

# Woodsboro - Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

VOLUME 5, NO. 4      “EXALTING THE IMPORTANCE OF IDEAS AND INFORMATION” —EDWARD R. MURROW      APRIL 2025

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## "Water & sewer systems working better than ever"

With those simple words, Woodsboro Councilman Bill Rittelmeyer put to rest the growing angst of many residents concerning the status of the Town's water & sewer system at the Town Council's March meeting.

The anxiety was created by a list of recommendations from the new water and sewer plant upgrades from the Prostart, the facilities' new operator. The recommendations were a result of an assessment of the facilities done by Prostart's management following their assumption of duties.

Upon completion of the assessment Prostart provided the town with a list of what they considered needed or necessary upgrades based upon their experience and industry best practices.

Barnes first alerted the public to the list back in September, but said he was hesitant to release the list until Councilman Bill Rittelmeyer, the Town's Water & Sewer Commissioner, had time to

go over the list and sort out what 'must be done' and what were just 'nice things' to do.

The planning meeting between Rittelmeyer, Barnes and management of Prostart was delayed until February of this year due to unavailability of Rittelmeyer due to health issues.

In a wide ranging, yet highly detailed talk at the March council meeting, Rittelmeyer described how the facilities were operated prior to the hiring of Prostart, how Prostart operates them, costs and budgets, and how all that factored into the final disposition of the contents on the list of upgrades and repair recommendations submitted by Prostart.

"My first question to Prostart management," Rittelmeyer said, "was, are we in full compliance with all State MDE, Federal regulations, is everything currently fine? The answer was an emphatic yes. There are no issues with the water and sewer treatment plant ... and we are not in any dire straits



Our hat goes off to Heath Barnes for his Herculean efforts over 24 hours to restore the town's water supply after it was knocked out by a car hitting a fire plug on 2nd street. See page 20 for the full story.

of falling out of compliance."

"The list totaled \$440,000," said Rittelmeyer, of which, "\$175,000 are priority items; \$150,000 are nice to haves; \$75,000 were long [term] preventive maintenance items; and there was one \$15,000 item that neither us nor the operators could figure out why it was on the list."

One of the 'nice to haves', he said, was the recommendation to enclose and heat the wastewater discharge sand filter area as opposed to simply insulating the piping to it. When asked what that would cost, he was told a little over \$100,000. Rittelmeyer said he told them "we are not going to build a building over it. We never had one, don't need one."

continued on page 2

## Residents call for hold on Israel Creek Water permit

Over 50 people showed up for an afternoon briefing by the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) on the Lochland Ag & Turf farms request to draw up to 580,000 gallons of water per day out of Israel Creek to support their turf business. Throughout close to two hours of public comment, only Lochland owner Matthew Toms spoke in favor of granting the permit.

The hearing opened with a presentation of the permitting process by MDE's representatives. Questions and discussions that followed indicated the presentation was too technical for many in the audience.

Immediately after the MDE presentation, the floodgate of objections opened, starting with one resident asking "why are you having this meeting at 2 in the afternoon? Why not in the evening when more people could attend?" MDE said they would have had to pay their representatives for an evening mail, a response which drew groans from the audience.

Initial concerns focused on MDE's lack of actual flow rates in the creek to make its determination on how much water could safely be withdrawn. The MDE claim that the flow in the Monocacy at the Jug Bridge monitoring station could be utilized to pro-

vide an accurate estimate of Israel Creek's flow rate, was strongly pushed back.

The MDE was broadly criticized for using flow rates taken during the rainy seasons as opposed to the flow rate in the summer when the creek would be at the lowest. The fact that all the photos of the creek shown by the MDE were taken in the winter, as opposed to the summer, did not go unnoticed.

Members of the audience pleaded with MDE to stop relying on figures that are more than 20years old and, instead, see the creek as they see it. Some residents said they have observed the creek for more than 60 years.

"Why don't you come back and take your flow measurements during the Dog Days of Summer?" one resident asked. "That will give you a true understanding of the flow rate when they [Lochland] will be pumping water out of the Creek."

Others recounted the number of times the creek has dried up in recent years. Many questioned the logic of allowing water to be drawn from the creek to water sod when residents of town are permanently banned from watering their own lawns.

In a subsequent e-mail to the MDE provided to the News-Journal, David Ennis, speaking as a registered Professional Engi-



Stuart & Elline Garst stand in front of the 40 acre wetlands on their farm that will be adversely affected by the pumping of water out of Israel Creek.

neer with over 40 years of water resources experience in the State of Maryland, including a number of years managing the County's NPDES permit noted that: "the land use of the two watersheds cannot be more different. Israel Creek is rural/agriculture use while Jug Bridge has a significant urban component from the City of Frederick and surrounding County area." Ennis questioned how the MDE was accounting for the "MDE's storm-water regulations, which affected the data comparison between the two locations from the 1960s when there was no SWM, through the 1980s when quantity management was prevalent, to the current time frame when various quality requirements were implemented."

Stuart Garst, co-owner of Meadowlark Farm who resides

contineud on page 5

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WOODSBORO NEWS

Town elections set for May 10

Just when Woodsboro residents thought it was safe to come out – residents will soon be seeing campaign signs for the upcoming election of a Town Burgess and two Town Commissioners, with the election slated for May 10th.

Burgess Heath Barnes announced at February meeting that he was seeking re-election. At the same meeting Commissioner Bud Eckenrode, who was elected in 2021, announced that he was not going to seek re-election.

Commissioner Jessie Case who was also first elected in 2021 and serves as the Council Liaison to the Planning Commission told residents assembled for the March 11th town council meeting that he was running for re-election. “If anyone wants to challenge me, please do,” said a smiling Case.

“I just wanted to make sure you know that all of us on the Council want to serve the town. I grew up here. It’s kind of exciting to see someone who is I want to do it too, even if it’s [serving on the council] just for curiosity. I learned a little bit. I strongly suggest that if you know anyone who has an hour to kill on a Tuesday once month, that you encourage them. I think its important that as we have four slots for Commissioners, that we keep cycling people

through them, its gets people more informed especially if you have a circle of friends and you want to know something, get someone in that circle to serve on the council, and they can inform everyone every week on what is going on.” Case added.

Like Thurmont, Woodsboro utilizes what is called a “nominating convention” to identify who plans to run for Town Office. At the “nominating convention,” which will be held April 1st during the regular Town Council meeting. A resident is nominated for the office of their choosing by another resident, that nomination then needs to be seconded by another resident of the Town. Following the seconding of the nomination, the name is officially considered to be on the ballot.

The “nominating convention” provides a forum for those seeking office to tell the residents their goals and objectives if they get elected. In addition, as in prior years, this newspaper will provide all candidates free space in the May edition of the paper to communicate with the residents on their goals, objectives and hopes for the Town.

The Burgess is paid \$5,000 a year and Commissioners are paid \$3,000. All elected officers serve a term of four years.

The Town’s election will take place on May 10th. Residents can cast their ballots in the meeting hall of St. Johns United Church of Christ, located at 8 North 2nd Street, from eight in the morning until two in the afternoon. The newly elected Burgess and Commissioners sworn in on May 13th.

While the purpose of the nominating process is to identify the names to be put on the ballot, a resident who misses the nominating convention, can still run a write-in campaign, which given the historical low voter turnout for town elections, makes it possible for a resident to win a seat on the Council with just a handful of votes, as many have done in the past.

In the last town election, which took place in 2023, former Burgess Bill Rittelmeyer and sitting Commissioner John Cutshall ran unopposed, with only 39 residents casting a vote.

To vote in the election, residents must be residents of the Town and must be registered within 15 days of the election in Frederick County. Any qualified voter, who is unable to vote in person, may cast their vote using an absentee ballot. Those seeking an absentee ballot must apply in writing no later than seven days prior to the election.

Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

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Water & sewer systems working better than ever (continued from page 1)

Another item they wanted to replace, which the town is passing on, included a control panel, which Rittelmeyer recognized had just been replaced three years ago. When pressed on why the town should replace it, he was told newer control panels had more features functionally. “We don’t need more features functionally,” he said, “what we have right now works perfectly fine... it was \$60,000 to replace the one we have, we don’t need to replace it after 3 years. We don’t need a Cadillac version; I’ll take the Chevy or Buick. We need stuff that works with a hard budget.”

Another item the town is passing on is a \$50,000 recommendation to reinsulate and install heat tape on the piping going to the sand filters. “The pipe currently has insulation on it, yes, its dirty, but we never had a problem with the pipes freezing, water is flowing all the time, so this is a nice to have item, so it’s not on our short-term list. If we get another million dollars from

the government, then we may consider it, but even if the pipe freezes, all that means is the wastewater will sit in the tanks for a few days until the pipe unfreezes.” Rittelmeyer said.

The largest ticket item on the list is \$100,000 for a plant wide data acquisition and monitoring system. The town currently has data acquisition and monitoring system on each of the wells and wells only, but not on the pump houses or any of sewer infrastructure. According to Rittelmeyer, “the system we have today works, it works well and has been working well. It monitors the wells, which has been the priority of the town... right now I don’t see that as a high priority. The critical piece - which is, are we pumping water into our water tanks, and keeping water in the town, that’s all being monitored, and being monitored quite well. What they recommended was an upgraded system that offer just more feature functionally, but we have no

issues with what we have.”

Items that did make the cut include \$75,000 for preventative maintenance on the aeration and mixing equipment in the three SBR tanks [the tanks in the wastewater treatment plant that allow waste to settle out]. Rittelmeyer explained that over the years rags have entered the systems which are now clinging to the aerators, making the motors that turn them work harder. Prostart recommended draining the tanks one at a time, removing all the rags and other debris, cleaning the tanks out and pull the motors so they can be refurbished. “This is an issue that has been going on for a while and corrective actions are long overdue,” Rittelmeyer said.

Another item that made the near-term ‘to do list’ for the town was \$50,000 in preventative maintenance and upgrades to the sewer pump station on James Street. “Instead of reacting to it when it breaks, we are going to look to get that addressed.”

Long term preventative maintenance items recommended by Prostart, and accepted by the town, include \$75,000 for the replacement of control panels and electrical connections across the systems. Rittelmeyer stated many of them are in poor condition and the town will work with Prostart to prioritize their replacements.

Rittelmeyer added that while the

contract with Prostart to operate the plants was more than double the prior contractor, the Prostart contract includes not only all the required testing, but 25 hours per week for maintenance related tasks which is saving the town over the long run. “They are actually fixing things on their own when they have spare time.”

The fact that maintenance is now ongoing has resulted in higher efficiency of the facilities’ equipment, resulting in the need to run them less, which means less electrical use, said Rittelmeyer.

The cost of electricity for the two facilities is one of the larger line items in their budget, and while Rittelmeyer doesn’t have the most current usage figures yet, he expects that due to increased efficiency, electrical costs which last year was \$108,000, will drop.

Under the prior contract, if a pump failed the town would not only need to purchase the new pump, but have to hire another contractor to come and replace it. Under Prostart, while the town still must buy the pump, Prostart will install it for free. “Over time, not having to bring in another contractor to do repairs will save the town money,” said Ruttlemyer.

Rittelmeyer also made note of Prostart’s management of the sludge extracted from the wastewater treatment facility. The sludge is sent to the county for final disposal for which the

town is charged based upon weight. Under the old operator, the sludge was liquid in nature, so the town was paying the weight of both waste and water. Under Prostart, the sludge will be dewatered prior to being sent to the county, which will result in less disposal costs to the town, therefore saving the town additional money.

“So while they [Prostart] cost more, they are doing stuff to save us money that we never got before ... so if people have concerns about the management of the water & sewer treatment plant – it is being managed at a far, far better level than it ever has been in the history of this town,” said Rittelmeyer.

Rittelmeyer closed his presentation by saying the town’s water and sewer systems are in better shape now then it was before hiring Prostart. “We are not in critical need, the water and sewer plant are not falling apart, and even though we have some fairly high-ticket items we need to put in the budget, most of that is preventative maintenance or repairing very old hardware. I think we are very well positioned.”

Rittelmeyer went on to say that if emergencies do come up which require the town to spend money, that the town had \$256,000 in the water and sewer fund which it could use, not to mention over \$1 million in the town’s general fund.

Barnes pointed out that last year the Town budgeted \$120k for repairs and maintenance. “So we budget close to the amount of repairs expected annually anyways.”

Residents in attendance at the meeting expressed pleasure with Rittelmeyer’s detailed briefing saying it addressed most, if not all their concerns, and put many issues to bed.

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WALKERSVILLE NEWS

Council reviews General Fund expenditures

The Burgess and Town Council met in March to review the Town’s General Fund expenditures, just as they did in February to review the Fund’s revenue sources. No official numbers were presented at the workshop because it was intended to be informational only for the newest Commissioners to begin understanding how the Town determines its annual budget. The General Fund is where day-to-day Town operating expenses such as office salaries, insurance and vehicle maintenance are found.

One expenditure the Town has is the dues for the Maryland Municipal League (MML). The League was founded in 1936 to represent all of Maryland’s 157 cities and towns to ensure elected officials can provide the highest level of service to their residents. MML

is a voluntary, non-profit and non-partisan association whose dues are based on the Town’s population. The Burgess and Commissioners can attend a yearly conference as well as available online trainings. They also attend quarterly County meetings where ideas can be bounced off of other municipalities regarding ordinances, plans and other small-town concerns.

The Town also provides donations to various community groups and organization via the General Fund, which are recorded as expenditures. These donations support various programs in Town including the Community Show, an annual donation to the Town’s Fire and Ambulance companies, the high school’s “Safe and Sound Committee”, the library, a food program, and the Historical Society.

The yearly street sweeping service is an example of a service that is contracted out and listed as an expenditure. Commissioner Russ Winch asked if purchasing a street sweeper would be more cost effective than paying a contracted company to provide the service. “The Town has looked into the cost of a street sweeper and determined that it really is not worth it,” replied Williams. He explained that the Town traditionally only uses a sweeper once a year, in the fall, when the most leaves are on the ground.

The Town’s mowing services are also contracted out. According to Williams, this year is the final year in a five-year contract with the current mowing company so next year the Town will need to look for new bids. He also said the recent purchase of the property by the bowling alley will cause the mowing cost to increase

because the new property will need to be occasionally mowed.

Last year the Town approved a plan to include in the General Fund a line item for sidewalk renovations. Town Manager Sean Williams explained that the initial sidewalk monies were in the Capital Improvements Budget, however, the previous Council preferred a recurring fee instead of a one-time budget item. “If the goal is to continue annually to work on sidewalks and roadways it should be in our annual budget as a line item and not in the Capital Improvement budget,” said Williams.

Trash and recycling collection in Town is considered a General Fund expenditure, however, Williams pointed out that the Town is traditionally reimbursed for the recycling fees.

Other expenditures include advertising for changes to ordinances and other important Town notices, subsidized senior citizen meals, Veterans Committee funding, which includes an annual bus trip and care packages, and the salaries of the two park rangers that open and close the Town’s parks.

The General Fund expenditures also include the salaries for the Burgess & Commissioners, seven Public Works staff members and half of the Public Works Director’s salary. The other half of the director’s salary comes from the Water Fund. Additionally, Public Works employees receive some funding toward necessary equipment such as safety boots, protective gear and reflective articles.

Next month, the Town will discuss the Water Fund’s expenditures and revenue sources. Actual budget numbers will come into play soon as well.

New stop signs to be installed on Glade Blvd

Residents asked the Town Council for aid in slowing traffic down on Glade Boulevard between Crum Road and Chapal Place at the March meeting. This is not the first time residents have expressed concern over the speed of vehicles on this stretch of Glade Blvd.

Residents, represented by neighbor Austin Nelson, asked the Town to install a three-way stop with pedestrian crosswalks at Glade Boulevard and Wyndale Drive. Nelson read a petition that included three pages of signatures from residents agreeing with the request to install the safety measures. The petition claimed that past efforts, such as speed cameras, were found ineffective in decreasing speeding.

The Town Engineer previously determined that speed bumps would not work in the area due to the curvy nature of the road.

The petition included letters written by residents describing their personal experiences with drivers speeding down the Boulevard. Nelson shared stories that ranged from elderly residents afraid to cross the street to get their mail, to parked cars being hit by distracted drivers. “What kind of accident will have to happen in order for a change to be made,” asked one of Nelson’s neighbors.

Nelson said the intersection of Wyndale Drive and Glade Blvd

would be an effective location because not only is it a common school bus stop where children cross, but there is also a daycare, so the added safety measures would be beneficial. Nelson noted that cars commonly fail to stop for the school bus, creating an extremely dangerous situation.

Nelson further explained that the road is a common “cut-through” for people trying to get to the nearby Safeway, as well as to 194. By placing stop signs at this specific location, the 800-foot-long section of road from Crum Road to Chapel Place would be almost cut in half.

Commissioner Chris Ragen, who lives on Challedon Drive, which is

not far from the intersection being discussed, said he thinks the number of speed violators was significantly understated. “I can only speak from my own experience,” he said. “I live at the bottom of the hill on Challedon, and I think you are underselling the number of people coming through. I think most are not going to Safeway, but straight through to 194 to avoid going through Town. I can tell you, they speed very badly through Challedon.”

In order for the Town to put in the requested crosswalks, they will also be required to install ADAs, which make the crosswalks accessible for those with disabilities. These include curb ramps, visual

and audible cues for those affected by impairments, push buttons and clear markings, as well as other key requirements.

According to the Director of Public Works, Joseph Birch, each ADA will cost approximately \$3,000 to \$5,000 dollars and they will need three to cover each crossing. The Council also discussed adding “mid-block pedestrian crossing” signs, which are placed in the middle of the crossing, to help alert motorists to the upcoming crossing.

After discussion, Council decided the funds could be pulled from the Street and Sidewalk Budget and they approved the addition of the stop signs and pedestrian crossing unanimously.

Verizon upgrades equipment on water tower

Two years ago, the Town Council voted to lease space to Verizon on the Town’s “Crum” water tower in order to install 5-G transmitters to enhance coverage in the Walkersville and Woodsboro areas. This was done to alleviate “dead zones” and benefit residents by increasing internet speeds by almost ten fold.

The deal at the time was for Verizon to pay the Town \$2,000 a month for a five-year lease, with five, five-year extensions, for a total maximum lease of 30 years. In addition, Verizon would pay a 3% yearly increase on the monthly rate which AT&T and T-Mobile, who are also on the tower, already agreed to do.

At the March council meeting, representatives of Verizon briefed the Council on plans to upgrade their equipment and move the equipment to the top of the tower instead of its current location on the railing. According to Town Manager Sean Williams, the upgrade has been “a long time coming” and he pointed out the need for the tower to undergo structural improvements anyway. “Verizon is looking to move to the top of the tower where Sprint’s equipment was located [Sprint’s equipment was removed after its merger with T-Mobile],” said Williams. “That will alleviate quite a bit of undue stress on the handrail.”

Williams pointed out that the last time the tower was checked for structural integrity was roughly two years ago and the tower passed the testing. Commissioner Russ Winch questioned the passing grade for the tower saying previous analysis found the tower to have stresses at 100%. He wanted to make sure that if anything went wrong, they would be assured of who was responsible.

According to Williams, all three providers are responsible for their equipment as well as repairs to the water tower deemed necessary because of damage from their equipment. One example is the replacement of the sway bars by AT&T at their expense in August of 2023.

On the other end of the spectrum, a brand-new water tower would cost the Town an estimated three to five million, as estimated by the Director of Public Works Joseph Birch. He pointed out, “the handrail is just a handrail, not an antenna stand. Them moving up top benefits the Town.”

The Council agreed with Town staff’s recommendation and approved the request to move Verizon’s equipment to the top of Crum Tower.



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### WALKERSVILLE INFO

Wed., Apr. 2 - 7 p.m. - Parks Meeting

Tues., Apr. 8 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Workshop

Wed., Apr. 9 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting

Fri., Apr. 18 - Town Hall Closed - Good Friday

Tues., Apr. 22 - 7 p.m. - Planning Commission Meeting

Wed., Apr. 23 - 7 p.m. - Town Meeting

Mon., Apr. 28 - 7 p.m. - EDC Meeting

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UNION BRIDGE NEWS

ENOUGH Initiative seeks input from Council

Representative Edwin Singer and Carroll County Commissioner Joe Vigliotti introduced the ENOUGH Initiative to the Town Council. The Program, created by Governor Wes Moore, is a first-of-its-kind community-based program designed to combat childhood poverty in Maryland. ENOUGH is an acronym meaning “Engaging Neighborhoods, Organizations, Unions, Governments and Households”. It is designed to aid neighborhoods that have been disproportionately impacted by systems and policies that limit the creation of wealth and economic mobility.

As to how Union Bridge qualifies for the Program, the Local Management Board created a plan for all of

Frederick County but focuses on areas with the highest poverty levels. Along with a small portion of Westminster, Union Bridge identified as having 20 to 29% of children living in poverty, making the Town a priority. Unfortunately, at this time, only Towns with a level above 30% receive the much-coveted grant monies; however, Moore has said there are plans to provide grant funding for the 20 to 29% levels in the future.

While Singer was adamant that they were not looking for any monetary contribution from the Council, finding supportive funding from the community is a priority for the Management Board. “It’s not going to be easy for us to do but I think

we’re going to need to talk to whoever our community partners are,” he said. “We are starting with you guys as the government and any organizations that you would suggest to us that we should talk to is important to us.”

Singer also pointed out the potential for County cannabis money, intended for areas adversely impacted by marijuana, and how it could be used to aid Union Bridge citizens. “I don’t want to say that Union Bridge necessarily is one of those areas that’s been adversely impacted by marijuana or substance abuse but, if you could make the argument that it’s an economically disadvantaged community, that’s one of the things that is men-

tioned in the use of cannabis funds as to how they want us to direct that money.”

One example of the Local Management Boards (LMB) aid was the creation of a transportation program for high school students who could be a part of a Carroll County Internship Program but didn’t have access to a car. “This year the LMB sponsored a transportation program so the kids that couldn’t get transportation could potentially participate in internships,” said Singer.

Singer said his team was working toward the goal of meeting with the Union Bridge Community in May or June. He asked the Commissioners to fill out a survey that would provide valuable input on how to

engage Union Bridge citizens for their feedback. “We want them to talk to us and we want them to answer questions, and we want them to tell us how they think we can make a difference here,” he said.

Some of Singer’s community engagement suggestions included sponsoring a dinner at the Fire Hall with activities for the kids, door to door canvassing, and working with the “Dream Big Union Bridge” Organization to get people out and involved. With the goal of presenting the results from their interactions with Union Bridge residents to the Commissioners by September, Singer pointed out that, “that’s not where things end.” The reports will help identify what needs to be done and how to achieve them.

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Candidate Nomination  
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A

ny interested candidate must file a “Certificate of Nomination” by April 14th. In order to qualify, interested persons must have lived with Town limits for a minimum of two years continuously, be a minimum of 18 years old and qualify to vote.

Union Bridge residents will have a chance to say something about who they want on their Town Council with three open Council seats in this election: Councilwomen Laura Conaway’s, Amy Kalin’s and Cheri Thompson’s. Remaining in office until 2027 are Mayor Perry Jones, Councilman Bret Grossnickle and Councilwoman Ellen Cutsail. Council terms are for four years but staggered so the entire council is not replaced at one election.



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COMMUNITY NOTES

Residents call for hold on Israel Creek Water permit (continued from page 1)

downstream from Lochland, noted how the area has changed over the years.

“The state just completed a \$7 million effort to restore wetlands along the creek,” he said. “When I grew up on our property, the creek always fed the wetlands, and we always had Meadowlarks. But over the years as the flow in the Creek was reduced due to urbanization, the wetlands dried up and Meadowlarks left.”

*I was honestly surprised how many people were interested in this situation. When I found out about a public hearing, I thought it might be an opportunity for dialogue with MDE on how to move forward with some type of compromise instead of everyone on either side being mad over the situation.*

—Susie Knapp

“Now, thanks to the State, we have 40 acres of healthy wetlands fed by the Creek, and for the first time in years, the Meadowlarks are back. And not only are they back, but the wetlands are flush with birds, bees, butterflies and animals of all shapes and sizes.”

“When you [MDE] talked about the impact on the water drawn by Lochland, you failed to talk about the impact on the wetlands adjacent to and on our property. The wetlands are built and dependent upon a certain flow rate in the Creek. If you reduce that flow rate by allowing water to be pulled out of the Creek, you will reduce the water flowing into the wetlands. If you reduce the flow into the wetlands, you will impact not only the size, but the quality of the wetlands, which will impact all those animals and birds who now call it home. You need to take their needs into account before you approve this permit.”

Garst’s description of the impact on the adjacent wetland drew several to call for an environmental impact review on the permit. While MDE pushed back stating that an environmental impact review was not normally done for water permits, the chorus of calls for one went unabated.

“If there was ever a reason for an environmental impact review,” said one resident, “this would be it. Let’s be clear, pulling water out of the Creek is going to impact the wetlands, and in doing so, the environment.”

Susie Knapp, who owns a farm adjacent to it, told the News-Journal that she has been working for years to improve water quality and wildlife habitat. “We are not completely opposed to a permit if there are some modifications regarding water usage amounts. We think the permit might be a good idea and gives the MDE some authority with the water usage and access to Lochland Ag and Turf,” said Knapp.

Knapp said she had “52 acres of water quality improvement buffers enrolled in the both federal and state programs. 26 of these acres are enrolled with the State of MD. The 6

acres mentioned in the article is actually part of the 26 acres. The total 52 acres are adjacent to wetlands and creeks across our farm and are all connected to Israel creek.”

The MDE’s assertion that Lochland would be prohibited from drawing water when the Creek’s flow was below a certain level was met with frustration, especially when the audience was told that Lochland would be responsible for ensuring it was complying by checking a measuring stick placed in the creek, which would be unavailable for the public to verify. Toms said that he would not allow anyone on his property to independently check the level on the measuring stick save Stewart Garst.

A recommendation to install a permanent flow measuring marker adjacent to the creek’s crossing under Crum Road to allow residents to independently gage actual flow conditions seemed to resonate with the MDE, but as with all the recommendations offered by the audience, MDE refused to commit to it.

The audience’s primary goal was to request MDE hold off taking any action on the permit until the summer when MDE could gauge actual summertime Creek conditions.

Many suggestions were offered to MDE on alternatives that should be considered. Jeremy Joiner who displayed a mastery of the water management rules; requirements suggested a litany of options to minimize environmental impact including Lochland’s drilling a well and pumping water directly out of the aquifer or digging



Israel Creek was barley flowing on the Knapp’s property, which is just downstream of where Lochland will be drawing water if the permit is issued. The Knapp’s wetlands that adjoin the creek depend upon said creek for water. As a result of the current low flow/level in the creek, the wetlands are currently bone dry.

a retention pond and allowing it to fill during rainy periods and then watering their turf by drawing from it. While Joiner’s suggestions were met with head nods from the audience, they received blank stares from MDE.

When pressed as to what they could expect next, the MDE said they would take all public comments into consideration and discuss the merits of what they had heard but would not provide feedback on the merits of each individual’s comments.

While MDE insisted they had not made a final determination, they would not say if they would give the public a heads up on the decision before issuing it, nor did they give the audience any idea of the timing for the decision.

“If you disagree with our decision, you can always file a lawsuit to stop

it.” MDE told the audience.

When pressed by members of the audience to hold another meeting, but this time in the evening, to allow the MDE to get more input from a wider audience which includes local elected representatives, the MDE

again demurred, instead suggesting the audience spread the word that the comment period was still open, and people could submit comments via the MDE website. But again, the MDE did not indicate when the comment period would close.



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GOVERNMENT

US Congresswomen April Delaney

When I was sworn in to serve Maryland's 6th District in Congress, I was hopeful that we could find common ground to make life more affordable for Marylanders. Instead, the last month has been plagued by chaos and confusion from the Administration's actions, especially for federal workers, farmers, health care centers and those who rely on federal programs to help feed their families or operate their businesses. Last week, the House Republican majority put forth a budget plan to extend massive tax cuts for billionaires, using money allocated for farmers and Medicaid/CHIP and SNAP recipients to help pay for them.

I am disheartened to see how the proposal sadly prioritizes tax cuts at the expense of Medicaid, a program designed for only one purpose: to provide basic healthcare for children, families and seniors struggling to get by. In Maryland's 6th District, more than 109,000 people get their health care through Medicaid/CHIP—more than half of whom are children.

The proposal also mandates deep cuts to the Agriculture Committee, which oversees the Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program (SNAP), on which over 10% of households rely in our district. These cuts not only jeopardize our moral obligation to take care of our communities, but they are also nonsensical to local economies; data shows that every dollar spent by SNAP recipients stabilizes our economy by sustaining the revenue of local small businesses and the food production of our agricultural sector. Disappointingly, despite my vote against these deep cuts, the legislation passed the U.S. House last week.

When the Administration is issuing tariffs that would inevitably drive up the cost of gas, food and other consumer goods, the last thing we should do is turn our backs on Americans working to build better lives for themselves and their families. Congress must work together to pass legislation that supports the working class and expands economic opportunity.

I recently visited Family Healthcare of Hagerstown, which heavily depends on HHS funding, to discuss the impact of ending Medicare with doctors and the over 60% of the Center's patients who use the federal healthcare program. Since the 1990s, Family Healthcare has provided affordable, accessible healthcare to Washington County, a designated Health Professional Shortage Area.

Not only is jeopardizing health care from 80 million people morally wrong, but it could also prove economically disastrous to poorer states, and end up costing taxpayers more in the long run.

I later met with the team at Thales, a private company that partners with agencies, such as DOD, to equip our active military with cutting-edge technology in the field to improve their communications, strengthen our national security and, most importantly, potentially save lives. They also rely largely on federal funding to support their R&D. Now more than ever,

it is critical that we lift up our public-private partnerships to continue to drive innovation and job creation in Maryland and across the country.

Farmers have also been caught in the crosshairs. As President Trump's 25% tariffs take effect, I'm thinking of our farmers, who will pay for more expensive aluminum and steel in their equipment and face difficulty exporting their crops when retaliatory tariffs take effect. These tariffs could devastate many family farms across Maryland and the country. On top of this, many USDA grants remain frozen by the President's Executive Order, despite a federal court's decision to release the funds to farmers in need. The Administration cut funding mechanisms and USDA staff, causing serious delays in repayment to farmers who have already invested in their land under the promise of federal reimbursement.

Last month, I hosted meetings with the Frederick and Washington County Farm Bureaus to hear how these tariffs and funding freezes could affect local farmers and to discuss this year's anticipated Farm Bill. As the daughter of a potato farmer and member of the

House Ag Committee, I will continue to listen to and fight for farmers in our district and across Maryland.

Lastly, I continue to fight against the indiscriminate layoffs, agency reductions and defunding of critical research programs at NIST, NIH, Fort Detrick and so many others by this Administration.

I sincerely believe our government should operate with the utmost efficiency for taxpayers, but these cuts are shortsighted and in fact harmful to our economy, national security and Maryland families.

Maryland is a national leader in scientific innovation and our local economy is powered by private-public partnerships, and I will continue to call on the Administration to stop its illegal freeze of Congressionally approved federal funding and widespread termination of critical federal workers.

If you are a federal employee or have concerns about the Trump Administration's policies, please share your story with me here. If you need help with a federal agency, please contact my office here or call 301-926-0300.

County Councilwoman Renee Knapp

In February, I, along with many others, were disappointed to learn that the Carl and Norma Miller Children's Center, a childcare center operated by Frederick Community College, will be closing on May 16 due to financial challenges. Frederick County continues to face an enduring shortage of affordable childcare, and any loss of capacity will be felt, especially for those families who had children attending that facility. In

addition to serving faculty and staff members in the FCC community, this center provides a crucial support system for student parents who are trying to further their education and career prospects. This center provides year-round services for infants 6 weeks or older to 5-year-old children. That kind of childcare is not easy to find or replace.

In 2024, the Division of Family Services commissioned a study on

childcare demand and availability in Frederick County. Not surprisingly, the study found that the current number of available slots is not keeping up with growing demand. Parts of the County, particularly the more rural areas, are already experiencing a crisis level shortage. These areas rely more on home-based childcare arrangements. Closing child care centers in the more densely populated areas is not a trend that we want to see continue.

Last year, the County Council passed a Home-Based Daycare Property Tax Credit, which I sponsored. This tax credit applies to improvements made to a home to operate a home-based daycare business and is one way to help increase availability. Frederick County is continuing to look for ways to address the need for childcare. Building on the 2024 study, the Division of Family Services and the Division of Parks and Recreation have initiated a new Child Care Study to fully assess the availability and affordability of child care for infants through children 12 years old. This study will focus on identifying solutions for expanding access, especially for underserved communities. Additionally, this new study will explore the possibility of County-sponsored childcare services to increase childcare options. Study data will include geographic disparities, the best locations for childcare services, and financial feasibility. A high level of study participation will be key to gathering as much data as possible and the most accurate assessment. In addition to upcoming community engagement sessions, there will be surveys, focus

groups, and interviews. More information can be found at [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Childcare](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Childcare).

Frederick County is working on other ways to expand quality childcare. Recently, the Division of Family Services and Frederick County Workforce services announced a Childcare Initiative Program to support individuals wanting to enter the childcare profession. The program includes training and resources needed to start a licensed, family-owned childcare business. Childcare businesses are an essential component of our local economy and supporting them the same way we support tech start-ups, family farms, and other small businesses is the right thing to do. The program also offers pathways to childcare certification and professional development. It's a great time to start a childcare business. The Childcare Initiative Program is free for eligible residents. Space is limited, and early application is encouraged. For more information, or to apply, visit the Frederick County Workforce Services webpage.

If you would like more information about these initiatives or any other issue, please feel free to email me at [rknapp@frederick-countymd.gov](mailto:rknapp@frederick-countymd.gov).

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GOVERNMENT

County Executive Jessica Fitzwater

April is Deaf History Month! Frederick County is home to a thriving community of people who are deaf or hard of hearing. We were proud to celebrate by holding a Deaf History Month Proclamation event at the beginning of the month. This event was a moment for us to come together, honor and recognize the impact of the deaf community, and reaffirm our commitment to inclusivity and accessibility. If you couldn't join us in person, be sure to check out a recording of the event on FCG TV! April also brings several other important updates and initiatives. From the unveiling of the Fiscal Year 2026 budget to new plans under the Livable Frederick initiative, there is much to discuss and look forward to.

**Budget**  
Over the past several months, we have been working hard to develop the County's budget for Fiscal Year 2026, which begins July 1, 2025. Your input and feedback have been invaluable in helping us shape a budget that reflects our community's needs, priorities, and values. Thank you for taking the time to be involved in the budget process.

Later this month, I will present my FY26 Proposed Budget. This is the most challenging budget we've faced in nearly two decades. Federal funds we've been promised are on hold. Federal workers' and contractors' income is uncertain. And the state is proposing to shift millions of dollars in costs to local governments.

Our biggest challenge, and my top priority, is education. Through this year's capital budget, we will make an historic investment in school construction projects to accommodate growing enrollment and renovate existing facilities.

Despite a tightening budget, I'm pleased to share that several school construction projects will move forward in the coming year. The budget includes substantial funding for the construction of a new Brunswick High School, renovations to Twin Ridge and Hillcrest Elementary Schools, and a new elementary school #41 in the eastern part of the County.

We must make budget decisions against the backdrop of chaos in Washington and a growing deficit in Annapolis. We will meet this uncertainty with a fiscally responsible spending plan that protects the core services our residents expect from Frederick County Government. To learn more about the budget process, visit [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Budget](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/Budget).

**New Livable Frederick Plans**  
Planning for more affordable housing, historic preservation, and green infrastructure is critical to maintaining the high quality of life that we enjoy in Frederick County. That's why Livable Frederick has announced three new plans on Housing, Historic Preservation, and Green Infrastructure. Members of the public are invited to attend an upcoming open house on

Monday, April 7 at Urbana Regional Library from 6 – 8 p.m. to learn more and provide feedback on the new plans. This public meeting will feature interactive activities designed to engage the community. The Livable Frederick Master Plan is an ongoing initiative designed to enhance the quality of life for residents of Frederick County by addressing critical areas such as housing, historic preservation, the environment, health, and the economy. The aim is to create a comprehensive and sustainable plan that reflects the community's needs. Through open houses and interactive activities, our Livable Frederick staff will gather diverse perspectives and ideas that can be incorporated into the plans. To learn more, visit [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/LivableFrederick](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/LivableFrederick).

**Expanding Childcare Opportunities & Strengthening Our Workforce**  
To address the critical shortage of quality childcare in Frederick County, the Division of Family Services and Frederick County Workforce Services have partnered to launch a comprehensive Childcare Initiative. The goal is to add more childcare providers and increase families' access to childcare options. Every family in Frederick County should have access to reliable,

high-quality childcare, and every childcare provider should have the support they need to thrive. This initiative helps families find the care they need and empowers individuals to build rewarding careers in childcare. By investing in our workforce and expanding access to childcare, we're strengthening our economy and ensuring a brighter future for our entire community. Up to 70 Frederick County residents will gain access to free training and resources that enable them to start and operate a licensed family-owned childcare business or obtain certifications to work in various childcare settings. Participation is free, but space is limited so be sure to apply early. To learn more, visit [www.FrederickWorks.com/Childcare-Initiative](http://www.FrederickWorks.com/Childcare-Initiative). While we are working to improve childcare for workers and families, Frederick County has also begun a new comprehensive Child Care Study to reassess the current childcare landscape in our community. Public participation will be critical to the study's success and it will help shape our children's future. Frederick County residents with children aged birth to 12 years old are invited to complete the survey and participate in focus groups. More information on how to get involved is available at [www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/ChildCare](http://www.FrederickCountyMD.gov/ChildCare).

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# COMMENTARY

## Words from Winterbilt

Is the government size the real issue?

Shannon Bohrer

We are in the midst of reducing our government by laying off and firing government employees. Ostensibly, the federal workforce is rife with corruption and incompetence and is just too large. There also exists opposition to the reductions, with the belief that government employees are necessary to conduct the people’s business. We do know that the process being used to reduce the employee numbers is divisive and controversial. One should expect some damage if one weeds their garden with a matchet.

The argument about the size of our government has been a topic for generations, with the belief that reducing the number of government employees is long overdue. Additionally, there is a Deep State embedded in the government that runs everything. The Deep State consists of networks of agents from financial and industrial organizations that rule with a few elected officials. The theory is that a small group of billionaires run the country for their benefit. Another reason to downsize is that the government should be lean and mean, more like a private industry, and only employ the number of employees needed.

Both sides agree that our national debt, at thirty-six trillion dollars, is a bit too high. That equates to \$106,000 for every citizen. Senator John McCain once said, “Congress is now spending money like a drunken sailor, and I’ve never known a sailor, drunk or sober, with the imagination that this congress has.” He was correct. Many elected officials talk about deficit spending and reducing the debt but rarely do anything constructive to address the problem.

A rational conversation about the size of the government in relation to what we expect from the government is needed. We need a consensus on what we expect from the government, and then how many employees are needed can be determined. While that is easy to say and even understand, politicians are masters at distraction and deception. For over forty years, one party has told us that government is too big, we spend too much, and we need fewer regulations. Many call this mantra the three-legged stool.

The three-legged stool sounds good, even responsible, and has been in the conversation for so long that many believe it. The belief is strong, and yet, the evidence is nonexistent. The premise of the three-legged stool is that with fewer regulations, business will thrive. We will spend less with fewer employees, and taxes can be reduced. Maybe the size of gov-

ernment should be determined not for the benefit of business and industry - but for its citizens. The Constitution is about the personal freedoms of individuals, not corporations.

It may surprise many that the government was reduced before. In 1990, there were 3.4 million civil service workers; today, before the firings, there were 2.4 million civil service workers. Other numbers run as high as 3 million workers. Why the different numbers exist is unknown. As one might expect, substantial false information does exist – possibly for deception. If you don’t like something, just make something up. We were told that the government spent fifty million dollars on condoms and sent them to Gaza. The scary part is that people believe it. While that sounds implausible and farfetched, it was topped with the news that Ukraine started the war with Russia.

For discussion purposes, let’s agree there are too many government employees. Therefore, it is understandable that reducing the number of federal employees will reduce the deficit. However, do the reductions allow billions in tax cuts for the billionaires without adding to the deficit? Most people familiar with math, addition, and subtraction say no. To pass the proposed tax reductions without creating more deficits, other programs comprising large budget segments must be reduced. Those segments include the big three: Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare. The math

required to balance the budget does not work without additional reductions in spending, even if you believe that Ukraine started the war.

Under President Clinton, the number of federal workers was reduced, and we did have balanced budgets. He did not weed the garden with a matchet or a chainsaw. The reductions were methodical with research and without disruptions of services. He also balanced the budget and paid down the national debt. Conversely, under President Trump’s first term, he increased the national debt by almost eight trillion dollars, the largest four-year increase of any former president. He may be trying to top his four-year record.

Do the wealthy individuals really need additional tax breaks? In 2023, it was reported that there were 735 billionaires in the United States. Notably, billionaires’ wealth has “increased 88 percent in the last four years.” It was also reported in 2023 (the last year with available numbers) that “The 25 richest Americans paid little to no federal income taxes,” as reported by ProPublica. The same document noted that “Nearly 50 companies in the S&P 500, including Tesla” and others, paid no income tax. So, are these the people and businesses that need tax breaks?

Additionally, our government subsidizes businesses to the tune of 100 billion dollars every year, twenty percent of which is for the fossil fuel industry. It was reported several years

ago that a few companies made record profits, paid no taxes, and received government subsidies. To be fair, many corporations take advantage of tax regulations that reduce what they pay - so it is legal.

Axios summarized the issue as follows: “Most politicians agree on three truths: We have a spending problem (too much), a tax problem (too high or too low), and a debt problem (way too much). Yet the typical response is to make all three worse.” I think they got it right.

Considering that we have a deficit problem, we should examine ways to address the issue. Reducing the number of federal employees is not a bad idea, but using a chainsaw is not helpful. Many find it strange that we have yet to be told of the fraud, waste, and abuse related to employee firings. Maybe they have not found any. Almost every piece of information on savings posted by the DOGE committee has been questioned and found to be misleading and often just false. No one born in 1850 is collecting Social Security.

Maybe we should question the motives of individuals and groups that are supposedly fixing many parts of our government that may not be broken. DOGE is run by the richest man on earth. Could DOGE be part of the Deep State?

*To read prior editions of Words From Winterbilt, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

## The Bulwark

MAHA is a fraud

Jonathan Last

What America’s new public health establishment—by which I don’t mean actual public health experts but their dilettante conspiracist bosses—is doing is choosing to move the country backwards. Less medical research, a pull-back on life-saving vaccines, turning away from science and embracing folk medicine.

Our new health establishment is explicit about wanting to go backwards. It’s right there on the hat: Make America Healthy Again.

Meaning: America used to be “healthy” and now is not.

I’m sorry, I know we’re supposed to meet people where they are and give them a loving truth sandwich, but this is the stupidest thing I’ve ever heard.

Does anyone remember what “health” looked like in America a generation or two ago? Half the country smoked. People dropping dead at 50. Child birth was dangerous. Seatbelts were suss. Drug use was off the charts. Dangerous communicable diseases were still around. Cancer was a death sentence. AIDS looked like an unstoppable tsunami.

Food? Do remember what grocery stores looked like in 1980? Aisles of canned vegetables, processed foods, and frozen TV dinners. Fresh produce? Good luck.

But that’s all anecdotal. Let’s look at the data. Because it

shows—absolutely, unequivocally—that this is the healthiest period in American history.

Let’s start with the dumbest possible metric: life expectancy.

We’ve had a slight downtick in the last year or two largely driven by COVID. You know why a lot of people died from COVID? Because they refused to follow public health advice during the pandemic and then refused to get vaccinated once we had vaccines in hand. So it was precisely the MAHA idiocy that moved our life expectancy backward.

How about infant mortality? That’s another excellent marker of health in a society. Oh, look—it’s incredibly low: 5.61 deaths per 1,000 live births. This is up slightly from 2020 because, again, COVID. But it’s still a historic low.

When do you think the golden, “healthy” past was? In 1980, the infant mortality rate was more than double what it is today (12.0). In 1960 it was more double that number (25.9).

How about infectious diseases? In 1900 half of all deaths in America were from communicable diseases. Through medical advances—especially vaccines—we got that number down to about 5 percent—until COVID. All by itself COVID accounted for 12 percent of all deaths in the United States in 2021.

So again: If you want America to be healthy you’d do exactly the opposite of what the Trump

administration is doing and urge everyone to get vaccinated.

And while we’re talking about healthy habits: Americans don’t smoke like they used to. Also, forty years ago less than a fifth of people in cars used seatbelts. Today that number is well over 90 percent.

Let’s talk about cancer. You ever feel like, “Man, people are getting cancer like crazy these days?” Here’s what happened. There was a huge spike in the incidence of cancer diagnoses from 1975 to 1995. Why? Two things.

First, people were living longer and you have to die of something. Since people weren’t dying from polio, measles, and communicable diseases, they were living long enough to get cancer. Second, medical science developed more tools to detect cancer. Inventing effective tests and screenings means finding more incidences. Donald Trump knows this.

In the early 1990s, people started surviving cancer at higher rates even as the incidences of cancer increased. And from 1995 to 2000, as the cancer incidence rate peaked, the mortality rate fell off a cliff.

Why? Because better tests = more cancer diagnoses = earlier interventions + therapeutic advances = much higher survival rates.

The pattern we see with cancer incidence describes a lot of our health challenges today. Why do so many people get dementia or Alzheimer’s now? Because they’re surviving cancer and—again—something is going to get us eventually.

Why so many autism diagnoses? Because 40 years ago doctors didn’t understand what they were seeing in kids who had ASD. Now they do. Once medical science understands what it’s looking at, you’re going to get more diagnoses. This isn’t hard to understand.

Look: There are some things that have legitimately gotten worse over time. The incidence of Type 2 diabetes has increased dramatically since 1950. Some of this is linked to increasing obesity.

What’s the answer? Diet and exercise, which you may recall Michelle Obama talking a lot about (and getting ridiculed by Republicans for her trouble). Semaglutide drugs show tremendous potential for helping curb obesity and reduce the incidence of diabetes.

You may be surprised to hear that MAHA does not like this class of pharmaceuticals.

So what’s going on here? Why does the “Make America Healthy Again” movement romanticize the health outcomes of the past (which were worse) and misunderstand the health outcomes of the present (which are significantly better along the most important vectors and continue to improve over time)?

Why do people like RFK Jr. oppose medical practices that create better outcomes?

I don’t know.

But at the end of the day, the “why” doesn’t matter. What matters is the results. And the results are going to be bad.

Buildings used to catch on fire all the time in America. It was a serious problem. That’s why cities had as many fire stations as churches.

Over time, we cut way down on the number of fires. We switched construction materials. We came up with safer mechanisms for delivering gas and electricity. We developed best-practices and enshrined them in building codes. The big thing was the invention of the sprinkler system.

The result was that even as the total number of buildings in America kept growing, the annual number of structure fires kept going down. Dramatically.

Imagine a movement that looked at this data and decided America didn’t need sprinkler systems anymore. Modern building costs are too high. There’s too much red tape. We spend billions on sprinkler systems every year that are never used. Let’s go back to the old ways. Make Buildings Great Again.

After all, we don’t have to worry about fires anymore.

The MAHA movement is like that. Except that while trying to get rid of sprinkler systems and building codes, they are also walking around carelessly tossing lit matches.

These people aren’t just frauds. They’re arsonists. And right now they run the U.S. government, the CDC, the NIH, and the fire department, too.

*To read other articles from the Bulwark, visit [www.thebulwark.com](http://www.thebulwark.com).*



COMMENTARY

The Liberal Patriot

How deep is the hole Democrats are in?

John Halpin

Trump’s approval rating has declined to the point where his approval is “underwater”—that is, his net approval (approval minus disapproval) has turned negative. And his net approval rating is even more negative on the all-important issue of the economy, Trump’s key issue in the 2024 election. Polls regularly show gloomy voter assessments of the economy’s current trajectory. Voters by 17 points say the economy is getting worse rather than improving and that their personal financial situation is getting worse rather than improving.

This raises the hope in Democratic hearts that voters are wising up to how terrible Trump is for the economy and the country and that a combination of #Resisteverything and a thermostatic reaction against the incumbent Trump administration will rekindle their political fortunes. This is a comforting take for Democratic partisans because it implies that a combination of stout-hearted opposition and waiting around for the sky to fall on Trump will suffice; no need to do anything drastic like actually changing toxic party positions and doing serious surgery on the party brand.

I think there are grounds for considerable skepticism here. The hole the Democrats are in is so deep that it is doubtful that the comforting take is the right one. Their problems are just too severe.

You’d think that as Trump runs into difficulties and sows chaos, voters would like Democrats more. They do not. Instead, Democrats’ favorability among

voters is scraping the bottom. In a March poll, favorability toward the Democratic Party clocked in at 29 percent, down ten points since right before the 2024 election and the lowest rating for the Democrats since 1992. Trump’s job approval among working-class (non-college) respondents in the poll was 20 points higher than their favorability toward the Democratic Party. The working class does not appear to be warming to the Democrats.

Among independents, the party’s favorability was an abysmal 11 percent vs. 56 percent unfavorable. These voters may not love Donald Trump but they really don’t like the Democrats.

In a February poll, about two-thirds of voters thought the Democrats don’t have a workable strategy for responding to Trump and around the same number found this take on the Democrats persuasive: “No one has any idea what the Democratic Party stands for anymore, other than opposing Donald Trump. Democrats have no message, no plan of their own, and no one knows what they would do if they got back into power. If Democrats ever want to win elections again, people need a clear message from them about what they stand for and what they’ll do.” Ouch.

On the plus side, voters in a February poll across the battleground Congressional districts thought Democrats in Congress “fight for what they believe.” However, they also thought Democrats don’t respect work, don’t share my values, don’t look out for working people, don’t value work, don’t care about people like me, don’t have the right priorities and, by a massive 47 points, don’t get things done. Double ouch.

There’s lots of polling data along these lines and they send a clear message: Dem-

ocrats’ image is atrocious and therefore cannot present an attractive alternative to Trump and the GOP.

This indicates a party that is truly in a deep hole. The party’s severe image, identification, governance, and geographic weaknesses cannot be remedied by mounting the (rhetorical) barricades against Trump and waiting for his administration to self-destruct. This may make the partisan faithful happy but it is woefully inadequate as a program to bring the party back to full health.

Unfortunately, that so many Democrats are wedded to #Resisteverything—rather than making the Democrats into a party more voters actually like shows the depth of denial in the party. They think they’re on the verge of a breakthrough if they just toughen up. They are not.

Democrats did worse in the 2024 election than you think. They completely failed to win over less engaged voters, who are becoming much more Republican. The higher the turnout, the more these voters show up and the worse it is for Democrats. Shor’s analysis indicates that if everyone had voted last year Trump would have won the popular vote by five points rather than a point and a half. Low turnout is now the Democrats’ BFF!

More broadly, ideological polarization among all nonwhites is shifting moderate to conservative voters away from the Democrats. This is making non-white voters less reliable constituencies for Democrats.

The issue landscape in 2024 was worse than most Democrats thought. The only really important issue Democrats had an advantage on was health care and that advantage was tiny by historical standards. The Democrats did have a large advantage on climate change—but voters don’t really care about the issue.

To reverse their fortunes, the Dem-



ocrats must alter their image in voters’ minds. Above all, they must be seen again as the party of the “normal American” and “the real America.” The last time they succeeded in doing a makeover like this was in the 1992 election when a group of politicians and political operatives, working through a group called the Democratic Leadership Council, turned around voters’ perception of the Democrats as weak on crime and defense and opposed to any reform of the welfare system. The DLC’s former president Bill Clinton won in 1992 on the DLC’s platform. I don’t suggest that the Democrats need to mimic the content of the DLC platform, particularly on economic and trade issues, but they do need to transform their image, or what political consultants call their “brand.”

Some commentators have insisted the Democrats’ defeat had nothing to do with “wokeness.” That is a fatal misreading. The Democratic makeover must start with the panoply of cultural and socio-economic stands that Republicans were able to use in 2024 to discredit Democratic candidates. These include the Democrats’ positions on immigration, sex and gender, affirmative action, criminal justice, and climate change.

I’m not suggesting Democrats should hypocritically adopt positions that are wrong-headed. In rejecting the participation of biological males in competitive women’s sports, Democrats would have biology and public opinion on their side. The same goes for policies that have encouraged street crime and illegal immigration. A more difficult issue is climate change. Democrats are right to reject Republican claims that it is a hoax or needs no serious attention—indeed, the Trump administration is actively discouraging the transition to renewable energy. But in order to win public support for any climate measures, Democrats will have to tone down their apocalyptic rhetoric and abandon unrealistic goals for achieving net-zero emissions. That would include, for instance, supporting natural gas as a transitional fuel and nuclear energy as a feasible alternative to fossil fuels.

Great advice. But I’m not holding my breath on when Democrats might choose to follow it. They’re too busy pretending the deep hole they’re in is just a shallow indentation and vanquishing Trump is right around the corner.

To read other articles from the Liberal Patriot, visit [www.liberalpatriot.com](http://www.liberalpatriot.com).

Good Day Neighbor

DOGE-ing is fun until someone gets hurt

Dorothea Mordan

We’ve all heard this proverb.  
For want of a nail the shoe was lost.  
For want of a shoe the horse was lost.  
For want of a horse the rider was lost.  
For want of a rider the message was lost.  
For want of a message the battle was lost.  
For want of a battle the kingdom was lost.  
And all for the want of a horseshoe nail.

The British Colonies became the United States so property, and responsibility stayed within our borders. The colonial residents had a lot, but did they really own it? The American Revolution settled that question.

The colonies kept the home country strong. After the Revolution we had everything in our grasp to eventually build a strong, prosperous country of our own. Part of that is because of our ability to create a great infrastructure. Part of our strength comes from two centuries of working out how to build great industry, balanced with support for the workers and consumers who make business dreams become reality. State and fed-

eral agencies, and their different abilities to scale responses in emergencies, are the most critical nails that keep our infrastructure sound. It’s tax season, take a look at what our tax dollars have brought us.

One component of our national infrastructure is the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). Services and emergency responses from FEMA can be found on FEMA.gov. Here are a few highlights.

At the federal level FEMA maintains detailed flood maps. Flood maps help communities decide where to live, where and what to build, and how to protect themselves.

Download PDFs on protecting your property from natural hazards such as flooding.

On FEMA.gov, search “interagency recovery coordination” for a list of recovery projects. This suggestion may or may not be effective. The federal government websites are currently being dismantled in bits and pieces. If you can’t find what you are looking for, try the Internet Archive (Wayback Machine). The URL is: [archive.org](http://archive.org).

Maryland has received disaster relief actions and support. In 2016 a storm that dropped six inches of water in two hours, flooded Ellicott City. From the FEMA Case Study Report on this incident: “Prior to the flood, Howard County Office of Emergency Management (OEM) staff had attended a

FEMA recovery training for local governments in Emmitsburg that assisted in formulating and documenting a Recovery Framework for Howard County, identifying 10 Recovery Support Functions (RSFs) crucial to local disaster recovery.” Because of federal resources, Howard County was prepared to meet the challenge.

FEMA responded when flash flooding came to Frederick a few years ago.

In Frederick City, the restoration of Carroll Creek and the flood control system built under the Creek, were supported by FEMA.

FEMA’s National Emergency Training Center (NETC) is located in Emmitsburg, MD. This is home to The National Disaster & Emergency Management University (NDEMU), formerly the Emergency Management Institute (EMI) and the National Fire Academy.

On April 19, 1995, the Alfred P. Murrah Federal Building was bombed. 168 people killed and 684 people injured. A team of 6 personnel from Oklahoma City, including the Operations Director for the Medical Examiner’s Office, had just completed training at the EMI in Emmitsburg. They credited the training for their successful handling of the operation.

The NDEMU had an annual training scheduled for March 10, 2025. On March 7, the federal government, aka Agents of D.O.G.E., sent by email the order, to everyone involved, that the training session was cancelled.

Students had arrived from all over

the country to take this course. Travel tickets bought and paid for. People had arrived at the dorms in Emmitsburg. All the expenses required to participate in a professional training session had been paid. Everyone sent home with no good explanation of why a scale back couldn’t be planned in increments, rather than wasting everyone’s time and money.

Agencies being reduced and/or dismantled include, but are not limited to, the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, U.S. Agency for Global Media, Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars in the Smithsonian Institution, Institute of Museum and Library Services, U.S. Interagency Council on Homelessness, Community Development Financial Institutions Fund and Minority Business Development Agency, Department of Education, Department of Homeland Security, Department of Energy, United States Agency for International Development (USAID), Consumer Financial Protection Bureau, Department of Veterans Affairs, Department of Agriculture, Environmental Protection Agency, Department of Health and Human Services, Department of the Interior and the National Park Service, Office of Personnel Management, General Services Administration, Small Business Administration, Internal Revenue Service, Department of Defense.

A major reason for having a nationwide agency run by the federal government is to have the agility to focus resources wherever in the country

they are needed. Resources needed to respond to crises, such as natural disasters or contagious disease outbreaks, affecting large areas of a city or state are generally greater than any one state can provide for its own population, much less for another state.

If getting rid of waste and fraud was the goal then federal agencies and departments would be examined in sections. Reducing federal services would be done in coordination with the fifty states’ local agencies to maintain services needed by Americans. Agencies with international partners would be given time to change course on established agreements. Neither of these are happening.

The goal is to throw away federal services, and force Americans to spend more for privatized support. Or just take whatever a current administration feels like sending to Americans in need.

Americans are losing dependability of service in many agencies. Social Security? The checks in the mail. The US Post Office? Well, that check might sit around a while.

Sacrifice looks like a good idea if you have it bad. We had everything. We wanted more.

Let’s see what happens in the next emergency.

For want of a nail. . . .

To read prior editions of Good Day Neighbor, visit the Authors section of [Walkersville.net](http://Walkersville.net), or visit her website: [ChandlerDesignsLimited.com](http://ChandlerDesignsLimited.com).



PASTOR'S DESK

Peace

Pastor Phil Beck  
St. Paul's Lutheran Church

Where are you finding or in a place where Peace has been elusive or difficult to achieve? When this is the case, we are invited to seek the Lord in prayer to discern a way to be encouraging to one another, to listen to the call of peace in all we do which when shared with those around us will offer a straighter road to overcome the desolate emotions we find are weighing us down keeping us from God.

There is a voice calling out to us in the wilderness for us to listen to pointing out the Good News of Jesus who has come into the world bringing peace into our lives. The Gospel of Luke points us in

the direction of the hope that is to come and especially gives us notice that in the wilderness peace can be realized. As the spirit of hope fills our heart we are called to seek out a peace with one another and experience the hope found in Christ. In the peace Christ brings, we are encouraged us to foster peace in our relationships and communities as we await His coming. Peace is a profound state of tranquility transcending the mere absence of conflict, embodying a deep sense of inner serenity and collective well-being.

Peace flourishes in spaces where understanding, compassion, and respect for one another prevail, fostering connections that bridge divides. In moments of peace, the clamor of discord quiets, allowing for reflection, dialogue, and the nurturing of relationships. It is the gentle rhythm of coexistence, where diverse

voices come together to celebrate differences while working collaboratively towards common goals. It is in this peace we find our love for one another, a love asking us to move past the seeds of discontent and self-centeredness allowing us to experience new growth and the renewal of relationships strained in whatever wilderness we may be residing.

In a quote from Pastor April Fiet she clarifies for us that “both the Greek and Hebrew words for peace (eirene and shalom) have more to do with wholeness than with quiet or rest. Eirene comes from the verb that means “to join together” or “to tie into a whole.” Shalom is about wholeness and goodness in the relationship between things. Perhaps, our calling in a world without peace is to participate in the work of tying things back together. In peace-less days, we are called to be peacemakers, with all of the grit and difficulty that will entail.” As Pastor Fiet mentions, it is incumbent upon us to join together and make whole those whom we know to be challenged in this time or any time. We are called to love our neighbor and share the peace of God with those who find themselves outside of good tidings.

Often, we look at the state of the world; war, division, injustice, and think peace can only come through political solutions or the end of conflict. John speaks of a peace that is much deeper. It is a peace transcending our particular issues and addresses the inner turmoil of the human heart. The peace of God is not just the absence of conflict; it is the presence of justice, wholeness, and reconciliation. For us, this means looking at the obstacles in our own lives hindering the peace of Christ from entering. What are the things that are keeping the Peace of God from entering our hearts? Are there places in our hearts that are holding bitterness, unforgiveness, or anxiety that we need to reconcile? When we seek Peace,



we are called to remove the obstacles in our hearts keeping us from experiencing the peace of God.

The Peace of God which allows us to join together with our friends and family to dispel any turmoil we may have weighing us down. True peace is not merely the absence of war or conflict but the presence of God's transformative love and grace in our lives. This peace is not something we create on our own, yet is a gift from God, made available through the work of Christ. Christ comes beside us to show us the way and lead us from the dark days into a place of tranquility and calm, a combination of joining together to follow in His way to make our roads straighter.

In a world full of anxiety and turmoil, we are reminded that God's peace is not bound by the shifting sands of political systems or human rulers. Christ, the Prince of Peace, brings lasting peace to all who receive Him, despite the brokenness and conflict around us. John's Gospel message of repentance is an invitation to experience the peace of God. Repentance is a joyful return to God, recognizing He is the source of all peace. It is in the absolution of our sins through Christ we experience the reconciliation and peace of God. As Luther said, “The peace of God is not just peace with God; it

is peace within ourselves, through the forgiveness of sins.”

Christ's work on the cross reconciles us to God by making peace through the blood of His cross. This peace is received through our faith as we trust in the Gospel and are comforted by the forgiveness of sins. John's call to prepare the way for Christ is an invitation for us to experience this peace in our own lives. We are called to turn from sin and trust in the promise of God's salvation, which is found in Christ alone. We, as the faithful, are called to be proclaimers of this peace. Just as John the Baptist prepared the way for the Lord's first coming, we are called to proclaim the peace of Christ to a world that is still in need of reconciliation. Through our witness, we can be the bearers of the peace of Christ to all who believe.

We recognize this peace is given to us by way of the means of grace, the Word and the Sacraments. In Baptism, we receive the peace of forgiveness; in the Lord's Supper, we experience the peace of Christ's body and blood, given for the forgiveness of sins. These gifts are the way God continues to prepare our hearts for His coming, a coming we experience in the Peace of a snow covered lane or as we exit a midnight Christmas Service.

A peace that exudes a subtle joy in knowing God's creation is holding us close, filling us with a togetherness found only in the arms of God bound by hope and the promise of our life with Christ. Our Peace comes to us in a manner with everything to give and asking for nothing in return for our salvation. We are reminded in Philippians that we are to “be anxious for nothing, but in everything by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known to God; and the peace of God, which surpasses all understanding, will guard your hearts and minds through Christ Jesus.”

Because of the tender mercy of our God, we experience Peace, a peace sent to our hearts through the work of the Holy Spirit. Peace be with you always. Amen



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**Easter Sunday April 20th**  
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*The angel said to the women, “Do not be afraid, for I know that you seek Jesus who was crucified. He is not here, for he has risen, as he said.”*  
Mathew 28: 5 - 7

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## THE BOOK OF DAYS

## A group of old ladies



April 2

Died at Edinburgh, on the 2nd of April 1856, Miss Elizabeth Gray, at the age of 108, having been born in May 1748. That cases of extra-ordinary longevity are seldom supported by clear documentary evidence has been very justly alleged; it has indeed been set forth that we scarcely have complete evidence for a single example of the centenarian. In this case, however, there was certainly no room for doubt. Miss Gray had been known all her life as a member of the upper circle of society in the Scottish metropolis, and her identity with the individual Elizabeth Gray, the daughter of William Gray, of Newholm, writer in Edinburgh, whose birth is chronicled in the register of her father's parish of Dolphington, in Lanarkshire, as having occurred in May 1748, is beyond dispute in the society to which the venerable lady belonged.

It may be remarked that she was a very cheerful person, and kept up her old love of whist till past the five score. Her mother attained ninety-six, and two of her sisters died at ninety-four and ninety-six respectively. She had, however, survived her father upwards of a hundred years, for he died in 1755; nay, a more remarkable thing than

even this was to be told of Betty Gray—a brother of hers (strictly a half-brother) had died so long ago as 1728. A faded marble slab in the wall of Dolphington Kirk, which records the decease of this child—for such he was—must have been viewed with strange feelings, when, a hundred and twenty-eight years later, the age-worn sister was laid in the same spot.

Little more than two years after the death of Miss Gray, there died in Scotland another centenarian lady, about whose age there could be no ground for doubt, as she had lived in the eye of intelligent society all her days. This person was the Hon. Mrs. Hay Mackenzie, of Cromartie. She died in October 1858, at the age of 103; she was grandmother to the present Duchess of Sutherland; her father was the sixth Lord Elbank, brother and successor of Lord Patrick, who entertained Johnson in Edinburgh; her maternal grandfather was that unfortunate Earl of Cromartie who so narrowly escaped accompanying Kilmarnock and Balmerino to the scaffold in 1746. She was a most benevolent woman—a large giver—and enjoyed universal esteem. Her conversation made the events of the first half of the eighteenth century pass as vividly before the mind as those of the pres-

ent day. It was remarked as a curious circumstance, that of Dunrobin Castle, the place where her grandfather was taken prisoner as a rebel, her granddaughter became mistress.

It is well known that female life is considerably more enduring than male; so that, although boys are born in the proportion of 105 to 100 of girls—a fact that holds good all over Europe—there are always more women in existence than men. It really is surprising how enduring women some-times become, and how healthily enduring too, after passing the more trying crises of female existence. Mrs. Piozzi, who herself thought it a person's own fault if they got old, gives us in one of her letters a remarkable case of vigorous old-ladyism.

I must tell you,' says she, 'a story of a Cornish gentlewoman hard by here [Penzance], Zenobia Stevens, who held a lease under the Duke of Bolton by her own life only ninety-nine years—and going at the term's end ten miles to give it up, she obtained permission to continue in the house as long as she lived, and was asked of course to drink a glass of wine. She did take one, but declined the second, saying she had to ride home in the twilight upon a young colt, and was afraid to make herself giddy-headed.'

The well known Countess Dowager of Cork, who died in May 1840, had not reached a hundred—she

had but just completed her ninety-fourth year—but she realized the typical character of a veteran lady who, to appearance, was little affected by age. Till within a few days of her death she was healthy and cheerful as in those youthful days when she charmed Johnson and Boswell, the latter of whom was only six years her senior. She was in the custom to the last of dining out every day when she had not company at home. As to death, she always said she was ready for him, come when he might; but she did not like to see him coming. Lady Cork was daughter of the first Lord Galway, and she lived to see the sixth, her great grand-nephew.

Mr. Francis Brokesby, who writes a letter on antiquities and natural curiosities from Shottesbrooke in 1711. (published by Hearne in connection with Leland's Itinerary, vi. 104), mentions several instances of extremely protracted female life. He tells of a woman then living near the Tower in London, aged about 130, and who remembered Queen Elizabeth. Hearne himself subsequently states that this woman was Jane Scrimshaw, who had lived for four score years in the Merchant Tailors' alms-houses, near Little Tower-hill. She was, he says, born in the parish of Mary-le-Bow, London, on the 3rd of April 1584, so that she was then in the 127th year of her age, 'and likely to live much longer.' She, however, died on the 26th of December 1711.

It is stated that even at the last there was scarcely a grey hair on her head, and she never lost memory or judgment. Mr. Brokesby reported another venerable person as having died about sixty years before—that is, about 1650—who attained the age of a hundred and forty. She had been the wife of a labouring man named. Humphry Broadhurst, who resided at Hedgerow, in Cheshire, on the property of the Leighs of Lyme. The familiar name she bore, The Cricket in the hedge, bore witness to her cheerful character; a peculiarity to which, along with great temperance and plainness of living, her great age was chiefly to be attributed. A hardly credible circumstance was alleged of this woman, that she had borne her youngest child at four score. Latterly, having been reduced by gradual decay to great bodily weakness, she used to be carried in the arms of this daughter, who was herself sixty. She was buried in the parish church of Prestbury. It was said of this woman that she remembered Bosworth Field; but here there must be some error, for to do so in 1650, she would have needed to be considerably more than 140 years old, the battle being fought in 1485. It is not unlikely, however, that her death took place earlier than 1650, as the time was only stated from memory.

To read other selections from Robert Chamber's 1864 *The Book of Days*, visit [thebookofdays.com](http://thebookofdays.com).



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ECOLOGY

Backyard invasives to know

Anne Gageby  
Strawberry Hill Foundation

Spring is officially here, and buds are making their debut. This is a great time to become familiar with some of our area’s biggest problematic invasive plants – Japanese barberry, stiltgrass, mile-a-minute, garlic mustard, and many more. You may spot some or all of these plants by roadways, along walking paths, or even in your own backyard. Most look innocent, if not sort of lovely as they grow. After all, greenery of all kinds makes a forest or field appear healthy and thriving. But non-native invasive plants can quickly take over an area, pushing out native species that our local wildlife depend on. This can leave wildlife vulnerable in a variety of ways that might not be readily apparent. It can also have a serious negative impact on local flora.

For example, Japanese stiltgrass displaces native herbaceous and woody plants by crowding them out but it also leaves a more nefarious impact: it changes the soil’s pH by making it more basic. Many of our native plants and shrubs need a more acidic environment to thrive. Our state flower, the mountain laurel, is one such shrub. Wood anemone and wild ginger, two lovely groundcover plants that attract early pollinators and butterflies, need acidic soil to grow. Even hardy spicebush, which can survive in a variety of soils, does best when the soil is acidic.

There is an upside to dealing with Japanese stiltgrass, however. It’s easy to root out by hand. The roots are shallow and weak so hand pulling takes little effort. It’s possible to get ahead of it if the infestation area is small. However, it will likely take time to fully eradicate it

from a backyard or area since the seedbank can be quite large. So, if you find stiltgrass in your yard, start pulling now but know that you’ll likely have to pull them up again next year.

Garlic mustard is another invasive you can root out by hand if the infestation is light or scattered. Make sure to pull the entire root and not just cut the plant back. Cutting a flowering plant will allow it time to resprout from the roots. This is problematic if the area of growth includes native spring ephemerals such as yellow trout-lily or spring beauty. Garlic mustard’s monoculture nature shades out other plants and dominates the growing area. It outcompetes other plants for nutrients and resources and even releases allelopathic chemicals that can kill mycorrhizal fungi.

Of all the invasives we can find outside there is one that is the biggest thorn in my side (pun intended) and that is Japanese barberry. Barberry forms dense stands that can reach six feet high and multiple zig-zag branches that are extremely difficult to trim back. And trimming is a must if you’ll have any hope of getting to the roots without being jabbed by the hundreds of needle-thin thorns along each branch. Barberry is quite a beast, for sure. These beast-like qualities make it a perfect habitat for white-footed mice which tend to be Lyme disease reservoirs. Added to the list of problematic features is Japanese barberry’s unique self-created micro-climate that supports blacklegged (deer) ticks. Yes, this plant creates its own perfect habitat for deer ticks, the main source of Lyme disease. Mice find shelter and protection from predators within the safety of barberry. Deer ticks travel on their mice hosts to new homes within a barberry bush and set up shop. As hikers and woodland creatures pass



Japanese Stillgrass not only displaces native herbaceous and woody plants but also changes the soil’s pH making it harder for native plants to grow.

through barberry-invaded areas, deer ticks latch onto new hosts and spread disease. It’s a viscous cycle.

So, how do we stop barberry? We do our best. It’s an incredibly hardy plant, unfortunately. It’s shade, drought, and cold tolerant so extreme winters won’t have the effect one might hope for. But it can be removed using a weed wrench or similar tool. Be sure to remove the plant entirely because new growth can come from rhizomes and roots. Don’t forget to wear protective gloves along with clothing to cover exposed skin. The thorns on a Japanese barberry are fierce.

One of the prettier invasive plants we find at Strawberry Hill is mile-a-minute, so called because it can grow up to six inches a day. It produces a large tangle of thin vines that smother other native vegetation by blocking sunlight. Like English ivy, mile-a-minute can weigh down its competition until fragile stems break and plants die off from lack of light. And yet, it also produces a crop of striking blue-purple berries that stand out from the seas of green. The berries are dispersed after been eaten by a variety of wildlife and spread via elimination.

Interestingly, mile-a-minute berries are buoyant and can be spread via waterways for some time after being detached from their stems. They remain buoyant for a little over a week and so can travel long distances down creeks and rivers. They’re able to spread over larger areas by not being entirely dependent upon wildlife for dispersion. That’s great for mile-a-minute but bad news for us fighting an infestation of it. Fortunately, mile-a-minute requires less drastic eradication measures than other plants. Mile-a-minute can be pulled by hand and tossed aside to dry out and compost. Be sure to wear gloves and long sleeves, though. There are tiny, recurved barbs on the undersides of leaves.

Fighting the spread of invasives is a time-consuming process that takes patience and teamwork. At Strawberry Hill, we designate certain days each year for targeting specific areas and plants. It’s an ongoing battle that will last for years. But is it worth it? Yes, absolutely. We do our best to give our native flora and fauna the best fighting chance. We tackle the barberry, mile-a-minute, and so many more when and where we can. We don’t get them all, unfortunately.

Hope isn’t lost, however. Ever year brings new ideas, new methods – sometimes mechanical and sometimes biotic. As the seasons change and weather patterns shift, we may see some of these invasives die off on their own or become more manageable. For now, we’re donning our gloves and getting to work.

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THE RETIRED ECOLOGIST

Can science explain everything?

Bill Meredith

*“May the road rise up to meet you;  
may the wind be always at your  
back; may the sun shine warm  
upon your face, and the rain fall  
gently on your fields; and until we  
meet again, may God hold you in  
the palm of His hand.”*  
...beannacht traidisiunta na hEire-  
ann.

My great-great grandfather came to America from Ireland in the early 1840s, a fugitive from the potato famine. Fortune brought him to a farm in West Virginia, where there were no parades or green beer; but there was good, rich soil, and he used it to preserve some of his ancestral customs. He taught his children and grandchildren that potatoes must be planted on St. Patrick’s Day, come rain or shine (unless it fell on a Sunday; in that case, one day earlier or later was acceptable). In the course of time, that bit of wisdom was passed on to me by my grandmother. So when March 17 arrived this year, the temperature passed 60° for the first time, and the birds responded with a lilting song, the March wind blew gently at my back, the sun shone warm upon my face... and I got the shovel and headed for the garden.

The rain had fallen gently on my field a few days earlier and I knew, even without asking Dave Elliot, that it was too wet to plow. Normally, digging or plowing wet soil will cause it to get packed into a consistency like concrete, and seeds planted in wet soil tend to rot; but with potatoes planted on St. Patrick’s Day, it’s different. The ground will freeze and thaw several times in the next month, and that will keep the soil soft if we don’t walk on it. And potatoes don’t mind a bit of dampness; even the ones we missed when we dug them last summer will sprout this spring without rotting. It would be nice to think St. Patrick told my ancestors that it worked this way 1600 years ago; but, since potatoes didn’t arrive in Ireland until several years after Columbus brought them from America, I guess the Irish must have figured it out by themselves. However it happened, it works.

There was a time, not too long ago, when spading a 30-foot row and planting one-eyed slices of potato in it would have been a pleasant way to pass half an hour in the spring sunshine; but I have reached the age

where it is a day’s work, so I put the shovel away and went inside for a nap. In hindsight, that may have been a mistake. I inherited a vivid imagination and an affinity for storytelling from both sides of my family... Mom’s folks were Irish, and Dad’s were Welsh... so when I go to sleep tired, I often dream a bizarre mixture of their stories and things I have read. And it happened again.

In both Irish and Welsh folklore, once upon a time there was a young God named Lleu Llaw who fell in love with a human girl and resolved to marry her, even though that was against the rules for Gods in those days. Lleu Llaw’s mother created a curse which prevented the marriage, and he was despondent; so, to cheer him up, his uncle, who was a magician, combined nine spring flowers and produced a new goddess named Blodeuwedd, who so charmed Lleu Llaw that he married her. History does not record what became of the earthly girlfriend, but Blodeuwedd went on to become the Celtic Goddess of Spring; and I am told there are those who say she is still around, in the form of an owl. Personally, having spent 60-odd years studying ecology, I have to doubt it; but if you think about the weather we have had for the past couple of months, the influence of a mischievous Irish goddess could explain a lot.

The next couple of days were clear and pleasant, and it actually looked like the weird weather patterns that have ruled our lives since 2015 began might be moving toward a more normal climate; but behind the scenes, strange things were going on. About the time I was planting the potatoes, a solar flare erupted on the surface of the sun, and the following night there was a spectacular display of the aurora, or Northern Lights. I don’t think it was visible in Emmitsburg, but the papers said it was seen as far south as Tennessee. And then the following day the paper reported a total eclipse of the sun; it wasn’t visible here either, but you could have seen it if you were in the Faroe Islands. So that got me thinking. Will Rogers was still on the radio when I was born; I was too young to remember him, but my parents set great store by his wisdom, and they told me that all he knew was what he saw in the papers. And then when I got up the next day, which happened to be the first day of Spring, it was snowing.

I don’t always think clearly that early in the morning. I had the vague idea that if it was the first day of Spring, it shouldn’t be snowing; but it was, and seriously, too. It was logical to ask, “What’s going on here?” but the answer that followed was not logical at all. It was what logicians call the “*post hoc fallacy*” ...that is, when several events occur in sequence, the first event is the cause of the others. Applied to the present situation, it would mean planting potatoes in wet soil on St. Patrick’s Day had caused the solar flare, the Northern Lights display, the eclipse, and the un-seasonal snowstorm... and goodness knows what might happen next! I’m ashamed to admit that for a few minutes it gave me an exhilarating sense of power; but it didn’t last. It wasn’t long before I realized that it would make just as much sense to assume Blodeuwedd did it all... but since I haven’t heard any owls, I guess I will have to fall back on some dry, boring scientific explanation.

Except for that confusing start, spring has been quiet, but not uneventful. There have been several mornings when large, V-shaped skeins of geese flew overhead as I went out to get the paper; they don’t seem to honk as loudly as they used to, but I can still hear them, and I always watch until they’re out of sight. There were a few robins around all winter, but the first wave of migrants arrived during the biggest snowstorm we had in February, and now I see them every day. After that same snowstorm I looked out of the bathroom window one morning to see a young deer standing there, munching on a euonymus bush; and around the corner, in the edge of the Great Forest was a herd of them. They were nibbling at the leaf buds that were just starting to appear on small trees and bushes; some were lying down and chewing their cud. My wife and I watched them all day, and counted a total of 15, about half of which were last year’s fawns. They will be glad to see Spring arrive; winter was colder and snowier than usual, and their food supply is running short.

Deer are browsers; their preferred foods are new growth on woody plants such as shrubs and tree seedlings, and they also eat nuts, fruits and broad-leaved weedy plants. They can eat grass, but it is harder for them to digest than woody growth. Late winter is a hard time for them; they will



Blodeuwedd - the Celtic Goddess of Spring - takes the form of an owl in Irish and Welsh folklore. Photo from our good friend Dr. Nat White, DVM.

have eaten most of the twigs they can reach, weedy growth has stopped, and grass is often covered with snow. Where the invasive English ivy has grown up into large trees, the deer have eaten all of the leaves they can reach; and in places where the deer populations are overcrowded, some will starve if Spring doesn’t arrive on time. So we watch them, and wait. I’m glad to get rid of the English ivy,

and I don’t mind if they prune some of the saplings; but if they decide to browse on my crocuses, pussy willows or potatoes, there will be war, and I’ll be out there throwing rocks and banging on garbage can lids... and listening for owls.

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# IN THE COUNTRY

## “April showers”

Tim Iverson  
Naturalist

The Potomac River is often called the “Nation’s River”, and every year there is an assessment compiled by a non-profit clean water advocacy organization, the Potomac Conservancy. The overall state of the nation’s river has been turbulent throughout recent years and decades. As recently as 2011 the Potomac River was classified with a ‘D’ grade. American Rivers, another clean water advocacy group, listed the Potomac as the nation’s “Most Endangered River” in 2012. There has been some progress though, and the Potomac Conservancy upgraded the state of the Potomac from a ‘D’ to a ‘C’ in 2013. This annual “State of the Nation’s River” report has not yet been released for 2014. This assessment is based off of fish populations, overall quality of habitat and water, and surrounding land use.

While all roads lead to Rome, our regional rivers lead to the Chesapeake Bay - the largest and most productive estuary in the United States. The most recent report, released in 2014, denotes the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay at a ‘D+’ grade. The Chesapeake Bay Foundation releases an updated report

every two years based on fisheries populations (crabs, Rockfish, and oysters primarily), acreage of bay grasses, total poundage of estimated pollution emptied into the bay and its tributary waterways. While the overall report card seems dismal the report itself highlights a mixed bag of take-away themes. On the bright side: overall water quality is improving, bay grassess and oyster populations saw a +2 point increase. However, there was an overall decline in blue crab and rockfish populations, and forested buffer zones. This report highlights areas of progress and areas that need improvement. Restoration is costly, but failure to do so would be catastrophic.

There is a path to restoration called the Chesapeake Clean Water Blueprint. This is a provision of the Clean Water Act enacted by the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA). In 2010, the EPA began to legally enforce the “Total Maximum Daily Load” (TMDL) which is a scientifically derived basis of the acceptable amount of total pollutants the water system can handle while still being productive and meet water quality standards. Six states (Maryland, Delaware, Virginia, Pennsylvania, New York, W. Virginia) and the District of Columbia are now required to incrementally reduce nitrogen,

phosphorus, and sediment pollution over two year periods through 2025. Nitrogen, phosphorus, and sediment are the top three pollutants contaminating the bay. Farms and agribusiness are responsible for 41% of the polluted runoff, but urban and suburban areas are responsible for 15% of the total deposited amount.

In order to ensure shared responsibility of a clean and productive estuary each state must meet the scientifically derived limits by 2025. The blueprint defines the parameters of what must be done, but it’s entirely up to the states to decide how to go about doing it. The task falls to each state to figure out how to best reduce the pollution generated through runoff. Maryland has its very own specific blueprint to reduce our TMDLs with several robust and progressive initiatives. One of these initiatives was established by MD House Bill 987: Stormwater Management - Watershed Protection and Restoration Program. This law gave us the infamous “Storm Water Remediation Fee,” often derided as the “Rain Tax.” Currently the fate of this law is uncertain. Court battles have already reduced the impact and jurisdiction of the law, and Gov. Hogan has introduced legislation to repeal the law altogether. The spirit of the law was to create revenue specifically allocated to combat the leading source of pollution and biggest threat to the Chesapeake Bay. Whether Gov. Hogan is successful or not may make little overall difference. Each state is federally mandated, and subsequently each county and locality, for reducing polluted runoff - this will likely require tax dollars.

Stormwater runoff undoubtedly holds one of the biggest pieces of the puzzle to the overall health of the Chesapeake Bay. So, what’s a homeowner to do? Regardless of whether or not you’re getting taxed on the rain you can help mitigate the effects. The issue with runoff is that the stormwater picks up pollutants and chemicals from impervious surfaces like roads, sidewalks, and roofs and carries them to drains and rivers instead of through the ground where those nasties get filtered out



Similar to the creek between the two adjoining pastures pictured above, natural buffers along stream borders greatly minimize both water and nutrient runoff, preserving the health of the local creek.

through the soil. Governments certainly play a role in remediating this problem, but citizens can help reduce the overall impact as well.

Citizens can’t prevent rain, but they can prevent run off. Collecting rain in rain barrels or by constructing rain gardens you can strategically utilize rain, reduce runoff, and save on your utility bill. A rain barrel is a storage system used to collect rain from downspouts and roofs. They are inexpensive and collected water can be used for anything. All you need is a 50 - 60 gallon drum (sold at hardware and outdoor stores), PVC coupling to connect to downspouts or roof drainage areas, screening to keep insects and debris out of the barrel, and a hose is optional.

For many homeowners up to 40% of summer water usage is dedicated to watering gardens and lawns, this can help to reduce that number and your water bills. A slightly more ambitious do it yourself project would be to plant a rain garden. Rain gardens are a landscaped area that hold stormwater so it will infiltrate into the soil as opposed to becoming runoff. These shallow depressions are low

maintenance and beautify homes and neighborhoods. Other benefits include reducing erosion and flooding, recharging the water table, and increased property values. There are many how-to guides online or a local landscaping company can assist you with installing one.

We drink it, we bathe in it, we play in it, and we need it. Our water is invaluable and irreplaceable. The quality and state of the nations river and the most productive estuary the country has been in jeopardy for some time. Things are getting better, but the call to action is still ringing. By doing what we can and playing our part on a local level we can make that 15% difference. Collecting rain water so we use less from the infrastructure, planting rain gardens to reduce runoff and filter water, or participating in river clean ups are all small tokens that can add up to big impacts. Ensuring we have the cleanest possible water pays dividends for our wallets, our ecosystems, and ourselves. Here’s to the April showers that bring May flowers!

To read past articles by Tim Iverson, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.

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## SCIENCE MATTERS

# Can a “star in a bottle” make electricity?

Boyce Rensberger

If all goes well—and that is a very big assumption—one of science’s long-cherished dreams may become a reality in less than ten years. The dream is to make electricity from carbon-free, safe, nuclear fusion and to do it in a way that makes more energy than it consumes.

Nuclear fusion, as you may know, is a process very different from nuclear fission, the phenomenon that drives some 419 nuclear power plants now operating around the world. Fission uses heat released when atoms of uranium or, less commonly, plutonium are made to split into smaller atoms. Fusion, by contrast, forces hydrogen atoms through a series of reactions to fuse into helium, a phenomenon that also gives off heat. In both cases, the heat can then be used as in any other kind of power plant to boil water into steam that drives electrical turbines.

So, what’s happening now?

A private company spawned by M.I.T. announced in December that it will “independently finance, build, own, and operate” a grid-scale, thermonuclear fusion power plant in Chesterfield County, Virginia, just south of Richmond. Commonwealth Fusion Systems signed an agreement with that region’s power company, Dominion Energy Virginia. The fusion plant would be built on Dominion’s land. The newly made electricity would feed into Dominion’s grid.

Though many groups around the world are working to commercialize fusion energy, this would appear to be the furthest any group has ever gone toward delivering on that long-held dream. The goal first promised in the 1950s is to make electricity from a fusion process that gives off more energy than it consumes and do it on a sustained basis. Much of the appeal of fusion power is that the “fuel” is an isotope, or version, of hydro-

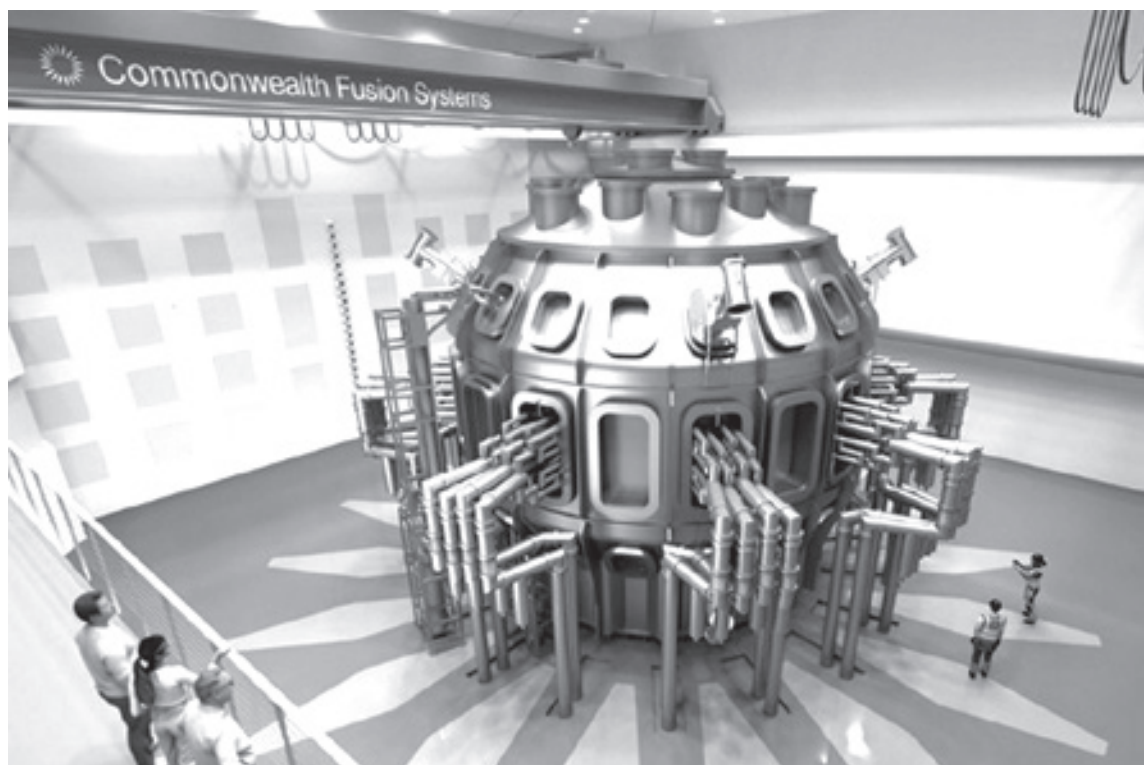
gen (called deuterium) that can be extracted from sea water plus another hydrogen isotope (called tritium) that can be made from lithium. Fusing the two isotopes yields helium, a safe and valuable “waste product.” No greenhouse gases are produced.

A little background is in order.

In 1925 an astronomer named Cecilia Payne, whom I wrote about in 2023, discovered that stars are made almost entirely of hydrogen and helium, the two simplest elements and the first to come out of the Big Bang. They were created as loose atoms which eventually clumped together, the aggregation becoming ever larger as the growing mass exerted stronger gravitational pull. Once such a mass becomes great enough, the gravitational pressure deep inside creates intense heat—many millions of degrees. This ignites fusion reactions, and the great mass becomes a shining star. Nuclear fusion is the reaction that powers our local star, the sun.

The usual, over-simplified way of putting it is that the nuclei of hydrogen atoms, which are single protons, are forced to move so fast that they overcome their normal repulsion (both have a positive charge) and slam into one another, binding and creating helium, with its nucleus of two protons. In reality it’s more complicated, too complicated to fit in this space. The bottom line is that hydrogen nuclei fuse (making helium) and release huge amounts of energy as heat.

The idea of practical fusion power first arose in the Soviet Union in 1950. The world had recently seen what fission can do after the United States dropped atomic bombs on Japan. But fission was easier to control, so it became the only practical form of atomic energy, despite producing



Artist’s conception of the proposed fusion reactor.

[Editor’s note – the artist apparently never saw an actual Tokamak fusion reactor.]

lethally radioactive waste products. The wastes of more than 400 fission reactors that have been operating for decades are usually stored on site.

But the dream of fusion power did not die. When I started as a science writer in the 1960s, scientists promised that practical fusion power lay “only 30 years” ahead. A few decades later it was still “30 years” away. Come that elusive day, fusion would produce electricity “too cheap to meter.” The phrase was borrowed from advocates of fission power much earlier.

Work on fusion power continued through the decades with many different machines designed to replicate the intense heat and pressure inside the sun, creating what some dubbed “a star in a bottle.” In 1950 Soviet scientists proposed a machine they called a tokamak. It bottled deuterium and tritium in a large donut-shaped ring surrounded by powerful magnets that repelled the charged parti-

cles from all directions, keeping them inside. The magnetic field’s pressure heats a cloud of hydrogen atoms as if they were inside stars, tearing away their electrons and forcing their nuclei to fuse into helium and release heat.

Countless engineers and scientists have worked to design and build fusion reactors in the tokamak form. Some worked, but none has achieved a system that would be practical. They all consumed more electricity than they could produce. Or, at best, some achieved “break-even.”

The private company aiming to build in Virginia has developed a tokamak at its campus outside Boston that they say will finally reach the goal, possibly next year or in 2027. Led by M.I.T. professors and grad students and funded with some \$2 billion in venture capital, it will use newly developed high temperature superconducting magnets to confine and heat the hydrogen nuclei. The tokamak proposed for just south of us

would be an upgraded version.

As the company says in a news release: “Commonwealth Fusion Systems is the world’s leading and largest private fusion company. The company’s marquee fusion project, SPARC, will generate net energy, paving the way for limitless carbon-free energy.”

They aren’t promising energy too cheap to meter, but neither are they saying the goal is 30 years away. They say their commercial fusion reactor will feed power to the grid in Virginia in the “early 2030s.”

I might live to see it.

*Boyce Rensberger retired to Frederick County after some 40 years as a science writer and editor, primarily at The Washington Post and The New York Times. He welcomes feedback at boycerensberger@gmail.com.*

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# THE MASTER GARDENER

## FCMG annual Spring Plant Sale

Maritta Perry Grau  
Frederick County Master Gardener

As the days grow longer and temperatures are on the rise, garden enthusiasts eagerly anticipate the annual Spring Plant Sale hosted by the Frederick County Master Gardeners. This much-anticipated event is set to take place on Saturday, April 26, from 8:30 to 1 at the Frederick Fairgrounds.

With a reputation for providing high-quality plants at reasonable prices, the Spring Plant Sale has become a cherished tradition among local gardeners. Whether you're a seasoned gardener or a novice eager to add life to your outdoor space, this event promises something for everyone. Master Gardeners will be on hand to answer your gardening questions and provide advice in selecting plants, ensuring that shoppers make informed choices to suit their gardening goals.

A bounty of botanical favorites  
The sale will offer a vibrant selection of annuals, perennials, herbs, and vegetable plants to kickstart the growing season, all suitable for Frederick County growing conditions.

**Annuals:** A dazzling array of annual flowers—including petunias, marigolds, zinnias, and impatiens, to name a few—will be available for those looking to add instant color to their gardens. Flowers for both sun and shade will be featured, as well as great combinations for containers and window boxes. Hanging pots will feature lush color combinations.

**Perennials:** For those in search of long-lasting beauty, native perennials such as coneflowers, asters, day-lilies, and black-eyed Susans will be featured, ensuring your garden remains vibrant year after year. Consider adding mountain mint to your pollinator garden (see more detailed information below in our section about herbs); it's been selected as the Perennial Plant of the Year by the Perennial Plant Association (perennialplant.org). Its heads of tiny white to light pink blooms attract a wide variety of pollinators throughout the summer.

**Herbs:** Herb lovers will delight in the aromatic selection of basil, thyme, rosemary, mint, and oregano—perfect for both culinary and medicinal use. Many gardeners add herbs as decorative

plants in the flower garden. Chives have delightful pink globe flowers, and creeping thyme does a great job filling in those sunny bare spots.

One thing you'll want to keep an eye out for is the Perennial of the Year mentioned above in our section about perennials: Clustered mountain mint (*Pycnanthemum muticum*, also sometimes called blunt mountain mint or short-toothed mountain mint). There are a number of different kinds of plants in the mint family, kind of like cousins once or twice removed! All are tough, adaptable perennials. In the wild, you'll often find these natives in meadows and open woodlands across the eastern United States and reaching west as far as Texas. According to the Perennial Plant Association (perennialplant.org), *P. muticum* is "not a true mint (*Mentha* spp.)," although *P. muticum* is in "the same family and has similarly scented leaves."

If you have or are developing a pollinator garden, you may want to add a pot of this clustered mountain mint. The small flowers we mentioned before "attract butterflies, wasps, and bees from July to September. The inconspicuous flowers are upstaged by surrounding silver bracts, which give the illusion of frost in summer and persist for months. Clustered mountain mint has no serious disease issues, and its aromatic foliage is unpalatable to deer and rabbits."

The Perennial Plant Association describes mountain mint as growing about two to three feet tall and forming a dense, weed-suppressing clump. Although mountain mint is not as invasive as true mints, it does spread easily by underground rhizomes, so, as mentioned above, you may want to plant it in a pot or in an area where it can grow freely.

That silvery sheen of clustered mountain mint's leaves makes a nice contrast



Choose a selection of annuals, herbs, and even vegetables to create lovely gardens wherever you have the space. Here are some of the various-sized planted containers from the 2024 Spring Plant Sale.

to other plants, especially those with dark foliage. The website suggests planting it with black-eyed Susans (*Rudbeckia* spp.), bee balm (*Monarda* spp.), blazing star (*Liatris* spp.), and Joe Pye weed (*Eutrochium* spp.), as well as native grasses such as little bluestem (*Schizachyrium scoparium*) and switchgrass (*Panicum virgatum*).

**Vegetables:** For those with a passion for homegrown produce, the vegetable plant section will feature tomatoes, peppers, cucumbers, squash, and an assortment of leafy greens, allowing buyers to cultivate their own fresh and nutritious food right in their backyard. Space is limited? Consider planting vegetables among your flower beds or in pots for an eclectic effect. You'll want to check with a Master Gardener or other source to make sure which plants make good companion plantings.

**Flea Market:** Come see what treasure we have for you at one of the most popular booths at our plant sale—our garden-themed flea market. Who doesn't love finding a good bargain at

a yard sale? Add whimsy to your garden with a unique array of pots, sculpture, and other decorative items. For example, you can elect from an array of flower pots, planters and containers (some handmade); choose among numerous colorful, decorative items for your home, patio, garden, and yard; and shop for gardening books, gardening tools, bird feeders, and other items.

What will you spot—a big wicker picnic basket, vases, a new garden tool belt, or a stainless steel counter-top compost collector? Will you find decorative bees and butterflies, or even a lady bug in our jewelry section.?

**Supporting a good cause**  
Proceeds from the plant sale will go toward the Frederick County Master Gardener program to protect and conserve the natural resources of Frederick County. The Master Gardeners support safe, effective, and sustainable horticultural practices that promote the development of healthy gardens, landscapes and communities. In addition to gardening advice, our programs provide produce to the Frederick Food Bank, help preserve the watershed, and support biodiversity in our environment. By attending the sale, shoppers not only enhance their gardens but also contribute to a greener, more sustainable community.

**Event details**  
Arrive early for the best selection, as popular plants tend to sell out quickly. Cash and credit card payments will be



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THE MASTER GARDENER

accepted, and you may want to bring boxes or carts to more easily transport your purchases from table to car.

Whether you're an experienced gardener or just starting out, the Spring Plant Sale is a can't-miss event that promises inspiration, education, and plenty of beautiful plants to brighten up your garden. Mark your calendars

and get ready to dig into spring!

Call us at 301-600-1596; check our website for upcoming seminars, Master Gardener certification classes, or other announcements, gardening information and advice

To read other Gardening articles, visit the Gardening section of Walkersville.net.

Frederick County Master Gardeners April Seminars

April 12 (10 to noon): "Back to Our Roots: Humans and Gardening Throughout History" Learn about our historical experiences with cultivation, nature, and public and private lands, from imperial gardens to personal plots and windowsill planters. Discover how we can reignite our passion and find peace in cultivating the land mindfully and resourcefully while encouraging others to do the same.

April 12 (1 to 3): "Bay-Wise Principles" Encourage wildlife; control stormwater runoff; mow & water efficiently; mulch appropriately & recycle yard

waste; fertilize, plant & manage yard pests wisely; and protect the waterfront. These 'best practices' can earn you Bay-Wise certification—and a distinctive yard sign.

All seminars are free unless otherwise stated. Seminars are held at the University of Maryland Extension office at 330 Montevue Lane, (off Rosemont Avenue) in Frederick.

For more information and sign-up links, visit the Events section of the Master Gardeners Frederick County Maryland webpage, or call the extension office at 301- 600-1595.

Small Town Gardener

Fickle but fabulous April

Marianne Willburn

April is a month of watching the weather forecast and kicking myself once a week when I forget to close the greenhouse in the evening. There are far more pressing things in the world to worry about of course, but a fresh salad goes a long way towards helping one cope with the latest global disaster.

It's frightening to think of the hours of work that can be lost because of a moment's lapse in memory, and the new gardener must realize that to sprout seeds and take cuttings is to commit oneself to a babysitting job where life and death are on the line.

Extremes are what we're afraid of, and extremes are exactly what we're dealing with in early April—extremes of temperature and weather that bite us when we're not paying attention. It is difficult to stay vigilant. So much easier to be soothed into a false sense of security by a warm day spent dividing ornamentals. But it's still dangerous out there.

Some things are quite happy... and quite safe. Peony and aquilegia shoots have begun their upward thrust and seem to be secure in their timing. Not so the Rogersia.



The arrival of Daffodils provides the first splash of color in otherwise desolate gardens.

A late frost will cut it, wilted and blackened to the ground, where it must start again – so I look at those early shoots and developing leaves with some reservation, taking out the fleece when low temps threaten

One of the best joys of the April garden is watching the daffodils supported by the emerging foliage of larkspur, fennel and poppies, and I highly recommend this type of layered planting to extend your garden's season, not just your daffodil season. Soon, the daffodil foliage will be swallowed up (but quite green) by the emerging perennials and self-seeded annuals, and I will not feel the need to yank it until it is quite yellow.

If only I could follow up with tulips, but the deer have spoiled that avenue of pleasure, forcing me to start containers in fenced areas for fenced areas. It is one of the main plant/deer resentments I have, for the show could be so great otherwise.

Speaking of deer, the self-seeded plain-Jane hosta will be carpeting a long,

boring bed by May and be eaten by June, but April always makes me feel as if the hundreds of emerging shoots might survive. I cannot be bothered to rip them all out and save future disappointment, so instead I look at it more as a temporary flush of color, cutting the 'celery stalks' to the ground with a trimmer in early July.

You'd think it would weaken them, but it doesn't seem to. The hosta I mean – nothing weakens the deer. Meanwhile, I am letting ostrich fern get a foot-hold on the bed, and regretting it even as they pick up steam. They are beautiful, lush and deer-proof, but they are also thuggish and unstoppable. I would have preferred a well-woven tapestry to a mono-textural bolt of cloth, but sometimes you have no choice.

Greens, radishes and pea tendrils are making their way to our plates, and between that and a healthy supply of eggs, I suppose we could subsist somewhat happily. After all, we are consuming what must be the nation's most expensive protein at the moment.

The chickens (a new flock last year) have laid well all winter, and spring sees an uptick in production. They eat table scraps, garden weeds, and non-GMO organic feed and it is extraordinary to think what a dozen of their premium protein pods would cost us at the store. Last night my husband went to the storage fridge packed with eggs and said he felt we must be doing something illegal. But when a raccoon can wipe out your golden geese overnight, and eggs store so well, it makes sense to hold on to them.

April is an unpredictable month, but in its gentler moments there is nothing like it. So many miracles each day to witness – so much awakening and joy. There is work, of course, but taken in small doses it is wonderful.

If you're not into small doses, and you've planted too many seedlings (you have), please take a few pictures of your leftovers and post them online for the benefit of fellow local gardeners like myself who just wiped out an entire flat of tomato seedlings by leaving the greenhouse open last night. Ahh fickle April.

Marianne writes from Lovettsville, VA. Join her and co-host Leslie Harris as they stir up horticulture on their new podcast The Garden Mixer – found everywhere you get your podcasts.

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PETS

Needing people

Jennifer Vanderau  
Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter

Did you ever see those bumper stickers that say, “The more people I meet, the more I like my dog?”

Some days that statement is more true than others. I’ll tell you, I’ve had a week where I feel like gluing thousands of those all over my car – and I don’t even own a dog! Maybe I can see if they have a cat one. Man, a lone cabin in rural Montana (with television, cable and an internet connection, of course) is looking sooooo good right now.

Barbra Streisand sings that people who need people are the luckiest people in the world. Really, Babs? Some days I’m not so sure.

People can be quite the conundrum – tough to figure out and occasionally difficult to handle. I’ll never forget when my sister took a cruise a few years ago. She said she became frustrated because she couldn’t get away from anyone. She was trapped in the middle of the ocean with no where to go.

I understood her plight, actually. Maybe we’re both isolationists at heart – we grew up in the country, after all, so it’s possible – but there are some moments in life where you just need a minute to yourself, you know?

I have a feeling that the animal-lovers who read this column have some idea what I’m talking about. Like the previously mentioned bumper sticker, sometimes an evening alone with our pets is just what we need to unwind from a stressful day. I know some nights that’s the perfect solution for me – even if I do have to run around the house trying to keep some of my felines from fighting with their siblings. Ugh.

On the other hand, do you remember that Twilight Zone episode, where all poor Henry Bemis wanted to do was read, but no one seemed willing to let him? He locked himself in a bank vault on his lunch break to get some peace away from

people, just in time to survive an atomic bomb attack. When he emerged, he found himself alone and ironically, he couldn’t take the isolation. I think Mr. Bemis, at that moment, would have wholeheartedly agreed with Streisand.

I read a piece of fiction a few years ago that had the two main characters survive the apocalypse and become literally the only two people left on the planet. That’s it. Everything was still here – McDonald’s and Target and hotels – it’s just that the people were gone. The author did a magnificent job of really giving the reader the sense of remoteness and being completely alone. It was freaky.

So, technically, I suppose it really is people who make the world go around.

In fact, I’ve seen presentations that talk about how very much we need people. We are hard wired to seek out human connection, so too many days alone can actually affect your health.

People can be frustrating, horrifying, exasperating, appalling, apathetic, disgusting and cruel. Yet at the same time, they can be encouraging, thoughtful, attentive, sympathetic, inspirational and unselfish.

I think learning to accept all of that – and the plethora of other adjectives I’m sure you could add to both sentences – and live with the idiosyncrasies of people is a big part of the human condition.

Sometimes people will disappoint you, and yet other times, people can be surprisingly delightful.

Since I started working at CVAS, I’ve seen that first hand. Ours is a peculiar job. People can be incredibly frustrating, but at the same time, you need them. It’s people who give and people who adopt and people who go above and beyond for their animals, but it’s also people who abuse pets and drop them off with no information or throw them away like garbage.

See what I mean? It’s a real challenge and some days it’s tough not

to let that back-and-forth get you down.

But, in some ways, that’s also life. It’s yin/yang. There’s good moments and bad moments. There’s frustrating people and there’s incredibly sweet and altruistic people.

Maybe it’s learning to find balance in those two opposing forces.

So I think what I’ll do is get just one of the bumper stickers and on the bad days, when people are bugging me, I’ll look at it and know that there are others out there, like me, who know what it means to some days like their pets more than the humans who also inhabit the planet.

*The Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter accepts both monetary and pet supply donations. For more information, call the shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit the website [www.cvas-pets.org](http://www.cvas-pets.org).*

*Jennifer Vanderau is the Public Relations Coordinator for the Cumberland Valley Animal Shelter and can be reached at [cvascomm@cvas-pets.org](mailto:cvascomm@cvas-pets.org). The shelter accepts both monetary and pet supply donations. For more information, call the shelter at 717-263-5791 or visit the website [www.cvas-pets.org](http://www.cvas-pets.org). CVAS also operates a thrift store in Chambersburg. Help support the animals at the shelter by donating to or shopping at the store.*



Candy Cane came into the shelter as a stray on Christmas Eve (hence the name). She is a 3-year-old black and white girl who is a real sweetheart. She loves getting treats and is looking for a home that has a good nap spot. Do you have what she’s looking for?



Gloria came into the shelter as a stray, so we don’t know a whole lot about her, but we think she’s about 6 years old. She’s a dilute tortie who is a nice girl looking for her second chance. Could you give her one?



Sweet Pea came into the shelter as a stray, so we don’t have a lot of information about her, but we think she’s about 10 years old. She’s looking for a place to spend her golden years.



Jelly was brought into the shelter with another dog after they had been found running at large. Jelly did test positive for Lyme disease but is undergoing treatment for it and is doing quite well. Jelly does have some knee/hip issues, but it does not slow him down. He is on an affordable joint supplement that he should be on for the rest of his life to help. He’s around 5 years old and a hound mix.

Before humans die, they write their last Will & Testament, give their home & all they have, to those they leave behind. If, with my paws, I could do the same, this is what I’d ask...

To a poor and lonely stray I’d give:

- My happy home.
- My bowl & cozy bed, soft pillows and all my toys.
- The lap, which I loved so much.
- The hand that stroked my fur & the sweet voice which spoke my name.

I’d Will to the sad, scared shelter dog, the place I had in my human’s loving heart, of which there seemed no bounds.

So, when I die, please do not say, “I will never have a pet again, for the loss and pain is more than I can stand.”

Instead, go find an unloved dog, one whose life has held no joy or hope and give MY place to HIM.

This is the only thing I can give...  
The love I left behind.

-- Author Unknown



Peaches is a sweet, loving 8-year-old Lab that was surrendered to the shelter when her owner could no longer care for her. Peaches was on treatment for the mange and secondary skin infection for 3 months and has made a full recovery since! She did very well during her treatment and is very glad to not be itchy anymore! Peaches would love to find her loving forever home soon!

For more information about Sweet Pea, Candy Cane, Gloria, Jelly, or Peaches, call the Cumberland Valley Animal shelter at 717-263-5791, or visit them online at [www.cvaspets.org](http://www.cvaspets.org) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!



# Balancing law and compassion

Linda Shea

Working at an animal shelter--especially our shelter-- is a unique and rewarding experience. We love animals and walk in every day to fur, feathers, and sometimes even hooves. We work with colleagues that have the same dedication to the animals in our care. While many times it doesn't even feel like work, reflecting at the end of each day produces thoughts of cleaning cages, feeding animals, changing litterboxes, washing dishes piled high from 100 (twice that many during kitten season!) residents, and non-stop laundry. In addition, of course, working with animals inevitably means working with people throughout the community.

On a routine basis, we explain

our role in the community--to enforce existing laws and ordinances. It is not our place to exaggerate intent, extrapolate facts, or arrive at a decision without evaluating situations in a fair manner. For example, we can ensure a pet owner is providing "nutritious food in sufficient quantity for the species, breed, condition of the animal." However, we cannot mandate which brand of food to buy. We can make sure an owner in is compliance with Maryland State law on Rabies vaccinations, but we cannot mandate which Rabies vaccine their vet must administer. We do our best to be effective as we balance law and compassion, especially as some pet owners simply do not know the law. Sometimes we run into disagreement with citizens who want to see more done; even some who

broach vigilantism in their opinions. We take those opportunities to educate and reassure people that we are on the same page--- but we approach every situation thoughtfully, thoroughly, and with experience.

Our mission at Frederick County Animal Control includes preventing the mistreatment of animals, sheltering animals in need, rehoming pets, and educating the public. While our mission revolves around animals, our successes often revolve around people. We try every day to build relationships with pet owners, volunteers, and people in the community who are also animal welfare minded. We appreciate the opportunity to serve our community and we appreciate those who understand what we can--- and cannot--enforce.



Huskee is a staff and volunteer favorite. At only one years old, he is a handsome, friendly guy that loves to play. He is also well-mannered, walks nicely on leash and enjoys the company of other dogs. Like so many Siberian Huskies, Huskee arrived at the shelter as a stray. The breed is hard-wired to run, so left unattended they just can't help themselves.



At twelve years old, Callie hopes to find a nice, quiet retirement home. Her previous family owned her for the last nine years but relinquished Callie to the shelter when they were moving. The transition to shelter life has been challenging; however, she is slowly adapting. She is shy when meeting new people but with patience Callie can be very affectionate and sweet.



At eight months old, Gordon is currently our youngest cat available for adoption. He is at that perfect age where he's young enough to be playful but old enough to enjoy affection and not get into mischief. He was found by McCurdy Field in downtown Frederick, but no owner came to the shelter to reclaim him. Gordon is friendly and has an easy-going personality; therefore, shelter staff recommend him for families with kids of any age.



Staff and volunteers are scratching their heads as to why Lightning has been at the shelter for eighty plus days and no one has adopted him. At only two years old, he is well mannered, affectionate, enjoys the company of other dogs and has lived with kids of various ages. How did he end up at the shelter? His primary caregiver developed a medical issue and was no longer able to care for him.



Quibbles arrived at the shelter on December 26 as a stray and no owner came forward to reclaim her so she now waits to meet her new family. Quibbles can be overwhelmed by new people and experiences, but she does become comfortable with patience and repeat exposure. Once you gain her trust, she is a typical 10-month-old pup: playful and affectionate!

For more information about Huskee, Lighting, Quibbles, Callie, or Gordon call the Frederick County Animal Shelter at 301-600-1319 or visit them online at [www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac](http://www.frederickcountymd.gov/fcac) or better yet, visit them in person at the shelter!

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COMMUNITY NOTES

Behind the scenes of March’s water loss

Burgess Heath Barnes

What appeared to be another quiet Friday night on March 21st in Woodsboro quickly changed around 9:40 when either a very erratic or drunk driver hit the fire hydrant on Liberty Rd. in front of the elementary school. I immediately called our water plant operator who was already on the way to the town because he had been alerted to the system by falling water pressure but had no idea about what was causing it. I knew this had to be serious, so I went directly to the scene. When I arrived, I was shocked to see how much water was gushing out. It had already completely covered the yards of a couple of residents. I started making calls to found out where the valve key tool use to shut off the water was located. What is referred to as a valve key

tool is about a 5-foot T shaped pipe with a square fitting on the end that goes down into the ground and around the valve to shut it off. Unfortunately, the valve had bent so badly that it was pressing against the cast iron pipe covering the key and would not fit over it to turn it off. By this time the water had been flowing for almost 2 hours. At this point I reached out to Walkersville who were more than happy to assist. After still not being able to get the water stopped the decision was made to turn the town’s water supply off completely. The Walkersville water vacuum truck was used to vacuum water out to allow us to get to the valve [even though the water was turned off to the town, water was still pouring out as the pipes at higher elevations in the town drained out].

At around 3:30 it was determined that the valve controlling the shutoff to the fire extinguisher was bent beyond being able to be turned off, so we had no choice but to leave the water off and return in the morning with excavators to do a proper excavation of the pipe in order to fix it properly. At 6:30 we were back on scene with Mark, our former water plant operator who came in on his own to assist along with James from ProStart, and RGR plumbing, who all went to work excavating the broken hydrant and valve. Within 2 hours they had it dug up and capped the broken valve and by 11 the first parts of the water in town were turned on. I was updating every hour to two hours on the Living in Woodsboro Facebook page since we do not at the time have the ability to do real in time updates

on the town website (however an update to the website is coming soon to have that ability). Throughout the next several hours most of the town’s water was turned back on and by 4 everyone had water except the Upper Copper Oaks and Knotty Alder Court areas. The water supply in those areas are unique in the town as water to them has to be pumped up hill. Before the pumps could work the tank they draw suction from had to be about 2/3rds full. In spite of our best efforts, by 8 that evening the tank was still less than half full. I knew we could not keep these residents out of water any longer and so ordered 4 tankers full of potable water to be brought in and their water was drained into the suction tanks, which allowed the pumps to start to pressure the pipes in Upper Copper Oaks and Knotty Alder Court areas. By 9:30

the entire town had been restored. It was a long 24 hours, but I can honestly say for the most part the town residents of our wonderful town understood that we were doing what we could do to get the water restored as soon as possible and had patience. This is what makes our town such a great place. Town staff said they never experienced this severe of a water emergency, and hope to never have another. I cannot say thank you enough to Warren from the town of Walkersville for helping us out in the middle of the night, James from ProStart who was awake for at least 36 hours straight, JR Delauter who along with me was up for 36 hours straight and was out helping haul sandbags, in the middle of the night, the town maintenance men who were there helping, Marc Angleberger our former water operator who came to help, and RGR plumbing for being on the scene ASAP. Also a special thanks to the town of Walkersville for allowing us to get the parts that we needed from them to get the water restored. I know it is not the way anyone wanted to spend their weekend, but you all jumped in and helped restore the town, and are greatly appreciated. Unfortunately, at this time we still do not have an identity of who the driver was. At first, it was reported to be a greyish or brown truck, but after reviewing one doorbell camera that caught it from a distance it appears to be more like a full-size. The Sheriff’s department has the video and is investigating as well. I have requested the videos from the elementary school, and we are hoping theirs will pick up the tag number. If the driver cannot be located we are hopeful that the town’s insurance will cover the repairs since it was not a fault of the town’s. To replace the hydrant with a new one, the water will need to be turned for several hours to Liberty Road residents, and this includes the school so the repair is tentatively being planned for the afternoon of March 28th or Saturday, March 29th so they do not have to cancel school. All residents that will be affected will be notified in advance. We are going to have a serious discussion at our next town meeting about the need to have an emergency plumber on contract and available on-call at all times. While the current water plant operators will handle emergencies, they are not emergency plumbers. They handle the upkeep and emergencies for the water and sewage plants but do not repair or replace infrastructure items. I will be talking to the Council at the next meeting about the need to get a contract with an emergency plumber to be on call should a situation like this happen again. They would then work in coordination with the water plant operators in emergency situations like the one that just occurred.

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# Woodsboro-Walkersville NEWS-JOURNAL

## SECTION 2

## The Frederick Bird Club

Claire Doll  
MSMU Class of 2024

Birdwatching, the practice of observing birds, is not only a hobby, but also an escape—an opportunity to witness beautiful nature and wildlife first-hand. Believe it or not, in the Emmitsburg and Woodsboro-Walkersville communities, you don't have to travel far to see exquisite birds. In fact, you might not even need to leave your backyard!

The Frederick Bird Club is a local organization dedicated to all things birding: birdwatching, bird sitting, bird walking, bird listening. It is a community of nature enthusiasts who gather to celebrate Frederick's unique bird population and share good knowledge with each other, hoping to spot the most beautiful feathered friends among company. A chapter in the Maryland Ornithological Society, the Frederick Bird Club seeks to educate those in the Frederick area and beyond about conversation efforts and how to observe the flying fauna.

The club has a wide range of birders—from people who just enjoy the birds that come to their feeders to adventurers roaming the world. While the membership has traditionally consisted of those 50 and older, several younger birders have become active in recent years, bringing great energy and new ideas.

President Kari McPartland joined the Frederick Bird Club in 2021 when she moved to Frederick. She has been birding since 2018.

In Asheville, McPartland met with a local group that held nature walks in a nearby park. "Birding with serious birders," she said, "is the best way to learn about birding." Inspired by her birding experiences in North Carolina, McPartland said it was a "no-brainer" to seek out the bird club upon her arrival to Frederick. "Being asked to be President was a

really beautiful thing," McPartland feels that the bird club is an inclusive, informative, and overall fun time.

The club's Vice President, Riley Metcalfe, moved to Frederick in January 2021. Before this, he lived in Australia, where his love of birding began in 2020. "It's a good activity you can do outside," he said, noting the stringent pandemic restrictions in his country. "I could just bird-watch in my neighborhood." Metcalfe expresses his enthusiasm for the "vibrant company of birders" in Maryland, exclaiming how his membership in the Frederick Bird Club is a great way to get to know his surrounding community.

Kathy Brown, one of the club's State Directors to the Maryland Ornithological Society and a former President, has been part of the Frederick Bird Club since she moved to the area. Upon her retirement, Brown felt drawn to meeting others and getting to know her community. "What sparked my interest in birding was the feeder left behind by the previous owners when we moved here." Brown is surrounded by the forest and has been regularly visited by woodpeckers. "There's always a nice show going on," she said. Brown enjoys traveling for birding, highlighting her trips to Costa Rica, Ecuador, and the highlands of Scotland, adding how it is a great way to vacation.

The Frederick Bird Club meets monthly, both virtually via Zoom and in person at Hood College in downtown Frederick. Each meeting consists of a guest speaker, brief presentations to share bird sightings and announcements, and time to mingle with other birders. The club also hosts field trips around Maryland including the Blackwater National Wildlife Refuge and the Bombay Hook National Wildlife Refuge.

Naturally, the club meets for birdwatching. "There are bird counts that have been going on for 76

years," said McPartland. "One event we do in the fall is 'the big sit,' where we just sit in one place and count how many birds come to us."

The Frederick Bird Club plays a great role in educating the community. Members present to libraries and organizations, allowing citizens to get involved through learning and volunteering. Brown notes that the club has a big presence at the Frederick Fair, where attendees can learn about conservation efforts such as habitat work and nesting boxes. "The club has consistently gotten more involved in supporting our community," Brown adds. In fact, the City of Frederick is applying to become a Bird Community in the Bird City of Maryland Network. This would allow all communities to support bird conservation practices and ensure an environmental-friendly relationship between birds and people.

Even if you have no birding experience but you're interested in the nature around you, the Frederick Bird Club is the perfect place to start. "Maryland is a wonderful state if you're a birder," said Metcalfe. Complete with mountains, water, and coastal plains, Maryland hosts exceptional native birds—cardinals, hawks, and chickadees. However, the state is also on a migration route, meaning that fall and spring are seasons filled with new and exciting species of birds such as warblers, cuckoos, and tanagers. "Birds that should be in tropics, I've seen at parks," Metcalfe shares. "Peo-



**American Bald Eagles have become a frequent sight in the Catoctin area. Last year, a mother was spotted with two juveniles and this year those juveniles have been spotted on their own.**

ple always say, 'You must miss the Australian birds,' but because of our migration route, it is better to bird in Maryland."

McPartland adds that within walking distance of the Monocacy River, she spotted a great blue heron standing in a parking lot. "You can see 100 great blue herons on the river," she said. "They're hidden in plain sight."

Looking to start birdwatching? McPartland, Metcalfe, and Brown share their favorite birding spots. The Audrey Carroll Audubon Sanctuary in Mt. Airy, including 129 acres of diverse habitat, is open to the public and free of charge. Additionally, Fountain Rock Park and Nature Center in Walkersville boasts plenty of

amenities perfect for birdwatching. McPartland also shares several locations closer to Emmitsburg: Catoctin National Park, Strawberry Hill Foundation, and Mount St. Mary's University campus walking trail. However, first try looking out your front door or walking to a park. "You might think, 'Surely there won't be anything here,' but often there is," said McPartland.

If interested in joining the Frederick Bird Club, more information can be found on the Maryland Ornithological Society website: [mdbirds.org/join/chapters/frederick-bird-club/](http://mdbirds.org/join/chapters/frederick-bird-club/), including a meeting schedule and ways to contact the club. "Anyone is welcome!" exclaims McPartland. "Frederick birders are the best."

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HISTORY

Williams History of Frederick County

Continued from last month

John Witter

John Witter, who is number among the well-known and citizens of Frederick County, is retired farmer and minor of Walkersville. He was born on a farm near Boonsboro, February 8, 1837. His parents were Emmanuel and Sarah Witter.

John grew up near the old Witter homestead in Washington County. He received his education and his native county's public schools. He followed farming until 1859, when he went west to Colorado and onto California, then a wild and unexplored section of the country. He made this trip by ox wagon across the Rocky Mountains, a distance of over 2,700 miles.

After reaching Colorado and California, he engaged in gold mining there until 1861, when he returned over the old trail on horseback to Freeport, Illinois, where his father had immigrated. Here Mr. Witter practiced engaged in 1862 and 1863. In 1864 he started back west, bound this time for the Pacific coast. He went by way of what is now the Yellowstone Park, through Wyoming and Idaho. For two years,

he was engaged in gold mining in Montana, and Idaho. Mr. Witter, a second time, returned home to Illinois, and then to Frederick County. He settled on a farm on the Emmitsburg Pike near Frederick city. Here he followed agricultural pursuits for 25 years.

In 1894 he retired and located in Walkersville, where he has since made his home.

The farm upon which he lived for a quarter of a century is situated to three miles north of Frederick, and contains 116 acres of fine limestone land. The place as well improved and is now cultivated by his son, Robert G Witter. Mr. Witter is a highly respected citizen of the county and has wide acquaintance. Mr. Witter was married to Annie Baker of Walkersville.

In 1894, he made a third, and more extensive trip to California and Mexico, where he is a large stockholder in Copper mines. In August, 1909, he made a forth trip to the Pacific coast, this time by rail to the Pacific Coast and onto the Yukon Alaska exposition and return via Yellowstone Park.

Henry Norris

Henry Norris is the owner of the "Locust Grove" farm, containing

153 acres in the Johnsville district, on the Coppermine Road, about 3 miles from liberty. He was born on this homestead, March 2, 1842. He is a son of Nicholas and Mary Ann Norris.

His grandfather Amos Norris, was the first of the family to live on the Locust Grove Farm. He was a slave owner, and died on this estate at the age of 68 years. He was a Whig, and a member of the Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Norris was married to Elizabeth Hoyt. She lived to 75 years old, and was also a Methodist in religion.

Amos's son, Nicholas, was born on the part of Locust Grove now owned by his son, Nicholas E, in 1804. He was one year old when his father located on this track. He received his education at professor Rockwell's private school at Liberty. He followed farming pursuits. He was elected and served one term as Commissioner of Frederick County. It was while he was serving in that capacity that the county courthouse was built.

At the death of his father, he succeeded to Locust Grove, and here he died in 1866. Politically, he was at first a Whig, and later Democrat. He was a elected commissioner by the Whigs. Religiously he was a

member of the Lenore Methodist Episcopal Church. Mr. Norris was married to Mary and McKinstry.

Henry Norris, son, of Nicolas and Mary Ann, was born on the parental estate, Locust Grove, and was educated at the Fountain public school under John Rapp. He later attended a private school at liberty under Professor Loveland.

He was all his life identified with farming until two years ago, when he retired from active labor. His son is now managing his farm. Mr. Norris purchased his place in 1882, and was very successful in its cultivation. The home was erected in 1803 by his grandfather. It is a two-story and basement building, a brick. The brick was burned on the place. In his political views, Mr. Norris is a staunch Democrat. He is an affiliated with the Methodist Episcopal Church in Linganore in which he is a treasurer. He is a highly esteemed citizen, and is a man of much more worth. He is recognized as one of the most substantial citizens in Johnsville, and commands the respect of all who know him.

David Warner

David M. Warner, farmer and salesman, son of Emmanuel and

Margaret Warner, was born in the Woodsboro District, August 24, 1848.

Emmanuel Warner, father of David Warner, a well-known farmer of the Woodsboro district, spent his life farming. He was Republican, interested in county affairs.

David Warner, was educated the public schools of the district, and remained on the home farm, working with his father until he attained his majority. He learned a milling from Mr. Krauss after milling for a number of years, Mr. Warner abandoned the business, and assume the management of a farm belonging to his father-in-law George Martz. Some years after this, he purchased a farm in the Creagerstown district which you cultivated successfully for nine years. He then sold his farm to his father-in-law and removed to Frederick City, having secured a position with the Dearing Harvesting Company, with whom he has remained until the time of his death.

David Warner was married to Jane E, daughter of the late George D and Mary Martz. Mr. Warner and his wife are members of the St. John's Evangelical, Lutheran Church, in Creagerstown. Mrs. Warner is an active worker in the church. Mr. Warner died at his home in the Woodsboro district, September 23, 1898, and is buried in the cemetery at Woodsboro. After the death of her husband, Mrs. Warner returned to Creagerstown where she now resides.

The ancestors of the family were Germans, who immigrated to America in 1700. Daniel Martz, grandfather, of Jane Warner, was prominent as a farmer and merchant in Woodsboro and Johnsville, where he lived to a good old age.

George D. Martz, son of Daniel and Elizabeth Martz, father of Mrs. Warner, was born June 28, 1825. He received his education in the public schools of the district, and remained on the Homestead, working with his father, until he began farming for himself. Mr. Martz purchase from his father, a fertile farm of 161 acres in the Woodsboro district, which he cultivated so successfully that he was able to buy a second property, situated also in Woodsboro. To this

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Two black and white portrait photographs of women in profile.



HISTORY

place, he removed and spent the remainder of life and improving it. He was a stockholder in the Creagerstown and Woodsboro Turnpike Company, and was highly esteemed by his fellow citizens. George D. Martins was married to Mary Ott. Of four children, only one survived. Mr. Martz was a member of the Lutheran church in Woodsboro. He died August 30, 1906, and rest in the cemetery in Woodsboro . After her father's death, Mrs. Warner came into possession of both farms, which are now rented.

**Thomas William Fogle**  
Thomas, William Fogle, one of the old and highly respected citizens of Woodsboro, was born near New Midway, December 20, 1839. He is the son of William Fogle, and his first wife, Margaret Stein.

Henry Fogle, the great grandfather of Thomas W. Fogle, came to Frederick County from Pennsylvania. He was wealthy and purchased a farm for each of his five children, these tracks were in the Woodsboro district. He could have brought land around Frederick City, but it was full of malaria, and it was not so thickly settled in the neighborhood he chose. He is buried at Rocky Hill. Mr. Fogle was the father of five children.

John Fogle, son of Henry Fogle, was born, lived, and died in the Woodsboro district. He grew up a farm boy. He brought books and studied veterinary surgery. He afterwards engaged in that work, and went by the old-fashioned name of "with doctor". He also studied medicine and conducted sort of an apothecary shop on his

farm. He was the owner of a fine farm in the vicinity of New Midway. He was drafted and served in the second war with Great Britain, 1812 to 1815. Mr. Fogle was married to Kathryn Eyler, daughter of John Eyler.

William Fogle, son of John and Catherine Fogle, was born and reared in the father's farm near Midway, now on by John Bastian, December 31, 1814. He received a limited education, and lived home until he was married. His first work was day, laboring, he began farming, near new Midway, and later, rented farms in the Frederick and Buckeystown district. He died at his farm December 31, 1900. He was an independent voter, and in his religious fuse was a Lutheran. Mr. Fogle was married twice his first wife was Margaret Stein, who died in the Woodsboro district. Mr. Fogle was married secondly, to a Miss Stiley of Ohio, by whom he had one child.

Thomas William Fogle, son of William and Margaret Stein Fogle, attended the old-fashioned subscription, and later public schools until he was 15 years old. He was reared in the usual manner of a farmer's son, and early began work. At the age of 22 he began to burn line. He had previously learned this occupation with a man in York, serving 18 months. He followed this vocation in Frederick County for 10 years. After then purchased his present farm of 100 acres and this track he cultivated until his retirement about 1899. He has since then rented the farm to his son. He erected all new buildings on the place after securing possession of it, and an

1869, the year he located there, he built his home. In 1879 he put up the barn and a grain shed was constructed in 1885. Mr. Fogle was a man of high character and his highly thought of in the community and he makes us home.

In politics, Mr. Fogle lent his influence and support to the Democratic Party. He was a member of the Solomon's Evangelical Lutheran Church of Woodsboro, and was formally an elder.

Mr. Fogle was married January 2, 1867 to Linda Fox of Woodsboro. She was born in the Johnsville district, May 13, 1835. She is a Lutheran and religion. Mr. and Mrs. Fogle, have been born one son, Albert Eugene, who was born August 22, 1868.

Balser Fox, Mrs. Fogle's father, was born in the Johnsville District. He was a farmer, and died in his native district at the age of 87. His wife, Linda Ann Stitely, lived to be 80 years old. They were Lutheran and had three children.

**James G. Stevens**  
James Stevens, manufacturer, and dealer in hardwood and lumber, son of Charles and Eliza Stevens, was born in Creagerstown, December 21, 1868.

Stevens, attended the public schools of Creagerstown, and completed his education by a business course in Eaton and Burnett Business College in Baltimore. Having finished his course, he spent a short time at home, and soon secured a position with the Pennsylvania Steel Company in Steel Town, Pennsylvania. After serving the company for three years, he resigned his position to accept another with the Lerrilard Tobacco Company, of Jersey City, with whom remain for two years, when he was called to the homestead by a serious illness of his father. Mr. Stevens, now assume charge of the home farm, which he cultivated successfully for one year. He then began a business for himself as a dealer in lumber. In this he succeeded admirably.

He now owns and manages a sawmill situated at the foot of the mountain, from which he ships thousands of feet of lumber to

all parts of the state. The lumber used in the building of many fine residences and Barnes in Frederick county was manufactured in his plant. Mr. Stevens owns 100 acres of excellent timber land on the mountain, and a beautiful residence in Creagerstown.

All the lumber required for the house, barn, and outbuildings was the product of his own mill. He has been a hard worker, diligent and faithful in business, and to those qualities attributes his financial success. He was appointed justice of the peace in Creagerstown, by Governor Warfield, and discharge the duties of the office faithfully, giving entire satisfaction to the community. Mr. Stephen is highly esteemed in the district. He is a member of the Arcadia Lodge of Thurmont, and of the improved Order of Old Fellows. He is a stockholder in the Creagerstown and Woodsboro Turnpike Company, and in the Woodsboro Canning Company. James Stevens was married Nanni Stamp, of Creagerstown.

**George Sager**  
George Sager is one of those residents of Johnsville District, who have received large returns for their labors. Mr. Sager's efforts have been spent in agriculture. He lives on the spring run farm of 105 acres, which he bought from James Clemson. The property lies on the road from Hopewell to McKinsty's Mills. He was born on a farm near Good Intent, October 17, 1868. He is a son of Matthias

and Catherine Sager. The Sager family is of ancient German lineage. Matthias Sager came from Germany to New York when he was 14 years old. With him came a brother and a sister, the ladder going west. He came to Frederick County where he hired himself out to farmers. He later work by the month in the Woodsboro district, and then secured a small track of 25 acres, near New Midway. He passed the rest of his life and was buried at Rocky Hill Cemetery. He held membership in the Rocky Hill Lutheran Church and was a devout man. He lent his influence to the advancement of the Republican Party. Mr. Sager was married to Catherine Fogle. She is still living.

George Sager, son of Matthias and Catherine Sager, security schooling at Pleasant Hill. He left school at 18 years of age and worked out by the month. He began life by himself by cultivating the law and farm in Johnsville district, where he lived for 11 years. In the spring of 1903, he secure possession of his present, to which he removed. Mr. Sager is a man of high character. As a farmer, he has been very successful. He is one of the leading men of his community, and possesses the esteem of all who have the pleasure of knowing him. He is progressive and a man of intelligence.

Mr. Sager was married January 23, 1891, to marry Elizabeth Myers. Mr. and Mrs. Sager are affiliated with a new side dunker church.

continued next month

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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

## April 3

### Get Immunized

If you have not been immunized within the last two years against typhoid fever, Dr. John Fulton, Director of the State Department of Health, urges you to go to your physician and have it done. The vaccine will be furnished free of charge by the State Department of Health and your physician get his supply either directly from the office of the Department in Baltimore, or from the local health officer. If it is not convenient for you to go to your own physician, the local or the deputy health officer will vaccinate you against the disease.

One of the most reliable gauges of the up-to-dateness of any community, according to Dr. Fulton, is its record in regard to typhoid fever. "A decline in typhoid fever," he says, "Indicates state and community activity, on the one side—protection of water supplies from pollution; protection of food supplies from contamination; care in detecting the presence of 'carriers'—supplemented by personal intelligence on the other side.

"The State Department of Health safeguards every community in the State with all the means at its command, but there are unavoidable weak spots in every sort of defense. To off-set these and to afford the security that nothing but individual immunization can give, the Department urges all persons who have not been vaccinated against typhoid within the last two years to be vaccinated before June, before the 1925 'typhoid' season opens.

"Typhoid is what we call a seasonal disease. It reaches a low ebb during the winter; starts up again in the spring and reaches its peak in August or September. Vaccination against typhoid requires three treatments, one each week for three weeks. Each week it will take about five minutes of your time.

The only cost to you will be your physician's fee. The anti-typhoid treatment is a sure preventive if taken in time.

"In 1914, there were 1,860 cases of typhoid fever reported to the Bureau of Communicable Diseases from the counties. In 1924, the number reported was 823—or over a thousand less. But that was 823 cases too many!

"We want to cut down typhoid fever until it disappears entirely as a cause of sickness and death in Maryland. It can be done. Help to make it negligible this year."

### Flittin'

Movings are on the go in Uniontown. Harry Wilson moved to the Little house, formerly owned by U. G. Heltibridle; Hugh Heltibridle moved in his lately repaired property; Ray Haines taken the house vacated by Heltibridle; Herbert Ecker, moved where Haines lived; John Heltibridle takes George Staub's property, east of town; Russel Fleagle will farm his father-in-law, Will Bower's farm; Emory Baust moves to his lately purchased home the Edwin Koontz farm; Laverne Baust goes to Harry Fleagle's, near Mayberry; Lester Baust will farm the Shriver place, at Trevanion; Lawrence Smith takes W. P. Englar's farm vacated by Mr. Baust; Clarence Wolf moved to tenant house, on J. E. Formwalt's farm.

The following movings have taken place in Keysville: Carl Haines, from Frederick County to the Cluts farm; John Frock, from the Cluts farm, to his recently purchased property, formerly the Smouse property; Edward Shorb to Taneytown; Clarence Derr, to the farm occupied by Mr. Shorb; Walter Stonesifer, to the Weybright farm; Harry Clabaugh, from the Weybright farm, to the Dutrow farm; Frank Deberry, from the Dutrow farm to Thurmont.

### Child Injured By Automobile

Catherine Bowers, seven year-old daughter of Allen Bowers, of New Midway, sustained a fracture of the left leg on Friday morning, when she was struck, and knocked down by an automobile driven by John Redeenour of Woodsboro. She was brought to the Frederick Hospital where the fracture was reduced, and bruises dressed.

The girl is said to have crossed the road in front of a herd of cattle, which her uncle was driving and ran in front of the car, a Ford coupe. Redeenour was unable to stop the machine in time to prevent the front bumper from striking her. One front wheel passed over her leg.

Redeenour brought his car to a halt and assisted in getting the child to her home nearby. Dr. Diller, of Detour was summoned and had Bowers removed to the hospital. She was later taken home where she was reported to be suffering from her injuries. Dr. Diller stated that he was not sure whether internal injuries were sustained or not.

### Oscar Joy Held For New Larceny

Oscar Joy, about 21, up near Liberty, was arrested on Tuesday evening by Sheriff Allbaugh and charged with taking a lap rope, saddle, and pump from Ralph Schauffer of near Walkersville. Four hay rakes were also found on a wagon belong to Joy, but it could not be ascertain whether they were stolen or not. Joy is now confined in the Frederick County jail awaiting a hearing before the circuit court. Joy was arrested, following a complaint to the authorities.

Joy has been at Liberty on a suspended sentence imposed by the circuit court in 1919, after he was convicted of a charge of larceny. As he is now under a suspended sentence, it is considered probable that he will be similarly dealt with in accordance with the provisions of the suspension.

## April 10

### Second Rocky Ridge Meeting Held

The second meeting to be held at Rocky Ridge for the purpose of protesting against the closing of the Appold's school, discussion of rumors that the Rocky Ridge school will be closed, and as an urge to the road authorities for the completion of the Rocky Ridge Road this summer, took place on April 6 in the town hall and was attended by more than 300 persons.

During the evening, each of the County Commissioners spoke briefly on the road question, and were unanimous in their support that it should be finished. It was learned that the commissioners had already recommended the road be completed, but that the Chairman of the State Road Commission had declare that a new road could not be built this summer due to the shortage of funds.

in regards to the school discussion, Paul Winchester and Reverend Hemler spoke on behalf of the community and said that people of

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IONA TOMATOES Solid Pack No. 2	can	12c
RED CIRCLE	COFFEE	lb 45c
A&P Evap. Milk		Tall Can 11c
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Golden Bantam Corn		can 22c

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that vicinity were much displeased with the County Superintendent and School Board for ordering the schools closed, and demanded not only they reopen the Appold's school, but the erection of a new one at Rocky ridge. The County Commissioners promised support and cooperation in the Appold's case but stated that the school budget this year is \$323,000 not including the bond issue for building new schools, while 23 years ago it was only \$42,000.

### Walkersville Union Church Services Brought To An End

The Union services which have been held during Lent by the churches of Walkersville closed on Thursday night with a service in the Methodist Church. Reverend Shettle of the United Brethren Church preached to forceful sermon in which he noted that in the Walkersville District, there were 400 people who were not members of a church. "Why are they not in a church? Too many members of our community are following other things then Christ," he said. "We need more effort on the part of church members to draw their neighbors in. The churches of our town are ready to lay themselves on the altar of Christ, and have a passion for the souls of men, so we cannot allow those

400 souls to not be brought into a church. The lack of their attendance at a church will be the undoing of our community."

### C&P Telephone Rate

Below will be found the new rates of the C. & P. Telephone Company which are as follows: Business-one party line \$4.75; two party, \$4; rural, \$3.25; Service. \$1.08 1-3. Residence, class 3-one party line, \$3.50; two party, \$2.75; 4 party \$2.25; rural, \$2.25; Service, 75 cents, this applies to Westminster and vicinity. Class five-Business-one party line \$3.75; 4 party, \$2.75; rural, \$2.50. Service 83 1-3 cents. Residence-one party line, \$2.75; 4party, \$2.00; rural, \$1.75; rates per month. Business-one party line, \$4.25; 2 party, \$3.50; rural, \$3. Residence-one party line, \$3; 4 party, \$2; rural, \$2. Service, 66 2-3 cents.

### New 1 1/2 Cent Stamps

A new 1 1/2 cent postage stamp has been issued to Maryland and other post offices. It will take the place, on and after April 15 of the 1cent stamp, for which there will be little use, except for "drop" letters in non-free-delivery post offices. The 1 1/2 cent stamp will be required for circulars and matter of that class, and third-class matter weighing 2

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# 100 YEARS AGO THIS MONTH

ounces or less. The stamp is brown, and contains the portrait of the late President Harding.

### Peach Crop Badly Hurt

Dr. Auchter, head of the Horticultural Department of the University of Maryland, has made a thorough examination of the peach buds in Frederick County, and finds that from 50 to 100 percent have been killed by the cold weather. The worst injury was on the four-year old trees. In some other counties where the killing has not been so great, there is a decreased number of buds.

### Con Artist

A young man who said he was from New Market, canvassed Keymar last week, and said he had a broken leg and was just out of the Frederick Hospital and needed help, but he appeared able to walk about as good as anybody; and later it was noticed he had a fine looking car parked near the crossroads north of this place, got in the car and drove toward Detour.

## April 17

### Heavy Liquor Law Sentence

Harry Stem, of Union Bridge, was tried on Wednesday before Justice Hutchins on the third charge of “bootlegging” in violation of the liquor laws, and was fined \$700 and sentenced to the House of Correction for nine months.

The case grew out of alleged sales to William Smith, in February, when Smith is alleged to have bought liquor from Stem and became so badly intoxicated that he lay out on the snow for hours badly freezing his feet, and for a long while it was feared that amputation would be necessary.

Stem appealed the decision and gave bond for \$2,500, for his appearance at the May term of court.

### A Big Mountain Fire

Between 1,500 and 2,000 acres of timberland, for a large part young hickory and oak, were burned over on Sunday and Monday by fires which started in a dozen different places on a five-mile section, along the crest of the Catoctin Mountains, near the new storage dam at Fishing creek.

The big fire in the High Knob section was reported to be extinguished late Monday night, after it had re-kindled during the day. This section is being patrolled to prevent another out break. The fire was of incendiary origin, it is claimed by forest wardens. Fire raged fiercely Sunday in Oxen Hollow, a section of the Catoctin Mountain about three miles north west of the storage dam on Fishing Creek.

This fire was probably the larger of the two and was the hardest to bring under control. This section of the mountain is covered with dense and very dry underbrush, and fanned by a very strong south wind, it spread rapidly in every direction. The fire is believed to have been caused by carelessness.

More than 30 persons were in this section of the mountains Sunday and Monday picking arbutus, which grows there. As many of them were picnicking and had built fires, it is believed that they started the fire.

### New Type Water Wheel

A demonstration of a new type of water-wheel, known as the “White” water wheel, on Beaver Dam, occurred on the farm of Marshall Wachter. This new type of wheel is constructed on an entirely different principle from other water-wheels which must depend on a certain amount of pressure or head, whereas the White product, it is claimed, depends on the current and volume of water with or without pressure and it is said can be used in ocean tides.

On the Wachter farm two wheels, 9 inches high and 22 inches in diameter are placed nearly together, both using the same current, the series of vanes or blades being movable and in operation are open on one side while they fold on the opposite side. The water passing one side engages the vanes of the second wheel and revolves it in the opposite direction from the first wheel while the water which has expended its force in the operation of the first wheel passes along the side of the other wheel where the vanes are closed. The wheels are geared together and produce about 3 horse power or 2,000 watts of electrical energy which will be used later to light Mr. Wachter’s buildings. A large number of persons witnessed the demonstration.

### Cop Not Ticketed

A state cop pulled a man over on the state road, on Monday, for “speeding” and while presenting the case before Judge Davidson, left his speed catcher wagon stand at the corner of Baltimore and Middle St. in violation of the town’s “no parking” ordinance. It should have been “tagged” to appear before the Burgess and pay a fine, but the machinery of the law didn’t work in that case.

## April 24

### Big Storm

The storm on Sunday afternoon that was felt in northern Frederick & Carroll Counties where great damage was done by wind and hail.

Rising swiftly over the crest of the Catoctin mountains, the black laden storm clouds, extinguished the light of the sun, and made mid-afternoon as dark as the coming of the night. With the swiftness of a striking snake, the storm unleashed its fury, driving all forms of human, animal, and bird life to cover.

Sharp brilliant flashes of lightning, intermingled with the steady rumble and crash of thunder accompany the torrential downpour of rain and hail, which fell for more than 3/4 of an hour.

Trees were uprooted in several parts and many were splintered

and shattered by bolts of lightning. Houses were unroofed, hundreds of trees blown down, and many automobiles were wrecked. The loss was divided between, wind, hail and rain, but mostly wind. Many buildings were wrecked, and much damage was done to telephone, telegraph and light wires. Some of the buildings were unroofed, while others were moved from their foundations and some completely wrecked. Great damage was also done to orchards and trees.

At E. S. Shriver’s tenant farm the silo was blown against the barn, and a small chicken house completely demolished, with a loss of nearly 100 baby chicks. Four cows, grouped around a tree on the farm of Arthur Von were instantly killed when the tree was struck by lightning.

Losses running in 1,000s of dollars are believed to have been suffered by county peach growers by the freezing temperatures that followed the storm. According to the thermometer the lowest point was 26°, although it was reported elsewhere that the thermometer had gone as low as 24°.

Peach trees on which the blossoms were in the pollination stage were the most seriously affected by the low temperature, the buds be more tender at that at that period in their germination, then afterwards.

So far as could be learned from the leading orchardist, apple trees were not affected by the frost, since trees, and only a few orchards were beginning to show pink

In the Oscar Rice’s Peach Orchard severe damage was done to early peach tree buds and blossoms, and towards noon, Mr. Rice reported that most of the petals had turned brown, assure indication that they had been damaged by the freezing temperatures.

### Girl Killed By Auto Truck

Catherine Watson, 11 years old, daughter of Mr. and Mrs. David Watson, about two miles from New Midway, was run down and killed by a truck on Wednesday evening. With her younger sister, Mamie, and two other children, she was returning home from school. They had been riding on the end gate of a wagon, and when near the Herr farm, jumped off and ran across the road without seeing the truck. Three of the children got across the road safely, but Catherine was struck and killed. The driver of the truck was Wilbur Gladhill, of Union Bridge, who had just delivered a load of farm produce, and was on his way home. Postmaster Kimmey, who was at work on his farm nearby, saw the accident and took the girl to the office of Dr. Fitzhugh, who pronounced her dead.

### Union Bridge Woman In Accident

Mrs. William Mackley and daughter, of Union Bridge, were more or less injured about 7:30 Saturday evening when their Ford car

standing in front the residence of Irvin Sterner, York St., whom they were visiting, was side-swiped by another Ford car said to have been driven by a man by the name of Flickinger, of Hanover.

Mrs. Mackley was rendered hysterical and the child suffered bruises and slight cuts about the head, but neither were thought to be seriously injured. The family were about to leave for their home at the time but remained over after the accident until Sunday afternoon. The car which struck the other was coming in York Street, and it is said the driver claims to have been blinded by the light of an approaching auto which caused the crash. The left rear fender and running board on the struck car were torn off and crumpled up and the front axle on the other bent.

### Stolen Car Returned

Keymar Postmaster Kenneth Smith had his Ford coupe taken from his garage last Sunday evening, or early Monday morning, and on Monday evening the car was brought back to the A. W. Feeser canning factory. A young man was around here in the evening. Constable Eyler was notified and he came to Keymar and got the young man and took him to the Westminster jail. He gave his name as Thomas Smith.

### County Farm To Be Devoted To Silkworm Agriculture

The Oyster Farm, in Glade Valley, where some years ago more than \$1 million worth of Percheron horses of international fame, were collected by the Lake George Oyster from all parts of the world, will this spring be the scene of an experiment in the agriculture of silkworms, which is successful, may revolutionized the silk industry in this country.

The experiment will be conducted by Dr. William Payne who sometime ago purchased the Walkersville farm from the Oyster estate for more than \$100,000. He believes the farm, climate condi-

tions, soil, and location to be perfectly adapted to successful culture of silkworms and sees in it, the possibility of developing a great industry in Frederick County.

Members of Payne’s family in Germany and France have for years successfully operated silkworm farms, and he felt that the industry could be conducted profitably in this country.

“In Frederick County”, said Payne, “I find an environment, particularly suited for the culture of the silkworm. The climate and soil he says is just right for mulberry trees and he believes an acre of ground can make a clear profit of \$1,000.”

Silkworm eggs have been ordered by Payne, and will be ready for the experiment about May 1. The entire process involves many elements: the spinning of silk, evolution of the worm into a butterfly, laying of eggs, and the death of the butterfly, is completed in six weeks. The worm, after hatching, passes through many stages, during which it eats omnivorously of mulberry leaves before finally spinning about itself a cake of pure silk. One started the process is self-sustaining, that is, each farmer can produce a sufficient number of eggs from the next season’s crop.

A brother of Payne operates a silk plant in Patterson, New Jersey, and will purchase the local product. For the time being, Payne has rented sufficient number of Mulberry trees in the neighborhood of his farm to supply his experiment with food. He is planning a large acreage of mulberry trees, which will be suitable for food for silkworms in about three years.

The 147-acre farm is one of the most fertile of the justly famous Glade Valley. It sits on the northeastern edge of Walkersville, and fronts the Walkersville-Woodsboro Highway for a distance of nearly a mile.

*To read other articles related to 100 Years Ago this Month, visit the History section of Walkersville.net.*



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LIBRARY NEWS

The sun is shining, the birds are singing and spring is in full bloom! Get a strong start on gardening this year by attending a program at the Walkersville Library or check out books on gardening, home improvement or anything your literary heart desires. If the rain threatens your outdoor plans, bring the whole family to the library and explore the kids' room, stay for storytime or an interactive program, or relax in a comfy chair while watching the storm pass from Glassy Point.

Please note that all Frederick County Public Libraries will be closed on Sunday, April 20th.

Kick off your Spring Break with the thrilling Amazing Race: Maryland Edition at the Walkersville Library! Challenge yourself with engaging station-based activities such as crab catching, a corn kernel treasure hunt, and much more, all while discovering fascinating facts about our state. To make the day even more enjoyable, groove to popular tunes spun by DJ Pedro from Epic Events and grab a bite to eat from two food trucks! This event promises a day filled with competition and enjoyable family activities that you will not want to miss! Sunday, April 13 from 1 to 3.

It's time to prepare the garden, and that includes all the waste that can be turned into compost! It may seem daunting, but the Frederick County Department of Energy and Environment will teach you tips and tricks to ease the process. Learn how to make compost that works for you and your garden needs on Sunday, April 6 at 1.

Join us on April 27 at 1 for an exciting and energetic salsa dancing program at the library as Mónica Giaimo from Revolution Modern Dance teaches us about this vibrant dance style! Be sure to wear comfortable clothing and shoes that allow for easy movement.

Wind down after a hard day's work with a 1-hour, free yoga class offered by Sol Yoga. It will be held on Monday, April 14 and 28 at 6. If you're looking for an exercise class that will invigorate and get your heart racing, try out Freedom BANG Fitness class every Saturday at 10am.

The Walkersville Branch Library has programs designed for adults with developmental disabilities and their caregivers. The Go Team Therapy Dogs will visit the library for an hour on April 9, starting at 10:15. These well-behaved dogs are ready for cuddles, listening to a story or just sitting quietly by

your side. On Wednesday, April 23 at 10:15, Michael Davies from Maryland Department of Transportation (MDOT) will discuss pedestrian safety and road rules to keep everyone safe!

Drop by for a warm drink and chat with friends or stay for the programs and learn something new during Senior Cafe at 10am! On April 10, Farm to School will discuss nutrition tips for a healthy immune system, and Chair One Fitness will lead fun exercises that can be done from a chair! Both programs are open to any aged adult, no ID inspections here!

Elementary Explorers have a chance to be detectives of the past during the next Explorer Badge session. Become an archaeologist for the evening of April 15 from 6 to 6:45. Learn about LiDAR, create a family time capsule, ask an archaeologist all your burning questions, and of course, earn your next badge!

If you have a kid ages 8-13, they're probably looking for something to do after school. The Walkersville Branch Library has programs just for this age group! Minecraft Monday at 6 on April 7 is a great opportunity for your tween to explore the world of Minecraft and connect with new friends. Create an edible masterpiece using candies, icing and other sweets on April 9 at 4. Let your kids experience the satisfy-

ing craft of your childhood with Shrink Art on April 21 at 6 and come back on April 23 at 4 for them to design their own stickers!

Teen Tuesdays at 3:30 are the perfect time to decompress after school, get crafty, and have fun with friends! April is Earth Month, so bring your creative brain to the library for all sorts of ecofriendly fun. Turn soda bottles into bird houses on April 8, make mini looms and weave something new on April 15, and make a recycled planter on April 22 to celebrate Earth Day. If you're more thrill than chill on your Tuesday afternoon, stop by on April 1 for some exploding art!

Our Take a Closer Look program for Elementary through High School students is designed as a deep dive into specific topics. Embark Skate Shop will be here on April 4 at 1 to show you cool moves and everything you need to know about skateboarding. April 18 is National Exercise Day! Get your body moving by learning about basic martial arts from Jeff Chavez from Frederick Martial Arts. This program at 1 emphasizes improving coordination, strength, and flexibility while engaging children and teens in active, healthy exercises.

Practice reading aloud to a group of fluffy, attentive listeners on Thursday, April 10 from 6:30 to 7:30. The Go Team Therapy Dogs

will be more than happy to sit with you and your child to enjoy a story and get some extra snuggles.

If the rain foils your playground plans, come out to Fri-Yay every Friday at 11 to explore hands-on activities with your little one! Dance the rain away on April 4, get hands-on and make sculptures on April 11, celebrate Earth on April 18, and get down on the farm on April 25.

The Walkersville Branch Library schedule for storytimes is as follows:

Monday: Infants 10am; Baby Steps Skill Building at 10:30; Babies at 11

Tuesday: Toddlers at 11

Wednesday: Family at 6

Thursday: Preschool at 11

Bilingual Storytime at the Walkersville Branch Library will be on Wednesday, April 2 and 16 at 6. Storytime will be presented primarily in English, while introducing basic words and concepts in Spanish, French, ASL and other world languages!

For Preschool Storytime on April 17, we'll have a City Nature Challenge storytime! We'll read books about nature, sing songs, and learn more about plants and animals found in our community. Following storytime, participate in a mini "bioblitz" as we use iNaturalist app to find and identify as many species as possible in our surroundings.

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SCHOOL NEWS

Frederick County School Board

Karen Yoho  
School Board

March 31 ushered in the beginning of the 4th term for the 2024-25 school year. This is the time of year that the Board of Education urges each student to hang in there and give it their best effort. Graduations are right around the corner in May. Board members look forward to participating in graduation ceremonies, where students and their families happily celebrate the culmination of their public school years.

The Board's only regular meeting for the month will be on April 23. This is a change from what is printed in the Calendar-Handbook.

When we think of the Blueprint for Maryland's Future, we may not at first realize that the Arts are included. At the State Board of Education meeting on March 25, we were reminded that a "well-rounded education" stated in the Blueprint, very much includes the Arts. Here in FCPS, there are a variety of opportunities to see our very talented students. The All County High School

Dance Festival is on April 29. The Elementary Honors Chorus will perform at the Weinberg Center for the Arts on April 30 with a guest conductor. And you still have a chance to catch a few high school musicals in April. Walkersville HS will perform "Joseph and the Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat" on April 3, 4, and 5. The same dates will find "Little Shop of Horrors" at Urbana HS. Linganore HS students will star in "The SpongeBob Musical" on April 3-6. Frederick HS is performing "9 to 5" April 30, May 2 and 3. And finally, Oakdale HS and Tuscarora HS will be performing "Footloose" and "Once Upon a Mattress", respectively, on May 1-3. You can find more information on the individual school websites.

You'll want to be sure to appreciate your Administrative Professionals on April 23. We all know how much harder it would be to function without these key individuals. The Maryland Legislature will conclude its session on Monday, April 7. Since Die, loosely translates to mean day without end because all business must be con-

cluded on the final day. Every year, school boards and school system personnel wait anxiously to interpret and implement the effects of legislation that is signed into law by the governor. Add to that what is occurring at the federal level with changes to education funding, these are not always easy times for local education agencies. Through it all, we continue to strive to do our best for our students and staff.

There is no Policy Committee meeting in April. At the May 21st meeting, the committee will begin the review of Policy 443, "Creating Welcoming and Affirming Schools for Transgender and Gender Nonconforming Students" and Policy 444, "Educational Equity and Excellence". These policies are available in full on the FCPS website under the Board of Education tab. While the Board has heard many people speak on Policy 443 during the public comment portion of our meetings, we look forward to hearing from more members of the community at both our regular meetings as well as the May Policy meeting.

At our March 12 meeting, the Board updated the parameters for public comment during committee meetings. Speakers will be given up to two minutes each, with a total of forty minutes for public comment. Registration will occur at the time of the meeting. Should the speaker's comments run longer than the allotted time or if an individual is unable to attend in person, comments may be submitted in writing to the committee and/or directly to the Board.

We wish wonderful Passover and Easter holidays to those who celebrate. Spring Break is April 14 through the 21st. A safe and restful break to all.

Trade/Technical scholarship offered!

The Peg and Orley Bourland Educational Assistance Fund is awarded year-round through Glade Valley Community Services and The Community Foundation of Frederick. This "scholarship" is to provide need-based funds for educational purposes in trade or technical fields (such as nursing, HVAC, CDL training, cosmetology, driver's education, GED, &c.) to help defray the costs associated with tuition, fees, testing, tutoring, trade tools, supplies, etc. Applicants' eligibility requirements are:

- Must be a resident of Walkersville feeder school pattern area.
- Must describe financial need, career goals and specify how the funds will be used.

The award is given to applicants who are pursuing technical

and skilled trade fields (not 4 year degrees), including previous recipients. The award(s) can be up to approximately \$1,200, based on applicant's needs. Applications are due a minimum of 60 days prior to when funds are needed. Applications are available at: Glade Valley Food Bank, Walkersville High School, Career and Technology Center (CTC), Walkersville Public Library, Walkersville Town Hall, Woodsboro Town Hall, FCC and The Community Foundation of Frederick. They are also available online at Naviance (WHS) and for printing online at [www.Glade-Valley.org](http://www.Glade-Valley.org). The application can be emailed back to [gladevalley.org@gmail.com](mailto:gladevalley.org@gmail.com). For more information, call the GVCS Office at 301-845-0213.

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(Take 194 N. or S., turn onto Rt. 550 at Woodsboro to Creagerstown.)

**Easter Egg Hunt**  
**Woodsboro Regional Park**  
Presented by  
**Woodsboro Volunteer Fire Company**  
**& The Town of Woodsboro**  
**Saturday, April 12th at 2**  
**Pictures with the Easter Bunny!**  
**Over 2,000 eggs! 9 Grand Prizes!**  
**Kids Easter Bingo**  
Sun., April 6th - Doors open 11:30 - Games at 1  
Woodsboro Fire Hall

**Woodsboro Evangelical Lutheran Church**  
**CASH BINGO**  
**Saturday, April 5**  
Doors open at Noon ~ Games begin at 1:30  
**Woodsboro American Legion**  
Gravel Hill Rd., Woodsboro (Behind Trout's Market)  
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2 \$100 specials and 1 \$500 jackpot  
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# FOUR YEARS AT THE MOUNT

*This month, we asked our writers to create a children's story that highlights a theme deeply significant to them in honor of International Children's Book Day on April 2nd. Keep reading to see what creative stories they've come up with!*

## Freshman

Klyde and the orb

Cameron Madden  
MSMU Class of 2028

Some time ago, there lived a kid in the woods. This child's name was Klyde, and Klyde's birthday was coming up. Klyde's parents loved him very much, and were planning to give him the best present possible, and since they were wizards, they could make it the most magical gift ever. So, when his birthday came, they gave him a box nearly twice his size! Inside, Klyde found himself a tall and darkened piece of wood, with rubies stuck to the top of it.

"What is this?" Klyde had asked, holding the large object next to him. "It is your birthday present, a magical staff for you to practice your magic on!" Klyde became excited, as he had not been able to learn magic at his young age, and now he was finally able to start training to become a wizard! Just then, the parents pulled out a smaller box and handed it to Klyde - it was a surprise gift! When he had opened it, a strange blue ball arose from the top and hovered in the air above. Klyde was scared at first, and

tried to back away, but the orb followed him wherever he went! Once he realized the orb was harmless, he asked his parents what this was for.

"It is an extra gift, passed down by your grandfather! It is an orb of wishes, which everyday can grant up to one wish for an entire week; be careful though, you cannot reverse the wishes you make!" Klyde's eyes widened more than when he had received his last gift, and immediately he took off to the front yard to test out this new present.

"I wish for a treehouse!" he asked, and before long without a wrong ladder dropped from the branches above, into a small house on top of the trees. He climbed up and played all around the house, until he grew bored and dropped down. He wondered what better he could wish for, and dreamed the rest of the day about how the orb was a better gift.

Not too long after the next day arose, and immediately Klyde awoke and set out for the fields. In between reeds and grains, he and the orb went away. Somewhere nearby he and the orb lay, where he thought and thought between his wishes to say. "Alright," said Klyde, "I wish for the field to be growing candy, not grain!" and so it became. Soon the field's rows

turned to chocolate, with peppermint sticks and pods of sugar being sowed to the ground. He ran now through the fields, picking as he went; until the farmer came out and found Klyde in his field. "Hey!" said the farmer, whose food was now gone. "How dare you remove all the work I had done!" And so, he chased Klyde all the way out, past the field then forests and all in between. Klyde did not mind, and went back all the way home, dreaming of what more he could do with his magic orb.

The next day came, and Klyde sought to do more; as he went out of the house and into the town. Here he found townspeople, all dressed up in gowns. Once he entered, he realized he had not brought his money. He suddenly jumped and turned to the orb and said, "I wish that everything in this town was free to me!" Once said, the shopkeepers looked up; they saw little Klyde and wondered what was up. Klyde came to the shoemaker and asked him for new shoes, and without a hitch, the Shoemaker gave him the best pair he knew. And then he went to the barber and asked for a haircut, and suddenly the barber walked up and cut his hair for nothing. The next thing he did was he went to the toy

shop, and soon he walked out with his cart filled to the top. As he was leaving the townspeople came out; they said, "Hey, how dare you do this all without pay!" Like before, Klyde ran out.

For the next couple of days Klyde used the orb; using it to do whatever he wanted for the day, and not caring about the consequences. He didn't practice with his wand, and did not become any closer to being a wizard; he simply played with the orb, and grew more bitter and bitter. For after the 6th wish, he knew not what he wanted. And so on the 7th day, he went around the area to see what he could do. He stopped at the field where he found the farmer, now hungry and tired, without crops to water. And he went to the town and saw stores closing; they had nothing to sell and now were not well. Everywhere he went, there were people that were hurt, by the wishes and actions that he and the orb caused. He fell, and distraught; without knowing what to do. Now nobody liked him, and there wasn't anything he could do.

That was until he came back home, where he had left his other present - the staff in his room! If he could learn to become a wizard, then he could fix all of the problems. The

only problem was he did not learn - he spent his time wishing, instead of earning. He thought it doomed, and knew people would suffer and hate him; until he realized he had one wish left to make.

"Orb!" He exclaimed, "I wish to know how to be a wizard, and use magic with my staff!" Without hesitation, all manner of color and sound now glowed from his staff, and when he had touched it, it sparked greatly and flew to his hand. He now was a wizard, and could fix his mistakes at last! He went to the farmer and tapped the candy fields with his staff. It was raised and replaced into crops; vegetables, fruits, and honey on top! The farmer was glad and thanked Klyde for forgiving him for the wish. Next, he went to the townspeople, and to every store he went to, paying the people double what he owed them. And all over the country, Klyde used his magic to help others; even those he did not use the orb against. He learned that it is ok to wish, but to learn and be kind is the real gift he could have ever wished!

*To read other articles by Cameron Madden, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

## Sophomore

The perfect balance

Gracie Smith  
MSMU Class of 2027

It had been raining for nine days straight. At this point, the once-dry grass began to weep from the overconsumption of fresh, constant rainfall. I never thought you could get tired of something you needed to survive. For nine days I had watched the grass slowly resurrect from the crisp rain, only to die again from nature's stimulating generosity. It baffled me how easily something could die. If you don't get enough of something, you start to die. However, if you get too much of something, you also start to die. How solely dependent we were on balance.

My gaze out the window broke when my teacher, Mrs. Haney, dismissed us for lunch. The other students and I made our way to the cafeteria to eat, and I took my usual seat at the end of one of the long tables. I opened my lunch to reveal

what my mother had packed for me. There was a tuna sandwich on wheat bread, baby carrots, blueberries, and two packs of string cheese. My eyes lingered on the tuna sandwich. Right, Friday.

During Lent, it was expected that we avoid eating meat on Fridays, and we fast on Ash Wednesday and Good Friday. Going to a public school made these obligations difficult to explain. I, being somewhat shy and modest, never wanted to put myself in a position to explain my Catholic practices or obligations. It was most unfortunate that a group of kids on the other half of the table took notice of this and decided to comment.

"What is that?" sneered a girl, with brownish hair and a pale complexion. She looked at my food in disgust. Her eyes were particularly fixed on my sandwich, the tuna sandwich.

I thought a moment before commenting, trying to figure out the best way to answer without further questions. However, the only thing I could muster up was, "Oh, it's a tuna sandwich."

Stupid. Of course they know it's tuna.

The girl with brown hair laughed an obnoxious sort of laugh that drew attention to the situation. Before I knew it, it felt like half of the cafeteria was looking at me and my tuna sandwich. Not only was my appetite lost, but I was numb. For the first time ever, I couldn't move. I just sat there holding my sandwich while the girl with brown hair laughed at my food.

After a seemingly long while, she finally stopped laughing, "Tuna? Who eats tuna?"

Her friends laughed in support of her ignorant comment. I gazed across the room, face red, and noticed now that everyone in the cafeteria was looking at me.

Again, I found myself considering my options, though, rather blindly. Looking down at the rest of the food my mother packed, I found myself angry at her. How could she do this to me? Why would she pack me tuna? Of all things!

Before I spoke, I quickly composed myself and dismissed my previous way of thinking. It wasn't my mother's fault, and I knew that.

I opened my mouth to speak, but the words came out weakly. "My mom made it for me, today's-" I stopped myself quickly before I continued. I can't tell them why, no, they wouldn't understand.

The girl with the brown hair met my gaze, her eyes clawing into me. I was at a loss for words. That is until one of the hall monitors approached the table. "What's going on here?"

First, the lady looked at me, then she shifted her stare to the other kids on the opposite side of the table. The blatant snickering from that half the table silenced almost immediately. The girl with brown hair grabbed a strand of her hair to twirl, "nothing."

I couldn't believe that was all she said. I further couldn't believe that the hall monitor accepted her words - no - her word and went on.

I looked back at my food, refusing to touch it.

On the bus ride back home, I brainstormed ways to explain to my mom why I hadn't eaten the food she prepared for me. Deep down, I knew she'd be disappointed in me, but I didn't know what for. Would she be upset I didn't eat, or didn't stand up for myself?

I swallowed as I found myself robotically walking into my house. As the door opened, I could hear my mom yell from across the house, "Hey honey, how was your day?"

Her voice echoed across the room, and her footsteps followed. My heart only began to pound more as I let out a "It was fine."

Instinctively, she took my lunch box to empty it; I had a bad habit of never doing that. I watched her do this, bracing myself for the confrontation that was about to occur.

"You didn't eat?" Her voice shifted to one of concern, and her eyes darted at me for an explanation.

I knew I couldn't lie to my mom as I felt the tears coming on, "I-I couldn't eat... these kids, they- they were making fun of my food- and-"

My mother knelt down to me and took my shoulders, "Caleb," her voice wasn't mad, "you should never be ashamed of who you are, do you hear?"

I nodded, gaining control of my emotions, "but, but they don't understand."

"And?" My mother looked into my eyes, "they don't have to. You should never be ashamed of who you are, or what you believe in, Caleb. The only person you need to please is Him."

I nodded, suddenly feeling foolish about this whole ordeal.

"Don't you ever let someone persuade you into doing something that goes against you, and what you believe in. Don't you ever feel ashamed, Caleb."

Her words echoed over and over in my head. I turned my head to look outside at the drowning grass. In a world full of inconsistencies, it occurred to me that there is one thing that remains constant: God.

You can never have too little of Him, nor too much of Him. Perhaps He is the balance that we need in life. That, as my mother reminded me, is nothing to be ashamed of.

*To read other articles by Gracie Smith, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*



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# INTERNATIONAL CHILDREN'S BOOK DAY

## Junior

### The beauty of learning

Devin Owen  
MSMU Class of 2026

Della loved learning new things, whether it be hobbies or facts, she was always ready to grasp onto new pieces of information and never let go. Currently, she is learning about how to multiply numbers in her math class and how to write in cursive in her ELA class. Like any 8-year-old, her favorite time of the school day was recess, where she learned how to climb the monkey bars, play kick-ball, and throw a football! Della loved learning new things. She has learned how to count to one hundred, how to tie her shoelaces, and she is attempting to learn how to whistle...except it kind of just sounds like blowing air. Della has begun to put together that learning is actually a really cool thing! It's so odd though that only kids get to learn new things. Adults should be allowed to learn too! Shouldn't adults be allowed to learn, too?

Little did Della know, adults never stop learning!

It was a perfect September afternoon. The sun still shone warmly, but a crisp breeze carried the scent of the changing autumn leaves. The school day had ended, and Della eagerly

awaited her arrival at her grandparents' house—her favorite place to be until her mom and dad finished work. Della tapped her fingers on her backpack, wishing the bus would go faster. Finally, after what seemed like hours, the bus pulled up to her grandparents' house. On the front porch, Grandma Eileen sat with a glass of iced tea, the dogs lounging beside her. Grandpa Rick was just returning from checking on the horses ready to greet the young girl as she arrived. He saw her and begun waving and hollering as Della hopped off the bus.

"Well look who finally decided to join us! Only took you eight hours little miss!" he teased.

"Grandpa Rick! You know I don't have a choice when I get here...I have to go to school!" she called back, a grin spreading across her face.

Grandpa Rick began to chuckle and then asked, "School! Well, you must have learned lots today. What do they teach you there anyways?"

"All kinds of things! I'm learning how to multiply numbers and how to write in cursive like Grandma Eileen does! It's really fun actually, learning stuff is so cool. I'm sorry you and grandma can't learn new things anymore now that you're all grown up." Della replied.

Her grandparents exchanged a surprised look before bursting into laughter—not in a way that made Della feel

silly, but in the warm, amused way adults do when children say something unexpectedly funny. Wherever did their sweet granddaughter get this ridiculous idea? Adults learn new things all the time.

"Della, sweetie, what makes you think that me and grandpa can't learn new things anymore?" Grandma Eileen asked.

"Well adults don't go to school. Only kids go to school so that means you guys don't learn new things." Della said.

Again, her grandparents laughed to themselves a bit, careful not to make her feel like they were making fun of her. Grandpa Rick started "Oh, kiddo, that's not how it works at all! We learn new things all the time."

Grandma Eileen continued with a smile, "My dear you can always learn new things! Just because we're all grown up doesn't mean that we stop learning. In fact, your grandpa and I have started taking a cooking class to learn new recipes for dinners! You can also learn things outside of school, my girl. In fact, sometimes you learn more outside of school than you do in school"

Della's eyes widened. "Wait...grown-ups can take classes too?"

"Of course!" said Grandpa Rick. "And you don't have to be in a classroom to learn something new. Like your grandmother said, sometimes,

you learn more outside of school than you do in school."

Della looked a bit confused for a moment but then realized that Grandma Eileen and Grandpa Rick were right! She has watched them both read books and newspapers and talk with her mom and dad about the new things they recently learned. "That's true! Like how I learn how to help take care of the horses here. I learned that outside of school and they definitely don't teach it there!" She exclaimed.

"Yes, precisely Della! Learning never stops no matter how old you are." Grandpa Rick stated.

This was a very eye-opening moment for young Della, not to mention exciting, as she learned that she could keep learning new things for the rest of her life! From that moment on, she made a promise to her grandparents: they would always keep learning new things and sharing them with each other.

Years have passed and Della is now 21 and about to graduate college! She decided to major in Education so that she could share her love for learning with the next generation of kids. Every break from school she makes it a habit to go visit Grandpa Rick and Grandma Eileen, it has become a tradition. With each visit they sit in the living room and talk about all the new things they've recently learned. During her latest

visit, Della beamed as she told them, "I started taking a painting class! I've been learning all about different ways to create beautiful art." She's been so excited to share this with them!

Grandma Eileen smiled. "That's wonderful! I actually just started reading a new book, and I've discovered that I *love* mystery novels. This one is called, 'Where the Crawdads Sing', you should read it honey!"

"And I just started learning pottery!" Grandpa Rick added. "It's tricky, but I think I'm getting the hang of it."

Della's eyes sparkled. "Pottery?! That sounds amazing! We should do it together while I'm here!"

And just like that, a new plan was made. That afternoon, Della, Grandpa Rick, and Grandma Eileen spent their time shaping clay, making wobbly pots and silly sculptures. Then, Della showed them some new ways to paint so that they could paint their new sculptures when they were ready. They laughed, learned, and proved something important—no matter how old you are, there's always something new to discover.

And Della, just like she had when she was a little girl, never stopped learning.

*To read other articles by Devin Owen, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*

## Senior

### The smallest squirrel

Dolores Hans  
MSMU class of 2025

There are many animals in the forest with important jobs. The beavers build strong dams, the birds sing beautiful songs throughout the skies, and the bees help pollinate the flowers and make honey. Then there are the squirrels, who help plants and trees grow by burying seeds and acorns in the ground. The trees grow big and tall, and make nice homes for lots of animals.

One day, a small squirrel named Lily came across the biggest acorn she had ever seen. She thought about eating it or playing with it, something that would make her happy. She simply couldn't decide. Eventually she decided to bury it.

Over the years, that acorn would become the biggest tree in the forest, and many future generations of squirrels would live there.

Now, Stella was the smallest squirrel in the tree. She would watch as her friends and neighbors scurried down the tree trunk each day to do their daily tasks.

From where she sat in the tree, she could see some squirrels go left through the tall grass, the path that led to a riverbank that was covered in fluffy moss. This moss was perfect for making cozy places for other squirrels to sleep in the tree. She knew how important this job was. She liked to picture herself going to see the riverbank herself and bringing back moss for her family to sleep on.

From her place in the tree, she also saw some squirrels go right through the tall grass, the path that led to a row of bushes, which were full of delicious hazelnuts. She loved the taste of this food, and it was

especially important to scavenge these tasty treats before the winter.

As the summer came to a close and the autumn leaves began to fall, Stella knew she was old enough to do a job just like the rest of the squirrels. She was so excited to help her family and friends. She got to thinking though, what if she was too small? What if she chose the path to the moss but wasn't strong enough to carry it back to the tree? What if she chose the path to the bushes but couldn't reach high enough to take hazelnuts from the branches?

From her spot in the tree, she looked back and forth, from the path on the left to the path on the right. She just couldn't decide. She asked her mom what she should do. Her mom said "the moss is lighter than you think, and you are plenty strong. The hazelnuts are low to the ground, you would be able to reach them". This helped Stella realize she could do either job just fine, but for some reason she still couldn't decide. Her mom said, "Do you know how this tree came to be?"

"It came from a big acorn, right?" asked Stella.

"Yes, but the acorn wasn't put there by accident. A long time ago, there was a squirrel named Lily. She was small like you. She came across the acorn, and was trying to decide what to do with it. Now, she could have eaten it or played with it, or given it to someone else as a gift. But she decided to bury it."

"Why?" asked Stella curiously.

"Because she knew that the acorn might become a big strong tree for her family to live in for many years to come."

"So, Lily was in our family?"

"Yes," said her mother, "so you see, no matter what job you decide to do, as long as you are helping someone else, you are doing something important."

Stella smiled. She loved helping others, and she could do that with both jobs. She slept well that night knowing that when she woke up, she could follow the rest of the squirrels down one of the paths through the tall grass and no matter what she was doing a good thing.

The next morning, as the sun beamed through the treetops, the squirrels scurried one by one down the tall trunk of the tree. Stella leaped off her mossy bed and scurried down too. She was going so fast that she started to trip over herself. She started to tumble down to the ground. When she landed in the dirt, she felt sad. She started to question her path again. If she couldn't go down the tree without falling, does that make her too small to carry moss or pick hazelnuts? Even if she got up and continued today, she would still have to go down the tree tomorrow and every day after that. She was afraid to fall. Maybe she was too small.

She looked up at the tree and tried to have courage. She remembered Lily, a small squirrel like her, a squirrel who did something important. "If she can do it, so can I", Stella thought. She thought about what her mother said, and about how much she wanted to help people. The idea of falling was scary, but even if she fell every day, it was a struggle she would have to face in order to do something for the good of squirrels in the tree.

She got up out of the dirt and decided to keep going. But there was one problem. From the top of the tree, she could see the paths, but from the ground, she was too small to see over the tall grass. She didn't know which direction to go in. She started to feel uneasy. Should she wait until someone else came along to direct her? Should she give up and go home? She looked back up at the tree.

Just then, a leaf floated down toward the ground from the top of the tree. It moved with grace and ease. Not certain in a direction, it didn't have to be. It was just free. Inspired, Stella decided to just take a step forward. She didn't know if it would lead her to the riverbank or the bushes, she just went. She thought

to herself "even if I don't end up carrying moss or picking hazelnuts, I can still find something important to do. And who knows? Maybe I will come across a big acorn."

*To read other articles by Dolores Hans, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*



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ARTS

Upcoming at the Weinberg & News Spire Arts

April 3 – Sarah Koenig

The Frederick Speaker Series is proud to present Sarah Koenig, the award-winning journalist and co-creator of the groundbreaking podcast Serial. Koenig, whose work revolutionized the podcasting industry, will share insights into investigative journalism, storytelling, and the impact of Serial on modern media.

Since its launch in 2014, Serial has amassed hundreds of millions of downloads, making it the most listened-to podcast in history and earning the prestigious Peabody Award—the first ever awarded to a podcast. In 2015, Koenig was named one of Time magazine’s “100 Most Influential People.”

Koenig began her journalism career as a newspaper reporter before transitioning to radio in 2004 as a producer for This American Life, where she produced and guest-hosted several acclaimed episodes. Her ability to weave compelling narratives and her dedication to investigative reporting have set a new standard in journalism. In 2015, she co-founded Serial Productions, later acquired by The New York Times, further expanding her impact on the industry.

A post-event meet-and-greet is available and purchased in addition to the ticket for the event itself. This includes a photo opportunity, a signing opportunity, and light hors d’oeuvres and refreshments. The proceeds of the Meet & Greet benefits children’s programming at Frederick

County Public Libraries.

A complete listing of artists and performers scheduled for the 2024-25 season can be found at WeinbergCenter.org.

Tickets for all events may be purchased online at WeinbergCenter.org, by calling the box office at 301-600-2828, or in person at 20 West Patrick Street. Discounts are available for students, children, military, and seniors.

April 5 - Anthony Nunziata

Experience an unforgettable evening of music as acclaimed classical-crossover tenor Anthony Nunziata takes the stage at New Spire Arts. Joined by esteemed pianist and composer Jeff Franzel, Nunziata will deliver a captivating performance blending classic jazz, pop standards, Italian arias, and his heartfelt original songs.

Dubbed “America’s new romantic singing sensation,” Nunziata has enchanted audiences worldwide with his powerful voice and charismatic stage presence. Recently headlining a sold-out debut at the legendary Café Carlyle in New York City, he has also shared the stage with renowned symphony orchestras, including the New York Pops at Carnegie Hall. With over 400 concerts to his name, Nunziata has performed at premier venues across the globe, earning praise from Broadway World as “an explosion of love and entertainment.”

Joining Nunziata on stage is acclaimed pianist Jeff Franzel, a versatile musician and songwriter who has

worked with industry legends such as Frank Sinatra, Josh Groban, and Taylor Dayne. His masterful playing will provide the perfect complement to Nunziata’s soaring vocals.

April 6 - Beloved Children’s Classic ‘Charlotte’s Web’

Experience the heartwarming tale of friendship, bravery, and love as TheaterWorksUSA presents Charlotte’s Web. This creative reimagining of E.B. White’s beloved novel brings the timeless story to life with bluegrass music and an innovative set design, making it a must-see for families and young audiences.

This delightful production follows Wilbur the pig and his extraordinary bond with Charlotte, the wise and kind-hearted spider, who sets out to save him through her miraculous web. Alongside their farmyard friends, they embark on a touching journey of hope, kindness, and the true meaning of friendship. This stage adaptation, written by Joseph Robinette (Broadway: A Christmas Story The Musical), features original direction and set design by Andrew Rasmussen (Broadway: Ruben & Clay’s First Annual Christmas Carol Family Fun Pageant Spectacular Reunion Show), costume design by Tristan Raines (Broadway: Bring It On The Musical), and original music composition and orchestrations by “Sheriff” Bob Saldenberg, Kat Minogue, Robert Abrahams, and Michael Donovan.

April 11 - Asleep at the Wheel

Get ready for a night of foot-stomping, honky-tonk energy as Asleep at the Wheel brings their signature Western swing sound. For over fifty years, frontman Ray Benson has been leading Asleep at the Wheel across the globe, carrying the torch for Western swing music and introducing its irresistible rhythms to new generations. With more than 30 albums, ten Grammy Awards, and countless miles on the road, Benson and his ever-evolving ensemble have become an American roots music institution.

“I’m the reason it’s still together, but the reason it’s popular is because we’ve had the greatest singers and players,” says Benson. “When someone joins the band, I say, ‘Learn everything that’s ever been done, then put your own stamp on it.’”

Over the years, Asleep at the Wheel has collaborated with an impressive roster of genre-spanning artists, including Willie Nelson, Brad Paisley, Jamey Johnson, Merle Haggard, George Strait, the Avett Brothers, Amos Lee, Old Crow Medicine Show, and Lyle Lovett. Their Grammy-winning 2015 tribute album, Still the King, honored the legendary Bob Wills, while their latest release, Half A Hundred Years, reunited original members Chris O’Connell, Leroy Preston, and Lucky Oceans after four decades, alongside special guests Emmylou Harris, Lee Ann Womack, George Strait, Lyle Lovett, and Willie Nelson.

Asleep at the Wheel continues to shape the landscape of American roots

music, blending tradition with innovation. “It took me 60 years, but I’m doing what I’m meant to do—singing and playing and writing better than I ever have,” says Benson. “A bandleader is just someone who gathers people around them to play the best music they can play. I just try and make the best decisions possible and kick some ass every night onstage.”

April 12 - Heather Aubrey Lloyd

Acclaimed singer-songwriter Heather Aubrey Lloyd takes the stage at New Spire Arts, delivering her signature blend of folk, slam poetry, and percussive energy. With a voice described as “Janis Joplin and Joni Mitchell blended together” (The Montgomery Call), Lloyd’s performances are as compelling as her lyrics. Presented by Frederick Music Foundation.

A former Baltimore journalist turned full-time musician, Lloyd has spent two decades touring the country as a co-frontwoman for iLYAIMY, performing everywhere from intimate coffeehouses to major festival stages. Her solo work, including her award-winning album A Message in the Mess, showcases her ability to weave intricate narratives into captivating melodies. Driftwood Magazine praised her for delivering “an intimate presentation, as if she is performing just for the listener,” while The Morning Call lauded her “powerful emotional and technical range.” Lloyd has garnered an impressive list of accolades. Her music blends elements of folk, world percussion, and slam poetry, creating a sound that’s both unique and universally resonant.

Majestic welcomes Gettysburg Film Festival

The Gettysburg Film Festival returns May 8 -11, focusing on the legacy of World War II. Internationally acclaimed filmmaker Ken Burns will open the festival on Thursday, May 8th, marking the 80th anniversary of Victory in Europe (V -E) Day. Special guests include Martin Sheen, Anna Deavere Smith, Susan Eisenhower, Stephen Lang and more.

“We are thrilled to welcome Ken Burns and this extraordinary group of experts to Gettysburg for our film festival,” said Gettysburg College President Bob Iuliano. “The festival honors not only the power of storytelling but also the courage and wisdom of General Eisenhower—a leader whose legacy continues to inspire our College and our community today.”

“As Gettysburg College’s center for cinema and performing arts, the Majestic is excited to continue to connect our campus, community, and these luminaries for this celebration of history on film,” stated Majestic Theater Executive Director, Brett Messenger. “Our historic venue is particularly suited to connect today’s audiences to this year’s theme, Victory in World War II, as

it was where our community gathered 80 years ago to stay connected to the war effort, on screen, through news reels from the front.”

The Majestic Theater Box Office issues tickets for events located at the Majestic Theater only. Tickets are available now for:

Thursday, May 8

10 - da Vinci to D -Day: The Art

of Documentary Filmmaking - \$35  
10:30 - The War - Pride of Our Nation - Free

10:45 - The War - FUBAR - Free  
1:15 - The U.S. and the Holocaust - “The Homeless, Tempest -Tossed” - Free

1:30 - The Craft of Storytelling: Ken Burns and Anna Deavere Smith - \$35

1:45 - The War - The Ghost Front - Free

4 - Jazz - Dedicated to Chaos - Free

4:20 - The War - A World Without War - Free

Friday, May 9

10 - Martin Sheen: A Legacy of American History on Screen - \$35

10:25 - The Monuments Men - \$10

10:30 - The Rape of Europa - \$10

1 - The Story of G.I. Joe - \$10

1:45 - Invisible Warriors - \$10

2:30 - Saving Europe’s Art, with Robert Edsel and Susan Eisenhower - \$35

3:10 - The True Glory - \$10

3:50 - Behind the Lines - \$10

Saturday, May 10

9:15 - There is Another Way - \$10

9:30 - Memphis Belle - \$10

11:45 - The Big Red One - \$10

12:30 - Band of Brothers - Day of Days - Free

2 - A Bridge Too Far - \$10

2:15 - Band of Brothers - Crossroads - Free

3:50 - Band of Brothers - Why We Fight - Free

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COOKING

Longer April evenings

Sonya Verlaque  
FCC Culinary Program

I feel like although the days have “gotten longer” they have also been jam packed with activities in the evenings, with sports practice, music recitals and events at school. This has made it extra hard to have dinner at home and not in the car from a drive through. Plus, the opening of grilling season is also at hand. So I hope some of these recipes can be helpful in getting meals on the table of your family at home.

**Pork and Green Bean Stir Fry**  
This is an easy and fast recipe for dinner time that comes together in one pan, and also is simple to substitute for whatever you have available in your refrigerator. No ground pork, its ok, beef or chicken will work. Don't have green beans - you can use broccoli or even frozen mixed vegetables if that is what is available.

- Ingredients*
- 1 1/3 cups (265g) jasmine rice
  - 2 cups (500ml) water
  - 2 tbs. peanut oil
  - 300g green beans, cut into 5cm lengths
  - 500g ground pork
  - 3 green onions, sliced
  - 1 tbs. grated fresh ginger
  - 2 cloves garlic, chopped
  - 1 tbs. finely chopped fresh cilantro stems
  - 1/4 cup (60ml) gluten-free hoisin sauce
  - 1 tbs. tamari
  - 1 tsp. sesame oil
  - 1/3 cup fresh cilantro leaves

*Instructions*  
Rinse rice under cold running water until water runs clear; drain well. Add rice to a medium saucepan with the water, cover; bring to the boil. Reduce heat to low; cook, covered, for 10 minutes or until rice is tender. Stand covered. Meanwhile, heat half the peanut oil in a wok or large frying pan over high heat; stir-fry beans, in batches, until the skin begins to blister. Remove from wok. Add

remaining peanut oil to wok over a high heat; stir-fry pork for 5 minutes or until browned. Add green onion, ginger, garlic and cilantro stems; stir-fry for 1 minute. Add hoisin, tamari and sesame oil; stir-fry until heated through. Return beans to wok; toss to combine. Top stir-fry with cilantro leaves; serve with rice.

**Spring Lamb Kabobs**  
Somehow eating something off a stick makes it extra fun. Marshmallow, no thanks. How about put it on a stick and into a fire, yes please! Chunks of meat and veggies, no? How about here on a stick and we will stick it in a fire. All the sudden it's a whimsical hit. These spring lamb kababs can also be switched out for beef or chicken. You will need about 30 minutes to marinate the meat but that gives you time to heat up the grill.

- Ingredients*
- 1 pound lamb, cut into 1-inch cubes
  - 1 red bell pepper, cut into squares
  - 1 yellow bell pepper, cut into squares
  - 1 zucchini, sliced into thick rounds
  - 1 red onion, cut into wedges
  - 3 tbs. olive oil
  - 2 tbs. lemon juice
  - 2 tsp. dried oregano
  - 2 tsp. garlic powder
  - Salt and pepper to taste
  - Skewers (soaked in water if wooden)

*Instructions*  
In a bowl, mix olive oil, lemon juice, oregano, garlic powder, salt, and pepper. Add lamb cubes and toss to coat. Cover and marinate for at least 30 minutes in the refrigerator. After marinating, thread the lamb, bell peppers, zucchini, and onion onto the skewers, alternating between ingredients. Preheat your grill to medium-high heat. Lightly oil the grates to prevent sticking. Place the skewers on the grill and cook for about 10-15 minutes, turning occasionally,

until the lamb is cooked to your desired doneness and the vegetables are tender. Remove from the grill and let rest for a few minutes. Serve warm and enjoy!

**Utah (Funeral) Potato Casserole**  
When I lived in Virginia, one of my good friends was from Utah and if we had a group potluck everyone asked her to make “Funeral Potatoes” which are creamy and cheesy and salty and delicious. And she usually prepped them the day before and then baked them right before coming to the gathering. I feel like these could be a fun side dish for Easter supper that can be prepped ahead of time. Although, I've never had them at Easter. My understanding also is that the cornflakes are the most “authentic” topping. (Recipe from “Just a Pinch” because I am not from Utah.)

- Ingredients*
- 4 tbs. unsalted butter
  - 1 cup diced onion (about 1 small onion)
  - 2 clove garlic, minced
  - 30 oz package frozen shredded hash brown potatoes, lightly thawed
  - 10 1/2 oz can condensed cream of celery soup (or cream of chicken soup)
  - 1 cup sour cream
  - 1/4 cup grated parmesan cheese
  - 1 1/2 tsp kosher salt
  - 1/2 tsp black pepper
  - 2 cups shredded sharp cheddar cheese
  - 1 1/2 cup crushed potato chips or crushed corn flake cereal

*Instructions*  
Preheat the oven to 350°F. Heat 2 tbs. butter over medium heat in a skillet. Add the diced onion and cook, stirring, until soft and




Spring Lamb Kabobs.

translucent, about 6 minutes. Stir in the garlic and cook until fragrant and softened, an additional 2 minutes. In a bowl, toss together the cooked onions and garlic, hash brown potatoes, condensed soup, sour cream, Parmesan, salt, pepper and 1 1/2 cups Cheddar.

Spread the mixture in a 9-by-13 inch casserole dish. Melt the

remaining 2 tbs butter. Top the casserole with the remaining 1/2 cup cheese and crushed potato chips (or cereal), then drizzle the melted butter over the top. Bake in the oven about 1 hour or until it bubbles around the sides.

To read other Cooking articles, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.



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ASTRONOMY

The night sky of April

Professor Wayne Wooten

For April the waxing crescent moon passes just north of Jupiter on April 2nd. On April 4th, the first quarter moon passes just above Mars. The full moon, the Egg Moon, is on April 12th. The moon is last quarter on April 20th. In the dawn on April 24th, the waning crescent moon lies just to the left of bright Venus and below it, fainter Saturn; it lies to the right of the pair the following dawn, and just to upper right of Mercury near the horizon. The new moon is April 27th, and on the 30th, the waxing crescent again passes by bright Jupiter at dusk.

At the start of March, Mercury and Venus lay in the west after sunset. Now both have passed between us and the Sun into the dawn sky. Venus is brilliant in the dawn as April begins, just north of much fainter Saturn. Venus is at its brightest on April 27th. Mercury joins the pair at month's end.

Still in the evening sky, Jupiter is well up in west after sunset as April begins, but much lower by month's end. Mars is higher in the sky, in Gemini, and will stick around in the evening sky until the end of summer.

While the naked eye, dark adapted by several minutes away from any bright lights, is a wonderful instrument to stare up into deep space, far beyond our own Milky Way, binoculars are better for spotting specific deep sky objects. For a detailed map of northern hemisphere skies visit the [www.skymaps.com](http://www.skymaps.com) website and download the map for April; it will have a more extensive calendar, and list of best objects for the naked eyes, binoculars, and scopes on the back of the map. Also available is wonderful video exploring the April sky, available from the Hubble Space Telescope



The Sombrero Galaxy (also known as M-104) is a galaxy in the constellation borders of Virgo and Corvus. It is slightly bigger in size than the Milky Way. It has a bright nucleus, an unusually large central bulge, and a prominent dust lane in its outer disk, which from Earth is viewed almost edge-on. The dark dust lane and the bulge give it the appearance of a sombrero hat (thus the name). It is easily visible with amateur telescopes. Its large bulge, central supermassive black hole, and dust lane all attract the attention of professional astronomers.

website at: [www.hubblesite.com](http://www.hubblesite.com). Sky and Telescope has highlights at [www.skyandtelescope.com/](http://www.skyandtelescope.com/) observing.

Yellow Capella, a giant star the same temperature and color as our much smaller Sun, dominates the northwestern sky. It is part of the pentagon on stars making up Auriga, the Charioteer (think Ben Hur). Several nice binocular Messier open clusters are found in the winter milky way here. East of Auriga, the twins, Castor and Pollux highlight the Gemini. South of Gemini, Orion is the most familiar winter constellation, dominating the southern sky at dusk.

The reddish supergiant Betelgeuse marks his eastern shoulder, while blue-white supergiant Rigel stands opposite on his west knee. Just south of the belt, hanging like a sword downward, is M-42, the Great Nebula of Orion, an outstanding binocular and telescopic stellar nursery. The bright diamond of four stars that light it up are the trapezium cluster,

one of the finest sights in a telescope. In the east are the hunter's two faithful companions, Canis major and minor. Procyon is the bright star in the little dog, and rises minutes before Sirius, the brightest star in the sky. At 8 light years, Sirius is the closest star we can easily see here.

To the northeast, look for the Big Dipper rising, with the top two stars of the bowl, the pointers, giving you a line to find Polaris, the Pole Star. Look for Mizar-Alcor, a nice naked eye double star, in the bend of the big

dipper's handle. Take the pointers at the front of the dipper's bowl south instead to the head of Leo, looking much like the profile of the famed Sphinx.

The bright star at the Lion's heart is Regulus, the "regal star". Now take the curved handle of the Big Dipper, and follow the arc SE to bright orange Arcturus, the brightest star of the spring sky. Studies of its motion link it to the Sagittarius Dwarf Galaxy, a companion of our Milky Way being tidally disrupted and spilling its stars above and below the

plane of the Milky Way, much like dust falling away from a decomposing comet nucleus. So this brightest star of Bootes the Bear Driver is apparently a refugee from another galaxy, but now trapped by our Galaxy's gravity.

Now spike south to Spica, the blue-white gem in Virgo rising in the SE. Virgo is home to many galaxies, as we look away from the obscuring gas and dust in the plane of the Milky Way into deep space. To the southwest of Spica is the four sided Crow, Corvus. To the ancient Greeks, Spica was associated with Persephone, daughter of Ceres, goddess of the harvest. She was abducted by her suitor Pluto, carried down to Hades (going to Hell for a honeymoon!) and when Jupiter worked out a compromise between the newlyweds and the angry mother-in-law, the agreement dictated Persephone come back to the earth's surface for six months of the year, and Mama Ceres was again placated, and the crops could grow again.

As you see Spica rising in the SE, it is time to "plant your peas", and six months from now, when Spica again disappears in the sun's glare in the SW, you need to "get your corn in the crib".... so was set our calendar of planting and harvesting in antiquity. There is indeed a rich harvest in Virgo, of galaxies. Between Spica and Corvus is M-104, the famed "Sombrero".

Farmers' Almanac

*"Here cometh April again, and as far as I can see the world hath more fools in it than ever."*  
—Charles Lamb (1835-1910)

**Mid-Atlantic Weather Watch:** Dry and mild at first, then warmer with showers and thunderstorms, then turning much cooler and dry (1, 2, 3, 4, 5); rain and mild, then much colder with flurries west followed by more rain and milder temperatures (6, 7, 8, 9, 10); unseasonably warm with heavy rain then dry and cooler (11, 12, 13, 14, 15); chilly at night and warm during the day, then warm and humid with rain and thunderstorms, then cooler and dry (16, 17, 18, 19, 20); dry and turning warmer then showers and storms and turning much cooler with a light frost (21, 22, 23, 24, 25); turning very warm and dry, then rain and cooler (26, 27, 28, 29, 30).

**Severe Weather Watch:** The Town and Country Almanack sees high winds (3, 4, 5), hard freeze (7, 8), heavy rain (12, 13) and another hard freeze (23).

**Full Moon:** April's Full Moon will occur on April 12th. Many Native American tribes referred to it as Fish Moon because the fishing starts to improve as the weather warms up. It also has been called

Pink Moon because of the many pretty flowers that begin to display their bright pink hues as they bloom throughout the month.

**Special Notes:** April Fool's Day falls on Tuesday, April 1st in 2025. Watch out for practical jokes and pranks that may be coming your way from family, co-workers, and even your friends! Earth Day is observed on Monday, April 22nd. Check out The Earth Day Network, at 202-518-0044, and at [www.earthday.net](http://www.earthday.net) offers some interesting, fun, and easy activities that you and your family can do that will help promote a healthier relationship with our fragile Mother Earth! Arbor Day falls on Wednesday, April 30th. Go to [www.arborday.org/](http://www.arborday.org/) for more on The Arbor Day Foundation's mission, which focuses on helping others understand and use trees as a solution to the many global issues we face today that include air quality, water quality, a rapidly changing climate, deforestation, poverty, and hunger.

**Holidays:** Easter Sunday falls on April 20th in 2025. Celebrate the resurrection of Our Lord, Jesus Christ, by attending the church of your choice and enjoying a fine meal with family and/or friends

**The Garden:** Set out annuals and other perennials now. Cool season vegetables, such as spinach, lettuce, peas, broccoli, cauliflower, and beets can be planted as soon as the soil can be worked. A good test of "soil readiness" is to take a handful of soil and squeeze it. If it remains in a ball, it's too moist and should be allowed to dry further. If it crumbles, start planting! Begin planting indoor seedlings outdoors. Harden them off first with several short days outside under cover.

**The Farm:** Best days for planting root crops (19, 20); weeding and stirring the soil (29, 30); planting above-ground crops (4, 5); harvesting all crops (16, 17, 18); to set hens and incubators (5, 6, 7, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21); the slaughtering and butchering of meats (1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, 30); transplanting (1, 2, 3, 27, 28, 29, 30); harvesting and storing of grain (20, 21, 22, 23, 24, 25, 26); weaning of animals and livestock (16, 17, 18, 19, 20, 21, 22, 23, 24).

J. Gruber's Thought For Today's Living

*Gardens are for all ages: the young for hope of the future, the elderly, for fond memories of the past, and for those in between, the rewards of a good life, now.*



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# WALKERSVILLE HIGH SCHOOL

# Go, go, go Jo!

**Celia Alsbaugh**  
**WHS Class of 2028**

It's been a while since a trip down to WHS' auditorium space has been taken, so for those who are wondering what these students have in store for the spring, this is for you. These WHS theatre students have been thrown 3,900 years into the past with their upcoming spring musical being none other than "Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat". This 80's classic is going to take place on WHS' stage on April 3rd, 4th and 5th.

For three months, the WHS Theatre Department's best have been working tirelessly to put this show together. A huge production, "Joseph" is one of the few musicals written with no lines at all! The entire show relies on the sung-through method, using only singing, music and dance to tell the story. These talented students couldn't pull off such a chorus-heavy show without the guidance and support from their Director, Louise Martin. Martin has a great love for her students and puts copious amounts of work into making WHS' productions come to life. Every day after school, Martin would lead her cast through vocal or blocking rehearsals for hours, slowly but surely training them to be stage ready. "My students are simply incredible," Martin states, "They have worked diligently on this show, and I know that you will love it!"

Many of these talented stu-

dents came auditioning for this show with musical experience, but the dancing side was another matter. It was clear there was only one person fit for the job of making dance numbers perfect for "Joseph," and that person was none other than Chelsea Humphries. A math teacher by day and choreographer by night, Humphries spends her free time coming up with dazzling dances to go along with the energized musical score. As Humphries puts it, "I love seeing all of the hard work come together and create a masterpiece of art onstage." Her colorful choreography performed by this talented cast of 23 lights up the stage and is sure to have audiences on their feet with applause.

Shifting gears to explore another piece of the WHS Theatre Department, such a large production would not be possible without the amazing minds behind the scenes! The “Joseph” crew is a mighty group of 32, with jobs ranging from lights and sound up in the booth to props and costumes backstage. The construction crew and scenic painters took on the difficult task of bringing the multi-layered set to life. The house crew prepared the auditorium to create a truly immersive environment, while yours truly created the programs and posters for audiences to enjoy. All of these members play a key role in getting musicals such as these from being ideas on paper to becoming physical, pigmented, live experiences.

One of the most impressive

and hardworking groups amongst this theatre department has to be the costumes crew. Run by the incredibly gifted Cathy Alspaugh, this team of women hand fitted, designed and sewed each and every piece worn onstage by the cast. Alspaugh and her crew of four, made up of the talents of Chris Bontrager, Sonja Scalera and Pat Douglass, ensured that each and every actor and actress had their own personally unique costume that would look dazzling under stage lights. Just as the name suggests, *Joseph and The Amazing Technicolor Dreamcoat* is a vibrantly rich show, and this costume crew did not fail to deliver. Joseph's technicolor dreamcoat was handmade by Bontrager, who spent hours sewing together the panels that would become, as Martin puts it, "the coat of my dreams!"

If one takes a trip towards the front of the WHS stage, they will find themselves having to look down. This pit of mystery holds the cornerstone of this theatre department, the pit orchestra! This aptly named group of students and alumni have been diligently practicing on their instruments to bring Webber's beautiful score to life. From electric guitars to clarinets to drum kits, this show has no shortage of colorful sound, a sound this orchestra has not failed to deliver. Patricia Rowely, the mother of a cello player in the pit, Juliet Rowley, explains why having a live orchestra is so important to the show, claiming, "I really enjoy having a live pit orchestra in a school musical because it



**Walkersville High School's theatre department rehearsing for their upcoming spring musical. Photo credit: Marissa Paoletti.**

enhances the performance by providing a richer, more dynamic sound." This mutualistic relationship between the cast and orchestra is one of a kind. The cast is honored with the gift of performing to live music while the musicians get the chance to be a part of a large, unique production.

It's possible one may be wondering how some pages of notes and words can go from paper and ink to a physical, three-dimensional, live show. One of the many ways WHS prepares for opening night, which isn't a very well-known aspect of the theatre department, is what they like to call "Production Day". WHS prides itself on having fantastic, handcrafted sets. These unique sets take more than a couple of hours during after-school rehearsals to construct. It is mainly this issue that prompted the necessity of a "Production Day". Students who take part in the production or technical crews arrive at school on a Saturday at 8

and work hard all day long until their jobs are done. Most don't go home until 12 hours later, after the sun has set. The construction crew, led by James Meech, spend the day constructing the set while costumes stitch away backstage. The props crew locate and clean their necessary handheld props while lights and sound organize cords and technology. It is a day of mass collaboration, and extreme productivity, as the name suggests.

Overall, it is clear how dedicated these WHS students are to their art, and all of their hard work is sure to be evident in their brilliant performance of “Joseph,” coming soon! With four show dates in total, showings take place each night at 7 on the 3rd, 4th, and 5th of April, with an additional matinee showing at 2 on Saturday, the 5th. As Martin puts it, “we can’t wait to see you!”

*To read other articles by Celia Alsbaugh, visit the Authors section of Walkersville.net.*



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HEALTH

FMH recognized with prestigious 2nd Magnet designation

Joshua Faust  
Frederick Health

Frederick Health has been recognized with its second prestigious Magnet redesignation, conferred by the American Nurses Credentialing Center of the American Nurses Association. Frederick Health first achieved Magnet recognition in 2020 and was informed of its second designation on February 25.

According to David Marshall, Chair and Executive Committee Member of the American Nurses Credentialing Center of the American Nurses Association, Frederick Health earned its redesignation for the following reasons:

- Patients and their families are at the forefront of care
- Patients experience fewer complica-

- tions, lower mortality rates, and higher satisfaction scores
- Nurses identify Frederick Health as a supportive work environment
- Nurses are empowered, and leadership is visible and accessible
- Nursing practices are based on evidence, and nurses advance professionally

Receiving this recognition for the quality of their nursing practices “Reinforces the fact that Frederick Health is making real contributions to our community by keeping patients healthy, informed, and safe,” says Dr. Jamie White, Vice President of Patient Care & Chief Nursing Officer.

Frederick Health is among only 10% of healthcare organizations in the United States to earn the Magnet honor and

is one of only 12 acute care hospitals in Maryland to hold this distinction. Frederick Health is the only hospital in western Maryland with this distinction.

“Earning the prestigious Magnet designation for the second time is further validation of the excellent care the Frederick Health team delivers to patients every day,” Dr. White added.

For over forty years, Magnet designation has been considered the industry gold-standard for nursing excellence awarded to healthcare organizations. Magnet recognition serves as an impressive and important distinction for Frederick Health and positively impacts the broader Frederick County community. Healthcare consumers view the Magnet designation as a credential for top-notch nursing care and a Magnet recognition demon-

strates a high level of engagement and a healthy work environment.

“With a team of nearly 1,000 nurses, Frederick Health takes great pride in this redesignation. It translates into happier nurses and better care for the community we serve,” stated Dr. White.

The process to earn Magnet recognition is very thorough. It includes a three-day onsite validation and review by the Commission on Magnet Recognition. Appraisers reviewed 3,000 pages of narratives with evidence and spoke with nearly 500 staff members from 23 different departments during a site visit in December 2024. Standards for this designation increase every four years when organizations seek renewal of their Magnet status. To maintain this designation, Frederick Health demonstrated improvements such as increasing the percentage of nurses with advanced degrees, having additional research studies or unique community health initiatives, and increasing quality patient outcomes and satisfaction.

Dr. White emphasized that earning Magnet redesignation is a team effort. While the accreditation recognizes the nursing team specifically, the organization must work collaboratively to meet the standards and benchmarks set forth by the American Nurses Association.

“From our nurses and care teams to the department heads, senior leaders, and members of nonclinical teams, every department at Frederick Health played a significant and supportive role in this designation process,” said Dr. White. “It is something we all take pride in.”

Magnet is also a useful tool in recruiting and retaining nurses. To earn this designation certain workplace metrics must be met by an organization, including nursing engagement, expertise, and workplace satisfaction. During the onsite visit, Magnet Appraisers speak candidly with nurses about their workplace happiness and satisfaction. These honest conversations are factored into to earning a designation.

The response from Frederick Health nurses was overwhelmingly positive. Chris Bumbaugh, Vice President of Human Resources with Frederick Health, said that when they hire and interview new nurses, Magnet is a topic of conversation.

“Being recognized by Magnet allows

Frederick Health to recruit and retain the best nurses available. It says to nurses looking for work or a new opportunity that the Frederick Health nursing team is recognized as among the best,” Bumbaugh stated.

In addition to being Magnet redesignated, the healthcare system also earned several “exemplars” – specific categories that Magnet views as important or noteworthy. To earn an exemplar, a healthcare system must outperform the established national benchmarks or develop a unique programming or initiatives that benefits the community.

Frederick Health earned exemplars include:

- 100% of reporting inpatient units had fewer blood stream infections
- 100% of reporting inpatient units for pressure injuries
- 100% of reporting ambulatory units for coronary interventions
- 100% of reporting ambulatory had no patient burns
- 100% of reporting ambulatory units for surgical errors
- 92% unit-level professional board certification
- The ongoing Stroke Smart Initiative

The ongoing cultural & socially sensitive care provided by Frederick Health Hospice and Forensic Nursing teams

Dr. White, herself a nurse with decades of experience, knows the importance of teamwork and trust. She also understands that these awards help reinforces the excellent care available at Frederick Health.

“Being recognized for a second time as Magnet designated is an honor that reaffirms the hard work and dedication of both our nurses and our entire staff,” concluded Dr. White. “I am so proud of this team.”

To learn more about Frederick Health’s Magnet redesignation, please visit [www.frederickhealth.org/Magnet](http://www.frederickhealth.org/Magnet).

For more information or to schedule an appointment, call 240-566-7632 or visit [www.frederickhealth.org/MDC](http://www.frederickhealth.org/MDC).



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COMMUNITY NOTES

Global community science event comes to Frederick County

Carey Murphy  
Mobilize Frederick

For the first time, Frederick County residents are preparing to join a global community science event with a very local focus: the wildlife in our environment. The City Nature Challenge will take place from April 25th to April 28th. Thousands of people from MD, DC, VA and WV are expected to participate.

The mission: to observe and identify as many species of wild animals, plants, and fungi as they can during the Challenge period—in local parks, neighborhoods, front stoops, back yards...anywhere. The Challenge is a fun event that offers a great opportunity to get outdoors. It also has a serious intent; the data collected will provide valuable information to scientists on urban wildlife and global biodiversity.

Frederick county participants will use their cell phone cameras or digital cameras, and the iNaturalist platform to make observations. iNaturalist is a popular free app supported by the California Academy of Sciences and the National Geographic Society to help community scientists make accurate observations of the natural world. Over 3million people worldwide have shared their observations on iNaturalist, making it one of the largest tools for biodiversity tracking.

Mobilize Frederick, the local non-profit focused on implementing recommendations from the Climate Response and Resilience Report (CRR), is coordinating Frederick County's participation. They are joined by more than 60 regional organizations, including Sustainable Frederick, Master Gardeners, Master Naturalists, Frederick County Public Libraries, local scout and 4-H leaders,

and ThorpeWood. The data collected will directly support Recommendation 26 from the CRR, enhancing and protecting regional biodiversity.

Jenny Willoughby, the City of Frederick's Sustainability Manager is part of the planning team: "We're excited to get more folks interested in the nature around us, especially in our local parks and green spaces. These areas are full of wildlife and are great places to relax with family and friends. The City of Frederick was recognized as a Bird City last year and we hope the City Nature Challenge will be a way for seasoned and aspiring naturalists to learn more about birds and other wildlife right here in the City."

Carey Murphy is the Mobilize Frederick Challenge Coordinator and Project Coordinator for Growing Green!, which supports local schools pursuing Maryland Green Schools certification: "The Challenge is a fun

opportunity to connect nature enthusiasts— even beginners—with one another from all parts of our large county. Students and educators participating can meet Green Schools objectives by engaging in hands-on community science."

Special events will be hosted across Frederick County during the Challenge. Sustainable Frederick, for example, has organized a guided walk and bioblitz with Master Naturalists and entomologists at Riverside Park to search for birds and bugs on Sunday morning, April 27 from 9-11. The Frederick County Public Libraries will host nature-themed storytimes followed by guided explorations to search for wildlife nearby.

The Frederick Team will officially kick off the inaugural Challenge with a community event on the evening of April 2 at 6 at the Brown Community Center in downtown Frederick

featuring guest speaker, Sam Droege, renowned USGS bee biologist and bioblitz pioneer. Attendees will learn how to participate in the CNC and discover the importance of community science.

In the northern part of the county, there will be a City Nature Challenge themed storytime at the Emmitsburg Library on April 21 at 10:30 and a storytime at the Thurmont library on April 26 at 11. On April 28, from 2 to 4, as part of this year's theme of "Love Your Federal Lands", Mobilize Frederick will partner with the Catoclin Mountain Park Visitor Center to empower visitors to explore the beautiful Catoclin Mountain Park.

An in-person iNaturalist training is offered by the Frederick County Master Gardeners on April 9 at 5:30. For more information visit: [www.mobilizefrederick.org/city-nature-challenge](http://www.mobilizefrederick.org/city-nature-challenge).

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