

The Emmitsburg Dispatch

Vol III, No.4

news and opinion in the service of truth

April 1 2004

April 27 Election; Town to Vote for 2 Commissioners

By Richard D. L. Fulton
Staff Writer

Emmitsburg will hold its election on Tues., Apr. 27, from 7 a.m. to 8 p.m., at the Resident Deputies Office (aka Old Town Hall), 22 E. Main St. Voters will elect 2 town commissioners, and possibly decide on an annexation.

At press time, 5 persons had filed for the 2 vacant commissioner positions. They are incumbent Commissioner Clifford L. Sweeney, Dianne L. Walbrecker, Stanley C. Mazaleski, William O'Neil, and Harold Craig. O'Neill and Craig are campaigning together as members of the Citizens Organization to Preserve Emmitsburg (COPE).

Annexation referendum

Citizens may also have the opportunity to accept, or reject, the annexation by the Town of a 20.03-acre tract of land owned by Josh Bollinger, Rosemary Bollinger and Harriet Gigeous, located off Irishtown Rd.

Emmitsburg's Board of Commissioners approved the annexation 3-1 on Feb. 2 and Mayor James E. Hoover confirmed their action on Feb. 11. Commissioner Art Elder, a COPE member, voted it. Members of COPE have led the effort to challenge and overturn the decision. They have gathered more than 76 pages of voter signatures to make the issue a referendum on the April 27 ballot.

Although the property is zoned R-2, which would per-

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—RAYMOND BUCHHEISTER / THE EMMITSBURG DISPATCH

An emergency repair was made on Mar. 25 at the Emmitsburg sewer plant to a locked mechanical valve that controls the over land flow system. Donald Hurley of W.L. Delauter and Son operates an excavator at the direction of his foreman Jim Schaffer and fellow operator Jeff Schrecengost. The excavation crew digs a hole 14 feet deep to locate the underground valve. A broken shear pin caused its failure.

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Environmental Agency Threatens \$7,000 Fine for Wastewater Spills; Seeks Connections Limit

By Richard D. L. Fulton
Staff Writer

The Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) has threatened to fine Emmitsburg \$7,000, and the community will likely be forced to address the degraded wastewater system, according to documents

received by the Town.

At the Town work session on March 25, Board of Commissioners President Patrick B. Boyle suggested the MDE action should come as no surprise to anyone. "They (MDE) gave us all the red flags," Commissioner Art Elder said, "It's sad to see this Town in this sad

shape."

According to a draft consent order received by the Town as part of the State complaint, the State is seeking a \$7,000 penalty for wastewater violations that occurred between July 1, 2001, and Sept. 30, 2003.

The MDE is additionally propos-

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Annexation Referendum May Not Make Election Ballot

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners' decision to consider an amendment on the Bollinger annexation may have jeopardized the efforts of area residents to place the annexation issue on the April 27 ballot.

In March the commissioners voted to grant the Bollingers a hearing on April 19 to consider lifting one of the conditions for annexing their property

that the Town had imposed (*See Town to consider lifting building restriction on Bollinger tract on pg 3*). That hearing could delay the vote on the annexation referendum.

Mayor James Hoover told The Emmitsburg Dispatch he believes that setting up the annexation amendment hearing only days before the election created a "Catch-22 situation" for the

election organizers and the community.

Logistical, if not legal, problem.
"The ballots for the April 27 election have to be printed... before the April 19 hearing. We don't know what the outcome of that hearing will be, or how it will impact the referendum," Hoover said. In other words, if the commissioners amend the annexation ordi-

—Continued on page 3

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The Emmitsburg Dispatch encourages its readers to express their thoughts and opinions about issues that appear in this publication or affect the community. Letters must be exclusive to the Dispatch and should be no longer than 300 words in length. They must be signed and include the writer's address and phone number to be used for verification. The Dispatch reserves the right to edit for content and space. Deadline for letters is the 15th of each month.

Fighting Drug Abuse is Everyone's Responsibility

National Public Radio recently aired a weeklong series on heroin in America. This series should send shivers down the spines of everyone concerned about our youth and our communities. Here in Emmitsburg, heroin is present in greater quantities than anyone could ever imagine, except for the young people who can find it any day, any time.

Heroin is very cheap and easy to get. Most of it comes from Colombia, through the Port of Baltimore and onto our streets. It is pure, powerful and deadly. Casual conversations with teenagers and young adults in town confirm that heroin is here and readily available. At \$4 a bag, it is cheaper than a six-pack of beer, and the seller does not ask for an ID.

According to NPR, a Massach-

usetts survey of 100 school-aged boys found that 4% of them said they used heroin. The average heroin user in the 1970s was a 28-year old urban dweller. Today, the average user is a white, middle class teenager living in suburban and rural communities, just like Emmitsburg. In Boston, according to NPR, the number of 18 and 19 year olds seeking emergency room treatment for heroin overdoses doubled from 2000 to 2002.

In Emmitsburg a number of overdoses have been reported, with at least one overdose-related death. While such incidents are not made public in Emmitsburg or in Frederick County, they should be. We spend our days dreaming about the ideal place in which we live, while a monster lurks among us. The public needs to receive

information about drug activities in their communities. It is the responsibility of our law enforcement agencies, the State's Attorney's Office and the news media to ensure that the facts are publicly reported and published often. While this may be cumbersome, it is our right, as citizens, to be informed about this menace so we can take appropriate action. Inaction will lead to countless injuries and death.

The Emmitsburg community must be ready to address drug use, addiction and treatment in our area. The Emmitsburg Coalition to Prevent Drug Abuse was founded to do just that. Everyone has a responsibility to fight the scourge of drug abuse in their families, places of business and in our local, state and federal governments. The Coalition would allow these elements to work as one toward the larger goal of preventing drug abuse. It will provide a forum where ideas can be heard, a resource for anyone who wishes to assist, and, hopefully, a powerful force aimed at prevention. But, we need the community's help. While

the police and many related agencies are already working to fight drug abuse, they are grossly undermanned, under funded and incapable of reaching deeply enough into local communities to effect the kind of efforts, that we, as a united community can make. Right now Frederick County only has 6 narcotics officers working the county. That is simply not enough. We can and must do our part.

As we enter the local and national elections campaign season, we ask that each candidate pledge to ensure government cooperation in our work. We ask the media, law enforcement agencies, drug counseling agencies, government officials and the courts to work with us to ensure a comprehensive and workable strategy to take drugs off our streets and away from our citizens. We can and must restore our communities to their historic splendor.

-Ted Brennan

Emmitsburg Coalition to Prevent Drug Abuse

Emmitsburg - small, quiet and beautiful

I am thankful for the opportunities *The Emmitsburg Dispatch* presents for residents to be informed about issues that are of critical importance for Emmitsburg. After reading about how the growth issue will be central to the upcoming commissioner election and how the sewer tap surcharge was being related to the growth moratorium, etc., I am hoping that most informed residents will know who is really for Emmitsburg and who is in it for their own special interests.

I moved to Emmitsburg from Columbia, MD and I have seen first-

hand what unrestrained growth can do to a beautiful and quiet community. When I left Columbia, I could tell the difference in sound between a police siren, fire siren, ambulance siren, media helicopter and a search helicopter. It is one thing to want to grow spiritually, in wisdom, or in our interpersonal relationships, but why there is so much emphasis on material or physical growth makes no sense to me except to line somebody's pocket with more money. What is wrong with being small, beautiful, and quiet?!

Clare Villanti

— Emmitsburg

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Town to consider lifting building restriction on Bollinger tract

Staff Report

The Emmitsburg Board of Commissioners voted March 24 to grant the Bollingers a hearing to consider rescinding one of the conditions for the proposed annexation of their 20.3-acre property.

The Town had accepted the proposal by a vote of the Board of Commissioners on Feb. 2 and the confirming signature of Mayor James E. Hoover on Feb. 11. The tract, located on

IrishTown Road, is owned by Josh Bollinger, his mother Rosemary Bollinger, and his aunt Harriet Gigeous.

One condition of approval was that no dwelling units could be constructed on the annexed land until the Town's sewage treatment plant meets its permit limits for 180 consecutive days.

The condition was imposed in order to synchronize the annexation approval with the proposed construction moratorium being considered by Emmitsburg. So far the Town has not declared the

moratorium, and generally regards it as a dead issue for the current Town administration.

But Town Planner Michael H. Lucas informed the commissioners that if they did not remove the condition, it could, by default, "have the same effect as a (deed) covenant." That means, he added, "If it (the annexation) goes through as written, it (the condition) could not be lifted (in the future) by this board or any board."

Would a meeting about removing the condition be essentially a new annexation hearing? Town attorney John Capp observed that the Town can restrict what aspects are reheard, and that the

hearing could be restricted to only the removal of the condition.

Commissioner Art Elder said that the commissioners should refrain from holding the hearing pending the outcome of a likely April 27 referendum to rescind the annexation altogether. Town Manager David Haller responded, "I think there is a certain flavor of fairness to him (Bollinger) for the same board to hear the request who approved the annexation."

The commissioners voted 3-1 (Elder opposing) to consider removing the condition for the Bollinger annexation, at a hearing at 7:30 on April 19 in the Town meeting room.

Referendum

—Continued from page 1

nance just before the election, will the voters be voting on the pre-amended annexation, or the amended annexation?

"Having the hearing just seven days prior to the elections, I would be concerned that the voters may not be aware or fully understand the question before them," he stated.

Mayor Hoover told The Emmitsburg Dispatch, "If we waited to print the ballots until after the hearing, we don't know if the hearing might have a continuation, or how a continuation would impact an impending refer-

endum." He added, "If we wait to print the ballots, we also cannot accept any absentee ballots."

"This is a major issue, holding a hearing one week before the election," Mayor Hoover said. "It is unlikely, in my opinion, this referendum will make the April 27 ballot, and therefore may have to be held on a special day."

"The decision to rush into this (hearing) just before the election was a poor decision, a bad choice. I'm concerned the board... may make another decision so quickly that they later may think was not the best decision," Hoover said.

More than enough signatures. Referendum proponents needed only

208 verifiable signatures on their petition, or 20 percent of registered voters. The county Board of Elections lists 1,042 registered voters in Emmitsburg.

On March 26 the mayor and the town clerk, Donna Despres, held a "public reading" of the more than 300 signatures on the petition. They were able to verify 261 names, 53 more than the law requires. They rejected about 73 of the names because they were not on the list of registered voters, were not legible, or had addresses not matching those of registered voters.

After hours. The verification process started at 7:30 p.m. and lasted until about 10 p.m.

But the Community Center was locked at 9 p.m. when the Emmitsburg Public Library closed, shutting off public access to the municipal reading.

The reading may not have violated

the State Open Meetings Act because there was not a quorum of government officials present, and the public reading of the petition names may not be a type of meeting required by law but merely one held by the Mayor as a courtesy to citizens.

Joan Fisher, Emmitsburg Library branch administrator, said that anyone holding public meetings should notify the library staff beforehand to ensure that the appropriate doors are not locked. "They (the meeting sponsors) would also have to assume the liability for having doors unlocked after library hours," she told The Emmitsburg Dispatch.

Mayor Hoover said he would instruct the Board of Commissioners and committee members to notify the library when they foresee a Town meeting will run beyond 9 p.m.

Election

—Continued from page 1

mit 77 single-family houses or 103 townhouses, the Bollingers say they intend to build no more than 50 single-family dwellings and no townhouses.

Hoover told The Emmitsburg Dispatch he had received COPE's petition. He was told it contains 334 signatures. "We haven't actually counted yet to confirm the number," he said. He estimates there are approximately 1,050 registered voters, but will receive actual numbers from the Frederick County Board of Elections.

"It's up to me now to verify that the names are of registered voters in Emmitsburg, and ensure they have 20

percent of the voters (signed up) in order to place the issue on the ballot," he said. "It appears to me that, if the signatures can be verified, they have the 20 percent and it would be a done deal (getting the annexation question on the ballot)."

Write-in votes

Hoover also clarified the issue of write-in votes. "Write-ins have to be registered as candidates in order to qualify as write-in candidates." Voting regulations allow for write-ins so that candidates can register during the last 2 weeks of the registration period, while the ballots are being printed. Write-in votes for individuals who are not registered candidates will not be counted.

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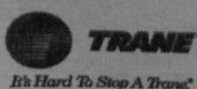
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EDITORIAL

Your Town Newspaper – Healthy and Growing

By Raymond Buchheister
Editor & Publisher

Based on the support and encouragement from the community to date, we have decided to publish *The Emmitsburg Dispatch* as a bi-weekly publication this month.

Commencing with the April 1 issue, the newspaper will be issued during the first week of each month, not necessarily the first day of the month. If the financial support demonstrated thus far continues, a second issue will be released about the 15th day of each month.

The editorial staff felt that April would provide a good opportunity to 'test-drive' publishing the newspaper as a bi-weekly. We will distribute 2 issues before the important Town Election, with the second issue featuring a Voter's Guide.

Emmitsburg area residents need a newspaper published at least every other week – and *The Emmitsburg Dispatch* needs this frequency to obtain and maintain adequate advertising revenue. The increased frequency of publication will also allow our newspaper to become a member of the Maryland-D.C.-Delaware Press Association.

Other plans to improve and enhance the newspaper are in the

works. You may notice some changes that have taken place with this issue of *The Emmitsburg Dispatch*, including an increase in news coverage and news stories. More dramatic changes will appear in May.

The newspaper's circulation now totals 7,000, which is 4,200 more than the 2,800 circulation it had when it was first published a year-and-a-half ago. We will soon increase the circulation to 10,000, but the potential circulation, according to the business model I have developed, is much greater.

The publication is mailed to each home in our circulation area, and is paid for by advertising, because I think everyone is entitled to be informed. It's delivered to homes by mail as a service. It's not thrown in the yard like other publications. We treat delivering the newspaper to you as important, just as others treat sending a check or even a bill to your home.

Whether or not the bi-weekly publication can continue will depend a great deal on the further support of the citizens and businesses of Emmitsburg and the surrounding area. This newspaper, or any newspaper, can only be as great as the community it serves allows it to be.

Coalition to Prevent Substance Abuse elects officers, plans web site

Staff Report

Joseph Mackin was elected Chairperson of The Emmitsburg Coalition to Prevent Substance Abuse at its March 26 meeting. Stanley Mazaleski was made Vice Chairperson, and Sabrina Paxton-Daily Secretary. The meeting took place at the Emmitsburg Library.

Michael Hillman, of emmitsburg.net, volunteered to serve as the group's webmaster and will design a web site for the organization. The web site will provide local residents with contact phone numbers, documents and pertinent resources

relative to substance abuse. Its purpose is to help educators, parents, youths and adults acquire information about substance abuse, or help them combat it.

The organization plans to expand its membership. "We've developed a core group. With that I'd like to start building the Coalition," said its founder and spokesman, Theodore "Ted" Brennan. Once established in the community, it could receive as much as \$100,000 in federal funds if it qualifies.

"Substance abuse is a very touchy and emotional subject. Some people



—RAYMOND BUCHHEISTER/THE EMMITSBURG DISPATCH

Phlebotomist Brandy Warren (R) draws blood from Bobbi Finegan, Ijamsville, for a multiphasic blood screening at the health fair.

Over 250 attend Lions Club Health Fair

On Sat. March 27, the Emmitsburg Lions Club hosted its 21st annual Health & Fitness Fair from 7:30 - 11 a.m. at the Mother Seton Elementary School, Emmitsburg. The Health Fair focuses on comprehensive, preventative health screening. Health care is the highest priority among the Lions' various service projects.

Gettysburg Hospital offered a number of fee-based blood screening tests, many of which are recommended on an annual basis. Multiphasic blood screening (MBS) can predict risk of coronary heart disease. A CBC, complete blood count, helps diagnose infection and anemia. The Hospital also performed optional blood tests. The prostate specific antigen (PSA) test is recommended for men over 50 as a pre-

ventive measure against prostate cancer. The sensitive thyroid stimulating hormone (TSH) blood test can detect thyroid disease.

The Lions Club also provided free screenings: blood pressure, vision, glaucoma, hearing, height and weight measurement, oxygen saturation, oral cancer screening, and spinal evaluation. Participants learned about massage therapy and received general health and health care information.

Volunteer individuals, businesses, organizations and agencies make the health and fitness fairs successful. Through their generous efforts, the Lions served hundreds of participants from Frederick, Carroll, Montgomery, Washington, Adams, Franklin, and York counties.

don't want to believe, or want to admit, it is happening in Emmitsburg. Others want to do something about it," Brennan said. The Coalition will try to make information available to the residents of Emmitsburg through the web site, special events, and other outreach efforts.

Other topics discussed at the meeting were public communications and outreach efforts.

The Coalition's next meeting is scheduled for April 29, at 7:30 p.m., in the Library meeting room at the Emmitsburg Community Center, S. Seton Ave., Emmitsburg. Guest speaker Scott Rolle, State's Attorney for Frederick County, plans to discuss what his office does about substance abuse. Information: Ted Brennan, 301-447-3746.

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Neither the publisher nor the editor will be liable for misinformation, misprinting, or typographical errors. The publisher reserve the right to edit any submitted material.

Agency threatens—

—Continued from page 1

ing to restrict the number of new connections to the sewer system to less than 20 "equivalent dwelling units (EDUs)" per year for the duration of any signed consent order. In reality, the 20 EDUs can also include commercial as well as residential connections.

Until the wastewater collection system can be brought into compliance with the consent order, the MDE would have to approve every additional service hook-up on a "case by case" basis. Oddly enough, these proposed restrictions equate to the development restrictions that were being considered months ago by the Town Board of Commissioners when debating a controversial proposed moratorium.

Boyle said, "Now we can only build 20 (new connections) a year for (potentially) three years and maybe no commercial" — depending on the method and sequence in which new sewer service hook-ups are parceled out while the consent order is in force.

Town Planner Michael H. Lucas warned the commissioners that they had better establish guidelines as soon as possible regulating the order in which the Town grants new sewer connection permits under any State-imposed limitations. "It's critical to

develop an allocation formula to avoid litigation (with applicants)," he stated. "Right now, we are probably vulnerable."

Following Lucas' advice, the commissioners immediately voted not to accept any new hook-up applications until Town Manager David Haller can meet with the MDE to negotiate the terms of the draft consent order.

Town attorney John Clapp said he had discussed the hook-up limitations with MDE Compliance Program Chief Dave Lyons, and that Lyons had indicated "the approved ones would go forward. It's new approvals that would be restricted."

The Town could also be faced with additional penalties should there be further wastewater spills during the term of the consent order. They could range from \$50 to \$1,000 per incident. Other penalties under the order can be assessed for violations of load and effluent limits: \$125 for each daily violation, \$250 for each weekly violation, and \$500 for each monthly violation.

MDE spokesman Richard McIntire told *The Emmitsburg Dispatch* that entering into a consent order with the State would help the Town avoid potentially higher penalties for violations of the Town's wastewater collection system permit. Under State law they could be as high as \$1,000 per day per viola-

tion and up to \$50,000 per incident.

However, McIntire stated, the pending consent order does not prevent the State from taking further enforcement action, or assessing additional penalties, for violations while the terms of the order are being negotiated.

The State enforcement documents were sent to Haller at the Town Hall via fax on March 10. Lyons advised him to contact the agency within two weeks "regarding any suggested changes" to the impending order. "We will revise the document wherever feasible," Lyons stated.

McIntire said that draft consent orders are "not written in stone," and can be modified. "Even the \$7,000 proposed penalty assessment is a negotiable point." He noted that there are no hard deadlines to make consent orders final, "But it is in the best interest of the State that it be done sooner, rather than later." He said that the urgency was also "dependent on the severity of the situation."

A signed consent order also serves as a shield against more severe State enforcement actions during the term of the order, at least with respect to the types of violations that the order addresses.

Haller told the commissioners, "We (the staff) are working with the MDE at an intense level," adding, "there is (room for) some negotia-

tions." He said, "There are some 37 different issues (raised by the draft order) and they (MDE) have asked us to read it and get back to them. This is a fairly complicated document and we've been working on it full-time."

The community's wastewater collection system has suffered various degrees of neglect for decades. Of particular concern is the general degradation of extensive sections of terra cotta (baked clay) collection mains dating back to the 1930s. The more these old pipelines partially or wholly collapse, the more unwanted rain and melt water flows into the collection system, overwhelming the ability of the lines to convey the wastewater, and the treatment plant to process it.

The result of this unwanted "wild water" in the system is often spillage of untreated sewerage. This may readily make its way into area streams, with an adverse impact on aquatic life, and threaten the health of residents who may come into contact with it.

The Town previously entered into a consent order with the MDE, in 1998. According to the MDE, the Town complied with that order, but continued to violate the treatment plant's permitted capacity and suffered a number of "unlawful sanitary sewer overflows," primarily due to wild water.

Paid Advertisement

Cliff Sweeney

A Concerned Citizen Out To Preserve Emmitsburg

"Citizens Organized to Preserve Emmitsburg" (COPE)... It's really interesting that this group that says they're protecting Emmitsburg really wants to destroy it.

COPE's Secrecy

They have 40 to 50 members and they won't tell where they are from or who they are. When they started the group, according to a COPE member and the Fredrick Post, they had 10 to 15 people at a meeting that elected four board members: President Bill O'Neil; Vice President Harold Craig; Treasurer Dot Davis; and Secretary Lisa Elder, the niece of Town Commissioner Art Elder.

O'Neil's own neighbors refused to elect him

President Bill O'Neil lives in the newly developed PemBrooke. Running for office in his own development, he could not get elected to any of three spots. What does that tell you about him? If the people living around him don't trust him, how can Emmitsburg's citizens? Ask him about that.

Craig calls developments "refugee camps"

Harold Craig Jr., a 77-year-old single man, wants zero growth and zero traffic. Craig stated, "I don't want any more refugees setting up any more refugee camps in Emmitsburg. I don't want any more children and families coming to Emmitsburg. The Town needs to shut down so I can walk across the street."

Craig also has very little regard for families already living in Town because he publicly writes and calls Emmitsburg citizens names and puts their families down, families who've been here for generations. Where is his family and children? Ask him about it.

COPE's secretary lives in Silver Spring!

Lisa Elder, Secretary of COPE, lives in Silver Spring, not in Emmitsburg, and is out getting petitions signed by other members of COPE who live in Taneytown, Rocky Ridge, Fairfield, and probably Thurmont, too. *We don't know where they all live and they won't tell you* unless you go to their meetings and demand answers in order to preserve the reputation of Emmitsburg citizens that COPE doesn't like and wants to get rid of, no matter how much those citizens have done for the Town that they live in.

Town will be run by outsiders!

Craig and O'Neil, according to the press, won't speak unless they're together.

I guess they won't vote on anything unless they are together also. And listen to this. Commissioner Elder is also a member of COPE. If Craig and O'Neil are elected, *three of the four* Town commissioners will belong to COPE and Emmitsburg will be *run by a tiny group* of people and as far as we know *most of them don't live here!* That's a good enough reason all by itself not to vote for Craig and O'Neil, or either one of them.

Craig/O'Neil may cause us tax hike!

Craig and O'Neil wrote a letter to the Maryland Department of the Environment (MDE) *giving false information* that may cause us tax-paying Emmitsburg citizens who live here fines and hardships. Just because of the political activist group called COPE, the State MDE is in the process of taking enforcement action. Now we may have State-mandated sewer connections. They (COPE) got their wish.

COPE doesn't care about Emmitsburg or its citizens. If we didn't have growth, none of these people living here now would be here.

COPE's treasurer turned her back on Emmitsburg!

Dot Davis...I can't understand why she has turned her back on Emmitsburg. I thought I knew her. Ask her why she doesn't want Well #7 brought online and give Emmitsburg the additional water COPE asked for one year ago. Ask her why she doesn't want any new families in Town, when she moved to Town in the 1950s and wanted to raise her family and kids here in a new development called Emit Gardens.

Craig/O'Neill will load committees with outsiders!

Now, according to Art Elder, COPE also wants to *fill the Town committees with out-of-Town* people. Should we ask people who live outside Emmitsburg what we should do?

Ask COPE members what they are doing. Question everything they do. Don't let Emmitsburg be dragged down to nothing by people who don't even live here.

Do you really want O'Neil and Craig, or even one of them in office? Will they represent Emmitsburg's best interest or COPE's? Citizens out to *preserve* Emmitsburg, I ask you, if COPE is protecting Emmitsburg *from the citizens* and people who made Emmitsburg, who is going to protect the citizens *from* COPE?

TOWN NEWS



—THE EMMITSBURG DISPATCH

Abandoned Headstones Found

Staff writer Richard Fulton records information from one of two abandoned headstones found along Old Gettysburg Road. The headstones were found by Kevin Albaugh, Emmitsburg, in a drainage ditch next to his property in March.

One of the headstones belonged to Frederick J. Hardman, who died in 1891. Hardman may have been the founder of one of Emmitsburg's foundries, and prior to that, one of the

Town smithies. Emmitsburg Area Historical Society records covering this period also mention a Mrs. F. Hardman owning land in the Town.

The other headstone belongs to a George J. Kauffman. Kauffman may have been a member of an area Civil War Period militia unit, but otherwise, little has been found out to date about this individual, according to Michael Hillman, Emmitsburg Area Historical Society.

A word from the Mayor Silo Hill Traffic Light

There have been several questions about the traffic light needed at the Silo Hill intersection. The light currently being installed will be a blinking warning light until such time as the state's minimum traffic conditions are met. At that time, the state will consider all operational factors prior to installing a fully operating traffic light.

Because MD Rt. 140, Main St., is a state road, only the state can authorize a traffic light at this intersection. The state of Maryland uses a national standard for justifying traffic lights. These standards are written into the Maryland Vehicle Law. The State Highway Administration must follow the Manual of Uniform Traffic Control Devices (MUTCD) standards that describe signal justification. Unfortunately, since we live in a society where so many people want to take legal action against one another for financial gain, the state must be very cautious and not deviate from approved standards because of legal liabilities. Those of us who live in Emmitsburg know that there have been several accidents at this intersection. However, most of those accidents have not been documented with a police report. Therefore, other than traffic counts, the state has very little documentation to justify a fully operational traffic light at this time.

There have been several traffic studies (counts) done at this intersection. The most recent one completed was in Feb. 2003. Another study is tentatively scheduled for the fall of 2004 in conjunction with the reconfiguration of the N. Seton Ave. and Rt. 15 intersection. To complete a traffic study, every car traveling through this intersection in all directions is counted. At the Silo Hill intersection, cars making a right turn from a dedicated right turn lane are not counted in the study. Cars operating straight through or making left turns are counted.

When a traffic count is conducted,

the state assigns a team to visit the intersection for a 14-hour period to count every car and document the direction of travel for each. Once this data is collected, it is then compiled into a report. For the four-hour signal warrant, the focus is on the 4 hours with the highest traffic volume. For example, to meet the state standards, for 4 of the 14 hours there must be a volume of 75 cars entering/exiting off Silo Hill Rd. and a volume of 800 cars combined operating east and west on MD Rt. 140. Although this intersection does not meet the minimum traffic flows to justify the traffic light, it does meet 3 out of the 4 hours necessary to meet the 4-hour justification. By the fall of this year, 2004, the remaining homes in Silo Hill will be occupied. Also, with the increased business at the Sleep Inn, the car wash and all the stores and shops on Silo Hill Rd., I believe we will most likely see this light in its fully operational stages in the next 9 to 12 months.

The current blinking light is being installed because the Town required the Sleep Inn Hotel to provide a traffic light at this intersection before receiving final site plan approval. The Sleep Inn Hotel has worked with the state to meet their requirement. In an effort to improve this intersection, the Sleep Inn has purchased and installed the blinking light equipment to serve as an intermediate solution until the state is able to approve the fully operational light. All of the wiring and hardware, with the exception of the light fixtures and vehicle detection, have been installed to convert the blinking light to a fully operational light as soon as the intersection is approved. The Town has not incurred any cost to install this light, nor will the Town be responsible for any cost to convert the blinking light fixture to the 3 light fixtures.

—Jim Hoover

Mayor of Emmitsburg

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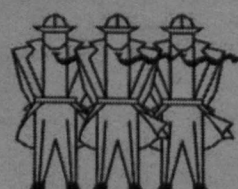
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(L-R) Janet Follin with Wanda (Guide Dog), James Follin with Tally (GD), Dr. Michael Bartholomew, Dr. Hugh Matthews, Dr. Gary Kubala, Brandon Patterson with Harlene (GD), Thomas Armstrong with Zorine (GD), Teresa Scripture with Macy (GD).

Guiding Eyes Dogs — a Volunteer Effort

Guiding Eyes for the Blind, a national nonprofit founded in 1954, matches trained dogs with blind and visually impaired men and women. Recently Catocin Region Guiding Eyes puppy raisers presented 2 plaques to the Emmitsburg Veterinary Hospital for its support of 17 potential guide dogs.

The Hospital has worked with the program since 1996. Michelle Emmert, Office Manager, told The Dispatch, "We want to help where we can."

Guiding Eyes is doing a fantastic job. Every time another dog qualifies, they send us a picture of the dog and its owner." The hospital regularly works with at least 5 families.

Guiding Eyes programs rely on volunteers. Funding comes solely from individuals, corporations, foundations and civic groups. Volunteer puppy raisers housetrain, socialize and teach basic obedience to puppies 8 weeks to 18 months old. Local veterinarians pro-

—Continued on page 10

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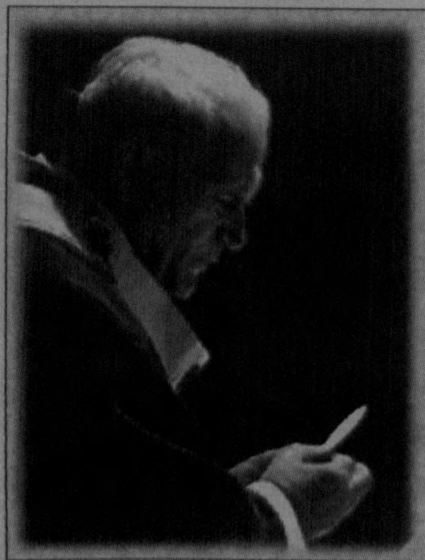
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RELIGION

John Paul II longest in office after Pius IX and St. Peter



-L'OSSERVATORE ROMANO PHOTO

The Vatican planned no celebration for March 14 but on that day

John Paul II broke a record for longevity as the Bishop of Rome. He was in office 25 years, 4 months and 18 days, surpassing the term of Leo XIII (1878-1903).

Of about 264 popes, only two have held that office longer.

The term of Pius IX lasted more than 30 years (1846 to 1878) and, historians estimate, St. Peter's lasted 34 or 37 years (30 to 64 or 67 A.D.). The Apostle was bishop first in Antioch and later, for a quarter of a century, in Rome.

Cardinal Karol Wojtyla of Krakow, Poland, was elected Pope on Oct. 16, 1978. At 58 he was the youngest Pontiff of the 20th century and the first non-Italian since the Dutch Adrian VI (1552).

A word from the pulpit

Jesus replaced the tree of death with the tree of life, the Cross

By Rev. Bill Warehime
Pastor, Tom's Creek
United Methodist Church

"Then the Lord God said, 'See, the man has become like one of us, knowing good and evil; and now, he might reach out his hand and take also from the tree of life, and eat, and live forever.' . . . He drove out the man; and at the east of the garden of Eden he placed the cherubim, and a sword flaming and turning to guard the way to the tree of life."

(Gen. 3:22-24 NRSV)

Many have seen the movie *The Passion of the Christ*. I was asked "What do you think about it?" and "Had I seen the movie?" First, I think they got the questions in the wrong order. And yes, I've seen *The Passion*. Here are a few thoughts.

I believe those, whose faiths are anchored in the Protestant traditions, will come away with a greater appreciation of the role of Mary, the mother of Jesus. She responded to the call from the angel Gabriel with "Here I am." Mary was the first to proclaim the nature of Jesus' ministry. I saw Mary as Mommy running to her son when he fell while playing, and running to his side carrying the cross to Calvary. Yes, I saw Mary in a new and different light.

We've heard so much about the violence, the whipping, the scourging, and the crucifixion. But that was the purpose of crucifixion. It was meant to be painful, to be brutal, to be bloody, and to be public. It was meant to be a deterrent to anyone who would oppose the Romans. Yet if you walk away from *The Passion of the Christ* and have only seen the violence and not seen the love, then you've missed the message. It was the love of Jesus that

shines through the blood and the pain. It was his passion that speaks louder than the crack of the whip, that is sharper than the thorns, and is more piercing than the nails.

In the Garden of Eden, Man enjoyed a special relationship with God. There was trust and peace — everything Man has ever wanted or needed. But Man chose to eat the fruit from the tree of Knowledge of Good and Evil, the one tree forbidden by God. He could have freely eaten from the Tree of Life but didn't. He had his pick of all other trees but he chose unwisely. And now the relationship was broken and God barred Man from the Garden of Eden and the Tree of Life.

Our Lord Jesus came to restore the relationship that was broken in the Garden. He came to show us a way back to the Father. It is a way marked by faithful discipleship through study, prayer, worship, and service. Jesus teaches us to give of ourselves as he gave himself for us. As he gave up his life for you and for me on a Cross at Calvary.

The enemies saw the cross as a tree of death. They were able to celebrate for a few days when they thought they had won. However, Jesus turned the Cross into the Tree of Life. On the third day Jesus rose from the dead and now lives and reigns in the hearts of all believers. Jesus said, "Because I live, you shall live too."

And now, today, Christians can take and eat from the Tree of Life. Whenever we celebrate Holy Communion, the Eucharist, the Lord's Supper, we have access not only to the Tree of Life but now enjoy a relationship with God. What was lost in the Garden of Eden has now been restored.

Praise be to God! Amen.

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OBITUARIES

Sister Cecilia Connelly

Sister Cecelia Connelly, DC, 95, died Mar. 9 at Villa St. Michael, Emmitsburg. Daughter of the late Mark Joseph and Mary Cecilia Cahill Connelly, Mary Cecilia Connelly was born in Bainbridge, GA. She graduated from St. Martin's High School in Baltimore in 1926 and entered the Daughters of Charity that December. Sister received a bachelor's degree in education from St. Joseph College in Emmitsburg in 1938.

Sister Cecilia was a teacher for 57 years. She then worked at the switchboard at St. Joseph's Provincial House from 1983 until 1990 when she retired. Survivors include numerous nieces and nephews, grandnieces and nephews, and great grandnieces and nephews.

A funeral mass was offered Mar. 12 at the Basilica of the National Shrine of St. Elizabeth Ann Seton in Emmitsburg.

Mr. Samuel Turner

Mr. Samuel A. Turner, 83, Emmitsburg, died Feb. 25 at Gettysburg Hospital, Gettysburg, PA. He was the husband of Lulu M. Tressler Turner, his wife of 52 years. Born Oct. 5, 1920 in Frederick County, he was the son of the late Annias and Margaret Miller Turner. He was a member of Living Word Ministries, Blue Ridge Summit, PA.

Surviving in addition to his wife are 2 children, Frank J. Turner and Linda M. Sanders; 4 grandchildren, Kari A. Turner, Frankie S. Turner, Krystal A. Turner and Steven S. Sanders; a brother, John A. Turner; and a number of nieces and nephews.

Funeral services were held Feb. 27 from the Living Word Ministries, Blue Ridge Summit, Pastor Warren A. Rice officiating. Interment was in Friends Creek Cemetery, Emmitsburg.

Master Marcus Rosensteel

Master Marcus Jace Rosensteel, infant son of Jeremy Lee Rosensteel and Kelly Diane Webb, Emmitsburg, died at birth Feb. 26 at Washington County Hospital, Hagerstown.

Surviving in addition to his parents are his brother, Matthew J. Click, and his sister, Melanie A. Rosensteel, both at home; paternal grandparents, Eric and Diana Rosensteel; maternal grandparents, Linda and Kevin Wetzell and Jimmy Webb. He is also survived by his aunt, Jessica Rosensteel, and 2 uncles, Brant Webb and Michael Wetzell.

Private graveside services and interment were held in Weller Cemetery, Thurmont.

Gibson's *The Passion*, A message for everyone

Editor's Note: Former editor of The Emmitsburg Dispatch, Bill Steo, went with members of Emmitsburg's St. Joseph's church to see The Passion by Mel Gibson. At one time he worked as a film and drama reviewer for The Miami Daily News. So we asked him to write a review for us.

Movie Review
By Bill Steo
Special to
The Emmitsburg Dispatch

No recent movie has generated more reviews and comments than The Passion of the Christ. One reason is the prominence of the co-writer, producer and director, Mel Gibson, who has starred in numerous swash-

buckling films. He spent \$30 million of his own money to make the film.

Many Christian churches have rented all seats in theaters, or bought blocks of tickets to give to their congregations.

For 2 hours and 6 minutes, The Passion portrays the torture of Jesus of Nazareth during the last 12 hours of his life (the Latin word, passio, means "suffering"), and ends with a fleeting view of Jesus risen. The script derives mostly from the New Testament gospels.

Message Film. Some reviewers have complained that The Passion fails to conform to the gospel narratives. But the movie is not a film version of the New Testament and cannot be judged as if it were. Also, it is not a documentary, nor an entertain-

ment like the 1973 films, Jesus Christ Superstar and Godspell.

The Passion is nothing other than a proclamation of a Christian message. The producer-director has said as much in interviews. He made the film to illustrate his belief that Jesus died because of the sins of all humanity. It is his personal representation — not of the gospels — but of some events that they narrate. The Passion is Mel Gibson's gospel.

For Empathy. Recognized as a message film, The Passion makes more sense. If it were a drama for entertainment, the beating of Jesus would not need to last 11 minutes. Horror can be conveyed briefly and indirectly, as by the shower scene in Hitchcock's Psycho.

—Continued on page 11

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EDUCATION

American Legion Unit 168 Essay contest winners

By Susan Allen
Staff Writer

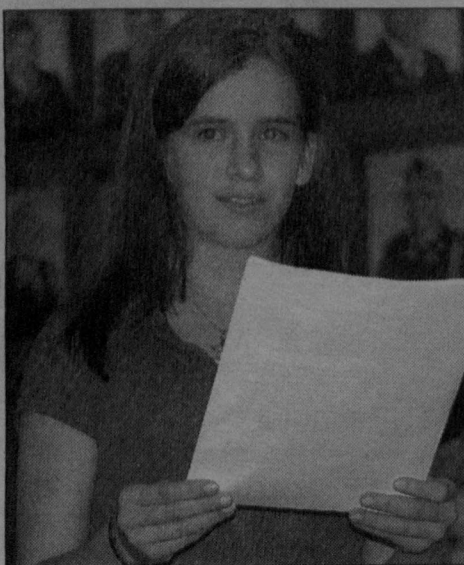
The Auxiliary of American Legion Edwin C. Creeger, Jr. Unit 168 announced its annual essay contest winners Mar. 18. Students in grades 3 through 8 wrote on the patriotic theme, selected by the national board, "Every Heart Beats True for the Red, White, and Blue — Old Glory."

Group I students, grades 3 and 4, submitted 150-250 word essays. Group II, grades 5 and 6, wrote 250-300 words. Group III, grades 7 and 8, wrote 450-500 words. Julie Mackley, contest

chairman, received 170 entries. There were no Group I winners this year.

Rachel Marlow, a fifth grader at Thurmont Elementary School, won first place in Group II. Her parents are Bob and Stacey Marlow, Thurmont. Georgia Firor, in sixth grade at Thurmont Middle School, took second

place. Her parents are David and Kathy Firor, Thurmont. Third place winner was Kelsey Wivell, Emmitsburg. Kelsey is the daughter of Doug and Kim Wivell, and the granddaughter of Jim and Lorraine Wivell and Arthur and Dot Damuth, Emmitsburg.



Victoria Farmer-Long

The first place Group III winner was Victoria Farmer-Long, Emmitsburg. Victoria, a seventh grader at Thurmont Middle School, is the daughter of Angela Long-Forrest and Pete Forrest, and James Farmer, Frederick. She is the granddaughter of Edith Long, Emmitsburg, and Charles Long, Gettysburg; and the great-granddaughter of Anna M. Martin, Emmitsburg, and Ethel Long, Harney.

Each winner read her essay at the awards ceremony. Ms. Rose Bentz, Auxiliary President, presented the prizes. First place essays in each group have been forwarded to District level competition.



—RAYMOND BUCHHEISTER/THE EMMITSBURG DISPATCH

(R-L) Rosalie Bentz, Unit 168 President, hands out awards to Victoria Farmer-Long, Emmitsburg; Kelsey Wivell, Emmitsburg; Rachel Marlow, Thurmont; and Georgia Firor, Thurmont. Julie Mackley (far left), contest chairman, received 170 entries.

Guide Dogs

—Continued from page 7

vide care, wellness checks and donate vaccinations. Students and dogs, generally Labradors, golden retrievers or German shepherds, train together for a month. Guiding Eyes provides all services at no cost to the students, including

lifelong follow-up. They have put together more than 6000 guide dog teams.

Catoctin Region Guiding Eyes covers northern and northwestern MD and south central PA. For general information, or to learn how to become a puppy raiser, call 717-642-6941 or visit www.guidingeyescatoctin.org.



—SUBMITTED PHOTO

'Jump Rope for Heart' -a Success

Jump Rope for Heart, held Mar. 16 at Emmitsburg Elementary School, raised nearly \$8000 to help the American Heart Association fight heart disease and stroke. Mrs. Jeanne Davis coordinated the event.

Jump Rope for Heart, co-sponsored by the American Heart Association and the American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, promotes physical fitness and heart health through jumping rope.

Of the 109 students participating, 27 raised over \$100 each; 8 of these brought in over \$200. Kurstin Metz' donations totaled \$600. Pictured left

to right are

Top Row: Tyler Leach, Trei Jackson, Laken Grossnickle, Tiffany Sloane, Trey Watts, Katie Davis, Eric Stone

Third Row: Brandon Stouter, Emily Poole, Brenden Snuff, Bryan Troxell, Nick Myers, Kaitlyn Glass, David Wantz

Second Row: Jacob Fisher, Kellie Kuykendall, Katelyn Parsley, Travis Rohrbaugh, Graham Nettleton, Rachel Wilt, Megan Watkins

Bottom Row: Paige McIntosh, Ashley Ridenour, Kurstin Metz, Ryan Pittinger, Tony Alvarez. Not pictured: Kayla Lenhart.

Catoctin Area Schools to Participate in Schoolyard Habitat Program

By Susan Allen
Staff Writer

Five schools in the Catoctin feeder area will participate in a Schoolyard Habitat pilot program. Emmitsburg, Sabillasville and Thurmont Elementary, Thurmont Middle, and Catoctin High will design projects to improve water quality, provide protection for wildlife, and encourage hands-on learning opportunities for local students. Each school already includes environmental science coursework, field trips, nature and weather observations, and volunteer opportunities.

Community Commons, a Frederick County nonprofit conservation organization, received \$70,000 from the Chesapeake Bay Trust to work with the U. S. Fish and Wildlife Service (USFWS) and Frederick County Public Schools (FCPS) on a meaningful Bay experience. The Chesapeake Bay 2000 Agreement, signed by MD, PA, and D.C., requires a "meaningful" Bay or stream experience for all students within the 64,000 square mile Chesapeake Bay watershed. Maryland's larger goal is a minimum of 3 experiences for each

student throughout elementary, middle, and high school.

Catoctin High School hosted the first regional meeting Feb. 24, 2004. Hilari Varnadore and Betsy Donnelly, Community Commons, and Karen Kelly, USFWS, described the Schoolyard Habitat program to approximately 40 teachers, staff members, Colleen Beall, FCPS middle school science facilitator, and parents. Participating teachers will attend summer workshops. At least 2 teachers from each school will attend a minimum of 2 days of specialized training. By May 2005 all schools will complete their campus water quality and habitat restoration plans. At least 1 schoolyard project will be implemented by that time.

Four schools in the city of Frederick will also participate. Frederick High, West Frederick Middle, Gov. Thomas Johnson High, and Gov. Thomas Johnson Middle will each have a planning team including teachers, students, parents, administrators, facilities staff, and community members. A USFWS biologist will

—Continued on page 11

Habitat Program—

—Continued from page 10

visit each site and advise the teams after they develop their concept plans. The existing landscape at each school will, in part, dictate their choices.

USFWS initiated its Schoolyard Habitat program in 1992. One of its goals is to change unused acres on

school ground into diverse learning environments by creating naturalized habitats featuring native trees, shrubs, grasses, and flowers.

The Chesapeake Bay Trust receives its funding from the MD State Income Tax check off and private donations, sales of "Treasure the Chesapeake" commemorative license plates, memorial gifts, and support from the MD business community.

Passion—

—Continued from page 9

Gibson shows Jesus suffering excruciating torture, scourged on all parts of his body, front and back, not merely to tell what probably happened, but to make viewers feel empathy for their savior. His Jesus falls several times with sickening thuds, and his hands and feet tear against the nails as the soldiers jolt the cross into its slot.

In reality, the director is saying, the passion of Jesus was horribly worse than the glossy paintings and artsy sculptures used as Stations of the Cross. Jesus effected salvation by his obedience. And his death, he wants us to know, revealed the ultimate evil of sin.

At least one flashback would not make sense except in a message film. It is the scene where Jesus offers bread to his friends at the Last Supper when he celebrated the Passover. Many Christians may not recognize their beliefs illustrated here: that Jesus is the bread of life, and that the death of the "lamb of God" was the real sacrifice of reconciliation with God that the Jews had offered symbolically with animals since the time of the Exodus. For Catholic Mel Gibson *The Passion* is a film about the Mass.

Subtitles. This is an extremely visual film. In some scenes individual characters don't speak, and spoken words are not all translated in the subtitles. Occasionally, there is no subtitle for a poignant remark, as when the soldiers with whips tell Jesus to "Taste (this)," and "(Here's a bit of) delight."

The dialogue often comes verbatim from the New Testament. Gibson has the actors perform it in Aramaic, the cultured language of Israel, and the vernacular Latin of the Romans. (Speaking to Pilate, Jesus uses Latin, a language he may not have known.)

Surprisingly, the use of subtitles proves to be a wise choice. It spares viewers from hearing dubbed English with a British or other accent that could not have sounded true.

Imperfect acting. Also surprising is the often wooden acting of the main characters. Maybe the story forced Jim Caviezel (Jesus) to be more passive than active, maybe the director

wanted him to act stoically, or as if numbed with pain, but Caviezel usually seemed too stiff.

Mary realistically appeared shocked by events, but displayed hardly any other emotions. Young John the Apostle, who accompanies her, is nearly expressionless. Mary did no serious sobbing or weeping in this movie; she showed no anger, made no loud outcries — all of which Jesus did in his lifetime. Such demonstrations would be natural for a real-life human mother observing her son being tortured for hours.

Several women whom I respect saw Mary differently. One is my wife who says Gibson's Mary suggests that the reality of the events precluded any other emotion than horror and that all she could manifest was emptiness of heart.

Gibson's Satan simply lacks credibility. It appears as a woman, not very repulsive, with a man's voice. What it is doing, and why, remain unclear. It does little but lurk. If Satan menaced Jesus horribly in his last hours, it did look or behave like this.

The Roman soldiers who beat Jesus come straight out of an early silent movie. They laugh and leer as if insane. The actual men who tortured Jesus were not having a party but just "doing their job" as soldiers in a brutal government, a point better illustrated without laughter.

Historians know that Pilate, the local Roman ruler, callously executed hundreds of Jews. The movie makes his character rather gentle and sympathetic — a relief for the movie but, with the unbelievable soldiers, a weakness for the message.

Powerful art. The weakness of these important characterizations do not, however, make *The Passion* anything less than a superior work of film art.

Gibson has imagined Mary quite creatively, allotting her some non-Biblical but credible actions that give substance to the story, like wiping up Jesus' blood. He weaves in several effective subplots. Simon, the Cyrenean who helped carry the cross, develops from a reluctant pilgrim into a defender of Jesus. The well-acted Judas perpetrates his betrayal and suicide as mentally unstable and beset by devils. Peter acts out his denials with



—SUBMITTED PHOTO

Kindergarten does unit study on horses

Joe Topper and his horse, Mamie, visited Emmitsburg Elementary School on Mar. 17 as guests of Mrs. Carolyn Miller's kindergarten class. Mr. Topper showed the children how he handles and cares for Mamie, puts on horseshoes, and how to sit correctly on her back. Mrs. Miller said, "Mamie is just a wonderful

horse...the children were thrilled to see her." The class recently completed a study unit on horses. Students learned the characteristics of horses, practiced weighing and measuring toy horses, and made model horse farms. In February their families came to school for a "horse celebration," and watched the movie, *Spirit*.

emotional power.

Gibson's flashbacks effectively complicate and elaborate the story. The makeup for Jesus (5 hours to apply every day) reaches a pinnacle of realism. The moody lighting, animated crowd scenes, the lush and seemingly authentic backgrounds, the sounds and soulful music — all move the film along vigorously and keep audience interest high.

Universal appeal? Directors of Biblical films face a dilemma. To make the film intelligible to audiences everywhere, they should touch on all relevant background information. But to make the film artistic they have to omit various elements in the Bible.

The Passion will probably have little meaning for Muslims, Buddhists, and Hindus. Muslims deny that Jesus, a prophet of Allah, could suffer such a fate. Buddhists and Hindus consider the *Passion* story unfitting for Jesus, an enlightened sage, who should have transcended suffering and death, like the Buddha.

The Passion probably lacks meaning even for Americans who don't know the gospels or repudiate them. But it has been widely acclaimed in the U.S. where most of the population knows Christianity's story.

Anti-Semitic? *The Passion* shows Jewish leaders provoking the murder of Jesus by the Romans, as they did in fact. But in no way does the movie incite viewers to dislike Jews. The scenes may arouse fears in persons with memories scarred by the Holocaust and by Christians' historical abuse of the *Passion* narrative.

But this movie does not promote any such abuse.

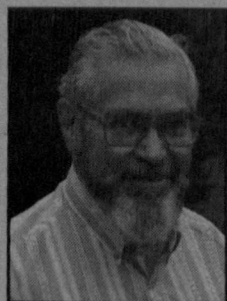
The Passion is no more anti-semitic than Mafia movies are anti-Italian, or all WWII movies are anti-German. Interestingly, a real-life Jewish actress, a Romanian named Maia Morgenstern plays Mary the mother of Jesus. Eventually someone realized that her last name means "morning star," a Christian title for Mary.

Uncommon events. Allegedly, several uncommon events happened during the making of *The Passion* — conversions, drug abuse cures, the reconciliation of enemies, severing of adulterous relationships, apparitions of mysterious personages, explosions of energy, unknown figures kneeling as Jim Caviezel (Jesus) passed by. Witnesses confirm his claim that he was struck by a lightning bolt.

Perhaps the most unusual fact about *The Passion* is that, in a world that grows more secular daily, this lay gospel was made at all.

Recommendation. *The Passion* of the Christ, rich in art and meaning, is worth viewing more than once, perhaps every year before Easter. Everyone should see it, especially Christians who may know, but not adequately feel, what their salvation cost. It is an enlightening, rousing film and a good antidote for the prevalent diluted Christianity which teaches, according to Protestant theologian H. Richard Niebuhr, "a God without wrath brought men without sin into a kingdom without judgment though the ministrations of a Christ without a cross."

The (retired) Ecologist Protecting the homeland in winter



Bill Meredith
Dispatch Writer

May 16, 1940, was a big day in my life. I was dimly aware that there was a war in Europe, but that was an abstraction; what was real was that it was my 7th birthday, and my parents had given me a BB gun. It was a Daisy carbine model, just like the pictures in the Red Ryder comic books and Boys' Life that I had been drooling over for months. Ever since I was 3 and had a popgun that shot corks, my Dad had instructed me about gun safety; I knew how to carry it safely, and not to point it at people or farm animals even if it wasn't loaded. I also knew most living things were off limits, but it was OK to shoot at rats, English sparrows, or any birds that were stealing cherries. So as soon as it was out of the box I marched boldly off into the chicken yard where the cherry tree was, took aim at an unsuspecting catbird, and fired away. I was never more astonished in my life,

before or since; I can still see that catbird as it folded up and dropped to the ground without a flutter. I didn't know what to think. I suppose, since I had aimed at it, I must have expected to hit it, but I hadn't anticipated the reality of killing something. It was not a pleasant feeling.

As it turned out, hitting the catbird with that first shot was a fluke; I didn't realize it at the time, but I was both nearsighted and astigmatic, and after that I rarely hit anything. Over the next few years a half-dozen English sparrows got unlucky, but most of my targets were cans and bottles in the garbage dump. Years later the BB gun was passed on to my kids until they got their own, and eventually it was left to rust in the garage among some old, unused tools. But it was not lost; a few years ago my son came across it and had it cleaned up and reconditioned. It became a birthday present for the second time, and now it resides in a state of sentimental, honored retirement in the corner of my room.

It was a tough winter this year; the season arrived late, but made up for it by being colder than normal. The cold was not a problem for birds as long as they could keep dry; but then came the snow. It started in January and continued into February

in 6-inch doses, separated by freezing rains. The rains coated the trees with ice and turned the surface of the snow into an icy crust that made it nearly impossible for small birds to find food. Some 16 species of them turned up outside my kitchen window, looking for handouts. They emptied the feeder each day, and we enjoyed their company during breakfast. Everything was fine until the squirrels discovered the feeder.

As a general proposition, I have nothing against squirrels; they are admirably tough, adaptable, and interesting to watch. But I knew they had their own supplies of nuts, so I wasn't eager to buy sunflower seeds for them. More importantly, when they came to plunder the feeder, they chased the birds away. My wife pecked on the window; they ran off once or twice, but then quickly realized that she couldn't come through the glass to get them, and proceeded to ignore her.

Drastic measures were called for. My wife wanted me to get the pellet pistol, but it could have done serious damage to both the squirrels and the car parked nearby. I wanted to chase the squirrels off, but didn't want to kill them. Then I remembered the BB gun dozing peacefully in its corner. I roused it from its torpor, loaded it and sneaked out onto the porch. The squirrel on the feeder looked at me over his shoulder, sneered, and continued stuffing himself. I took careful aim and fired; and I could see the BB as it left the end of the gun and flew in a gentle arc like a weak pop fly to second base, hitting the ground about half-way to the feeder. The squirrel was startled by the noise of the gun, but not enough to leave; he watched with interest as I recocked, aimed a couple of feet higher, and fired again. This time something happened inside the aged gun; perhaps the piston that propels the missile had been stiff from lack of use, or maybe it was just the thrill of being back in the hunt again... but for whatever reason, the next BB flew with more enthusiasm, sailing over the squirrel's head and ricocheting off the drainpipe by the garage. The squirrel trotted off; he was probably full anyway.

This scene was repeated several times each day for the next few weeks. Sometimes the gun would

shoot almost like new; other times the BB would float through the air as if it was attached to a parachute, and occasionally nothing came out at all. I became more determined; my wife became more aggravated. The squirrels seemed to enjoy the competition until one day I actually hit one of them. The BB didn't have enough force to penetrate the skin, but it must have stung; the squirrel jumped, directed a stream of sciurine invective at me, darted up the plum tree and disappeared over the roof of the garage.

For a while I basked in newfound respect from both the squirrels and my wife. It developed into a kind of bizarre game; I would try to ease the door open without the hinges squeaking and slip out to the porch. The birds, whom I was trying to help, insisted on warning the squirrels, and they would provide running targets. I didn't keep score, but I probably hit them about one shot in 20 attempts. My wife feigned contempt, but secretly she was getting drawn in. One morning when I came in to breakfast I found the gun on her desk, and she admitted she had tried it. She claimed she had hit a squirrel, and when it didn't return that day she began to feel guilty. "Maybe I killed it," she said, staring forlornly out the window. Luckily, I was behind her, so she couldn't see the expression on my face. I had seen her try to shoot before... she held the gun like a broom she was trying to skoosh a mouse with, and I knew the only danger to the squirrel was that it might die laughing... so, informed by nearly 50 years of marriage, I said nothing. The next day, the squirrel was back, with a self-confident smirk on its face; it even brought a couple of friends to watch. The game went on.

Eventually the snow melted, the days got longer, buds started to swell, hormones began to flow, and the squirrels turned their attention to more serious matters. Birds still come to the feeder, but it isn't a matter of survival to them now; they, too, are beginning to think of other things. The squirrels also stop by the feeder occasionally; they will probably be bringing their kids to see it before long. The game will resume next winter; in the meantime, the homeland is secure.

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Liberty Township Board of Supervisors Chairman Paul Harner (Center Left) and supervisors John Miller (L) and Leonard Sites (R) consult with township Solicitor Walton Davis, just before the board votes on the Liberty Valley PRD. — Photo by Raymond Buchheister/The Emmitsburg Dispatch.

PA township rejects Liberty Valley PRD

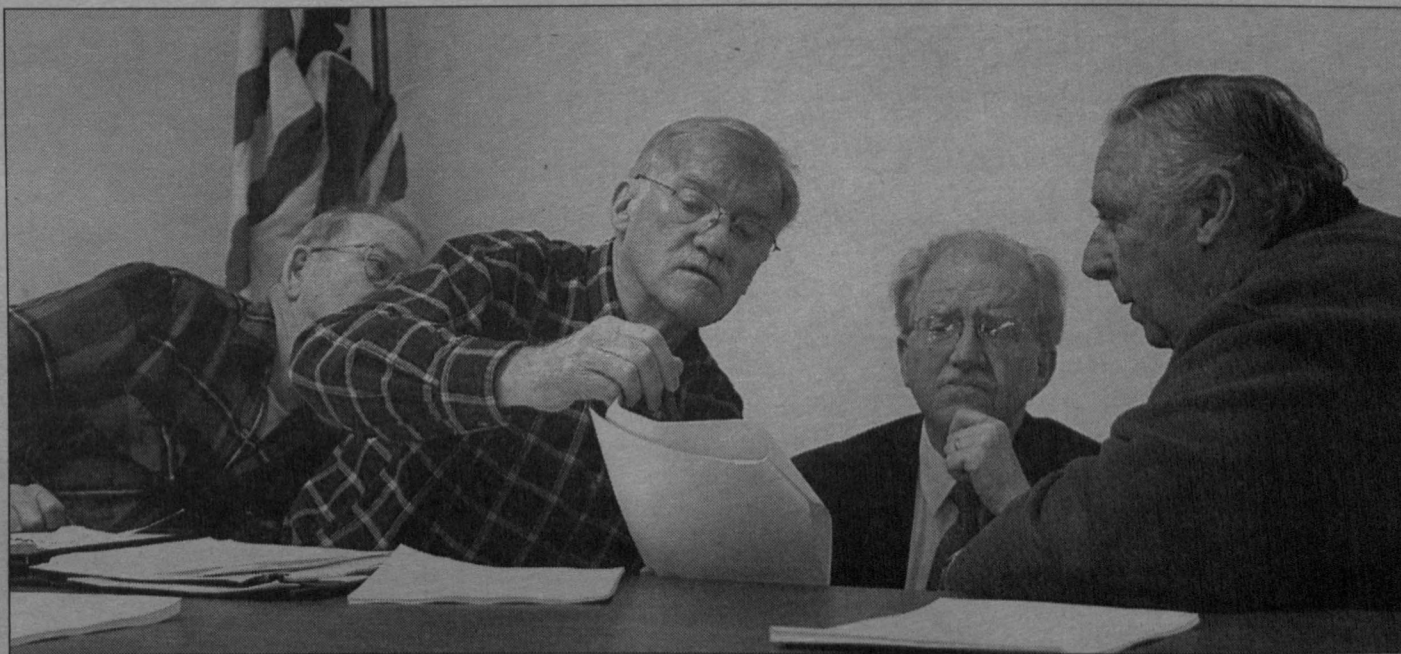
The Liberty Township Board of Supervisors nixed Liberty Development Company's proposed 1,181-unit development in a 2-1 vote on Mar. 16.

Board of supervisors Chairman Paul Harner and Supervisor John Miller voted to reject the Liberty Valley development. They felt the township zoning ordinance had been sufficiently purged of references to planned residential developments (PRDs) to justify denying the proposal.

Supervisor Leonard Sites disagreed, and voted in favor of the development.

Efforts to expunge references to PRDs from the township zoning ordinance began in 1985 with the move to disallow special exceptions, which included PRDs. However, some references to PRDs, mainly definitions, remained in the ordinance until this past February.

The Wormald Companies has 30 days from Mar. 16 to file a land use appeal in the Adams County Court of Common Pleas.



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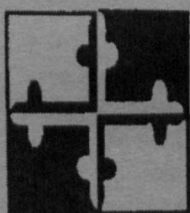
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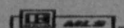
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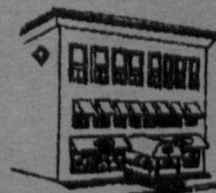
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SPORTS AND RECREATION

An "Up-and-Coming" Local Sport: The Oldest and Fastest American Game on Two Feet

By Megan Zimmerman
Intern Writer

Despite its French name, lacrosse is as American as apple pie. It is the oldest sport in North America. Native Americans developed lacrosse, mainly to strengthen their men during preparation for war. According to legend, as many as 1,000 men played on a field up to 15 miles long, with games lasting for days.

It was not until the 19th century that lacrosse became an organized sport. The men's teams came first, beginning in 1877. Nearly 50 years later the first women's team was established at the Bryn Mawr School in Baltimore.

Since then, lacrosse has grown to become one of the most popular team sports in the U. S., with over 52,000 players. There are national, collegiate, and high school teams across the country. Lacrosse has even seen "tremendous growth" in Frederick County, says Bill Derbyshire, the Catocin High School Lacrosse Coach.

In the late 1980s, Derbyshire, along with A.J. Russo, coached a youth team in Emmitsburg — the only lacrosse team in Frederick County. With Baltimore, one of the birthplaces of lacrosse, being so close, the sport quickly attracted many people. Combined with the

commitment of local recreational programs, there are now many youth, high school, and community lacrosse teams scattered across the county.

"Working with the youth created a natural flow of players into high school," explained Derbyshire. "It was clear that the county needed more teams to keep up with the interest."

Lacrosse has only been a varsity high school sport for 5 years, but Derbyshire believes that "it is quickly approaching an equal plane with other more popular sports, such as football and baseball."

Even though Frederick County lacrosse is "in good shape," adjustments still need to be made. The sport has to stay in the school systems, and the local high schools need to adopt a junior varsity lacrosse program to meet the demand from younger players. Derbyshire believes this commitment will allow Frederick County lacrosse to catch up with other MD team's skill levels and competitiveness.

Lacrosse is definitely gaining more respect in Frederick County, and with a few improvements and a little time, it may grow to become one of the biggest sports in the county.

The MD General Assembly is currently considering both House and Senate bills that would establish lacrosse as the state team sport.



CYA Lady Cougars win first title in Mid-MD Conference

Staff Report

The Catocin Youth Association (CYA) Junior Varsity Lady Cougars traveling basketball team captured the Antietam Division title in the Mid-Maryland Conference Championship tournament on March 1. They defeated St Maria Goretti at Thurmont Middle School with a final score of 34-19. This is the first time the Cougars team captured the title.

In the early rounds of the tournament, the Cougars narrowly defeated Ballenger Creek at Hagerstown on Feb. 28, and Poolesville at Thurmont on Feb. 29. The team ranked #1, with 9 wins and one loss in the regular season. The team had 11 wins and 5 losses in its combined season and off-season games.

The Cougars came out strong in the beginning of the final championship game taking the lead 16-8 in the first half. Never looking back, the girls led from start to finish beating Goretti. Leading the scoring for the Cougars was Brittany Malone with 9 points, and Emily Delauter and Tara Free with 8 points each. Megan Olson added 5 points and Katelyn Keilholtz added 4. Teamwork was the key to the game. A persistent defense and balanced scoring attack assured the Catocin Lady's victory.

Rachel Olsen, assistant coach, said, "The win against Goretti was bitter-sweet." She categorized the Goretti team as "tough." The first time the girls took on Goretti in an off-season game, Goretti "crushed" the Cougars, Olsen said. The Cougars barely beat Goretti, outscoring them by one point, in one regular season game.

These 6th and 7th grade Catocin girls worked together all season developing a well rounded team with scoring from all players. Megan Olson and Katie Despeaux controlled the inside game leading the team in rebounds. Emily Delauter and Katelyn Keilholtz handled the ball beautifully leading the team with assists, and steals. They also set the pace for aggressive defensive full court pressure. Tara Free came alive with her great shooting and rebounding skills, and Brittany Malone led the team offensively making a name for herself in the league as a scoring threat inside and out.

Team coaches include Jeff Barber, head coach, and Rachel Olson, Bill Malone and Ginger Malone, assistant coaches. Team members include Megan Olson, Brittany Malone, Emily Delauter, Katelyn Keilholtz, Megan Peomeroy, Amanda Kline, Amber Lovejoy, Samantha Crabtree, Tara Free, Amanda Barber, Devan Fogle, and Katie Despeaux.

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Looking Ahead

Apr. 3- Spring Bazaar. 9 a.m. until ? at St. Mark's Lutheran Church, Sabillasville, MD. Eat in or carry out soups, sandwiches and desserts. Baked goods table available. Information: 301-241-3287.

Apr. 4- Easter Egg Hunt. 2 p.m. at Thurmont AMVETS. Rain or Shine. All children will receive a gift and there will be many special prizes.

Apr. 8, 9- Easter Seafood Bonanza. 11-6:30 p.m. each day at Emmitsburg Fire Hall. Shrimp (steamed and fried), Crab Cakes, Oysters, Fish, Crab Soup available.

Apr. 9- Food Sale. 11 a.m. until goodies are gone. Held in conjunction with the Easter Seafood Bonanza at the Emmitsburg Fire Hall. All types of baked goods, breads, and pies available.

Apr. 9- Fellowship of Christian Trail Riders Meeting. at 7 p.m. every second Friday of each month. An interdenominational group of horse lovers from the region. Activities: Trail rides, charity rides, educational programs and demonstrations. For meeting location and information: Lisa at 301-241-4886 or Stephanie at 717-642-9492.

Apr. 11- Easter Egg Hunt. 1 p.m. at the Emmitsburg Community Park next to the Senior baseball field.

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Apr. 13- Health Screening for Stroke & Heart Disease. Beginning at 9 a.m. at Weller United Methodist Church, 101 N. Altamont St., Thurmont. On that day, adults can find out your risk for a stroke by having 4 Prevention Health Screenings. Screenings are available for less than \$30 each as a package and may help prevent a major health problem. Results are given directly to you and you are referred back to your own doctor. To register for an appointment or more information: 800-446-0925. Space is limited to 50 people.

Apr. 15- Old Fashion Bingo. 7 p.m. at the Emmitsburg Fire Hall. Doors open at 5:30. Fun for kids as well as adults!

Apr. 16- Benefit Basketball

Game. Doors open at 6:15 p.m., Game 7:15-9 p.m. at Gettysburg High School, Gettysburg. Firefighters to square off against MD and PA businesses in a game of basketball to benefit the National Fallen Fighter's Foundation and Andy Waybright Scholarship Fund. Adults \$10, Students and Seniors \$5. An evening of fun. Food and Door Prizes.

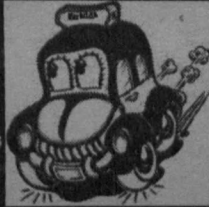
Apr. 18- Basket/Cash Bingo. Doors open at 11:30 a.m., games begin at 1 p.m. at the Emmitsburg Ambulance Company. Advance tickets \$12. At the door \$15. Price includes 25 games using 6 cards each. Specials: Wrought iron corner stand with baskets and hostess easter basket set. Raffles: Retired large workload basket and canister set. All proceeds to benefit the new ambulance building. Information: 301-447-6626.

Information: 301-447-6626.

Apr. 19- Historical Society Meeting. at 7 p.m. at the Emmitsburg Community Center. Topic of discussion: The history of the telephone system in Emmitsburg. Public encouraged to attend. Public encouraged to attend.

Apr. 24- Teen Dance. From 7-10 p.m. at the Emmitsburg Ambulance Company. The dance is a monthly event featuring refreshments, contests and prizes. Held for youth ages 11-17. Cover charge is \$5.00. Doors open at 6:30 p.m. Parents are required to drop children off and pick them up at the door. Youth are required to stay in the building until a guardian arrives to pick them up. Information: 301-447-6626.

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