

# The Monocacy

# MONOCLE

*Keeping an Eye on Local News*

A Biweekly Newspaper

August 28, 2020 • Volume XVI, Number 11



Adelaide and Calli Kessler sold their homegrown peppers, spicy and regular, at Whalen Commons. More pictures in Family Album on page 2.



Learning to mill wood at Calleva is a new educational experience for students. More information is in Local News on page 6.



The Monocacy River Bridge project is almost finished! Get the scoop on page 8.



The weeds of summer can be enough to make a grown person cry. Don't despair, see Garden on page 10.

## Design of the New High School Progressing By Link Hoewing

Montgomery County Construction Office manager Jamie Duffy and the county's architects involved in designing the new high school provided an update via Zoom to members of the Fair Access Committee (FAC) regarding progress in developing design options. Also included in the briefing were members of the school system (MCPS) construction department, Adrienne Karamihas in the planning department for MCPS, and Robert Winstead, a principle in the architectural firm VMDO that is in charge of the design project. Robert Winstead of VMDO led the meeting. PHS Principal Carothers and Dawn Albert from the PHS PTSA were also in on the call.

Winstead gave an executive summary of the feasibility study commissioned by MCPS. He is one of the directors of this seventy-five-person architectural firm. The focus of the company is in education construction projects, specifically in this region, including



Under all design proposals for a new school, the auditorium will remain and will be refurbished.

pre-K through college, and innovative projects like the brand-new St. Paul VI High School in Virginia.

In creating their feasibility study, VMDO was tasked to propose options by the end of summer, including creating estimates and phasing plans for presentation to the Board of Education at the end of the month (August 25).

They will also be preparing a summary report for the community. There is no set timeframe yet for the establishment of a community outreach process.

Overall, there are three design options that VMDO has proposed. They all center on the 2009 annex (the new science building) as the base

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## Proposed Solar Array for the Ag Reserve Sparks Debate

By Rande Davis

Around three square miles of commercial-scale solar is proposed for Montgomery County's Ag Reserve under ZTA 20-01, first proposed in January 2020. The ZTA will have a vote in September at the full County Council.

While Montgomery Countryside Alliance and Poolesville Green are allies on many issues and concerns in the region, they have taken opposite positions on this issue. The Monocle offers the following statements from both organizations as to their perspectives and encourage all concerned citizens to seek more information on the subject by visiting the website of each group and to feel comfortable reaching out to them specifically.

### Montgomery Countryside Alliance:

ZTA has scant/toothless protection for water quality, forests, and notably productive soils; this in the only part of the county set aside for agriculture.



A law allowing solar arrays on farmland is being proposed for the Montgomery County Ag Reserve.

Reserve farms are mostly on productive soil classes 2 and 3; there are no protections for these soils in this ZTA. In fact, the architect of this ZTA, Councilmember Hans Riemer, really showed his resistance to protect agriculture in the Ag Reserve when he said the difference between soil types allowed for siting commercial arrays was akin to roof color, asking, "Why would we limit solar to only blue roofs?"

This lack of understanding is the reason the council committee voted to only protect the soils in red (class 1), which, though productive, are all riparian buffers or on islands in the Potomac, not farmable.

Among many deleterious impacts of this ZTA, one is a chilling effect on leasing to these new farmers. In comparing the income generated by

**Continued on page 15.**

## Family Album



Joy Zucker-Tiemann from Pampered Chef and other parents managed the bake sale booth and helped the girls in their quest to raise money for cancer research.



Mom Sheila Sapp with daughter Mollie sold handmade pandemic masks, scrunchies, and hats.



Sarah T Artist, of Sarah Studios, offered uniquely handmade creations at Whalen Commons.



These girls joined together for a carwash fundraiser to benefit myeloma research.



Friends celebrated the eighty-second birthday of Poolesville's Betty Ritorto (center). Friends: Cindy Smith McCraith, Joan Carroll, Jan Deloria, and Laura Davis.



The extra hot days of August motivated these children to set up the traditional lemonade stand on Whalen Commons.

## Town Government

### Commissioners Pass Voting Ordinance

By Link Hoewing

At their August 17 meeting, the commissioners considered and passed an ordinance regarding mail-in voting in the wake of continued concerns about the coronavirus. The ordinance suspends parts of the town charter so the town can allow for mail-in voting in the November 3 election.

The town has never utilized mail-in ballots and its voting machines are the old-fashioned mechanical-lever types. Voters have to enter a voting both, pull down metal switches indicating their choices, and move a large lever across to tabulate their votes.

Under the proposed ordinance, all voters would receive mail-in ballots they could use if they wished. In-person voting will still be available. The ballots have special envelopes that would hold a person's ballot and include an affidavit a voter must sign, indicating that they are the legally registered voter using the ballot. Depending on how many voters use the mail-in ballots, it could take up to seven days after the election for the official results to be known. As with much that has happened during the pandemic, this is unprecedented.

The vote on the ordinance was unanimous, 5-0.

In other business, the commissioners considered proposals from the Parks Board. One proposal is to charge rental fees for the many pavilions the town has in its various parks. Currently, there are no fees imposed, but Town Manager Seth Rivard pointed out that this is not common in most other jurisdictions. Further, when a private party reserves a pavilion, it takes it "out of circulation so other citizens cannot use it." He went on to say that the pavilions are rented out frequently—about forty times a year—and the cost to replace all of the four pavilions is around \$140,000. With the expected longevity of a pavilion on the order of twenty-five years, a fee of \$60 would help recoup enough costs to help reduce needed investments. According to Rivard, the \$60 fee would not be high enough to recoup the full costs of replacement over the twenty-five-year life of the pavilions, but it would help and is in line with fees other jurisdictions charge.

Commissioner Jerry Klobukowski expressed concern that the proposal was not widely known by the public. He said, "It is not going to break us" to wait a couple of weeks and ensure that citizens are aware of the proposal.

Commissioner Jim Brown said that each property owner pays "thousands of dollars in taxes annually to support infrastructure." He too seemed to question the propriety of the new fee. Commissioner Klobukowski moved to table the proposal, and it will be considered in the next town meeting.

A long discussion followed the fee proposal debate concerning the removal of the "Streets" designation from the title of the of Parks, Recreation, and Streets Board. Town Manager Rivard noted that much of what is done regarding streets has to do with engineering issues such as street dimensions, repaving schedules, and selecting and overseeing paving contractors. He said that the board is more involved with the "Parks and Recreation" responsibilities of the body, and it would still be involved in issues such as town pathways.

Commissioner Klobukowski said he had no problem with the Parks Board being involved with streets, too. Jeff McIntyre, a Parks Board member, commented

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## Rande(m) Thoughts The Silent Blitz

By Rande Davis

How did they do it? How did they get through it? It has been almost exactly eighty years to the day that it first began, and it lifts one's heart to fully understand their resilience.

It began on September 7, 1940 at 8:00 p.m., the Blitz. For the next fifty-seven days in a row, Hitler bombed London day after day. The bombing was most intense for the first two months, and London dug in, prepared for their new reality that would last for the next five years. Here in America, our greatest generation of young people put their lives on the line in battle, while the people at home went to sleep with the fear of a bombing that never came.

What the Third Reich couldn't do, the coronavirus did. Our day of reckoning was January 21, 2020 when the very first case of COVID-19 was diagnosed in America. Since then, like the Londoners in the last days of summer in 1940, the words endurance and perseverance emerged with a whole new meaning.

From our cities, the COVID-19 Blitz has viciously worked its way nationwide. As we await with hope for new therapies and promising vaccines, praying they will come sooner rather than later, my thoughts have been fixated on the national crisis. For us, here in Poolesville, we must be grateful that we have been spared the utter tragedy known elsewhere. We must be experiencing what the little village of Shere, Surrey, England (located thirty-five miles from London) did in 1940.

Hunkering down seems to be such a trivial sacrifice compared to others. Even in Poolesville, hunkering down was not an option for many. Going to work was essential. Working at home and getting paid may become something we even prefer. Our business owners who have not had that option

had to re-invent their worlds. I have marveled at how Eric from Bassett's, Barbie from Cugini's, Linda from House of Poolesville, and all the others have innovated new approaches for their livelihoods. Their well-thought-out and diligent cleaning routines and strict adherence to the new rules of social gathering coupled with specific seating and menu adjustments actually seem to be more of a positive than a negative. They took action not to thrive but simply to survive. Kristopher's and Subway have stepped up rather than step down with their new outdoor seating that is a charming addition to the town. Mexican Grill has come back in some ways better than ever.

It's not just our restaurants that stepped up to the challenge. Look what Linda and Robert have done at Lewis Orchards, it's nearly incredible. Anytime Fitness and Calleva responded, as well. The fitness center has established routines for its COVID-19 response which makes one almost wonder why they ever had to close to begin with. For us, at least in Poolesville, their exercise environment is completely clean, safe, and reassuring. I have yet to be within six feet of a nyone there. Look at what Calleva has done: With their world-renowned haunted forest on hold, they have come back with some new educational programs for young people.

For our businessowners, waiting around for normalcy was not an option. I am amazed and do not take for granted what they have accomplished. Our experience here may seem so very, very trite compared to the Londoners' harrowing ordeals eight decades ago, but there's a spark of that British spirit living within us.

Through it all, I have a new item on my bucket list. I want to travel to Shere, Surrey and visit a local pub and have a pint of ale, raising a toast to them as we all sing an old song. I can almost hear it, faintly in the wind, the upbeat sounds of the Depression-ending era anthem, "Happy Days Are Here Again."

## Letter to the Editor

By Christine Rai

When I picked up last week's issue, I was so happy to see the front page covering Poolesville's proposed diversity council and Kenny Sholes's piece on the Ag Reserve's surviving enslaved quarters. You see, my husband is a person of color who grew up in Poolesville—he loves it deeply and yet had many distressing stories of unwelcoming or outright hostile experiences he or family members experienced here. When we first married, we were living in Baltimore County, and when we started our family, we knew we wanted to be closer to family. Frankly, I was very reticent to move to Poolesville and raise multiracial kids here because of his experiences and what I observed during my visits—but move we did. Now, thirteen years later, I have seen the town change, in my opinion, for the better. There are more events and resources here, more people of different colors and creeds, and more of a community vision and spirit. I've seen Poolesville's energy growing in power and positivity, and both our kids love living here. So imagine my happiness on viewing your front page—

terrific progress in acknowledging a topic many avoid or censor outright.

I was happy also to see your op-ed, "Diversity by Any Other Name," and was likewise pleased—not only is there a grassroots community effort, but the town's government and local newspaper are also in tune—however, the more I read, the more the body of this piece seemed to contradict itself and be based on a misguided impression, rather than actual information. Ironically, the day I read it, I had just finished a Community Conversations meeting which focused largely on what could be done to support lower-socioeconomic community members and students, not racial issues. The discussion centered around community resources, schools, family needs, and possible solutions. Additionally, just recently, one group member shared that she does not identify as a liberal and that she's voted Republican just as many times as Democrat. I take exception to the statement in the op-ed that this group is homogeneous and only focuses on race. While I agree with you that white people do often need to listen more to the needs and viewpoints of people of color, it's not an end-all-be-all solution. We are all at different stages of this journey to

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## Fun Fact...

"Happy Days Are Here Again," written by Jack Yellen and Milton Ager in 1929, instantly brings up images of the Jazz Era and the end of Prohibition. Not only has this song been used in countless films, but it has a deep connection to Franklin Delano Roosevelt. It was played at the 1932 Democratic National Convention following the nomination speech given by Judge John E. Mack to help enliven the crowd. Roosevelt was thrilled with the reaction and began using the song whenever and wherever he could on the campaign trail. The song ended up becoming the battle cry of the Depression with the chin-up attitude embodied by this tune lifting spirits across the nation. <https://dustydoldthing.com/>

## Tidbits

### Men's Group at Memorial Methodist: Confronting Racism

The three-year-old Memorial Men's Group is engaged in a study of racism. Co-leaders of the study, Scott McGrew and Ray Hoewing, note that "study and meditation is the main thrust of our group, but we have always focused on the practical, contemporary issues of the day."

The group previously examined the meaning of "Me Too" for men, guns, and violence, and men's responsibilities in the family, for example. The death of George Floyd on May 25 triggered widespread demonstrations and serious re-examination of Black-White relations in the U.S., including a public assembly and march in Poolesville the evening of May 30.

Anti-racism is a major thrust of the bishop, Estrelle Easterling, of the conference to which Memorial belongs. This has led the men of the church to ponder racism in our local community and how to play a more active role in confronting it.

### Poolesville Seniors Host Virtual Programs

In September, Poolesville Seniors is offering six virtual programs to help meet community needs for exercise, socialization, and information.

Each Wednesday at 1:00 p.m., Karen McPhatter teaches Zumba Gold. Follow along with Karen's well-choreographed paces, designed to get you moving.

Continued from page 4.

### Letter to the Editor

understand and do better, and it will require an openness of mind, a willingness to learn, and a desire to collaborate and compromise, as you suggest in your final statement.

As you pointed out, diversity is a kaleidoscope and isn't just limited to skin color, nor is this group limited to people of a certain voting

Darnestown Smiles Doctors Yellepeddy and Patel will present a dental program, with questions and answers, on Tuesday, September 8 at 1:00 p.m. The topic will be Dental Health for Seniors.

Wednesday, September 16 at 1:30 p.m. marks the return of our Quarterly Socials. Mary Ann Jung, from History Alive, will portray Elizabeth Cady Stanton, a Women's Suffrage, Women's Rights, and Equal Rights Advocate. There will be a short question-and-answer session at the end.

In July, over fifty viewers saw Kenny Sholes's presentation about historical properties in the Agricultural Reserve. Kenny returns on Thursday, September 17 at 7:00 p.m. to tell us about more Ag Reserve properties.

Poolesville Black History is the topic for Tuesday, September 22 at 7:00 p.m. Skip Etheridge will tell how the tiny settlements of freed slaves that surround Poolesville have impacted our town, our state, and our nation.

Stephanie Katz will discuss Medicare and its options on Tuesday, September 29 at 7:00 p.m.

All of the programs hosted by Poolesville Seniors are open to the entire community and are presented on Zoom. To register for any of the programs listed here, and to receive the Zoom link for each, visit the Poolesville Seniors website at: [poolesvilleseniors.org](http://poolesvilleseniors.org). Email questions to: [info@poolesvilleseniors.org](mailto:info@poolesvilleseniors.org). Keep checking their website for additional information and an updated listing of programs.

bloc. I myself am not a registered Democrat, but I find this group to be positive, solution-focused, and supportive. I invite you to join this group or take part in its future efforts and, again, I appreciate the *Monocle's* willingness to cover these positive big changes in our little town. Thank you to the *Monocle* for keeping the community informed even in these times of limited gatherings.

## Fun Fact...

### An August Midnight

A shaded lamp and a waving blind,  
And the beat of a clock from a distant floor:  
On this scene enter—winged, horned, and spined—  
A longlegs, a moth, and a dumbledore;  
While 'mid my page there idly stands  
A sleepy fly, that rubs its hands...



— Thomas Hardy, 1840-1928



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## Local News

### New Outdoor Program: Calleva Gap Year

By Olivia Murphy, Director of Calleva Gap

Calleva Outdoors is pushing the envelope this fall—and we are committing students for a whole semester in our new Gap Year program!

The Gap program—an educational, experience-based year between high school and college—is something that has been on our radar for several years now, and with the alternative fall season in front of us, we decided it was time to take the plunge. We have designed the program to allow recent high school graduates to try their hand at many skills: culinary arts, mechanics, construction, community outreach, and sustainable food production. The program is designed as a great alternative for students delaying college or who need a break from their virtual learning routine. Alongside their practical skills, students will balance “work” life with play and go on daily adventures in the river valley while staying true to the Calleva mission of getting people of all ages outside.

Students will also have the opportunity to make a lasting impact on communities in our area that would not otherwise have the ability to get into the outdoors—whether on the trail or on the river. Gap students will share their growing love of the outdoors with young people in Montgomery County and the D.C. area through outreach programs that make outdoor adventure more accessible. From gear swaps to approachable instruction, Calleva Gap participants will support the formation of COVID-friendly independent outdoor groups exploring rivers and trails in our area.



*In Calleva's fully equipped mechanic shop, students will learn basic car maintenance, as well as more advanced auto repair.*

The semester will be split into three blocks: the introduction, a group project, and an independent project. The introduction will allow students to learn many basic life skills, from changing a tire to cooking for themselves. They will experience all that the Calleva Farm has to offer them throughout the fall and into winter. Once they've learned the basics of each skill area, we will start on a group project: a tiny house build! The groups will design, frame, plumb, wire, and finish a tiny trailer home in an effort to learn a bit about the complete construction process. To wrap up the semester, students will have the opportunity to choose a project of their interest whether it be boat build, recipe development, go-kart build, or anything that inspires them! Working with a mentor, each student will design his/her project, create a timeline, and progress through milestones to completion. By the end of the semester, students will have gained a new level of self-sufficiency, earned increased self-confidence, and developed skills that will serve them well in their next phase of life.

We, at Calleva, consider ourselves to be lifelong learners who are constantly eager to acquire more skills and further our ability to make things ourselves, continually innovate, and grow. We want to share this philosophy and lifestyle through all of our programming. This year, we're especially excited to extend this to young adults. If you know of anyone who may be interested, check out [calleva.org](http://calleva.org) to learn more!

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Continued from page 1.

### Design of the New High School Progressing

footprint area for new construction. Over the last six months, fifteen option thumbnails were created as part of the study, and those were whittled down to three. In quick summary, the three are titled "Max New," "Campus," and "Bar and Reuse."

**Max New:** Under this model, as much new construction as possible would be done on the site. Most of the existing building would be torn down. The auditorium would stay and be rebuilt.

**Campus:** The auditorium and existing gym would remain under this option with new structures around them. This would incorporate an outdoor learning area utilizing a college-style campus. The "new" gym now at the school and the very old gym would stay with the old gym as auxiliary space.

**Bar and Reuse:** The auditorium and gym would stay with the auditorium being rebuilt. Several parts of the old building would be reused, including administrative space. Several new buildings would be constructed including a new full front envelope.

No matter which option is chosen, the plan is to have spaces set aside for potential community use after funding from the county. All three options would include significant indoor space that would be easily rentable from the county.

Regardless of the three options, there would significant new construction additions as the school classroom/administrative setup and use footprint is designed for 1,500 students at maximum. Currently, the maximum student population is set at 1,200.

In all three options, the existing auditorium stays and is rebuilt and enhanced. Construction times, the location of students during construction, and the overall costs of the options vary with the Max New option costing the most and the Bar and Reuse option costing the least. All construction would start in late 2021 and be largely complete by 2023.

During the discussion, there were questions about how MCPS is working with the county on a community center and wellness center and clinic. It was confirmed that there has been ongoing dialogue between MCPS and the county about preserving open space for future community use.

Cost estimates and the overall presentation of the options will be made by MCPS to the Board of Education at its August 25 meeting. The board is expected to approve the options for further review and community input.

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## Local News

### Repairs on Route 28 Bridge Near Completion

By Jack Toomey

Before the mid-1950s, there were only two ways to get to Frederick or cities beyond, and that was by using Route 28 or Route 240 (later renamed 355). Route 28 had gas stations, general stores, and other commercial buildings. Some of the buildings remain as oddities and served other purposes while others are vacant. Some may recall the house at Route 28 and 85 where the Birdhouse Man lived. In its day, it was a busy gas station. Another glaring example is the abandoned gas station at Route 28 and White Ground Road that has served a variety of purposes. Then General Eisenhower returned from Europe after World War II and was elected president in 1952. While his soldiers were invading Germany, their march was made easier by Hitler's network of high-speed roadways. As president, he began a vigorous program to build the interstate highway system. When Route 70S was completed, much traffic moved from the local roads to I-70S.

In 1930, the State of Maryland decided to replace two of its most dangerous bridges over the Monocacy River, and they were both on the aforementioned roads. The two sister bridges, built at the same time and style, were a source of pride for the state although the old bridge over the Monocacy at Urbana collapsed during construction of the new bridge, killing several workers. The bridge built over the river on Route 28 cost just a bit over \$100,000.

Ninety years went by, and each inspection of the Route 28 bridge showed deterioration, an unsafe deck, and buildups of debris under the bridge from flooding. While the bridge was in no danger of collapsing, a complete rehabilitation of the bridge was necessary, including deck repair, painting, and the removal of tons of debris from underneath the bridge. The Maryland Department of Transportation selected an Annapolis company to do the work and, in the summer of 2018, the first workers and equipment arrived on site. They found that the 446-foot-long bridge was in poor condition. It carried 9,200 vehicles daily, including many heavy trucks. Work was scheduled to last eight months. The cost was estimated at \$8.4 million.

Officials soon found that the heavy equipment needed for the job was too



The long wait to complete the refurbishment of the Monocacy Bridge will hopefully come to an end on October 1.

large to fit onto the bridge and still allow traffic to flow. Thus an occasional weekend shutdown was scheduled beginning in 2018. When the project was about fifty percent complete, it was decided to close the bridge completely every weekend except for holidays. Traffic lights were installed at each end of the bridge to allow for safer movement of traffic.

As of press time, the bridge refurbishment is ninety percent complete. It appears that the job will be finished by October 1 or earlier. People living in

and around Poolesville will rejoice at the sight of the ninety-year-old bridge all dressed up and waiting to carry traffic for another hundred years.

Sherry Christian, a spokesperson for the Maryland Department of Transportation, said, "We're in the home stretch, just finishing up the structure to make sure it will get the life expectancy the commuters want to see out of a rehab project of this nature. The major detours, which have greatly reduced the amount of time necessary

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Continued from page 3.

**Commissioners Pass Voting Ordinance**

that the board has lots of experience going back over many years with issues such as the placement of speed bumps and stop signs on streets. He felt the board played a valuable role in advising the commission and taking things off their plate that consumed time and energy.

Commissioner Valaree Dickerson said she wondered whether they could not come up with a proposal to “split the difference in roles between actual oversight of functions like street contracts and engineering problems” and some of the other issues involving streets and pedestrian byways such as speed bumps, safety issues, and signs.

In the end, Commissioner Klobukowski said, “This does not rise to the level of requiring this much discussion” and moved to table the proposal for future discussion. The motion was approved 5-0.



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## Garden

### The Weeds of August

By Maureen O'Connell

In my last column, "A Garden of Hope," I spoke about the garden as a place of refuge and peace in these challenging times. I remarked that my gardens in Barnesville were the best they have been in years. The plants looked very healthy with little evidence of damage from pests and diseases. That was mid-July, and now the scene looks a little bit different and not for the good. May, June, and most of July are the gardens' Goldilocks months: not too hot, not too cold, and not many nasty weeds, but, come August, the weeds seriously come to town and try to take over. They were helped by high temperatures, abundant sunshine, and enough scattered rain showers to promote fast weed growth. They always arrive right on schedule—in August. Unfortunately, my enthusiasm for serious or even casual weeding is diminished as the temperatures hover in the nineties.

Gardening has been described as crafting beauty from nature, but nature contains weeds. It goes back to

your definition of "weeds." Some say that they are flowers out of place. The problem arises when they are not where you want them; they are not in your picture of nature. There are weeds growing in many areas of the world every month of the year. There are regular weeds and serious weeds. I can live with some, since many of them have very pretty foliage and flowers, but many of them are also very invasive, long-lived, and difficult to get rid of. The wildflower *Persicaria amphibia* is such an example. It can live in aquatic or terrestrial locations and is also known as Water Knotweed and Oriental Smartweed. They grow about twelve inches high with lance-shaped leaves and stems that end in dense clusters of many five-lobed pink flowers. In August, their growth rate more than doubles as they creep and spread throughout my beautiful *Coreopsis* "Moonbeam," surround the daylilies, and invade any bare soil. I have given up controlling them.

The two monster weeds growing in my gardens in August are bindweed and Johnson grass. There are many invasive grasses, and I am not positive that my weed is Johnson, but it looks extremely like it, and I see it growing in many local areas, especially the hay fields. Bindweed is in the gardens in

other months, but Johnson grass shows up right on schedule in August. Johnson grass, *Sorghum halepense*, is a plant in the grass family, Poaceae, native to Asia and northern Africa. It has been introduced to all continents except Antarctica. It reproduces by rhizomes and seeds. It is especially troublesome to farmers as it causes serious economic losses as it reduces yield in corn, grain sorghum, soybeans, cotton, and hay fields. Tillage can spread the rhizomes and birds spread the seeds. Herbicides and controlled cultural practices are effective for agriculture use, but it is not practical or recommended for home garden use, as the herbicide will kill any ornamental plant it comes in contact with. In my gardens, I continually pull up stalks, but it is a never-ending and losing job.

Bindweed is the perennial cousin to the sweet potato and is very difficult to kill once it invades your garden plots. It can sprout, resprout, and re-sprout from wide, spreading

roots that can reach as deep as thirty feet underground. If you let this weed's flowers go to seed in your garden, the seeds can stay viable for up to fifty years. I control it by digging and pulling out all shoots when they appear. Repeated pulling will weaken the roots until hopefully they die out.

All weeds this summer seem worse than ever. Unless you try to break the cycle, they will become more invasive and numerous.

All is not lost in the garden; there will be another spring to look forward to. Now is the time to order spring-flowering bulbs and summer-flowering perennials. Expand your garden's horizon. Spring bulbs are not just limited to daffodils, tulips, and crocuses.

Don't let the weeds or the challenges of COVID-19 win. In times like this, I always enjoy reading the classic gardening essays of *The New Yorker* writer and editor Katharine S. White in her book *Onward and Upward in the Garden*. It was written in 1958, but it is ageless.

Do you have a garden-related topic you would like to read about?

The Monocle welcomes your suggestions.

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## Focus on Business

### Silver Lining

By Rande Davis

Imagine that you own a company that has successfully secured your family and your future, specializing in the organization and promotion of large parties, concerts, live shows, foreign movies, and conferences. Then it happens: The Pandemic. After the pandemic: no more events, resulting in zero income, no more crowds, no more concerts, no more shows nor gatherings.

Actually, Will Risso and his family didn't have to imagine it because they have been living it. He, with his wife, Sue, and family, faced the crisis and didn't blink. "My wife and I thought, instead of feeling sorry for the situation, we should reinvent ourselves with a service that is really needed in the community, something in demand." The name of their events company was Talent USA Productions LLC. Now it would become MoCoDelivery. "We saw an opportunity to create a local, small, family-owned delivery service, catering to all of Montgomery County and charging the customers a cheap price, flat fee. By doing so, we could also help the restaurants who were suffering from the higher cost of using the big, corporate giants, like Doordash and Grubhub, who were charging them exorbitant percentages (30%)." The whole family is involved in this new enterprise. Their children, Wendy, William, Melany, and Makayla help with the social media, deliveries, and budget and marketing.

MoCoDelivery distributes products like bagels, French pastries, and Jewish-style delicatessen selections partnering with restaurants, such as Fresh



The Risso family of MoCoDelivery.

Baguette, Bethesda's Heckman's Caddies, and with iconic Ize's Deli and Bagelry in Rockville. Owners Angie and Lee Greenberg have been local Montgomery County residents for close to ten years. They have all the standard variety of bagels for just about every palate—made fresh in-house daily.

Heckman's Caddies Catering was developed by Ronnie Heckman after five years of serving the community at Brooklyn's Deli in Potomac and with Eric Heckman for five years at Heckman's Delicatessen in Bethesda.

MoCoDelivery's menu selection is huge and accessible on their website. Orders placed by Thursday, 2:00 p.m. will be delivered on Saturday. You can either text to order or go online to order at MoCoDelivery.com or text 202-718-8454, if you prefer

The American dream might have been ruthlessly ripped from this resourceful family, but they knew they could dream again. When the pandemic woes subside and the live productions come back, they will come back greater than ever; meanwhile, bon appétit!

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### Local News

#### Virginia Man Drowns in Potomac River

By Jack Toomey

On August 24, at about 2:30 p.m., a man's body was found in the Potomac River near Harrison Island just downstream from White's Ferry. Rescue units from Montgomery and Loudoun Counties responded with boats, and the man was located.

Since Montgomery County has jurisdiction over the river, the body was taken to the Maryland side and then sent to Baltimore for an autopsy at the office of the Medical Examiner.

The man was identified as Jason Lloyd Scrivo of Leesburg, Virginia. How Scrivo came to his demise in the river is under investigation by the Major Crimes Unit of the Montgomery County Police. Anyone with information about this case is asked to call detectives at 240-773-5070.



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Continued from page 1.

**Proposed Solar Array for the Ag Reserve Sparks Debate**

industrial scale solar to lease income from a table crop producer, there is no contest. When large scale solar is allowed in the Ag Reserve, old farmers are priced off the land, and new farmers are completely shut out in the only part of the county set aside for farming.

Solar arrays pay more per acre to the landowner, but this land was set aside for one purpose, agriculture, and solar arrays take land out of farming.

Though we all want to see the county embrace renewable energy, there is a disagreement about this flawed ZTA among local environmental groups. Without clear stipulation that these commercial facilities will be part of the community solar initiative, energy generated will simply flow to the regional grid, providing neither affordable energy for local consumers nor satisfying Montgomery County’s mandate for becoming carbon neutral by 2035.

Caroline Taylor, MCA president, added, “The Montgomery County’s Agricultural Reserve is not just happenstance farmland that hasn’t been developed. It is a master-planned, multi-million public- and private-dollar-easement secured, and a national model for farmland preservation. Given the other challenges to farmland across the nation, weather, floods, fire, high wind events, etc., we have learned that we need to protect every acre of farmland to ensure our resilience in the decades to come.”

**Poolesville Green**

As the debate on allowing community solar projects in the Agricultural Reserve continues, the pro-solar side is being defended by local environmental groups such as Poolesville Green. The group, which has organized the large electric vehicle meeting at Poolesville Day, sees community solar as a key tool to fight climate change. As its Executive Director Joyce Breiner explained, “The climate crisis is like a pandemic but in slow motion. Some impacts are already baked in, but severe impacts will be much worse if we don’t start taking major action today. We must transition to clean renewable energy and electrify our transportation sector—yesterday. That immense and daunting challenge is attainable if we are willing to use all the tools at our disposal. We cannot give up on our children’s future.”

Dr. Doug Boucher of Poolesville Green pointed out that solar power does much more to reduce global warming pollution than alternatives that take carbon out of the atmosphere, such as reforestation or increasing use of regenerative agriculture techniques like cover crops, no-till planting, or rotational grazing. “The difference is dramatic—an acre of solar does one hundred times as much to reduce global warming pollution. It also reduces the other health-damaging pollutants due to fossil fuels, unlike the alternatives that allow emissions to continue and then try to take some of the carbon back out of the air. Thus, it’s an issue of environmental justice as well, since air pollution injures communities of color the most.”

Karen Lefkowitz of Poolesville Green explained how community solar, which would be limited to small projects (ten acres maximum) and only two percent of the area of the Agricultural Reserve, would nonetheless be an important step forward for clean energy in Montgomery County. “Many county residents don’t have access to rooftop solar; community solar farms make it possible for them to benefit from solar energy, and under the Maryland community solar program, low to moderate income participants can get energy at rates up to thirty percent less than the utilities offer, providing access to those that might otherwise be left behind in the green economy. Non-low to moderate income participants can get rates up to ten percent lower,” she said.

Although MCA has claimed that combining agriculture and solar on farmland is “rather ridiculous,” Boucher points out that there are many successful examples across the country. A Department of Energy study of thirty of these pollinator-friendly solar projects found that they reduced sediment loss, increased water retention, and stored more soil carbon, compared to the kind of commodity crop agriculture that currently dominates the Reserve.

Furthermore, said Boucher, the legislation allowing community solar retains the strong existing legal protections for forests and stream valleys, and adds additional protection for high-quality soils, steep slopes, and wetlands.

Poolesville Green sees community solar as a question of whether all communities in Montgomery County will do their part to save our people and our environment from the danger of climate change. “Climate change is far too urgent to say that something should be done—but not here, not now, not by us,” concludes Boucher.

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## Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

### Present Crime

**Silver Alert:** An older gentleman who suffers from memory loss was reported missing. The next day he was found safe and sound and returned to his home.

**Assault:** 19100 block of Hempstone Avenue.

**Drug Arrest:** 15500 block of Schaffer Road. Individuals in a vehicle were arrested for possession of drugs.

**Vandalism:** 18400 block of River Road.

### Past Crime: 1900 to 1905

John Henry Lawson was picked up at the D.C. jail by a deputy sheriff and returned to Rockville where a warrant awaited him for stealing harnesses off of horses. Lawson insisted that he had received the harnesses as a gift from a man named Charlie Williams. When asked by the judge where officials could locate Williams, Lawson exclaimed, "I guess he's dead!"

Straddling the boundary line between Montgomery County and Washington, D.C. was a newly-opened pool room. As the only way to determine who had

jurisdiction over the crimes that were committed on the premises, law enforcement officials had to rely on the boundary stones that were put in place in the late 1700s. In addition to the game of pool, which attracted some unsavory characters, the place also held prize fighting on a lot outside the pool room. It seemed that prize fighting was illegal in Maryland but legal in Washington. Finally, it was determined that most of the building was in Montgomery County, and the place was shuttered by the sheriff.

A glaring election fraud at Damascus was being investigated by Sheriff Nicholson. More votes were cast in the Democrat primary than there were citizens of the town. In addition, there were claims that whiskey was given out to voters in return for favorable votes. Nicholson seized all of the ballots and secured them at the courthouse.

Edward Griffen and Robert Dennison, both wanted for the murder of Albert Johnson at Cabin John, were turned over to Montgomery County officials. (Note: During this time in history, at least half of the reportable crime in Montgomery County was committed at gambling halls, houses of prostitution, and dance halls along the Conduit Road

[now named MacArthur Boulevard], stretching from the D.C. line to Cabin John.) Instead of being locked up in the county jail to await trial, Griffen and Dennison were lodged at the Corcoran Hotel in Rockville, obviously in a gesture of their prominence in the community.

The sheriff of Montgomery County, his deputies, and the police in Washington were on the lookout for a

car that had struck a farmer on the Rockville Pike, scattered his wares all over the road, ruined his wagon, and deposited the man in a ditch. The driver of the high-speed automobile was believed to be a chauffeur who had been seen in Rockville before.

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



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## Remembrance

### Edith June Luhn

Edith June Luhn, 93, of Barnesville, passed away on August 16, 2020.

She was the wife of the late Leslie T. Luhn.

Born on June 16, 1927, in Maryland, she was the daughter to the late Harold B. and Estelle M. (Jamison) Barr. Surviving are her daughters, Sandra Luhn Oden and Mary Ann Luhn; two grandchildren, Michael T. Oden, Sr. (Michelle) and Duane S. Oden, (fiancée Stacie); three great-grandchildren, Michael T. Oden, Jr., Sara V. (Oden) Markham (Kyle), and Grace A. Oden; one great-great-granddaughter, Virginia Rose; and one step-grandchild, Ray Randall. Edith also leaves a special daughter at heart, Elnora Caudell.

She was preceded in death by her two brothers, George W. Barr and Donald P. Barr.

In lieu of flowers, donations may be made to the Barnesville Baptist Church, P.O. Box 69, Barnesville, MD 20838.



Edith June Luhn



Continued from page 8.

#### Repairs on Route 28 Bridge Near Completion

to complete the bridge, should be coming to a close here with an anticipated completion to the project in October. We appreciate everyone's—especially residents'—patience and understanding during the construction."

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## Celebrating 31 Years of Service

### Separation Anxiety and Your Pandemic Pet: Save Them All

By Peter H. Eeg, BSc, DVM, CVLF

The Pandemic has been incredibly difficult for all people everywhere. There has been great sadness and heartbreak. In the mists of this event, there has been one bright spot, the adoption of millions of dogs and cats from rescues, shelters, and animal organizations across the world. In many cases, these organizations have had their cages and shelter areas empty or nearly empty. Humans with nowhere to go have turned to these little hopeful creatures for companionship and relief from the stresses of the Pandemic World. Small creatures that would otherwise not have a safe place on the planet have been taken in, given safety, love, and life.

Now comes the rub. The human race is getting back to a new normal. People are beginning to travel and go back to work. The pets that they have adopted that do not know a day without their humans are suddenly being left alone.

The number one reason dogs and cats are returned to rescue/shelter facilities is due to behavior problems. Dogs and Cats think like, well, dogs and cats. We as humans often infuse them with our human-like system of management. This does not work for the furrer group (no not Uncle Joe). Of the unwanted behaviors, destructive acts are at the top of the list for returning a once-forever pet.

Separation anxiety is the hallmark condition that is noted most when pets start to become destructive in the home. This behavior condition is currently being amplified by the close and constant interaction we are having with our pets during the stay-home pandemic. Your forever friend has come to identify you as a constant member of the pack/pride. Your sudden (as they see it) leaving of the house for long periods is distressful for some pets. They have grown to understand that the pack/pride they are in is a consistent hierarchy. The sudden leaving of the alpha male, female, or both stresses your pets. They feel that you were not intending to leave them as you went out to hunt and forage, so they try to follow. This usually takes the form of chewed doorknobs, chewed door jambs, torn rugs and drapes, tipped over tables and chairs, clawed furniture and walls, or food supplies invaded and consumed.

Avoiding separation anxiety is not always a simple fix. If you could ease them into your absence for the day, that is the best way. Start by leaving for noticeably short times. On your return, ignore them for the first two to three minutes, and then greet them. This makes your departure and return less of a big deal. Continue to extend the time away until your pets do not seem to be as excited upon your return. Cats can also suffer from this condition, so it is important to let them know you will return.

Some animals require a smaller area to inhabit while you are gone. This can include keeping them in a kitchen or mud room with access to the outdoors. Cats can be removed to one room with a food bowl, water bowl, and litter box. For your canine friend, provided enrichment objects like a KONG toy stuffed with frozen cheese or peanut butter can keep them occupied while you are gone. Playing single instrument music can also be a way to calm them while you are gone.

If you have the means, a dog walker or cat visitor with a certified person can help to break up the day and allow them to interact with others. This can also reduce their anxiety.

It is important to discuss this condition with your veterinarian and trainer should you start to notice issues as you venture farther and longer away from home.



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