions Club, Daniels Jeffers American Legion, and the Upper Montgomery County Farmers' Club. Laura Jamison served many years on the local PTA and as president of the Montgomery County Soroptimist Club.

In 1995, after the death of Charles H. Jamison, his son Franklin A. Jamison, became the president of Charles H. Jamison, Inc. and the real estate broker of record. This is a family business, and the board of directors are children of Charles and Laura Jamison.

Frank compares the past with the business of today with an old saying, "While some things change, some things stay the same." People still rely on the real estate professional to sell their properties, but the real estate professional of today must be able to command new technologies that were unheard of when his mom and dad started out.

The brokers at Jamison Real Estate offer services related to real estate such as sales of real property, selling of development rights, negotiating conservation easements, land development, commercial leasing, and land use consulting.

Franklin Jamison has continued his dad's record of service and has served on numerous boards and commissions in Montgomery County. He is a founding member of the Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce and former President of Chapter 32 of the Realtors Land Institute.

The third generation of Jamison children is set to take over in the brokerage and real estate investment business.

CEO Franklin Jamison said, "There is no better feeling than knowing that you have helped someone obtain a better life for themselves."

#### Founded 1949: Poolesville Plumbing and Heating Co

Poolesville Plumbing & Heating Co., Inc. was established by Master Plumber George T. Hillard (1928-2022) and his wife, Kathryn. George Hillard was best known for his lifelong commitment to the Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department.

In 1953, a fire damaged George's plumbing shop and spread dangerously close to his home in downtown Poolesville. This incident sparked twenty-six-year-old George's interest in joining the fire department. He became an active member of the UMCVFD and served for a total of sixty-nine years and is recognized for his thirty-nine years of outstanding service as the Fire Chief of the UMCVFD.

In 1968, George's oldest daughter, Kathy, and his son-in-law, David Jeffers, began working under George at Poolesville Plumbing and Heating. After George suffered from a stroke in 1998, David quickly rose to the occasion and assumed all George's responsibilities.

Together, David and Kathy Jeffers took on the role of being business owners, committed to keeping George's legacy alive and continuing to serve their community.

Today, the leadership role of the family business has been passed down to Brian David Jeffers, the son of Kathy and David, and George's grandson. Brian was just a kid when he started working part-time for Poolesville Plumbing. Despite his young age, Brian's work ethic was very prominent. He has always been hardworking and committed to a job well done.

This year, Brian's two children, Patrick and Kacie Jeffers, have started working full-time at Poolesville Plumbing.

CEO Brian Jeffers is proud of the family tradition. "As a company with generations of family leadership, deep roots in Poolesville, and over seventy-five years of experience, we are proud to serve our community and committed to our mission to provide quality, honest, and dependable services."

#### Founded 1905: Willard Agri-Service

In 1905, Harry Willard purchased a parcel of land in Poolesville where he later built a beautiful home that still stands today at the center of the Ferry Crossing development. The property included two steam engines and threshing machines, which Harry used to launch a custom farming operation. He also purchased and operated a sawmill on Willard Road, just past the current K2 Fitness. Those steam engines came in handy as a home already existed on the property and, rather than tear it down, using logs and the steam engines, he moved it to the other side of what is now Whalen Commons. It is owned by Paul and Claudia Shibelski and was the focus of a *Monocle* Mystery History, reporting on what was labeled as "the first mobile home in Poolesville."

Another venture Harry helped establish was the Poolesville Telephone Company, where he served as manager and treasurer until the company was eventually sold to C&P. He was also actively involved in maintaining telephone lines throughout the area and was never hesitant to climb poles himself when repairs were needed.

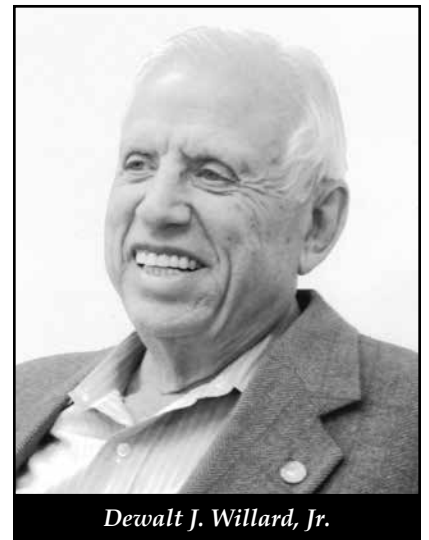
Harry Willard also constructed a building on Fisher Avenue to house a business offering the unusual combination of ice cream and beer. That building still stands today and is currently home to Glad I Yoga, Heather Soskin Photography, and WC Insurance. In addition, Harry built the original Selby's store on Fisher Avenue, which once stood in what is now the Anytime Fitness parking lot, just across from Charles H. Jamison Real Estate.

Harry's custom farming operation inspired Dewalt J. Willard, Jr. to become involved in agriculture. He often shared stories of working alongside his grandfather, including taking charge of the straw rick, where straw was blown into a large pile and then raked by hand once it reached the height of the thresher's discharge pipe.

De's custom farming business began in 1948 with the purchase of a John Deere 12A "Pull Type" combine for \$1,650. He pulled the combine using his grandfather's Farmall F-30 tractor. De's local business, a custom farming operation, grew steadily over the years, operating from Poolesville. During this time, De also started his own farming operation, which continues to this day. The base of operations is located on White's Ferry Road, adjacent to the Sarah Auer Swimming Pool.

In the late 1960s, as no-till farming technologies emerged, Willard Agri-Service (as it was named in 1970) expanded its custom farming operations to include liquid fertilizer and agricultural chemicals. The company also began offering custom application services to support growers in adopting these new practices, along with Agronomic Services.

Now led by Billy Willard, Sr., Willard Agri-Service eventually moved to Frederick, and has grown to serve the entire Mid-Atlantic with five locations.



Dewalt J. Willard, Jr.

Continued on page 21.



Continued from page 20.

### The Oldest Businesses in Our Area: The Oldest Will Amaze You!

The Willard farming operation continues today, utilizing the latest agricultural technologies to cultivate 2,200 acres of corn, wheat, soybeans, and sorghum, with a continued focus on minimizing environmental impact. The operation is carried forward by De's grandson, Billy Willard, Jr., who represents the next generation of the Willard family's commitment to responsible farming, innovation, and stewardship of the land.

"Farming has always been about taking care of the land and the people who depend on it," said Billy Willard, Sr. "Poolesville is where our family story began. The land, the people, and the work we've done here have shaped generations of our family."

#### Founded 1850: Morningstar Welding

Morningstar Welding was started about 1850 in Frederick County by Jesse Morningstar. The business was moved to Poolesville around 1900 by its then owner, Mike Murrel Morningstar.

Morningstar Blacksmith Shop opened on Elgin Road in 1908. The original building was a weatherboard structure which was later rebuilt in 1947 as a cinder block building. That building is still used today.

Murrel was a blacksmith and provided farrier services and wagon and wagon wheel building. Murrel had a nine-foot square forge with a hand blower that his son, Dick, would operate for him. Dick recalled his time as a child having to stand on a box to crank it!

Murrel died of a heart attack in his shop in 1954. Murrel was well respected by all and an integral part of the Poolesville and surrounding area community his entire life. His anvil still remains on the property as a symbol and testament to the man and his trade.

Murrel discouraged his son Dick (Richard) from entering the blacksmithing business. He told Dick that it was a hard life and was also a dying industry, becoming one for mostly horse racing and pleasure riders.

Dick did not listen to his dad because he saw an opportunity in the welding business. His sister, Dorothy, bought him his first welder in 1952. This welder is another surviving family relic on the shop property.

Dick changed the name to Morningstar Welding in 1960. He bought his first portable welder and entered the lucrative world of erecting buildings and high-rises. He traveled as far as Ocean City, Maryland, but he mainly worked within a hundred-mile radius of Poolesville.

Morningstar Welding participated in the building boom in the Maryland, D.C., and Northern Virginia region. They subcontracted with the largest construction companies in the tri-state area. Dick, however, never forgot the farmers and locals and always made time to fix and repair the odds and ends that came into the shop.

In 2006, Patrick Morningstar took over the family business and continues its legacy with his son today.

He has grown Morningstar Welding into a six-truck and twelve-employee operation, with his wife, Karri, as a full-time office manager and his son, Kyle, as the project manager. Their 40x80-foot building houses all the latest and greatest metal fabricating equipment. "The Shop" today does a lot of in-house fabrication and site installation, but Patrick also caters to the walk-in locals.

Patrick has expanded the business and finds himself less behind the torch and more behind the desk. Patrick is the fifth generation in a line of those who have engaged in the business of iron and steel, whether blacksmithing or welding.

When asked how it feels to be part of a continuous 170-year family tradition, Patrick says, "Look how far we've come!"

Would you like to announce a meeting, club,  
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## Remembrances

### Kevin Carmack

Kevin Kirby Carmack passed away peacefully on January 1, 2026, after a courageous battle with Primary Progressive Aphasia and early-onset Alzheimer's disease. Born on January 12, 1960, in Harrisburg, Pennsylvania, to Mark and Betsy Carmack, Kevin was a kind, caring, and deeply spiritual man, remembered for his humor, wisdom, generosity, and selflessness. He lived by a quote from Winston Churchill:

"We make a living by what we get; we make a life by what we give."

Kevin was the beloved husband of Laura Carmack and a devoted father who took immense pride in his family. He enjoyed fixing things, tackling DIY projects, gardening, watching HGTV, and riding his bike. After retirement, he found great joy in attending daily Mass. He was especially proud of purchasing a hundred-year-old home in Ocean City, New Jersey, where he spent weekends alongside his siblings, restoring and improving it.

A dedicated servant to his community, Kevin was a longtime member of Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic Church in Poolesville. He was a Third Degree member of the Knights of Columbus, served as an officer, and taught CCD for fifteen years. In service to others, he donated blood platelets at NIH in Rockville for fifteen years to support leukemia patients. Kevin also served as president of the Poolesville High School Boosters Club, where he enthusiastically raised funds to support local athletics.

Kevin graduated from Sterling High School in Stratford, New Jersey, and in 1995 was honored for outstanding lifetime achievements in engineering with induction into the school's Alumni Outstanding Achievers Hall of Fame. He studied mechanical engineering and architecture at Temple University, where he received the Gallery of Success Award in 2011 for outstanding professional achievement and for inspiring future engineers. He later earned his MBA from Johns Hopkins University.

Kevin began his professional career at RCA in West Windsor, New Jersey, followed by Fairchild, where he spent two years working at Matra Aerospace in Toulouse, France. Upon returning to the United States, he worked for Orbital Sciences Corporation before spending his final twenty-one years at NASA as a Project Manager.

Kevin was predeceased by his parents, Mark and Betsy Carmack. He is survived by his loving wife, Laura; his mother-in-law (Julie); his children, Kirby (Nikki) of Dallas, Texas, Whitney (Andrea) of Glen Mills, Pennsylvania, and Coleman of Tampa, Florida; his five siblings, Kathy of Laurel Springs, New Jersey, Karen (Mike) of Somerdale, New Jersey, Kristine (Joe) of Laurel Springs, New Jersey, Kenneth (Luanne) of Barrington, New Jersey, and Keith (Joy) of Linwood, New Jersey; and nineteen nieces and nephews.



Kevin Carmack

### Nancy Noel Sidders Frohlich

Nancy Noel Sidders Frohlich, 88, passed away on Thursday, December 4, 2025, at her daughter Ellen's home in Poolesville.

Nancy was born on December 24, 1936 in Washington, D.C., to Walter Franklin Sidders and Adele Helene (Gognait).

Nancy grew up in Tuxedo, Maryland, and graduated from Bladensburg High School in 1955. In 1957, she was accepted into the Capital City School of Nursing in Washington, D.C. and graduated with her registered nursing degree (RN) in May 1959. On February 13, 1959, Nancy married her childhood neighbor and schoolmate, Elmer Henry Frohlich, Jr. (Junie) after four years of dating.

Nancy and Elmer had two daughters, Betsy in 1960 and Ellen in 1962, and moved to Kentland. She graduated from the University of Maryland in 1968 with her Bachelor of Science in nursing (Summa Cum Laude). Four years later, she earned her Master of Science in nursing in 1972 from the University of Maryland, Baltimore, with a 4.0 GPA.

In 1980, Nancy became a nursing educator/LPN instructor at Suburban Hospital and then moved to the med-surg unit at Shady Grove Hospital, and on to the nursing education program at Frederick Memorial Hospital, and she finally ended her nursing career at Collingswood Nursing Center in 2000.

Over the years, she truly found a passion for travel, which she did in earnest.

Nancy loved being a member of St. Peter's Episcopal Parish and being involved with the yearly rummage and Christmas Attic sales, the Family Thrift Shop, and coffee hour.

Nancy was predeceased by her husband, Elmer Henry Frohlich, Jr.; her sisters, Joan Mohler and Mary Mueller; her brothers-in-law, Ewell Mohler, Charles Mueller, and Richard Green; her sister-in-law, Joyce Frohlich Green; her parents; and her in-laws, Elmer Henry Frohlich Sr., and Lillian Disney Frohlich.

Nancy leaves behind two daughters, Betsy Frohlich and Ellen Frohlich-Kirkpatrick; three grandchildren, Drew Kirkpatrick, Victoria Kirkpatrick, and Noel Kirkpatrick; son-in-law, Tom Kirkpatrick; two nieces, Jenny Mohler and Cary Renaud; and four nephews, Joseph Mohler, Matthew Mohler, Richard Green, and Charles Green.

In lieu of flowers, please consider a donation, foster, or adoption with K-9 Lifesavers ([k-9lifesavers.org/donate](http://k-9lifesavers.org/donate)) or the Prince George's County Animal Shelter ([www.princegeorgespets4us.com](http://www.princegeorgespets4us.com)).



Nancy Noel Sidders Frohlich

### Anne Lynch Hunter

Anne Lynch Hunte, 60, of Frederick, passed away on December 31, 2025.

Born on June 10, 1965, in Washington, D.C., she was the daughter of the late John Ramsey Hunter, Jr. and Jane Sanders Hunter.

Anne graduated in 1983 from Poolesville High School, the College of Wooster in 1987, and earned an MBA from Mt. St. Mary's College. She was a certified public accountant. Anne loved music and was an accomplished pianist.

She is survived by her mother, Jane; brother, Jim Hunter (Jane); and nephew, Greer Hunter.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made in Anne's honor to: Epilepsy Foundation, 3540 Crain Highway, Suite 675, Bowie, MD 20716.



Anne Lynch Hunter

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Continued from page 5.

### You Know about the Boston Tea Party—How about Poolesville's Tea Story?

but some rent was paid for a short period of time on a cash, no-agreement basis. Ultimately, the renter disappeared, leaving the mountain of crates behind, forgotten until 2015 when Brian began to clear away the garbage that covered them.

Last July, Brian was invited to Boulder to meet the managers of the Boulder teahouse and the organizers of the Boulder Dushanbe Teahouse project.

Today, Brian is at a loss as to what to do with his discovery. This Tajik teahouse is believed to be designed as an open-air structure like the one in Boulder. The Poolesville teahouse is bigger. Boulder encapsulated the teahouse into a year-round facility, adding windows, doors, and a skylight.

Brian remains bewildered with such a massive and intriguing discovery. He has many questions. The questions are: What to do with the collection? What is its value? Who would want to reconstruct a genuine Russian teahouse? What could they do with it? Could it be a tourist draw to Poolesville? To another town or city? Would it be better to enclose it like Boulder and turn it into a restaurant or café?

Just as he was wondering if there is a local restaurateur looking for a historical and extremely unique venue for his business, our story recently took a wild twist. A Russian man has contacted him claiming to be the owner of our treasure. He offered to buy back his abandoned teahouse, but Brian remains unsure what to do. As our tale goes on from here, we look forward to writing the final postscript to our venture.

Oh, then again, I think there is one more thing for sure. It might make for the most unusual and mind-blowing Starbucks in the world.



### POOLESVILLE AREA CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

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Continued from page 9.

### Mark Carothers: A Man for All Reasons

*We believe that positive presuppositions, open minds, and persistence foster progress.*

*We believe PHS is a unified whole-school community where every member feels heard, seen, valued, and supported.*

The last principle has become the idea that encompasses all the rest and has become a statement that is referenced frequently in school conversations, professional learning, and problem-solving. "I want to ensure that everyone who walks through our doors feels as though they belong and are seen in our school community, and that is a challenge our students and staff embrace."

In asking Mark what his mission is—what are his goals as a principal?—he is very clear and specific. "Each day, I want to extend the warmth and kindness that students may not be receiving regularly, all with the aim of ensuring they feel seen, heard, valued, and supported while also pursuing a positive trajectory for their lives. I want every student who walks through our doors to feel like they belong and are accepted for who they are."

What would Mark's overriding message be to the whole community? "Parents and caregivers trust us with their children every single day, and, as the primary 'face' of the school, the principal has a significant impact on that trust through clear communication, authentic conversations, and high visibility. If the greater community knows the principal cares, they can feel welcome at the school and truly believe that their children are loved and protected."

"For the community members who do not have children in the schools, I believe the principal's presence and commitment to the community allows for a strong partnership in support of students, staff, and families."

Now you know why the Poolesville commissioners chose this man to get their highest award, the Western Montgomery County Champion Award for his leadership throughout the construction project, and leadership of our school.

Mark has been married seventeen years and has a son who is a freshman at Quince Orchard High School.

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Continued from page 12.

Garden Thoughts for a New Year

**Food.** Landowners and gardeners should consider using plant types that provide natural food for birds. To satisfy the greatest number and variety of bird species, all these natural foods can be—and should be—supplemented with an assortment of bird foods provided in various styles of bird feeder at different levels. If I could offer only one type of food in my backyard feeders, my choice would be sunflower seed. It appeals to cardinals, finches, bluejays, and my other bird visitors. It is very high in protein, giving the birds the highest food value for the money spent. Their other food love is beef suet cakes, which I place in special holders. All woodpeckers and an assortment of other birds are daily customers in my backyard feeding area. I have six containers for seed and suet. I fill them up every day; business is very brisk!

**Water.** The challenge in providing water in winter for birds in our area is to keep it from freezing. There are various electric water heaters on the market, but that doesn't work for me. The nearest outdoor plug is too far away, so, every morning, I put on my heavy coat (over my pajamas) and gloves and break up the ice in the bird bath with a hammer. No fun. Recently, I tried a new plan. In the late afternoon, I empty the hopefully-unfrozen tray, and early next morning I fill it with warm water. Most birds look for water early in the morning. Problem sort of solved.

**Cover.** Of the three habitat elements essential for bird survival, cover (trees, shrubs, and low growing plants) is the most important. It helps to shield them from harsh winter winds, subzero temperatures, falling snow, and freezing rain.

I have many of these elements in my backyard. I call them my "bird motels." No overnight entry fees!

If you want to follow your resolution to improve your health (at least until April or May), that is yours to answer. The resolutions I offered to you for your garden and the environment are very important. Start in your backyard, no matter the size. You can make in 2026 an important contribution to the health and survival of the only environment we have on this planet.

Happy New Year! from the Gardener and her sous gardener Winston.

Of Poetry and Prose

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"A Happy New Year."

"A happy new year" it will be—  
if it's new:

New visions of all that is noble  
and true,

New powers for service,  
new knowledge of God,

New zeal for the ways that the  
heroes have trod,

New comforts, new courage,  
new graces, new joys,

New peace where the evil assails  
or annoys,

New friendship, new helpers,  
new faith and new love,

New treasures on earth and new  
treasures above,

New wisdom, new glory,  
new health, and new cheer,

Nothing old, all things new,  
in the happy new year!


—Anonymous

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## Celebrating 37 Years of Service

### Famous Quotes About Dogs and Cats.

#### *Holiday Season with Your Pets*

Peter H. Eeg, DVM

Reviewing a number of quotes about dogs and cats from famous people around the world has let me to give you a quick few to start your 2026.

We all love our furry, four legged kids and it is wonderful to have a quote ready to boost someone's day or dress down the very few animal detractors.

#### **Quotes of note for 2026:**

Ask anybody, Dogs and Cats are smarter than we (people) are —*Kurt Vonnegut*

I know they are dogs and cats, you know they are dogs and cats, do you want to tell them and break their hearts? —*Erma Bombeck*

If there are no dogs and cats in heaven, then when I die, I want to go where they went —*Will Rogers*

To his dog every man is Napoleon; hence the constant popularity of dogs —*Aldous Huxley*

If you pick up a starving dog or cat and make them prosperous, they will not bite you. This is the principal difference between them and man —*Mark Twain*

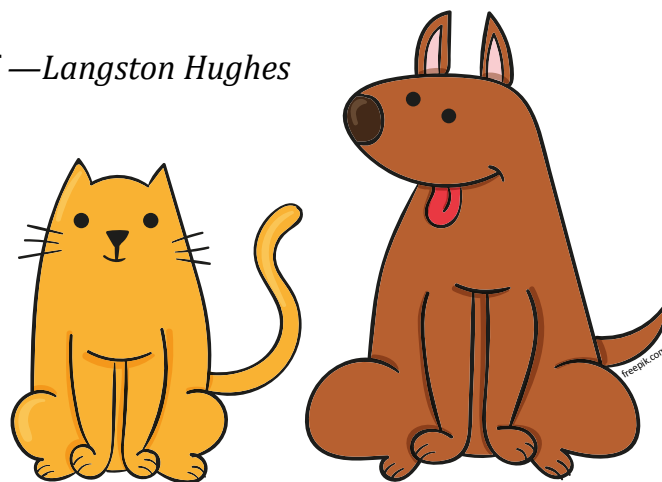
Act rough and tough but a dog can tell when you are full of stuff —*Langston Hughes*

They feel that they are first rate pets and have no wish to be second rate humans —*John Steinbeck*

(You may note if you look up the quotes that I have made small changes to include both species. This was done because I could. After all, I am the Veterinarian.)

#### **Happy and Healthy Next Year to You All.**

*Peter H. Eeg DVM and Poolesville Veterinary Clinic family.*



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