

The Monocacy

MONOCLE

Keeping an Eye on Local News

A Monthly Newspaper

July 2025 • Volume XXI, Number 5



PES fifth graders took their first steps toward John Poole Middle School. Principal Robbins gave them insights into life's priorities. Read more in School News on page 11.



Lion Herb Brown honored with Legacy Award for his five decades of Lionism. Read more on page 14.



A stunning reptile resides at the circle in Whalen Commons. Check it out in Tidbits on page 15.



Polo is so much more than a pony, a pole, and a poke. Chukker out all the fun on page 20.

Arabian Academy, Once Planned for Poolesville, Finally Closes in Virginia

By Rande Davis

In the mid-1990s, a very heated discussion raged in Poolesville over allowing Saudi Arabia to open a private academy near Poolesville. At the time, the division focused on disagreement between those against who were opposed for reasons ranging from negative impact on the Ag Reserve, lack of water, and even including some very extreme anti-Arab emotions. Those in favor were influenced by the proponents promoting their commitment to bring health and medical services to the town, drawing water from the Potomac, and the prospect of opening the private school to local residents. In the end, the citizens voted against annexing the land that would join the school to Poolesville.

The Saudi Arabian government moved the effort to Northern Virginia and eventually opened the Islamic Saudi Academy of Washington (ISA) in 2011. It had classes from pre-K to



The former King Abdullah Academy, in Virginia.

twelfth grade with a final enrollment of more than 1,200 students. Approximately thirty percent of the students were Saudi Arabian citizens. The school closed in 2016, replaced by the King Abdullah Academy later that year.

With the closing of KAA this June, Fairfax County's school board has approved a plan to buy the property for \$150 million, resulting in Virginia's

largest school district opening its first new high school in decades.

The campus includes robotics and ceramics labs, multiple cafeterias, an Olympic-sized swimming pool, athletic fields, and two amphitheater-style outdoor classrooms. It also features two administrative buildings adjacent to the school which could either be used as office space or early childcare.

St. Mary's Father Kevin Passes Away

By Rande Davis

The passing of St. Mary's Father Kevin this past June 5, at his retirement residence in Viera, Florida, has saddened the whole community, not just those who are Catholic. Like the legendary Father Reid, Father Kevin similarly endeared himself to his community. Father Kevin served as the chaplain for the Monocacy Lions and had a special talent for working with youth. He enjoyed providing dinners for the youth groups and for various other groups. He frequently paraphrased the classic words of William Booth, "You cannot warm the hearts of people with God's love if they have an empty stomach." His impact on the youths of our parish was evident by the large number of young people in attendance at Father Kevin's funeral.

Continued on page 9.



Over a dozen priests and deacons honored the memory of St. Mary's Father Kevin at his Mass of Christian Burial.

Family Album

Right: Friends of the Pikes joined Dr. Tim Pike (second from left) at the dental office's fifteenth annual Patient Appreciation Day.



Ten members of the Montgomery County Chamber of Commerce held their second annual Multi-Mega Mixer at our local Crossvines. They all signed a mutual proclamation of support of the needs of the county's business community.



The Poolesville Seniors tai chi class, instructed by Maureen Iovsic, couldn't have the class at their normal inside location, so they went to the park. The heat caused most to go online, but these hardy souls did the founder of tai chi, Zhang Sanfeng, proud.



The 2nd Annual Chambers Mega-Mixer, held at Crossvines, proved to be a great hit and sold out early.



UMCVFD Auxiliary members, Linda Lewis, Lynne Bodmer, and Gina Grubb, hosted a "bingo in the park" family-friendly evening of kids fun, games, and food!



At UMCVFD's bingo night, the kids could play various kid events.

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Town Government

Making Changes in Poolesville Stirs Controversies

By Link Hoewing and Rande Davis

There have been and will be many changes in both the residential and commercial zones within Poolesville, and these will continue into the horizon. With all the many changes, public controversy has been stirred, yet, with all the public hubbub notwithstanding, only another hundred homes may potentially be built in the town. Urbana it is not. I have found that opinions expressed on the internet have often been inaccurate or lack understanding of the actual town governing processes. Link Hoewing, the *Monocle's* government reporter, the current chair for the Fair Access Committee, a past town commissioner, and a former member of the town's Planning Commission, recently penned a very thoughtful piece on how the town operates.

While we are pleased to see so many citizens involved and commenting through social media about town matters, some of the assertions and allegations about the process, about the town's willingness to listen, and about town leaders, in some cases simply miss the mark.

We hope the following observations by Mr. Hoewing, with his in-depth experience, will clarify and even correct much of the misinformation to be found on the internet, and it is further hoped his comments will help everyone understand the processes better.

Comments by Link Hoewing:

There are many misconceptions about town government processes regarding perceived lack of public input in day-to-day decision-making, the approval process for town developments, possible conflicts of interest of elected officials, exaggerations about the power of commissioners, especially the role of the commission president, and allocation of water taps and water supply that require clarification.

On Conflict of Interest:

Regarding matters of conflicts of interest, one of the points that has been raised a number of times is the assertion that some of the commissioners, especially those who are realtors, mortgage lenders, or somehow connected to development, have what amounts to an "automatic conflict of interest" which should prevent them from being involved in considering developments and planning matters.

The town has an Ethics Commission which can investigate allegations of conflict of interest. The town also requires commissioners to file financial disclosure statements every year so that the public can see what potential conflicts they may have, including their investments, relationships they may have with potential contractors, family members who may benefit in some way by town activities, and involvement they may have in organizations or companies that may come before the town to do business.

All commissioners are required to recuse themselves from considering any issue where they have a direct conflict of interest. Any concerns regarding possible conflicts of interest can always be filed with the Ethics Commission which will investigate and issue a report and findings.

Just because public officials might benefit from a decision sometime in the unknowable future does not and should not preclude them from being involved currently in planning or development matters; otherwise, many good people, from all walks of life, could never run for office because it is always conceivable that somewhere down the line, a decision taken in the past might help benefit an official. This is especially pertinent to citizens who own any business in town. We want to encourage all our residents to feel free to run for office and don't want to discourage good talent from deciding to do so.

That is why conflict of interest is not about theoretical or potential future conflicts, which can never be proven, but rather demonstrable and current situations that clearly could harm the public interest and unfairly benefit an elected leader. Good ethics laws, which we have in place, help deter bad actors and help keep the government clean.

Role of the Planning Commission:

The roles of the Poolesville Town Commission (frequently referred to as the commission or the commissioners) and the Planning Commission need clarification;

Continued on page 28.

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Rande(m) Thoughts

What Goes Around Comes Around or It's All the Same But Different

By Rande Davis

With the July issue now in print, it seems my summer is already half over! While the weather is super-hot, this issue reads more like the Tidbits of Our Times rather than any hot blockbuster topics. No White's Ferry breakthrough, no big fires, and no big crime news.

Still, I really like how intriguing the issue on the whole came out. It's packed with the story of our times, even if it is just in simple, smaller articles.

I couldn't resist making the closing of the Islamic school in Virginia the headline. For readers who weren't living here in the 1990s, it might seem odd. The level of uproar, controversy, and at times, downright anger reached a peak rarely experienced, and that's acknowledging that we have had some very bumpy roads along our way since then.

The crib notes on that story are that the Saudi Arabian government wanted to build a private school in our area to, first, provide an academy for Muslim children, which would also be open to the whole community. They proposed discounted tuitions to locals and even offered to attach an "Urgent Care" type of service to gain support. Of course, the big issue was growth in the Ag Reserve and the lack of water. I could not help making the joke that, "Hey, these are Arabs living in the desert, you don't think they can't solve our little water problem?" Needless to say, the joke didn't go over well. Sadly, there were some really anti-Arab racist and vile comments coming from some

of us. This was long before 9/11, so we can't blame that. The ironic observation is that if they had built the school, and the county had never built a new school, looks like we might have gotten one anyway (a really fancy one, at that).

The funeral of St. Mary's Father Kevin had to be on the front page. For a priest, there was a sense of shyness to the man. He had a simple smile and a big heart, and he was softspoken with a bit of an Irish tone. Attending the Mass of Christian Burial was so impressive. The homilies describing the bond and camaraderie between priests gave us a humorous and poignant glimpse into the personal life of priests, and particularly Father Kevin's.

Link Hoewing penned our longest article giving insight into the processes of town government, particularly on growth matters, based on his extensive experience in volunteering for so many years. I would hope that everyone who comments on town matters on the internet, going forward, would read it before embarrassing themselves.

I am proud that so much history is in this issue. Who we are is based on whence we came, and we touch on our farming roots, the tragedy of the many town fires that took so much of our physical history, and what was originally on the land outside of town before it became an upscale equestrian trail facility and wild mud party site.

It's such an honor to talk about the good work of our civic and charitable groups, deserving of the kind of recognition only a print publication can bring. I hope you read about each and every one and feel grateful.

You can even discover the Sport of Kings: Polo. That's right. Right here in town you can now experience the special social attraction of polo with all the trimmings: exciting play, gourmet

Continued on right.

Kolm's Corner



Continued from left.

What Goes Around Comes Around or It's All the Same but Different

picnics, and a chance to dress up for a change.

Finally, our Tidbit stories and Family Album help remind us of the importance of individual accomplishments, not just the groups. I got a

kick out of the pictures of the bingo event on the park sponsored by our volunteer fire department. It was refreshing to see we can still have an event where the kids can play while the parents play a game. It just shows Poolesville doesn't always have to have a wine tasting and beer blast while the kids run around the park as a "family" event.

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Local News

Grand Marshal Nominations for Poolesville Day Open

By Link Hoewing

In 1992, Poolesville held its first Poolesville Day. The event was a small affair, but it continued to be held each year, growing in size, number of vendors, entertainment venues, and attendees.

Every year since that time—except 2020, the pandemic year—Poolesville has observed its annual festival, celebrating the Town of Poolesville, its residents, and the communities in the Upcounty of which it is a part. This year, Poolesville Day will happen again on September 20 from 10:00 a.m. until 4:00 p.m. with activities, vendors and music spread from one end of Fisher Avenue at Poolesville Elementary School (PES) to the Historic West End with the Electric Vehicle Show and agricultural and farming tents and displays, and all over Whalen Commons.

A hallmark of Poolesville Day has always been its parade down Poolesville's main street, Fisher Avenue, beginning at PES and ending at the corner of Fisher Avenue and West Willard Road. Leading the parade has always been the Grand Marshal, a person or group nominated by the citizens who symbolizes community involvement, leadership, and commitment to bettering our community.

Grand Marshals are selected by the Poolesville Day Committee from nominations submitted by residents. The committee uses a set of guidelines to consider the nominations and asks those submitting the name of a person or organization to be Grand Marshal to "describe a specific act or acts (personal or civic) of outstanding service which has been generally recognized as placing the individual or group (nominated) in a category well above others for sustained and distinguished service and commitment to the Town of Poolesville and its surrounding areas."

It is important to note that the guidelines do not specify that any person or organization nominated has to live in Poolesville or its surrounding areas. The nomination is focused rather on what the person or organization has contributed to the health and well-being of the Poolesville area. It is possible, for example, that a county or state official who does not live in our area may have done a lot to make the lives of citizens in the Poolesville area better, for example, by introducing

and passing legislation that is extremely beneficial to all of us.

Interestingly, not all nominees for Grand Marshal have been individuals. A number of organizations involved in community service in the Poolesville area have been nominated in the past. Jake Perkins, a founder of Poolesville Day and its leader for many years until his death in 2007, was posthumously named Grand Marshal, and his aunt and uncle appeared in the parade in his place.

Here is the list of people or organizations who have been selected for Grand Marshal, going all the way back to 2004:

2024: Brice Halbrook, Former Chair of Poolesville Day, WUMCO Board, Former Commissioner

2023: Kenny Mallow, Local Contractor

2022: Rande Davis and Publisher, *The Monocacy Monocle*; Local Historian; Amar Duggirala, Local Physician; Chair, Sustainable Poolesville

2021: Valaree Dickerson, Former Commissioner; Local Activist; Started Local Toy Drive

2020: Pandemic, No Poolesville Day Event

2019: Gwendora Reese, Historian, Founder Sugarland Ethno-History Project

2018: Link Hoewing, Past Commissioner

2017: Jerry Klobukowski, Past Commissioner, Education Liaison

2016: Tim Pike and Margaret Valega, Local Business Owners

2015: Grace Sheppard, Elementary School Teacher

2014: George Hillard, Fire Chief

2013: Maggie Nightingale, Local Activist for Poolesville's Library

2012: Jim Brown, Commissioner, Local Business Leader

2011: Ray Hoewing, Long Time Local Activist

2010: Jane Stearns, Founder of Local Charity WUMCO

2009: Betty Jean and Roy Selby, Long Time Owners of Local Grocery

2008: Odd Fellows Lodge Poolesville, Local Charitable Services Group

2007: Jake Perkins, Represented by Judy and David Feigin, Aunt and Uncle

2006: Mary Chiswell, Teacher, Oldest Poolesville Resident

Continued on page 7.



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Senior News

Poolesville Seniors Present Virtual and In-Person Programs

Visit the Poolesville Seniors' website, poolesvilleseniors.org, to register for these and a wide variety of virtual and in-person events. Sign up at 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.

June 27 and July 25

Line Dancing w/Ashley Kelch

Enjoy a free evening of line dancing with basic instruction that builds up to more complicated moves. *St. Peter's Episcopal Church. 5:00 p.m.*

July 3, July 9, July 17, July 23

Chair One Fitness with 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. *Speer Hall, 19800 Elgin Rd. 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.*

July 9

Game Day Golf Social

Share a bucket of balls and some putting provided by the Poolesville Seniors on the driving range at Poolesville Golf Course. *Crossvines Golf. 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m.*

July 10

Head Out on an African Safari

Jambo! What is a modern African Safari really like? Join Bill and Jill

McDonald on Zoom as they share their recent adventures in East Africa through stories, photos, and video. Registration required for the Zoom link. Virtual. 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

July 11

Grove & Garnish Tasting

Experience a light lunch featuring a small individual tasting of the Grove & Garnish summer menu! \$8.00 fee. Registration Required. *St. Peter's Fellowship Hall. 12:30 p.m. to 1:30 p.m.*

Latin Dance Instruction

An introduction to the basic steps of Latin dance (salsa, merengue, cumbia, flamenco). No experience is needed. *Speer Hall. 6:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m.*

July 16

Trail Hike: Seneca Creek Greenway Trail

Join an easy 2+ hour, 5.7-mile hike on the Seneca Creek Greenway Trail between Watkins and Huntmasters. *9310 Watkins Road, Gaithersburg. 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. Arrive 8:50 a.m.*

Musical Melting Pot Singalong

Enjoy singing along to old favorites, perhaps learning a few new things about them along the way. *Speer Hall. 3:00 p.m. to 5:00 p.m.*

July 17

Historic Ag Reserve with Kenny Sholes

Join local historian Kenny Sholes for the next Historic Ag Reserve Properties presentation. Virtual. Registration required for Zoom Link. 7:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

July 18

Movie Night: *Twisters*

In this followup to the original movie, competing storm-chasing teams find themselves squarely in the paths of multiple storm systems. PG-13, 122 minutes. *Speer Hall. 7:00 p.m. to 9:30 p.m.*

July 21

PS Book Club: *State of Terror*

This 2021 political thriller by Hillary Rodham Clinton and Louise Penny centers on Ellen Adams, the new, inexperienced U.S. Secretary of State who must assemble a team to unravel a deadly worldwide terrorist conspiracy. Mystery/political thriller. Virtual. Registration required for Zoom link. 7:00 p.m.

July 23

An Afternoon of Enchantment: Stories, Magic, Balloons and Fun for Kids, Parents and Grandparents

Enjoy fun for kids, parents, and grandparents with warm and rich stories told by author Noa Baum, and illusions and sleight of hand by Jeff Teate, master magician. Enjoy making your own sundae from a selection of toppings. Do a craft and take home a balloon folded and crafted by Jeff. *Poolesville Memorial United Methodist Church. 2:00 p.m. to 3:30 pm.*

July 31

Stay Safe Online: Understanding Phishing, Passwords, and Internet Security

Join Jacob Santucci, a cybersecurity

Continued on page 7.



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Continued from page 5.

Grand Marshal Nominations for Poolesville Day Open

2005: State Leaders of the Lions Club,
Odd Fellows, American Legion

2004: Earl Moore (UMCVD Chief) and
Sgt. Frank, Brown (County Police,
Fifth District)

The Poolesville Day Committee welcomes nominations for this important position. Nominations will be accepted starting on July 1 and ending on July 28. Entry forms will be available on the committee website during that time and can be submitted directly on the site. The web address is www.poolesvilleday.com.

Continued from page 6.

Senior News

professional, for a friendly and informative session on how to stay safe online. This virtual presentation is not just for seniors. Registration is required for the Zoom link. 7:00 p.m. to 8:30 p.m.

Weekly Events

Walking Club, Ping Pong, Pickleball, Tai Chi, Zumba Gold, Knitting and Crochet Club, Trivia Night, and Mahjong. Visit Poolesvilleseniors.org for details, days, times, and locations.

Of Poetry and Prose

Summer Evening

The frog half fearful jumps across
the path,
And little mouse that leaves its hole
at eve
Nimbles with timid dread beneath
the swath;
My rustling steps awhile their
joys deceive,
Till past, and then the cricket sings
more strong,
And grasshoppers in merry moods
still wear
The short night weary with their
fretting song.
Up from behind the molehill jumps
the hare,
Cheat of his chosen bed, and from
the bank
The yellowhammer flutters in
short fears
From off its nest hid in the
grasses rank,
And drops again when no more
noise it hears.
Thus nature's human link and
endless thrall,
Proud man, still seems the enemy
of all.

—John Clare

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Focus on Business

Anytime Fitness Poolesville: More Than Just a Place to Sweat!

By Rande Davis

There is more going on at Anytime Fitness Poolesville than just workouts and exercise classes. Joy Hallfors, operating manager and partner of Anytime Fitness Poolesville is proud of her nineteen-member staff but is especially proud of one who just graduated from Poolesville High School, and she wanted to share her pride with us and the entire community.

Team Member Anderson Preis began training with Joy back in 2020, and from day one, it was clear he is a most intelligent kid, but what makes him truly special is that he's also one of the humblest. Despite his incredible academic record and long list of accomplishments, he's kind, grounded, and always willing to support the people around him.

His academic achievements are numerous: Anderson just graduated from the prestigious Science, Mathematics, and Computer Science Magnet Program at Poolesville High School with a 4.0 GPA all four years, scored 1590 on the SAT, and was one of only twenty-five students accepted into the dual-degree engineering program at the Webb Institute, where he received a full tuition scholarship. The Webb Institute is a unique, top-ranked undergraduate institution offering dual bachelor's degrees in Naval Architecture and Marine Engineering. It is also the only full-tuition scholarship private undergraduate program of its kind in the country.

"In addition to managing four to five hours of homework a night," said Joy, "Anderson has worked in our front office for the past couple of years as a Member Services Associate, where he's helped keep our club running smoothly and made every member feel welcome—this, while he also worked for another company, tutored younger students in math, volunteered regularly at church and in the community, competed in chess, personally trained consistently."

Joy is also pleased to announce that Anytime Fitness Poolesville raised \$800 to donate to the local American Legion Daniel-Jeffers Post 247. Funds were raised through a fitness challenge event they sponsored called the Murph Challenge. The Murph Challenge is a Memorial Day workout tradition for the club that honors the life and legacy of U.S. Navy Lt. Michael Murphy. This intense workout draws the community together to reflect, sweat, and support a greater cause.

"Thanks to the enthusiasm of our members and the dedication of our coaching staff," said Joy, "we were able to make this donation to support the ongoing mission and service of Post 247."



Anytime Fitness's Joy Hallfors presented American Legion Post 247 Commander Julien Singh with a donation raised by members.



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Continued from page 1.

St. Mary's Father Kevin Passes Away

Well more than half of the congregation was in their twenties or thirties. Some travelled from out of state to pay their respects.

Everyone who knew Father Kevin also knew that second to his great love for God, the Virgin Mary, the Catholic Church, his parishioners, and family and friends was his love of Mickey Mouse. He first met Mickey on his first (of many) trip to Disney World when he and five other priests, fresh out of the seminary, took a road trip from New York to Disney World. His great friend from the seminary, Father Elston, gave a touching homily and recounted the trip. It was a great moment for brotherly bonding, resulting in other similar trips later. Joined by Father Elston, from a parish in Pennsylvania, he led youth groups on bus trips to the Florida playland. He would joke later that, on one of those trips, he did finally learn that planes go to Florida.

The bonding was evident at the funeral with fourteen priests and deacons sharing in the Mass in his honor. To witness the procession of priests, led by the Knights of Columbus, and their gathering at the altar was not just impressive but served as a testament to the man. Deacon David Cahoon, who served with Father Kevin at St. Mary's, said, "Like Father Reid, he fell in love with the people he served and chose to come rest in the garden out back. Someday, I hope to join them along with all the other saints who found a home here since 1741."

Fr. Kevin Patrick O'Reilly was born to Vincent A. and Joan C. (Dupre) O'Reilly in Evanston, Illinois on April 25, 1959.




Fr. Kevin Patrick O'Reilly

Father Kevin loved to travel, was a frequent visitor to Disney World and enjoyed cruises. When he was younger, he coached youth soccer, enjoyed skiing, and loved gardening.

Father O'Reilly is survived by his nephews, Anthony, Colin, and Brendan O'Reilly.

He was ordained a Roman Catholic priest on December 14, 1984 and served in many parishes in the Roman Catholic Archdiocese of Washington, including as Pastor of Holy Face in Great Mills, Maryland; St. Bernardine's Parish in Suitland, Maryland; and St. Mary's Parish in Barnesville.

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Ag News

The Montgomery County Agricultural Fair: The Very Heart of Our Culture and History

By Rande Davis

The soul of Poolesville comes from its rural roots, so it was natural that region leaders like Royce Hanson and George Kephart (with support from so many others) advocated and succeeded in establishing our 93,000-acre Agricultural Reserve that cradles the town. With the Ag Reserve emblematic of our soul, the Montgomery County Agricultural Fair (MCAF) is our heart.

This year marks the seventy-sixth year of the fair, marking what is in a sense the Fourth of July of our farming community. While the anniversary marks the beginning of the current version of the county fair in Gaithersburg, the Poolesville Fair set the stage early in the 1940s, with its successful ag fair held behind the high school, right where all the construction is underway today.

Volunteers organized a typical farm fair of animal competitions of horses, cattle, goats, and sheep. Of course, it was also a venue to showcase all the locally-grown produce, and tasty baked goods and desserts.

During the beginning years of what now has grown into a premiere county fair, borrowed land in Gaithersburg in 1945 to 1948 was used so that anyone in the community with an interest in agriculture could donate their time and efforts to provide 4-H and FFA youth the opportunity to compete for top awards with their projects. It was a bonanza of volunteerism. Parents of these youth served refreshments for the participants, sold catalog advertisements, built pens and ties for the livestock, and organized the entries. Prize money was provided by the Maryland State Fair Board.



Our farmers understand what horsepower really means.

Today's Montgomery County Agricultural Center Inc. (MCAC) was formed as a privately operated 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization on January 7, 1949, when a group of local farmers were elected as the first board of directors by the volunteer membership of the organization. The MCAC purchased sixty-four acres of land adjacent to the railroad tracks from Herman Rabbitt, a successful farmer and landowner in Gaithersburg. On June 4, 1949, hundreds of volunteers participated in an old-fashioned barn raising, and twelve outbuildings were constructed in just one day. Through this gargantuan effort, the site of the new MCAC was created. Dedicated volunteers donated time, materials, and talent to construct and continue operation of the fairgrounds. The fairgrounds would not be what it is today if it were not for those visionary pioneers who were committed to agricultural education and family entertainment.

As is true even today for the agricultural center, the volunteers were, and still are, necessary for the successful operation of the fairgrounds, through continued contributions of materials and free labor for the construction of the new facilities, as well as upgrading the old. A network of more than two thousand volunteers continues, providing their time, making the agricultural center a vital part of the business community in Montgomery County. The nine-day MCAF is held in mid-August and requires support from over eight hundred volunteers, who assume the responsibility for organizing and producing the single largest annual event in Montgomery County.



We were not sheepish about our pride in our farming life.

Fair participation has developed into a grand tradition for many families. The positive relationships and friendly atmosphere at the fairgrounds make the MCAC a unique organization that continues to provide service to the agricultural and non-agricultural segments of our population while educating the public.

Aside from its primary objective of being a showcase for 4-H and FFA members exhibiting livestock, garden, and home economic projects, the MCAF promotes agriculture through education of the community regarding agricultural issues and providing a meeting place for those interested in agriculture to encourage growth for future generations. The center is also committed to educating members of urban communities, helping them to acquire an appreciation for the role that agriculture plays in our daily lives.

Continued on page 12.





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School News

PES Graduates 119 Students

By Rande Davis

Congratulations to the fifth grade students at Poolesville Elementary School who will head to John Poole Middle School this coming September. The ceremony on June 11 began with the traditional Clap-Out Walk from the school to Whalen Commons where the festivities took place on a beautiful day.



PES fifth graders at their graduation ceremony in Whalen Commons.

Principal Doug Robbins noted in his remarks that the role of teaching at this level is of-ten defined as teaching how to read, write, and solve math problems. "While all of that is true, I believe in the early years our role is something even greater. At the heart of our work is the responsibility to help our students to

Continued on page 16.

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Regular Schedule
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Saturday, July 26

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School News

Students Teaching Students About Social Media Safety

By Emma Biedron

On June 3, 2025, six members of Project Uplift, a student-led, mental health advocacy club at Poolesville High School, gave a presentation about social media and privacy to fifth grade students at Poolesville Elementary School.

Project Uplift was founded in 2023 by students passionate about benefiting the community through mental health advocacy. They're currently working on creating a safe space in the counseling office of Poolesville High School called the Butterfly Room where students can go in times of crisis.

The members of Project Uplift understand the pressure having a cellphone brings and volunteered to help teach the elementary school students how to protect themselves in the world of social media. Kyro Owusu, Astrid Tayman, Nana Afriyie Opoku-Ware, Vibha Bantanur, Emma Biedron, and Cynthia Momanyi began their presentation by asking how many of the fifth graders carried a cellphone. Nearly half of the elementary students raised their hands.

Growing access to the internet at a young age means more elementary schoolers are being introduced to social media. The Project Uplift team displayed a series of fake Instagram posts that they had created, all of which contained personal identifiable information (PII). The fifth graders were then tasked with analyzing the posts to find the PII, which ranged from the sharing of weekend plans to identifiers such as a license plate, a home address, and full names. The elementary students responded enthusiastically. Project Uplift shared findings from the PEW Research Center that nearly ninety-one percent of all kids have posted a photo of themselves publicly, seventy-one percent have posted their school name and where they live, fifty-three percent have posted their e-mail address, and twenty percent have posted their phone number.

The members of Project Uplift also shared a social experiment they had performed to demonstrate the anonymity and potential dangers of social media. They had created a fake Instagram account that claimed to be from an unnamed Poolesville High School student. Project Uplift then used that account to follow 151 Poolesville students, 80 of whom followed back, despite not knowing who was behind the anonymous account. Notably, only two of the eighty sent a direct message asking who the anonymous "student" was. The person behind the account could have been anyone simply posing as a high school student. By following the anonymous account, the Poolesville students allowed an unknown individual access to otherwise private photos, many of which contained PII, and allowed the unknown poster the ability to privately message them. This part of the presentation was met with gasps from the attentive fifth graders.

Through their presentation, Project Uplift taught the students the importance of being cognizant of what personal information they may be posting, as well as the potential dangers of following strangers online.



PHS students from Uplift Project talked about the dangers of social media to PES students.

Continued from page 10.

The Montgomery County Agricultural Fair: The Very Heart of Our Culture and History

Although the MCAC has always given top priority in the usage of the grounds to county youth involved in 4-H and FFA activities, the fairgrounds are rented throughout the year to businesses and community organizations for shows, markets, meetings, receptions, banquets, and festivals. The revenue brought in by these rentals provides the organization with the ability to make improvements to the grounds for the comfort of fair patrons and rental clients.

The MCAC has been recognized by local and county governments as being an integral part of the business community by making contributions to the economic and social development of Gaithersburg and Montgomery County.

The MCAC continues its involvement in community service projects such as its VIP program for children who are facing life-threatening illnesses. These children and their families are treated to a special day during the fair.

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Pulse

Monocacy Lions Celebrate 85 Years Of Community Service

By Rande Davis

The Monocacy Lions Club held the annual Charter Night at Crossvines in a celebration and recognition of

service of members for 2025. The group elected its leadership as follows: Heidi Brenholz (President), Tom Rojas (Vice President), Cathy Mattax (Secretary), Scott Daniels (Treasurer), Val Dickerson (Membership Chair), Josh Maisel (Tail Twister), and newly-elected Board of Directors, Suzanne Tallia and Wendy Smith.

Dick Franklin was chosen to receive the club's highest honor, the Melvin Jones Award. Named for the founder of Lions Clubs International, the

Melvin Jones Fellowship Award is the highest form of Lion recognition and embodies humanitarian ideas consistent with the nature and purpose of Lionism. The recipient of this award is a model member because of his or her exemplary service to the club and the community.

Lion of the Year was given to Cathy Mattax and is presented each year to a deserving Lion, who has best supported the club's objectives and activities during the past year.

Legacy of Service

Herb Brown received the Legacy of Service Award which honors a Lion who has demonstrated years of outstanding service, unwavering loyalty, and heartfelt dedication to both the club and the community.

Continued on page 15.



Dick Franklin received the Melvin Jones Award, the highest honor in Lionism.



The winner of the Lions Community Service Award, Joan Carroll.



Monocacy Lions Secretary, Cathy Mattax, awarded Lion of the Year.



Tom Conlon awarded the Knights of the Blind Pyramid, an award honoring Helen Keller, who inspired the organization to take on issues of blindness as its primary mission.



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Tidbits

Town Fishing Contest Great Success

The winners were:

Grand Prize:

Carson Kramek – Age 6-8

First Place:

Declan Hafner – Age 6-8

Abel Leibrand – Age 9-11

Jai Hurd – Age 12-14

Emmett Comaskey-Marcil – Age 15 -16



The pond at John Poole Middle School attracted a large turnout to the annual fishing contest.



Grand Prize Winner: Carson Kramek



Declan Hafner



Abel Leibrand



Jai Hurd



Emmett Comaskey-Marcil

Snakes as Hard as Stones

Schoolchildren contributed colorfully-painted stones that they collected, and placed in a row, forming a friendly stone snake that has grown to over twenty stones so far. I know snakes are cold-blooded, I just didn't know they were stone-cold-blooded.



Schoolchildren contributed colorfully-painted stones that formed a friendly stone snake that has grown to over twenty stones.

Poolesville Walking Club

Poolesville's Walking Club, from the Poolesville Seniors, meets at Whalen Commons in the morning to walk together for fun and their health. They recently reproduced the iconic cover from the Beatles album Abbey Road this past June. In the picture are: Joan Evans, Cathy Mattax, Madelon Stone, Renita Talley, and Suzanne Tallia. They like to "Come Together" every morning "Because" "Oh! Darling!" "Here Comes the Sun!" "The End!"



Poolesville's Walking Club, from the Poolesville Seniors, meets at Whalen Commons in the morning to walk together for fun and their health. They reproduced the iconic Beatles album cover, Abbey Road, this past June. Pictured are: Joan Evans, Cathy Mattax, Madelon Stone, Renita Talley, and Suzanne Tallia.

Continued from page 14.

Monocacy Lions Celebrate 85 Years of Community Service

Knights of the Blind Pyramid: Tom Conlon

In honor of Helen Keller for challenging the Lions to "become Knights of the Blind," Tom Conlon was given the Knights of the Blind Pyramid Award. This award honors an outstanding Lion who exemplifies dedication and commitment to Lionism.

The club also recognized Joan Carroll for her many years of community service. The Monocacy Lions Humanitarian Award is presented to a member of the local community in recognition of unselfish commitment and tireless service towards the betterment of the local community. As part of this award, a \$1,000 donation is made to a local charity of the recipient's choice.

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Things to Do

July 3

PACC Network Breakfast Meeting

Featuring Poolesville Pride. Locals Restaurant. 8:00 a.m. to 9:00 a.m.

American Legion Daniels-Jeffers Post 247

Monthly meeting. All veterans are welcome. *Calleva Offices*. 7:00 p.m.

July 4

UMCVFD Annual Fireworks Celebration

Great food trucks (no alcohol, dogs, or other pets). New this year: front row box seats; call for info at 301-972-8719. Music by: Brickyard Road Band (a Lynyrd Skynyrd tribute band). \$10 per car. *Located at the intersection of Hughes Road and Sugarland Road*. Gates open at 5:00 p.m.; fireworks at sunset.

July 12

UMCVFD Pork and Beef Fundraiser

Join UMCVFD for a delicious BBQ pork and beef fundraiser lunch. Offering slow-smoked BBQ pork and beef, classic coleslaw, and hearty baked beans. Enjoy your meal at our covered tables or grab carryout. All proceeds

benefit our new Training and Activity Center. umcvfd.org/bbq. 301-972-8719. *Firehouse in Beallsville*. 11:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. or until sold out.

July 16

PACC Networking and Happy Hour

Cash bar, light refreshments, free to PACC members. *Comus Inn and Beer Garden, Dickerson*. 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m.

July 20

D.C. Polo Society Polo Matches

This family-friendly event is a perfect excuse to get dressed up and spend the afternoon with friends and family. Cash bar and food truck on-site. Children under 12 free. \$45 (includes one complimentary beverage); tailgate: \$75. *Congressional Polo Club, 14660 Hughes Road, Poolesville*. Two matches at 3:00 p.m. and 4:00 p.m.

July 25

Friday on the Commons: All Out '80s

Inflatables, food trucks, vendors, and kids' crafts, and games. Featuring beer (Checkerspot Brewing Company, Third Hill Brewing Company), and wine (Metzger Winery). Music by Zach Etheridge as DJ/EZ (6:00 p.m.) and Six Daze, an '80s cover band (8:00 p.m.). *Whalen Commons*. 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m.

Continued from page 11.

PES Graduates 119 Students

become good people: People who follow the golden rule, treating others the way they would like to be treated; people who can respectfully disagree and consider different perspectives; above all, people who others look at and say, "That is someone I want to be around."

He told them his wish for them is that he hoped their days at PES helped them to grow as readers, writers, mathematicians, and curious learners. "But more importantly, I hope you realize that the everyday moments and lessons at PES have helped shape you into kinder, more thoughtful, and more respectful individuals."

With pride in their success and with his warm wishes, he sent them on their way by reminding them that "being a good person will open more doors and build stronger relationships than anything else."

After the ceremony, the students celebrated with a fun-filled party and picnic at Stevens Park.




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Pulse

Pride on Display at Locals Market

By Skylar Mullin

Despite a slight downpour, the second annual Poolesville Pride Fest drew a lively crowd to Locals Farm Market on Saturday, June 14. Hosted by the Poolesville Pride Club, the event celebrated the LGBTQ+ community and brought together residents, vendors, and local performers.



Olivia (Olli) Paksima, a member of the Poolesville Pride, at her arts and crafts booth.



Sam Cooper and Sabrina, leading members of the Poolesville Pride and those who made the opening speeches.



Elizabeth Ward, Kyro Owusu, Cachaca, Avery Savino, Oz Buchet, Vera Samuels, members of Poolesville High School's QSU and Project Uplift.

The festival was organized in partnership with the Upcounty Prevention Network, Riverworks Art Center, and Locals and was funded by the MoCo Pride Center and the Town of Poolesville. The lawn was transformed into a vibrant marketplace. Booths included a photo booth with feather boas and fun costumes provided by Siren Studio, Black Magic Crochet—an artisan shop showcasing textile crafts—and Girl Scout Troop 31002, among many others. Two clubs from Poolesville High School—Project Uplift and the Queer Student Union—shared a booth and engaged energetically with other young attendees. The Rainbow Defense Coalition was also present, providing support and ensuring a safe environment for all guests.

Meanwhile, in the outdoor seating area of Locals, adorned with rainbow decorations, a small stage hosted many different performances. The event kicked off with opening remarks from members of Poolesville Pride, who thanked the community for their support. Shortly after, drag queen Bella Naughty led a “Drag Story Hour” and had children gathering on picnic blankets in front of the stage for her animated storytelling.

Continued on page 27.

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Local History

The Great Fires of Poolesville: A Story of Tragedy and Heroism

By Jack Toomey and Rande Davis

Only a few long-time residents of Poolesville remember what the old business section of town looked like. The center of commerce was grouped around the intersection of Fisher Avenue and Route 109. Much of the business of the town was conducted here, and where shopping centers stand today, there were farms and stately homes. How many remember that the town was nearly destroyed during three disastrous fires that happened with the last one seventy-two years ago?

In August of 1923, a fire started in the middle of the night. Most of the commercial district was destroyed. Mrs. Helen Pumphrey, whose home was and still stands directly across from the Poolesville Post Office on the site of the new Ferry Crossing development, was fifteen at the time. She recalled in an interview that she was asleep in her bedroom, when she was awoken "by all of the commotion, and I looked out my window, and the whole sky was red." She dressed and raced up the street where she first helped others remove goods from the stores. She recalled, "We formed a bucket brigade, but there was just not enough water." Most of the townspeople were trying to help, but retailers, including Hoskinson's Store, Spurrier's Clothing and Furniture Store (a 4,200-square-foot building), Fisher's Lemonade and Ice Cream, Wootton's Store, and the town's post office were destroyed. Many other shops were damaged, including the barber shop, a drug store, and some private residences.

After the fire of 1923, townspeople began to raise money for a water tower for firefighting, but all the money was lost when the Central Trust Bank failed. It was later taken over by the First National Bank which preceded M&T Bank.

In 1931, a fire broke out at the Kohlhoss & Sons Garage in the middle of town (where Poolesville Tire is now located). On March 25, 1931, Joseph Butler, an employee, came to work early and intended to light the stove for heat. He struck a match, but a fragment flew across the room and landed in a vat of gasoline that was used to clean tools and machinery. The vat of gasoline exploded and set fire

to the building and to Mr. Butler's clothing. Butler ran out of the building with his clothing on fire and dove into a barrel of sitting rainwater. Butler was injured, but since he was wearing two pairs of trousers, he was protected from life-threatening injuries. The building and its contents, including several automobiles, were destroyed in the blaze, and only the fast action of the Gaithersburg and Rockville Fire Departments prevented the fire from spreading to other buildings. It was said that responding firemen could see the smoke from at least six miles away. Ironically, one of the cars that was destroyed was that of Lawrence Clagett, a former Montgomery County Police officer, who had been killed in a fire just a few weeks before.

In September of 1935, another disastrous fire broke out in the middle of the night. The post office had been moved to the Norris house on Norris Avenue after the destruction of 1923. The fire was believed to have started there. Mr. and Mrs. Harry White were asleep in the old building when the fire started. Newspaper accounts of the fire related that Mrs. Emma Kohlhoss and Mrs. Dora Hall sounded the alarm and helped rescue the Whites. Mr. Charles Kohlhoss ran to the scene of the fire but was severely burned when the door of the post office collapsed on him. The post office was destroyed but an even greater disaster was averted when the Rockville and Gaithersburg Fire Departments arrived and managed to save the house of Mrs. Fannie Williams (the Frederick Poole House, now occupied by Sugar Pea Vintage) who had a priceless collection of antiques in her home. Tragically, a carload of firemen from Silver Spring overturned on the sharp curve just outside of town as they raced to Poolesville.

In February 1953, another fire nearly destroyed the downtown section. Mrs. Frances Le Marr, who lived on Elmer School Road, awoke during the night with labor pains. She called her husband, who was at work, and he raced home



Mrs. LeMarr, the hero of the 1953 fire. While the flames roared, the stork had to wait.

Continued on page 28.

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Sports

The Congressional Polo Club: Big Hats and Polo Ponies

By Jeff Stuart

If you are looking for something different to do with a little style attached on these upcoming summer weekends, consider visiting the Congressional Polo Club at 14660 Hughes Road in Poolesville. Don your big hats. Wear bright colors. "To me, the polo player has elegance and imagination. It embodies a sophisticated luxury and a timeless style," said fashion designer Ralph Lauren.

On Sunday, July 20, from 2:00 p.m. to 5:30 p.m., the club will host the first of their Summer Vibes Social Series. There will be picnic seating on the lawn. A limited number of lawn seats are available. In a beautiful countryside setting, there will be two rounds of polo featuring professional polo players, lawn games and activities, music by local artists, a cash bar and food truck, and photo ops to capture the day. General admission is \$45 each.

"We are open four days a week," said director and board member, Seema Sharma. "Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Saturdays are mostly practice chukkers or periods of play. Our competitive matches are on Sundays. We have polo matches. We do a lot of training and can match any level of play. We have a lot of professional polo players at our club. We have players from India, Argentina, and Chile. Sometimes, we have players from the UK and even Mongolia. We are a private club, but from time to time, we host events that are open to the public.




The sport of kings!

"Oftentimes, polo is seen as an elite sport or something that not everyone can be a part of. We are trying to break that perception. We are the closest polo venue to Washington, D.C., so we want to introduce polo to Washington and to the entire DMV region. We try to bring our costs down as much as we can, so if someone wants to give it a try and wants to learn how to play polo, they can. We are no more expensive than a tennis lesson or a piano lesson, probably cheaper. We charge \$135 for a lesson. We are kind of in that same ballpark. We think we are in reach of a lot of people that are investing time in other sports. A horse is a very expensive part of the equipment, obviously, but we provide you with a horse for an hour-long lesson. For us, it takes us thirty minutes before the lesson to pack and get the horse ready. Then after the lesson, it takes another twenty minutes to take all the equipment off the horse and hose the horse down, so when we teach an hour lesson, it takes two and a half hours for us. Then there is the cost of maintenance for the horse. We are not in this for profit at all. I run the club, but I volunteer my time. I do not take a salary. There is no money exchanged between me and the club. I do what I do because I love the sport, and I want to create awareness, so anyone who wants to give it a try and see if they even have a knack for it, we offer lessons that are very affordable, priced at about \$400 a month, including grooming services. That is for four lessons a week, sixteen for the entire month.


"We want to bring more people from around the world into the sport. We are doing our part here in the D.C. area. Robert Kinsler is our liaison with D.C. Fray. Our partnership with that organization over the past five years has helped us reach out to a wider portion of the D.C. area."

Continued on page 21.



19701 Fisher Avenue Poolesville, MD 20837
(All events start at 6:00pm unless otherwise noted)

<p>Red, White, & Brews June 6 - 6pm - 10pm</p> <p>Inflatables - Food Trucks - Artisan Vendors Kids Crafts - <i>Jenn's Uncommon Critters</i></p> <p><u>Beer</u>: Featuring <i>Checker Spot Brewing</i>, <i>Stone Silo Brewery</i>, & <i>Third Hill Brewing</i></p> <p><u>Wine</u>: Featuring <i>Metzger Winery</i></p> <p><u>Music</u>: <i>Michael Heister</i> - 6-8pm <i>19th Street Band</i> - 8-10pm</p>	<p>All Out 80's July 25 - 6pm - 10pm</p> <p>Inflatables - Arcade Games - Food Trucks Artisan Vendors - Kids Crafts and Games</p> <p><u>Beer</u>: Featuring <i>Checker Spot Brewing</i> & <i>Third Hill Brewing</i></p> <p><u>Wine</u>: Featuring <i>Metzger Winery</i></p> <p><u>Music</u>: <i>DJEEZ Zach Etheridge</i> - 6-8pm <i>Six Deez 80's Cover Band</i> - 8-10pm</p>
<p>Sunset & Sips August 22 - 6pm - 10pm</p> <p>Waterslides - Foam Dance Party Food Trucks - Artisan Vendors - Kids Crafts <i>Jenn's Uncommon Critters</i></p> <p><u>Beer</u>: Featuring <i>Checker Spot</i>, <i>Smoketown</i>, <i>Stone Silo</i>, & <i>Third Hill Breweries</i></p> <p><u>Wine</u>: Featuring <i>Metzger Winery</i></p> <p><u>Music</u>: <i>Sean Chyan</i> - 6-8pm <i>Back to the Beach</i> (Beach Boys Cover Band) - 8-10pm</p>	<p>Barrels of Fun September 5 - 6pm - 10pm</p> <p>Inflatables - Food Trucks - Artisan Vendors Kids Crafts and Games - <i>Jenn's Uncommon Critters</i></p> <p><u>Beer</u>: Featuring <i>Checker Spot</i>, <i>Smoketown</i>, <i>Stone Silo</i>, & <i>Third Hill Breweries</i></p> <p><u>Wine</u>: Featuring <i>Metzger Winery</i></p> <p><u>Music</u>: <i>Kill Gartner & Her Drifting Valentines</i> - 6-8pm <i>Highway Legends</i> - 8-10pm</p>
<p>Bingo Night June 20 - 6pm - 9pm</p> <p>Old Time Bingo for the Family Sponsored by UMCFVD</p> <p>Inflatables - Yard Games - Food Trucks</p>	<p>Stars & Screening October 3 - 7pm - 10pm</p> <p>Movie: <i>Bat 1 Transylvania: Transformia</i></p> <p>Fire Pits - Movie Snacks - Halloween Fun</p>



Continued from page 20.

The Congressional Polo Club: Big Hats and Polo Ponies

“Typically, during our social events, there is an MC at the polo matches to help explain the game and provide a little insight for those who are unfamiliar,” said Robert, who also serves as the club’s social entertainment leader. “There will also be foreign and exotic cars on display on the site. There are small activities and lawn games for the kids. You can take pictures with the horses. The club is looking for membership but is reaching out to those who want to learn how to play polo or just learn about the game. If you have your own horse, you might consider boarding the horse there. If you are learning how to play, it is nice to have your horse on site. There is a tradition in polo where you go out and stomp on a divot that has been created by the players during the game and help push it back into the ground. It is a fun afternoon. I have been doing it for several years. With the disruption of COVID, things are getting back to normal. We are excited to be part of the local community here in Poolesville. We help with local fundraisers through ticket sales. We try to be involved. Our mission is to make fun possible.

We make fun social events and organize social leagues in sports such as football, soccer, kickball, softball, and volleyball, and other events. Their events are held at locations throughout the city of Washington and the surrounding areas, including Tysons, Virginia, so the Congressional club offers participation in those sports as well.”

The club hosts Copa de Congressional Club competition at 11:00 a.m. on July 26 and 6:00 p.m. on July 27.

D.C. Polo Society has teamed up with Poolesville local Amy Baker’s luxe catering business, Eat Picnic Explore, to take your tailgate to the next level. Picture this: a beautifully styled picnic with rugs and plush pillows, low tables adorned with florals, sparkling glassware, and gourmet handcrafted charcuterie—all set up and waiting for you fieldside. It’s the ultimate in effortless elegance, where you can sip, snack, and socialize in style while taking in the action. This exclusive package includes a curated three-hour luxe picnic experience, with charcuterie by our partner Graze & Savor, ice, and sparkling water, and all set up and clean up. Order at eatpicnicexplore.com/dcpolo.

“A polo handicap is a person’s ticket to the world,” said Sir Winston Churchill.



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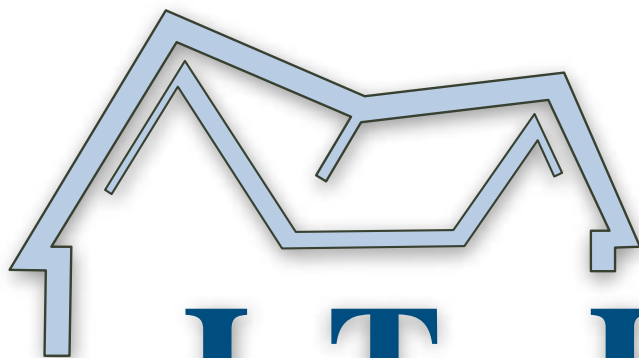
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Remembrance

Timothy Drew Hilton

Timothy Drew Hilton, "Tim," 60, of Barnesville, went to be home with Jesus on June 5, 2025. Born on May 16, 1965, in Frederick, he was the son of Bill and Shirley Hilton of Barnesville.

Tim graduated from Poolesville High School in 1986 where he would later return to work in security. He was also employed by McDonald's in Poolesville around the same time. Tim was a former Corporate Member of the UMCVFD and was very proud of it.

Tim was known for his generous spirit and no-complain attitude. Anyone that knew him loved him.

Surviving besides his parents are two brothers, Woody (Lisa) and Brent (Lynn); three nieces, Brittany Fields (Mat), Stephanie Brady (Eddie), and Christina Hopkins (Dylan); one nephew, Cole Hilton; two great-nieces, Addie and Emma; and two great-nephews, Cooper and Rye.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made in Tim's name to either Special Olympics Maryland or St. Jude Children's Research Hospital.



Timothy Drew Hilton

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July

A very pleasant month is this
To be in a country town.
The sunlight doth the foliage kiss,
Each verdant leaflet beams with bliss,
I see not one that's brown.

Fresh zephyrs fan the thrifty trees
The oaks, the elms, the willows,
The lake's face caressed by the breeze
In imitation of the seas,
Is flecked with tiny billows.

-Robert F. Skillings



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Protect the Ag Reserve

Ongoing and new challenges to the environment, farmland, and open space in our area require persistent vigilance.

■ Solar installations on farms.

A new state law—the Renewable Energy Certainty Act—aims to significantly expand solar energy generation in Maryland. It does that, in part, by giving solar companies easier access to farmland, including over 5,000 additional acres in the Ag Reserve. SCA strongly supports solar and renewable energy. But we oppose the placement of large solar facilities on good quality farmland.



■ Waste management.

Montgomery County's planned overhaul of its waste disposal and recycling systems is nearing launch. We continue to urge speedy closure of the Dickerson trash incinerator as part of the plan. The incinerator is the county's single largest source of pollution and greenhouse gases.

■ Data Centers.

A proposal to build a data center and battery storage campus in Dickerson continues to move forward, albeit slowly. Along with Montgomery Countryside Alliance, we are closely monitoring the county's assessment of the proposal. If approved, the project would be the largest real estate and industrial development in our area in decades.

You can read about these issues and more on SCA's website.

OTHER SCA INITIATIVES

- ✓ Promoting regenerative agriculture
- ✓ Monitoring "agritourism" in the Ag Reserve
- ✓ Preventing development near Sugarloaf Mountain
- ✓ Tracking energy infrastructure projects that threaten farmland

SCA is having a farm-to-table fundraising dinner on Sept. 27. Save the date. More details will come later this summer.

Help us advocate on behalf of the Ag Reserve. Consider becoming an SCA member and supporter. For more information, visit sugarloafcitizens.org or email us at info@sugarloafcitizens.org



SUGARLOAF CITIZENS ASSOCIATION
P.O. BOX 218, DICKERSON, MD 20842

Mystery History

The Fading History Of Woodstock Equestrian Park

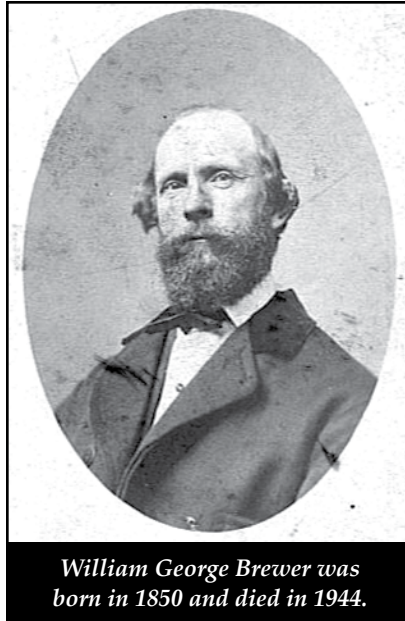
By Rande Davis

Travelers and commuters see Woodstock Equestrian Park on Route 28 north of Beallsville and may have wondered about the cluster of stone and framed buildings abandoned just above the entrance on the eastern section of the park.

While horse riders and even Mud Festivals may obscure the view of the remains of the Brewer Farm on the property, the imaginative historian might sense the spirits of George Washington, J.E.B. Stuart, and Confederate Gen. Jubal Early galloping their horses along the ridgeline.

Those historic legends have since departed, and today, the only occupants of the buildings are the pigeons that perch in a door opening of the crib barn on the property of our mystery history focus: the Brewer Farm.

The Brewer Farm was a section of the original 1,102-acre land grant known as Woodstock Manor. It is that parcel of 583 acres of land that was left after 519 acres of Woodstock Manor were sold to George Washington on January 13, 1794. Maddeningly for today's consumer, the property sold for \$12 to \$15 per acre. Dr. William Brewer, who held a medical degree from the University of Pennsylvania Medical School, is from a German family originally from Anne Arundel County. He and his wife, Mary Chiswell, had fifteen children.



William George Brewer was born in 1850 and died in 1944.



The Farmhouse on Brewer Farm.

The Story of the Brewer Farm: The Mysteries at Rosehill

William George Brewer was born in 1850 and died in 1944. William George Brewer married Ida White on Mary 16, 1872 and moved into the farmhouse shortly after their marriage. The colonial-style home, no longer there, stood directly in front of the cluster of buildings visible from Route 28. While their family had the house built for their marriage, it was not completed until some time after the wedding. In fact, when the couple returned from their wedding trip, the Brewer family held the reception in the foundation of the partially-constructed

Continued on page 25.



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Continued from page 24.

The Fading History of Woodstock Equestrian Park

house. It is easy to imagine that festive gala today since the reception would have been just in front of the stone buildings that are there now.

In the 1860s, Charles Johnson, along with Harriet Carr and her four children, were slaves on the Brewer farm. Some report that log structures, originally located directly south of the manager’s house, served as slave quarters. On the other hand, the descendants always referred to this tenant house as “the quarters” which lends credence to the theory that it was the slave quarters. The mystery as to which theory is right will have to continue for now. By 1870, Mary Johnson and her five children were servants on the farm. Interestingly, Mary’s husband, Charles, left the farm much earlier to fight in the Civil War. The most intriguing structures still standing are two Seneca sandstone buildings.

The larger one is referred to as the tenant (manager’s) house, and the other is a springhouse. The construction date is estimated to be around 1861. These structures are excellent examples of our agricultural heritage and of Seneca stone construction. In the 1700s and 1800s, the Potomac River near the mouth of the Seneca Creek was rich with sandstone and marble. The Seneca Quarry was located on the C&O Canal near the town of Seneca. This building was used to keep perishables cold by running spring water through a built-in tub.

The largest remaining structure is the decaying crib-barn, a wooden-framed structure that had the hay hoisted into the loft above, while placing animals or goods in the cribs below.

The late Walter and Audrey Pritchard of Dickerson, the last family to properly care for the home, lived in the farmhouse in the late 1960s and raised their four children there. Back then, the crib barn made a terrific basketball court, according to Mrs. Pritchard. Mrs. Pritchard also reported uncovering many beautiful rosebushes in the yard which is understandable since the property at one time is reported to have been called Rosehill. After the Pritchards moved out, the subsequent occupants did not take particularly good care of the home, and it decayed and was eventually torn down. Many members of the Brewer family are buried in the Monocacy Cemetery in Beallsville, just a half mile south of the site.



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Remembrance

Raymond "Butch" David Evans, III

Raymond "Butch" David Evans, III, 73, of Poolesville, passed away suddenly on June 20, 2025.

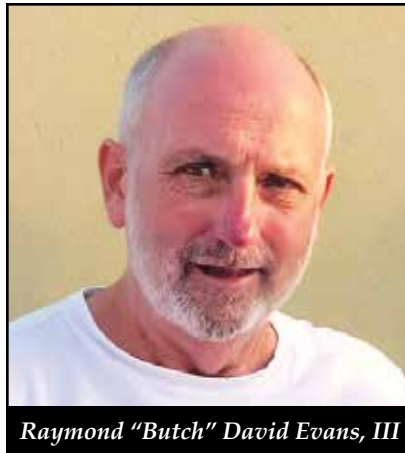
Butch was the loving husband of Barbara "Bobbie" Lynn Evans for fifty years.

Born on December 5, 1951 in Washington, D.C., he was the son of the late Raymond David Evans, Jr. and Freddie Mae Henderson.

Butch was survived by his wife, Bobbie; daughter, Kristy West (Christopher); four grandchildren, Makaela, Charles, Katelynn West, and Ryan Evans; and Ryan's mother, Elizabeth Brown.

He was preceded in death by his parents and one son, Michael Evans.

In lieu of flowers, the family asks that donations be made in his memory to the Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department



Raymond "Butch" David Evans, III

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Continued from page 18.

Pride on Display at Locals Market

A live performance by the Riverworks Wind Ensemble was followed by a presentation by Story Tapestries of "Identity through Poetry & Visual Art," which showcased creative work by local students and families. Local artists and musicians continued to perform throughout the evening as attendees browsed the booths and enjoyed local food. As the evening came to a close, Poolesville Pride Fest wrapped up its second year with another successful celebration of community.

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Continued from page 3.

Making Changes in Poolesville Stirs Controversies

these are two separate entities. Many of the comments seemed to assume that the commissioners, and particularly the president of the commission, control the planning and development process and can make decisions pretty much as they want without enough regard for the public interest. This is based on a faulty understanding of the authority of the commissioners, the town president, and the role of the Planning Commission.

The Planning Commission and town commissioners have shared responsibility for guiding the future development of the town; however, under Maryland law and the town ordinances, it is actually the Planning Commission, not the commissioners, that reviews and makes decisions on subdivision requests and site plans; and it is the Planning Commission that has the power to approve, deny, or approve with conditions, basing its decisions on applicable zoning codes, subdivision regulations, and development regulations. In this case, the Planning Commission functions in a formal, decision-making role. The decisions made by the Planning Commission are final and do not go through a further process with the local legislative body (the Poolesville Town Commission), although they can be appealed. (NOTE: With regard to Zoning Ordinances, which establish regulations for the use of land and standards for development within town, the Planning Commission does make recommendations to the commissioners which must approve them.)

The Comprehensive Plan for the Town, formerly known as the Master Plan, is not developed by the town commissioners but rather the Planning Commission. The commissioners vote on the final product, but the process of developing Comprehensive Plans involves extensive research and a lot of public input.

The Planning Commission just revised the Comprehensive Plan and held hearings, solicited public input, and also conducted surveys and citizen-listening sessions, like the public-idea-gathering session on Whalen Commons that was well-advertised and open to all, including folks who live in the broader Upcounty. Public ideas and input are not only sought extensively but help shape the town's vision for the future.

Planning Commission members are not elected, they are appointed. They are concerned local citizens just like you who give freely of their time to do a very hard job. I was on the Planning Commission for ten years, and I was in awe of the commitment and abilities of my fellow Planning Commission members and their shared love of the community.

The "Mayor" and Our Commission Form of Government:

We have a commission form of local government. While we have informally referred to the president of the commission as "mayor" on occasion, that person is not a chief executive and does not hold the powers of a mayor. Some of the comments also seemed to assume our town president can somehow exercise stronger leverage and has more power over town affairs to make unilateral decisions than the other four commissioners. Under our form of government, five commissioners are elected at-large and, for the most part, are equals.

In our government, one of the commissioners is elected president by the other commissioners, but other than setting the agenda, acting as the lead and voice for the town in many relationships with other governments and organizations, and usually working more closely on a day-to-day basis with the Town Manager and staff than other commissioners, he or she is not more "powerful" than the other commissioners.

Impact of Public Input:

There have also been comments suggesting that no one listens, that money or power is all that matters. All you have to do is go back to the original Willard proposal, which envisioned a development of some ninety-plus houses, including townhomes, to see that strong public opposition did have a significant impact. Not only were townhomes left out of the plan due to public opposition, the total number of homes to be built in the development was cut by a third.

Further, the Willards agreed to construct a number of rain gardens in the development, to build a new walking path from Whalen Commons up to the area where the John Poole House and Locals are located, greatly improving the walkability and safety of this part of town, are paying for streetscape improvements which will help improve the safety and beauty of Fisher Avenue in this area, and are building a parking lot for the John Poole House at their expense. All of this was done due to the willingness of the Willards to work with the town, the hard work of the Planning Commission, and the strong views of the public. Public input does matter, and in a town like ours, where people know each other and

where local officials are approachable and work on a voluntary basis, the public's views matter even more.

Water Tap Allocations for Developments:

Some of the comments also seemed to assume that an application for development and for water and sewer access means that a development proposal is on some sort of "fast track." Application and approval are not the same. For example, the recently-proposed new development on Norris Road does not have forty-four water taps approved, not by any stretch. The process has just begun, and it may take a long time, if ever, for taps to be awarded. This process is also not under the control of the commissioners, although they must make the final approval of the water allocation plan that is adopted every three years.

It is the Planning Commission, again, that reviews all requests for water allocations and makes decisions based on a range of factors, including the ongoing studies that the town and its engineer and staff do on a regular basis of the water system, the limits imposed by the Maryland Department of the Environment on how much water can be withdrawn from the aquifer, and input from the public.

All potential development projects follow town guidelines providing that, in the event of unforeseen circumstances which limit or reduce the capacity of the water system, the Poolesville Town Commissioners may reduce, limit, or cease granting water allocations. The town has been regularly studying and reporting on its water system as required by state law and because of its own desire to ensure protection of its water system. It held hearings recently and took input from its own hydrologist, Kathy Mihm, and Pat Hammond, a respected hydrologist hired by the Montgomery Countryside Alliance to do his own analysis. I was impressed by both presentations, and I am sure the commission and the Planning Commission will be taking all of this information into account when looking at this proposed development.

Let's Have a Productive Debate:

While I am glad to see so much citizen interest, I do have concerns that some of the assertions and allegations about the process, about the town's willingness to listen, and about town leaders, in some cases simply because of their profession, are not accurate. I do not think we should ever question the motives of others or make allegations against them or the town's procedures or failure to follow them unless we have good evidence to back up our concerns. We need to remember that these are volunteers giving of their time and talents. They deserve our respect unless there is clear evidence they have violated the public's trust. Let's debate the issues, learn about what is being proposed together, and have a constructive dialog.

Continued from page 19.

The Great Fires of Poolesville: A Story of Tragedy and Heroism

and picked her up to take her to the hospital. He recalled smelling a fire first, then "I saw flames shooting from the building on the main corner." He stopped his car at his sister-in-law's house, who lived two doors from the building on fire, and telephoned the fire department. As Mrs. Le Marr sat in the car, "There was a roar, and the whole flaming structure seemed to explode." Although about to give birth, she had insisted her husband stop and call the fire department before heading to the hospital. They were credited with saving many lives and the property of storekeepers and residents. Volunteer firefighters Daniel Breeden and George Hilliard took quick action and moved furniture and clothing from their house which was threatened by flames and moved two trucks from behind the buildings that were on fire.

Shortly after their arrival at the hospital, Mrs. LeMarr gave birth to a baby boy. The Upper Montgomery County Volunteer Fire Department responded to the scene, and to their dismay, they found that an eight-thousand-gallon cistern was empty, and they had to string hoses to pump water from a farm pond a mile from town. The Odd Fellows Hall, which housed a barber shop on the first floor, and a vacant building that had housed the Elgin Brothers Drug Store were destroyed, and the Poolesville Plumbing and Heating Company building was damaged.

It has been over seventy-two years since a significant fire has affected the Poolesville commercial district. A professional firefighting force, improved fire codes, and inspections have prevented other fires. Today, the vacant spaces and parking lots near this corner give a stark reminder of the disastrous fires that happened here in the early part of the twentieth century.

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Protecting Your Animals and Yourself from Extreme Summer Temperatures

Peter H. Eeg, DVM

The arrival of summer makes families and their pets head outside to enjoy the sunshine and road trips. Bringing your furry pals along is a fun and entertaining option on trips. Follow “beat the heat” guidelines for you, your kids, and your pets.

Veterinarians across the country typically see spikes in pet health emergencies during the warmer months, according to the American Veterinary Medical Association. These include emergencies such as heat stroke and injuries from excessively hot surfaces.

In 2024, 111 animal deaths that resulted from heat-related issues and another 388 animals that were rescued from the heat were reported to PETA.

Heat stroke is a major summer emergency and is most commonly seen in ‘short-nosed’ dogs such as bulldogs and pugs. They cannot release heat the same way that dogs with longer noses can, this makes it extra important to keep them out of the heat, avoid overexercising them, and always have water and shade on hand. During extreme heat events, all pets and outdoor animals are at greater risk of heat-related injury or death.

When temperatures are high, something as simple as taking your dogs for a walk on a trail could be dangerous or even life-threatening for them. They are already wearing fur coats, so cooling is extra hard for them to do. Dehydration is just as big an issue for your pets and outside animals as it is for you.

While travelling, take precautions to keep your pets safe by knowing the forecast and preparing for high heat conditions for you and your pet.

Have a supply of cool water available for you and your pets in your vehicle. One gallon per person and animal is a good rule. Make more frequent stops to allow for water breaks. Be sure your pets and kids are on a leash. If they were to run off in high heat periods,

the chances they will suffer heatstroke quicker than you can find them is always present.

On hot days, pay special attention to any changes in your pets’ behavior. Excessive panting, drooling, shaking, and the inability to get up or respond to you are key indicators of heat stress. If you are ever concerned, it is time to call your veterinarian or the closest animal ER.

When the air temperature is above 95° F, pets cannot cool themselves, and heatstroke can occur rapidly. Shade alone will not protect your pets from the heat. Having cool water in a bowl with a slow running source of water can be critical. Box fans can move the air, but if it is hot, it will not cool them.

Keep a rectal thermometer on hand when there are excess heat warnings. If your pet’s temperature is above 105° F, that is a critical time to get them help.

Immediately call your veterinarian to let them know you are coming in with a possible heat-stroke pet. As you prepare to go to the veterinarian, get your pet completely wet with cool (not cold) water. Alcohol poured onto the abdomen and the insides of the back legs and front legs can help reduce high fevers. Run cool water over their gums and tongue, if possible, also to help them cool.

Getting your overheated pet to your veterinarian or veterinary ER within 15 minutes of finding them with heatstroke can mean the difference between life and death for him or her.

Golden rule: If you think it is too hot, it is too hot. Keep yourselves and your furry friends inside where cooler temperatures are present. Go outside early in the morning or later in the evening when temperatures go below 85° F.



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