

# The Monocacy

# MONOCLE

*Keeping an Eye on Local News*

A Biweekly Newspaper

February 4, 2022 • Volume XVII, Number 23



*Welcoming home a hero. See more pictures in Family Album on page 2.*



*How do hollies and other plants help our animal friends? Read Garden for ideas on page 4.*



*Commissioner Jeff Eck and Montgomery County Council President Gabe Alborno distributed COVID tests and masks. More information is in Tidbits on page 8.*



*Poolesville High School girls' basketball team in action. Their story is on page 10.*

## Homes for Our Troops Welcomes Newest Home Recipient in Poolesville

By Rande Davis

Homes for Our Troops (HFOT), a national nonprofit organization whose mission is to build homes and rebuild lives through customized homes for disabled warriors, welcomed Sgt. Emmanuel "Manny" Melendez-Diaz and his wife, Natibel, to their new home in Poolesville at a Key Ceremony on January 28. The one-level ranch home which has over forty customized adaptations to aid wheelchair-bound persons, is located at the corner of Westerly Avenue and West Willard Road.

The Key Ceremony brought together dignitaries of HFOT, major national and regional sponsors, local leaders, and scores of area residents and new neighbors. The Maryland Chapter of the Patriots Guard, a group sponsored by the Sykesville American Legion, along with the Poolesville Daniel-Jeffers American Legion Post 247, joined a police-escorted motorcade for the couple as they arrived at their new home.



*The Homes for Our Troops home for severely-injured post-2011 vet Manny Melendez-Diaz is at the corner of West Willard Road and Westerly Avenue.*

On December 4, 2004, in Muqadiyah, Iraq, Sgt. Melendez-Diaz was serving with the 2nd Battalion, 2nd Infantry Regiment, 1st Infantry Division on a road clearance patrol when his vehicle hit an improvised explosive device (IED). This resulted in damage to his right leg, severe nerve damage in the left foot, severe pulmonary disease, and severe intestinal damage. In March 2006, doctors amputated Manny's right leg above the knee, and he was fitted for a prosthesis. He was medically discharged from the army in May 2007.

HFOT reports that Manny enjoys handcycling, kayaking, and spending time with his wife. The two have hopes and aspirations for their future, but they have been forced to put many of them on hold until now. The customized home provides the family with security and a new sense of freedom.

The new home is designed specifically with Manny's daily needs in mind. The Melendez-Diazes were especially pleased with the fully-handicapped-

**Continued on page 12.**

## Poolesville Sophomore to Represent American Legion Post 247 in State Oratorical Contest

By Rande Davis

Poolesville High School sophomore, Faith Nah, has been selected to represent Poolesville Daniel-Jeffers American Legion Post 247 in the Maryland State oratorical contest.

The American Legion national organization sponsors an annual Oratorical Contest that is designed to develop deeper knowledge and appreciation for the U.S. Constitution among high school students. Since 1938, the program has presented participants with an academic speaking challenge that teaches important leadership qualities, the history of our nation's laws, the ability to think and speak



*Neil Tiemann, Bob Cissel, Faith Nah, Jim Cappuccilli, Nick Markoff, and Drew McKone.*

**Continued on page 5.**

# Family Album



**Homes for Our Troops**  
*Building Homes.  
Rebuilding Lives*



## In Your Own Backyard

### Looking Back and Looking Forward

By Jon Wolz

Looking back at 2021 and forward to 2022, the pandemic still seems to dominate our lives. From January into March, I led or participated in several hikes, mostly along the C&O Canal. with both large and smaller groups, including walks with Poolesville Seniors and the C&O Canal Association. During that period, we wore face coverings. By April, when more people were vaccinated, I noticed people stopped wearing face coverings along the towpath; however, by the end of December, a lot of people were wearing face masks again, especially at Great Falls.

Group walks I was involved with last year included one or more hikes along the C&O Canal, the Johnson quarries, walking over and back at White's Ford (twice). I also went on some hikes sponsored by the Seneca Creek State Park to various locations within that park. I did several hikes either by myself or with family and friends.

I am outside in all four seasons and enjoy seeing the seasonal changes. In 2021, there were a lot more people enjoying the outdoors in our area as compared to other years. The seventeen-year cicadas were prolific and loud in Poolesville and along the canal.

In July, my friend Doug Zveare won a free night's stay at the Swain's Lockhouse (Lockhouse 21, Mile 16.64, on the C&O Canal) through a raffle. He invited Steve Horvath and me to stay overnight at the lockhouse. Jessie Swain was the last lock keeper when the canal closed in 1924. This lockhouse was restored and is one of seven lockhouses the C&O Canal Trust rents out as part of their Canal Quarters Program. The lockhouse is furnished as it would have looked in 1916 and tells the story of the Swain family inside. It has air conditioning, running water, and a small kitchen.

While staying at Swain's Lock, the three of us biked several miles up and down the towpath. That biking was the first time I had biked in over two years. Subsequently, I biked several more times on short outings with friends or by myself along the towpath. During 2021, I biked combined trips from Great Falls to Shepherdstown, totaling fifty-two miles. I also biked several miles along the towpath in the Hancock area and in the Oldtown area. During my visits to the canal, I met several cyclists who were traveling from Pittsburgh to Georgetown. They either camped along the way or stayed in B&Bs or hotels.

On another warm summer day, Rusty Smith invited me to go boating with him on the Potomac River. We left White's Ferry and headed down the far side of Harrison Island. In the river and along the Virginia bank down from the ramp of White's Ferry, I noticed large and smaller rocks that appeared to be Potomac marble, similar to what was quarried upriver on the Maryland side above White's Ferry by Benjamin Latrobe in 1817. I got out of the boat to inspect these rocks, looking for drill marks to determine if these rocks had been quarried. I did not see any signs of drilling. We floated by the area of Balls Bluff where the Union soldiers had climbed and retreated after the battle there in October 1861. Throughout the trip, I noticed what I thought were white egrets. Rusty said they were juvenile great blue herons. He said, "Look it up." I looked it up, and he was correct. He pointed out that whenever we saw the juveniles, there was an adult great blue heron nearby keeping a watchful eye. The juveniles were in groups of two to five. Rusty mentioned that the adult nudges the juveniles along if they are not looking for fish to eat.

After the trip with Rusty, I sent photos of what I thought were Potomac marble rocks to my friend Paul Kreingold who has written a book he is looking to publish entitled *The Lost History of Potomac Marble*. Paul invited me to go boating with him so he could see these rocks up close. We boated upriver from Edwards Ferry. When we reached the rocks, I got out of the boat and gathered a few samples. Paul confirmed the rocks were Potomac marble.

In early September, I was at the Monocacy Aqueduct viewing the high muddy waters of the Monocacy River after the remnants of Hurricane Ida came through our area. The high waters of the Monocacy added a huge amount of tree debris that is now resting against the aqueduct, blocking four of its seven arches. Ranger Jason Gillis was viewing the water and the debris while I was there. He said a contractor was about to remove the debris that had gathered against the aqueduct since 2018; however, with the additional pileup, the contract would need to be amended. Gillis is the arborist for the park and, among other things,

Continued on page 13.

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## Rande(m) Thoughts Empty Shelves, Empty Pages: Signs Of Our Times?

By Rande Davis

One of the most endearing and motivating experiences we have in publishing the *Monocacy Monocle* is the many times we hear directly from a reader just how much he or she loves our paper. We never take those statements lightly. The support of our readers is what sustains us more than anything. It is our most ardent wish to continue to do so for many years to come.

Our last three issues of the *Monocle* have been just sixteen pages, something that has not happened since our beginning in 2004. The pandemic has impacted nearly all businesses, national and local, and has negatively impacted us as well. It's unfortunate, as even in our small community, there is much more to report, but economics requires adjustments. As ad sales go down, we cannot afford to print as much as we would prefer.

As we advance into this new year, we are hoping that 2022 will be a new beginning of success for all of us in the business community in our area. It has been tough. COVID-19 has not only hurt all of us, but sadly, it has even caused a few of our beloved businesses to go under.

As the last paper standing of the four publications for our area that existed in 2004, we still believe in our mission: To ensure accurate news, to recognize individuals as well as groups for their contribution to all of us, to provide enlightening articles of our history, and to regale our readers with entertaining stories that elevate pride in the community we share. We are proud that we have never charged for

the Remembrance of one who has left us. Writing the last tribute to many of our friends who have left us has been a profound honor.

Our life-sustaining community spirit is still alive and well within our pages, as the *Monocle* uplifts us all. Without the *Monocle*, our shared cultural life becomes staler and insipid. Through the years, we have been at the forefront of battles like gaining a new school, opening White's Ferry, trying to save Selby's, holding elected officials accountable, respecting our heritage, and after seventeen years, so much, much more. Our mission has made a difference in the things we value. We hope you value our mission, too.

For those who are or have been an advertiser in the *Monocacy Monocle*, we are very grateful to you as an integral partner in this mission. Our publication reaches nearly all potential customers within a forty-minute radius of Poolesville, and along with the valued cultural benefits from our editorial offerings, we know we bring our advertisers the perfect venue for imparting their important messages about their services or products to our readers, their customers and clients in the area.

Although the times are tough, we hope that print news can continue to be viable. To our current advertisers, we thank you and hope you can continue to market your company or group within our pages. If you have not been an advertiser recently, we hope you can join us in 2022.

This year, as you consider how to best promote your business, please remember to give the *Monocle* an opportunity to partner with you in your quest for success. To our readers, please make every effort to shop local and to use our advertisers as often as possible. Oh, and don't be shy about thanking them for bringing the *Monocle* to you free of charge!

## Garden

### Winter Greens For Wildlife

By Maureen O'Connell

Even though monarch butterflies and hummingbirds headed south for the winter last fall, there is still a spectacular world of winter wildlife right outside your window. Many gardeners carefully plan for birds, butterflies, insects, and small mammals with food and shelter during the warm months of the year. They diligently seek to grow the best plants for pollinators, but what happens in your backyard in December, January, February, and March to help wildlife survive the cold? You can hang multiple bird feeders from trees, but there is more to their survival than food alone. They need water and shelter from harsh winter winds, sleet, and snow. The spring garden catalogs will soon be crowding your mailbox. Now is the time to plan on selecting trees and shrubs to plant this spring to help wildlife survive through the winter. As always, I only recommend plants that do well in my backyard for they can also do well in your Monocacy yard.



*The American Pussy Willow*  
(*Salix discolor*)

In the winter, your best choice is evergreens. Besides brightening the winter landscape, they are valuable sources of food and shelter for birds and other wildlife. Choose native plants as they save money and water, have better resistance to local weather conditions, demand less maintenance, and help restore natural habitats. Animals need plants in all stages all year: live and dead, green and brown,

Continued on page 9.

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Continued from page 1.

**Poolesville Sophomore to Represent American Legion Post 247 in State Oratorical Contest**

clearly, and an understanding of the duties, responsibilities, rights, and privileges of American citizenship. The program has featured numerous politicians and prominent contestants over the years, including high school students who went on to become luminaries like Lou Dobbs, former vice president Mike Pence, and Poolesville's own Rande Davis (okay, I couldn't resist that).

On January 29, Faith Nah delivered her remarks to a panel of judges on the topic: "What benefits are derived for citizens by our constitution."

She opened her presentation with a brief history of the development of our constitution and then went on to note its protection of free speech as preeminently important to our freedom and democracy. "Consider the role of free speech and how it has been protected time and time again. The right of the American people to politically speak out is important and crucial and is the foundation for American democracy. This pillar allows us to not only speak and engage freely, but also to better understand each other." She identified one of the threats to this time-honored tradition of free speech as the rise of the cancel culture. She described this as being especially true when the public completely excludes someone from discussion, frequently online, and especially in social media. When this happens, she explained, "we fail to understand what the founders had in mind when they were writing our constitution. Totally banning persons on social media for comments is not only unreasonable and ineffective but goes against the goal of the banishment in the first place."

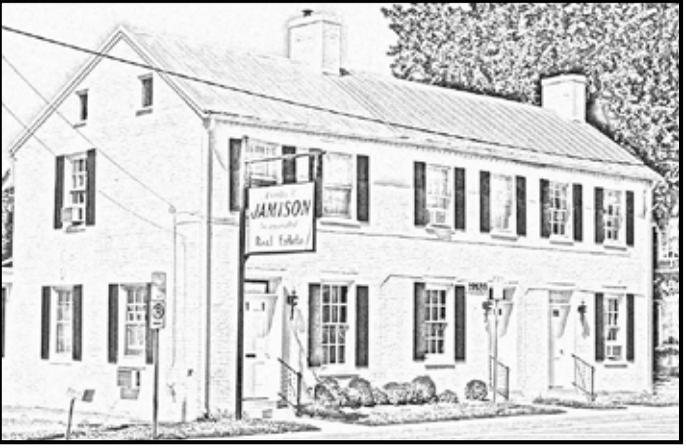
Faith pointed out that, when engaging in free speech, we are in the process which helps us to preserve it; to ignore free speech only leaves us in a state of confusion and chaos and works against our democracy.

Faith will now move on to the district competition, and if successful there, she will advance to the region level. Her participation could lead to her receiving a \$3,000 scholarship from the Maryland State American Legion.

James Cappuccilli, a former PHS counselor and post chairman for this event, observed "how proud we are to have her represent Post 247 and our community and look forward to her success. Faith will go on in this competition representing the values of Post 247."



*Poolesville High School sophomore Faith Nah.*

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## Senior News

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

For the months of February and March, Poolesville Seniors is offering a variety of virtual programs that will meet community needs for exercise, information, and socialization. Visit their website, [poolesvilleseniors.org](http://poolesvilleseniors.org), or call 301-875-7701 for more information and to register for the Zoom link for each program. All virtual events are open to the entire community. Please check our website calendar for up-to-date information.

#### Mondays, Wednesdays, and Fridays Indoor Pickle Ball

Fully vaccinated players are welcome, and masks are required in accordance with Montgomery County regulations. *Family Life Center, Poolesville Baptist Church.* 8:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

#### Mondays

**Tai-Chi** with Maureen Ivusic. 1:00 p.m. to 1:45 p.m. Virtual.

#### Wednesdays

**Chair Yoga** with Twyla Insalaco. 11:00 a.m. Virtual.

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

#### Trivia Game Night

If you love Trivia, come join a team with Poolesville Seniors. For more information, email [info@poolesvilleseniors.org](mailto:info@poolesvilleseniors.org). 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

#### Thursdays

**Mahjong with Joyce Kral.** Fully-vaccinated beginner and seasoned players are welcome in person. Masks are recommended. *Poolesville Presbyterian Church's Speer Hall.* 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m.

#### Fridays

**Breath-Mind-Body** with Kathy Jankowski. Please register for each Friday class. 12:00 p.m. to 12:45 p.m. Virtual.

#### February 10

**The SEHP Dorsey Archeology Project**  
Join Montgomery College Anthropology professor Tara Tetrault and Sugarland descendant Suzanne Johnson as they delve into the SEHP Dorsey Archeology Project, excavating the late 1800s log home of Basil and Nancy Dorsey in Sugarland. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

#### February 11

**PS Heart 'n Soul Virtual Auction**  
Poolesville Seniors present their first online auction featuring wonderful items, including original works of art, vacation stays, an amusement park trip, gift certificates, pickleball lessons, and more! Virtual.

#### February 21

**PS Book Club!**  
This month, readers will be discussing *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah. This novel, set in Texas during the dustbowl, examines one of the darkest periods of the Great Depression. It is a portrait of America and the American Dream, as seen through the eyes of one indomitable woman whose courage and sacrifice will come to define a generation. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

#### February 17

**Historic Properties with Kenny Sholes**  
Join Kenny and the Poolesville seniors as they continue their exploration of the historic homes and properties in the Agricultural Reserve. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

#### February 24

**Meet the Monocacy Lions**  
Join Ton Conlon, Heidi Rosvold-Brenholtz, and Roger Brenholtz to hear about this wonderful local volunteer organization and the much-needed

Continued on page 7.

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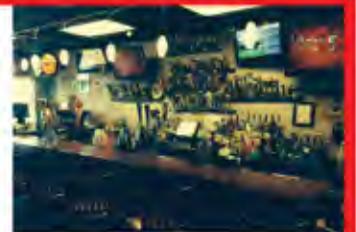
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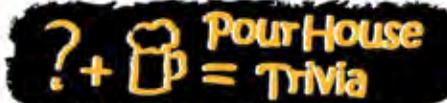


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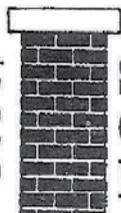
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## Things to Do

In place of our traditional Things to Do column, please note the following:

**PACC 2022 Annual Meeting** is scheduled for February 24 at 7:00 p.m. in the Poolesville Town Hall meeting room. This will be held in person and available live on the Chambers Facebook Live page. Face masks will be required. The annual Community Service award will be presented, and donations to local charities from the proceeds of the 2021 5K will be announced.

### Varsity Home Games

MCPS has approved for schools to have spectators back at twenty-five percent capacity. The school will only be selling tickets through GoFan. No tickets will be sold at the door. For home games, priority will be given to parents/guardians of players.

A link through GoFan will be set up with a specific timeframe when these tickets can be purchased. The link will be sent to parents by coaches. Then, at noon on the day of the event, general admission tickets will be available until the tickets are sold out. There is a limit of two tickets per transaction.

Continued from page 6.

### Senior News

assistance the Monocacy Lions provide to our area. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

### March 3

#### Small Engine Repair

Want to know how small, gas-powered engines really work or how to maintain and repair one? Join Kevin Thomas as he walks us through the workings of a small internal combustion engine, describing some of the common problems and their fixes. 7:00 p.m. Virtual.

For more information or to register for any of the programs listed here and receive the Zoom link for each, visit the Poolesville Seniors website: [poolesvilleseniors.org](http://poolesvilleseniors.org). Many of these presentations are also streamed live on their Facebook page and recorded for later viewing on YouTube. Did you know that you don't need a computer to participate? You can join the Zoom presentation using your smartphone or just listen in using the local telephone number from Zoom and the Poolesville Seniors meeting ID and Password. Call or text them at 301-875-7701 to learn how.



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## Tidbits

### COVID-19 Test Kits and Masks Distributed



*Standing: Chontelle Hockenbery, Link Hoewing, Bob Stottmeyer, Carolyn Ringling, and Frank Casaleno. Sitting: Jeff Eck, Candace Eck, Garrett Simons, and Caroline Simons.*

The Town of Poolesville Commissioners have been distributing COVID-19 test kits and masks in front of the Nightingale Library each Sunday from noon to 2:00 p.m. The most recent distribution was made on January 30 and future dates can be determined in advance on the Town of Poolesville facebook page or by calling town hall at 301-428-8927.

### Honoring Local Black History



*The Boyds Negro School*

The Boyds Negro School will be open on February 20 and 21 from 2:00 p.m. to 4:00 p.m. to celebrate Black History Month. The celebration will be presented with full safety protocols in place. Guests will be part of a tour group and will be limited to six people all of whom must wear masks and remain six feet apart. The door of the school will be ajar for ventilation purposes. Guests will be on a first come, first serve basis. Along with a historical presentation of the school, there will all be an outdoor tour of the property, with related history. There will be recognition of local Scout Zach Ransom, who will obtain his Eagle Scout badge for his achievement of planning and directing a project to build a replica out-house for the school. Members of Poolesville Boy Scout Troop 496 participated in the project.

### Sacred Relics Exhibition

Our Lady of the Presentation Catholic Church welcomes all to a teaching and exposition of Sacred Relics by Father Carlos Martins of the Companions of

the Cross on Sunday, February 27, at 2:00 p.m. in the church at 17230 Tom Fox Avenue in Poolesville.

Fr. Carlos Martins, a Vatican-appointed expert on relics, will be here with an extraordinary Vatican collection of over 150 relics, some as old as two thousand years. Catholic Answers tells us relics can be the physical objects or possessions “of the apostles and other holy people that are...sometimes associated with miraculous healings and other acts of God.” ([www.catholic.com/tract/relics](http://www.catholic.com/tract/relics))

Among the treasures presented will be relics of St. Joseph, St. Maria Goretti, St. Thérèse of Lisieux (the “Little Flower”), St. Francis of Assisi, St. Anthony of Padua, St. Thomas Aquinas, St. Faustina, and St. John Paul II. On display will also be a portion of the Veil of Our Lady and one of the largest remaining pieces of the True Cross in the world. Fr. Carlos is delighted to hear people’s reactions after their “Walk with the Saints” and notes how often people tell him the experience is akin to walking amid friends.

Those in attendance will be able to view and venerate each relic. All are encouraged to bring favorite articles of devotion—rosaries, holy cards, pictures of ill friends or family members—to touch to the reliquaries as a means of intercession.

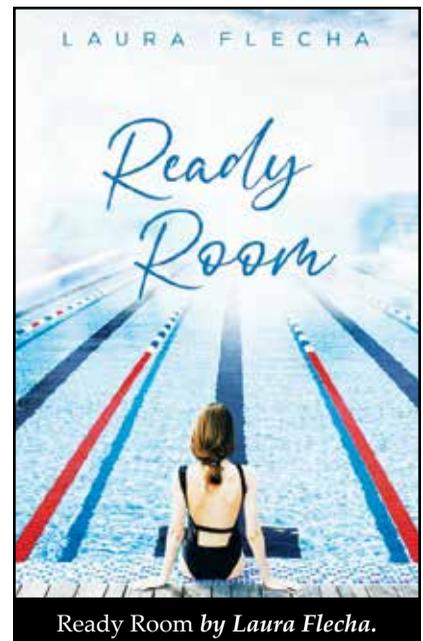
Fr. Justin Huber, pastor of Our Lady of the Presentation, encourages, “If you have a favorite saint, come stand body-to-body, so to speak. You’ll find two thousand years’ worth of saints here.”

Masks will be required, and all social distancing protocols will be observed. There is no fee for this ministry, but it is funded by free will donations. For a complete list of all the relics which will be on display, please visit Fr. Martins’s website: [www.treasuresofthechurch.com](http://www.treasuresofthechurch.com). For more information on the Vatican Relics tour itself, please contact Maria Villarrubia at [olpdsor@olpresentationmd.org](mailto:olpdsor@olpresentationmd.org).

### New Book by Local Author

Local author, Laura Flecha, has announced the publication of her book *Ready Room*, which tells a story through poetry that spans two decades, capturing joys such as raising children, being in love, and enjoying nature’s beauty, as well as diving into hardships such as mental illness, abuse, divorce, cancer, and infertility. The collection is emotional and honest, taking the reader through the seasons of life, while offering others who share similar struggles a hand to hold. *Ready Room* bridges a gap between Eastern and Western thought and shares a healing path for those in need.

Laura Flecha lives in Poolesville with her husband, two daughters, son, goldendoodle, chickens, and ducks. A few of her interests are gardening, running, and being a steward to Sugartree Farnette’s Little Free Library. Laura’s main passion in writing is poetry with a focus on women’s issues and subjects that can be difficult to talk about. As



*Ready Room by Laura Flecha.*

**Continued on page 12.**

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Continued from page 4.

**Winter Greens for Wildlife**

upright and fallen. Don't forget to provide leafy blankets. I don't like the seemingly innocuous leaf blowers; besides their loud noise and inefficient gas engines, they generate large amounts of air pollution and particulate matter. If you feel that you must rid your yard of leaves, use a rake. For the leaves on your grass areas, use the lawn mower to grind them up and then add it to your gardens as a wonderful garden soil amendment. Bumblebees, hummingbirds, moths, caterpillars, and toads need protective layers of decaying plants to keep them warm and protected all winter. That is why I don't completely clean my garden beds in the fall. That can wait until spring cleaning time. Leaves around trees, shrubs, and perennials provide winter refuge for rabbits and foraging birds. Listed below are some of my favorite hardy evergreens that grow very well in our Monocacy area.

**American Holly (*Ilex opaca*)**

There are about twenty native species and more than one hundred exotic hollies. Evergreen hollies are especially good shelter for many birds and small mammals. Mockingbirds, bluebirds, and Cedar waxwings are especially fond of holly berries. In our area, the American holly does very well. The stout, stiff branches of this pyramidal evergreen bear dark green, non-glossy, spine-tipped leaves. It ranges in height from twenty-five feet to as tall as sixty feet. Hollies are dioecious, meaning that they need male and female plants in order to produce seeds, which are their bright red berries, so if some of your holly bushes do not have berries, they may be male and simply cannot produce berries. Your tree needs a female.

**Northern Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)**

Bayberry is an upright, rounded, dense shrub with semi-evergreen dark green, leathery leaves. It has small waxy, persistent blue-gray fruit which adds winter interest and attracts many species of birds while it provides them food and shelter.



Northern Bayberry (*Myrica pensylvanica*)

Photo by Matthew Beziat.

The seed-filled cones of spruces, firs, pines, and many others appeal to nuthatches, finches, grosbeaks, chickadees, and other seed-eating birds. Junipers and yews also provide a feast of berrylike cones for species, like waxwings, robins, bluebirds, and sparrows. Some of these birds might not be around during the colder winter months, but they will appreciate any extra food during the other months. Many trees and shrubs have pros and cons. Do some research before you purchase any of them to be sure that they will fit into your landscape and satisfy your needs. The right plant in the right place is my best advice.

**The American Pussy Willow (*Salix discolor*)**

When gardeners think of the first flowers of spring, they think of snowdrops, crocus, and daffodils, but in our area, they don't even come close in bloom season as the earliest bloomers of all: the pussy willow. This wonderful tree is a great example of how a native plant provides habitat and supports native wildlife. It is dioecious, meaning that male and female parts are found on different plants. The males have the larger showier catkins, while the female catkin is smaller and greenish. The catkins are the flowering parts of the plant. The fuzzy fur coats keep the reproductive parts of the plant warm. Some birds, especially hummingbirds, use the fuzzy softness to line their nests. Depending on where you live, pussy willows can bloom from January to May. I have one that is twenty years old, twenty feet tall, and is now in bloom with hundreds of grayish-white catkins which will last well into February and early March. The March catkins provide one of the first-of-the-season nectar for pollinators. The insects, in turn, provide a feast for songbirds, especially chickadees and goldfinches. Douglas Tallamy, author and professor of Entomology and Wildlife Ecology at the University of Delaware, ranks the native pussy willow second only to oaks as the best host plant for moths and butterflies.

Take a walk around your yard today. Where would be the best place to plant some native trees and shrubs this spring? Besides beautifying your yard, you will be helping wildlife live longer lives and doing your small part to protect the environment.




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## Youth Sports

### Despite Fits and Starts, PHS Girls' Basketball Shows Talent

By Jeff Stuart

Despite periodic interruptions due to COVID-19 protocols, the Poolesville High School girls' basketball team has showed off their talent in flashes, but they have been inconsistent. Wearing warmups that display the name "Swick" on the back in honor of their former coach, Fred Swick, they are nonetheless happy to be back on the court for the first time since his passing.

Continued on page 11.



2021-2022 PHS Girls' Varsity Basketball team.

## Poolesville Area Chamber of Commerce

### 2022 ANNUAL MEETING for Chamber Members

**February 24th at 7PM – Poolesville Town Hall**

- Presentation of 2021 Community Service Award to Dr. Amar Duggirala
- Presentation of donations from 2021 PACC 5K race proceeds
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Continued from page 10.

**Despite Fits and Starts, PHS Girls' Basketball Shows Talent**

At the beginning of the season, the team was working through different rotations of players to determine the starting lineup. By the time this issue of the Monocle went to print, the starters should have been decided, including senior guard Jessie Rothenberg, freshman guard Alex Sosna, and junior forward Lauren Hopkins.

On January 12, the Falcons defeated the Springbook Blue Devils, 46-32. "I think our best game so far was against Springbrook," said coach Katie Hackey. "We played a great team game. Before that, we played well in beating Damascus at home, 43-37. We got off to a slow start, but by the end, we were defending well. The last couple of games we have not performed the way we should be.

"In the Kennedy game, freshman guard Leila Reid hit a shot from over half court at the end of the third quarter. That was pretty awesome. You don't see that every day." At that point in the game, the score had been tied, 19-19, with about four minutes left in the third quarter. Leila's shot capped a thirteen-point run for the Falcons.

"Hopkins scored twenty-five for us against Damascus. She was big for us inside the paint. We have another freshman, Alex Sosna, who has really stepped up and is performing consistently almost every game."

"I really enjoyed, as a team, the Wheaton game," said junior captain Hopkins, a 5'-11" center. "We were able the rack up the points to start off the season at home, and that was the only game where spectators were allowed. It was a really good overall team win. We performed well against a tough Springbrook team. We got off to a pretty good start, and were able to come out on top. It was pretty hard losing last season to COVID. We only had two seniors. We did get to play a little bit. It wasn't a normal season, but it was good to get on the court and play.

"I think Alex Sosna, as a freshman, has done really well to be able to start all these varsity games and not skip a beat at all."

"I'm glad that I get to be captain of such a great team. We've been really close for years," said 5'-7" point guard and captain Jessie Rothenberg. "I'd like to see our team succeed. I think the Springbrook game was definitely our best game. That's when we finally came together as a team. We played like we know we can.

It took a little while to get there after us all having COVID and everything, I was really proud of the way we played in that game. Our freshman, Alex, has been absolutely alive. She's great on defense. She's got long arms. She is always blocking the ball, and she can hit threes like no other six-foot girl can, I am really proud of the way she has been playing this season.

"Losing last season definitely set us back a little bit. We got most of our girls together to play last winter. It just wasn't the same without having the coach in the gym and running all of our plays. It was more undisciplined, but it set all the teams back. We bounced back, but then we all got COVID, and that set us back even more, but we have adapted and are moving forward."

Other seniors are Erin Cherian, Emily Bupp, and Kelsey Hobbs. Other juniors are Lizzie Kovacs, Phoebe Snelson, Avery Penn, and Ella Franklin. Breanna Salovich is a sophomore. Kelsey Lewis is the varsity assistant coach.

**Fun Facts...**

*discoverpoetry.com*

**February**

Though Winter still asserts his right to reign,  
He sways his sceptre now with gentler hand;  
Nay, sometimes softens to a zephyr bland  
The hurrying blast, which erst along the plain  
Drove the skin-piercing sleet and pelting rain  
In headlong rage; while, ever and anon,  
He draws aside his veil of vapours dun,

That the bright sun may smile on us again.  
To-day 'twould seem (so soft the west wind's sigh)  
That the mild spirit of the infant Spring  
Was brooding o'er the spots where hidden lie  
Such early flowers as are the first to fling  
On earth's green lap their wreaths of various dye—  
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- Rebecca Hey

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Continued from page 1.

### Homes for Our Troops Welcomes Newest Home Recipient in Poolesville

accessible kitchen as cooking is a shared passion. The home has extra-wide doors, a huge wheelchair-ready shower, lowered bath cabinetry and sinks, and many other adjustments for a wheel-bound person. Although fitted for a prosthesis, Manny will be in his wheelchair most of the time while in the home.

The financial freedom from a donated home will help Manny and Natibel fulfill their dreams of opening a catering business. The home will become a home office for Natibel for operating her makeup company. In the future, they would also like to start a family.

HFOT is four-star rated by Charity Navigator with ninety-seven percent of all funds received used solely for the building of the homes. Unlike similar groups, they spend very little in advertising, so more money can be used to build homes.

Since 2004, HFOT has built over 326 specially-adapted homes in forty-two states, including seventy-two active projects in the country. Their goal is to build a home for every veteran who qualifies for one of their specially-adapted homes.

The organization is unique in that it allows the recipients to choose a home-site location, and the Melendez-Diaz family selected Poolesville. "I knew immediately when we first came to consider the location that this was the community where we wanted to build our home," said Manny.

HFOT has a "Rebuilding Lives" mentality; therefore, they stay with their veterans after home delivery. Homes for Our Troops provides a pro bono financial planner for three years to assist in financial planning and household budgeting. They also provide homeownership education and warranty coverage to ensure that the veteran is set up for long-term success as a homeowner.

Commission President Jim Brown welcomed the family, as did State Sen. Brian Feldman and Del. David Fraser-Hidalgo. Pastor Joel Gilbert of Poolesville Baptist Church sang the National Anthem, and Boy Scouts Troop 496 and Poolesville Girl Scouts Troop led the attendees in the Pledge of Allegiance.

The spokesperson for HFOT, Miss Q, congratulated Poolesville for being one of the most generous communities she has ever seen. She challenged the town to continue its generosity by having twenty-six persons join their \$15-per-month donation campaign.

Commissioner Jim Brown welcomed the couple, "We are honored that you chose us. We want to make room for even more vets. We are humbled by your service to the nation. Thanks to all of you who have made sacrifices to our country. Welcome to Poolesville. The community will wrap our arms around you, and I am going to be the first one."

Commissioner Ed Reed welcomed Manny and Natibel. "The heart of Poolesville is volunteerism, and all of us are here for you to help you in any way we can. If you have needs call us, if the water goes out, call Jim." Reed acknowledged the request for twenty-six new donors but called upon Poolesvillians to double that number to fifty-two. "Fifty-two is what we do!"

Sergeant Melendez-Diaz and Natibel, humbled by the gift of a new home, acknowledged the profound support from the Poolesville community and thanked everyone for their coming to the event and showing such support. He also asked for more persons to donate so that "many more severely injured post-2001 veterans and their families can have a customized home of their own."

HFOT president and CEO, Brigadier Gen. (retired) H. T. Landwermeyer, Jr. introduced Manny to the crowd, noting, "We do not do charity, we rebuild lives. We see our mission as a moral obligation to citizens to repay them in a small portion for our debt to them. We stay in contact with our recipients not just on the day the home is given but into the future as they rebuild their lives. While we build homes, it's the rebuilding of lives that is our most important mission.

"The need for the new home focuses on the importance of freedom and independence. I think you agree, those who have fought for us down range, don't need to fight around their home on a daily basis. Home should be a place of respite, so we are thankful for your support in succeeding in this mission."

To make a donation to HFOT, visit [hfotusa.org](http://hfotusa.org).

Continued from page 8.

### Tidbits

she was brought up Tibetan Buddhist, her writing sometimes reflects Eastern concepts, though it always blends with Western thought and experiences. Laura's hope is that her writing brings comfort to those who may face similar challenges, and perhaps provide insight or a shared understanding of human nature. Her book is available at Amazon books.



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## Remembrance

### Fanny Rivera

Fanny Rivera, 68, of Poolesville, passed away on January 19, 2022. Fanny had a long battle with dementia and is finally at rest. Born on January 20, 1953 in New York City, New York, she was the daughter of the late Lucas and Anna (Aledo) Rivera. Fanny is survived by one daughter, Glicer Nalvarte of Poolesville; and two grandchildren, Sofia and Cecilia Nalvarte.



Fanny Rivera

Fanny spent more than thirty years working for the federal government, advocating for the rights of minorities and people with disabilities.

In honor and in memory of Fanny Rivera, the family asks that, in lieu of flowers, donations be made to the Rene Matos Memorial Scholarship Fund. Fanny was passionate about and an advocate of education. Fanny was an active member of the National Hispanic Coalition of Federal Aviation Employees (NHCFEA) and, throughout her career, she advocated for opportunities for Hispanics in the federal government workforce. Fanny was instrumental in establishing the Rene Matos Memorial Fund which continues to support educational efforts for Hispanics.



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- Just pick the amount you are comfortable with and send a check to: PO Box 247, Poolesville, MD 20837 or donate online at [www.wumcohelp.org/Membership.html](http://www.wumcohelp.org/Membership.html). **Please indicate that your donation is for the 2022 membership year.** Thank you!
- Members receive membership cards that make them eligible for discounts from local businesses, including 10% discounts at the K2 Café, the Healthy Hub, Cugini's, the Mexican Grill, and White's Ferry Grill; and other local businesses. See the complete list on our website.
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Questions? Please write Adam DeBaugh at [wumco2@gmail.com](mailto:wumco2@gmail.com) or call the WUMCO office.

Continued from page 3.

### Looking Back and Looking Forward

is responsible for removing tree debris from the park's aqueducts. I asked about the status of the giant silver maple tree at Lock 26. He said the plan is to trim back dead parts of the tree in hopes of extending its life. He also said the park is growing seven saplings from the maple tree in Williamsport. Four of those will be planted at Lock 26. It is his opinion that the giant tree is not one tree but a group of trees that grew together. He mentioned a photo from the early 1900s showing two women about to jump into the water at the lock. I have seen this photo. In the photo are saplings where the "giant" tree is now. Ranger Gillis called the phenomenon of trees growing together "inosculation." Looking closely at the giant silver maple, I can see at least two distinct trees growing from the tree mass.

In 2021, I participated in Potomac River trash cleanups with Scouts from Montgomery County who covered the shore from below White's Ferry up to the Monocacy Aqueduct. I also visited my son Thomas and daughter Shirley in Johnstown and Philadelphia, Pennsylvania who are in medical school. Both Thomas and Shirley will be moving in 2022 to further their pursuits of becoming doctors.

In 2021, my wife and I enjoyed working in our flower and vegetable gardens and are planning our 2022 gardens. I was able to go dinosaur tracking in Prince George's and Baltimore Counties either with my son Charles or my friend Jim Tucker. Sometimes I went by myself. I enjoy going in the wintertime because there are no snakes or ticks along the streams I visit.

Looking ahead to 2022, I plan on doing more of what I did in 2021. I will work with friends and the staff from the C&O Canal National Historical Park in planning to restore the Seneca Aqueduct as well as performing volunteer activities in the park. Keep active and take care of yourself and each other in 2022!

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## Police Blotter: Past and Present

By Jack Toomey

### Present Crime

**Assault Second Degree:** 21000 block of Clarksburg Road.

**Theft:** 18700 Jerusalem Church Road.

**Escape Attempt:** Steven Beitzel, who was arrested for at least three bank robberies including two in Poolesville, is incarcerated at the Montgomery County Detention Center in Clarksburg. On January 25, Beitzel complained that he was sick and was then transported to the Holy Cross Hospital in Germantown. While there, he became uncooperative, and the correctional officers were about to take him back to jail when he attacked one officer and tried to take his gun. He then fought with the other officer, and backup units were called. Beitzel was charged with several more crimes and taken back to jail.

### Past Crime: 1950 to 1954

The son of the police chief was managing a gas station in Gaithersburg when two holdup men entered and produced guns. The manager and the gas attendant were forced into a bathroom which was then locked. The robbers fled with \$100. The employees were released when a customer came in and heard the men yelling for help.

Police were investigating the death of an eight-year-old Kensington paperboy

and believed that his death could have been caused by an altered one-dollar cap gun. Detective Watkins told the press that if the cap gun was altered in a certain way, it could fire a .22 caliber bullet. A thirteen-year-old boy was identified as the person with the gun, and the case was ruled as an accidental death.

Montgomery County Police warned hunters to steer clear of towns and urban areas after complaints from residents of bullets striking their houses; in one case, a bullet damaged a window. People living in Poolesville were especially upset after sighting hunters at the very edge of their residential area.

In a closely-watched DUI trial, a Wire Hardware employee was found not guilty of drunk driving by Magistrate See. An off-duty sheriff's deputy testified that he heard a crash and ran out front to find that another car had crashed into his parked car on S. Adams Street. The driver appeared to be disoriented, and the deputy called the police who arrested the driver. At his trial, the man testified that he'd had one beer before leaving work. Then two police captains entered the courtroom. They both testified to the defendant's sober lifestyle. Magistrate See said that she thought there was a good chance that the driver was drunk, but because of the entire testimony, a bit of doubt remained, thus the finding of not guilty.

Police surrounded a farmhouse just outside of Poolesville with a warrant for Eppie Leith who lived there.

Officers were armed with gas guns and a battering ram. After an hour of calling for Leith to surrender, the police got tired of standing in the rain, so they kicked down the front door. They found the suspect asleep in a bedroom.

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

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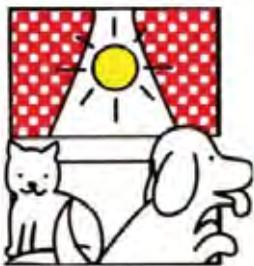
### Tips on What You Should Consider before Adding a Furry Friend to Your Family

Peter H. Eeg, DVM

Are you going to get a pet (another pet) to add to your family? Let's think about the factors that will allow you to make a good choice for you, your family, and your other pets already in charge of the house.

1. It is critical to think about and discuss your plans for getting a new pet with your family. It may seem like a wonderful, heart-filling, and generous event, but you may be creating un-expected issues for other family members including the four-legged kids already in the house. Be sure everyone is on board and that you understand the backstory of your new pet. Be sure everyone is on board as to what the collective would be looking for in a new pet.
2. Both cats and dogs create shed, produce dander, and leave saliva around the house. Some pets create huge amounts of dander, shedding, and saliva (Mastiff, St. Bernard, hungry cat), so plan to be prepared to manage that new environmental factor. Be sure you have furniture covers and bed covers (you know they are going to sleep in the bed, right?). Consider upgrading your vacuum and plan on replacing your furnace filters and HEPA filters weekly. Not all pets shed a lot, but all pets shed to some degree.
3. Be sure you have a good understanding of your pet's previous life if it is being rescued. Ask questions about why it was given up and how it did at the rescue or foster home. Be sure to take some time at the rescue or foster home (COVID dependent) to get a feel for how the new pet sees the world. If you are getting a new furry pal from a breeder (personal note, the world is overcrowded with dogs and cats; consider rescuing a wet nose first), check with your veterinarian and a trainer to get a feeling for the temperament, activity needed, breed behavior specifics, and final size of your new friend. Our English Fox Hound, Oscar, was an adorable 5 pounds of puppy. Now he is an "adorable" 135 pounds of adult chucklehead.
4. Your current pet family hopefully is a harmonious kingdom. That is likely to change in some way when the new furball arrives. Your current Pack/Pride has a certain way of doing things in their kingdom. If you have only one pet, its applectart may be significantly tipped by the new creature's arrival. The new arrival may have new and interesting ideas on who should be in charge and what it considers acceptable and normal, so be sure to introduce your current friends to your prospective new pal at a neutral location. For dogs, plan to meet in a park or open area on leash (not retractable leash but a solid leather leash). For cats, consider allowing the new feline to visit in its carrier at your home and see what the other kids think. The carrier protects it and your guys. Even if it seems tranquil, do not let it out. Keep the meeting simple and look for major red flags like aggressive hissing and biting of the carrier door. There are several online sources of information about what to look for in pets' postures and facial positions to give you an idea of what they are thinking, good or bad, about the new arrival.
5. Get as much information about the health of your potential new friend as possible. Ask to see the pet's history and be sure you send any medical records you have to your veterinarian before you agree to take on a new pet. Something that the breeder, foster, or rescue tries to play down as a "simple issue" could be significant and potentially costly to you and your new pet.

Most importantly, it is okay to say thanks but no thanks when offered a new furry pal. The right fit takes work.



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