

The Emmitsburg Dispatch

VOL V, No. 24

News and Opinion in the service of Truth

DECEMBER 21, 2006

Plans for a national fire museum in Emmitsburg

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

EMMITSBURG, Md. — Representatives of the fire services unveiled plans for a county fire museum and a national fire service archive at the Dec. 4 meeting of the town board of commissioners.

J.C. "Robby" Robertson, who was instrumental in the establishment of the national fire training center in Emmitsburg in the 1970s as liaison for the governor's office and the state fire marshal's office, announced the plans, along with Clarence "Chip" Jewell, Director of the Frederick

County Bureau of Emergency Communications.

In brief, plans call for saving the current ambulance headquarters located adjacent to the Community Center on South Seton Avenue, and remodeling the building to take on the appearance of an old-time firehouse. The front portion would be

occupied by the county fire museum filled with firefighting artifacts, including an 1835 Rumsey hand pumper used to fight the courthouse fire in Frederick in 1861. The archive would be at the rear of the building and hold national documents and other written materials concerning the fire service.

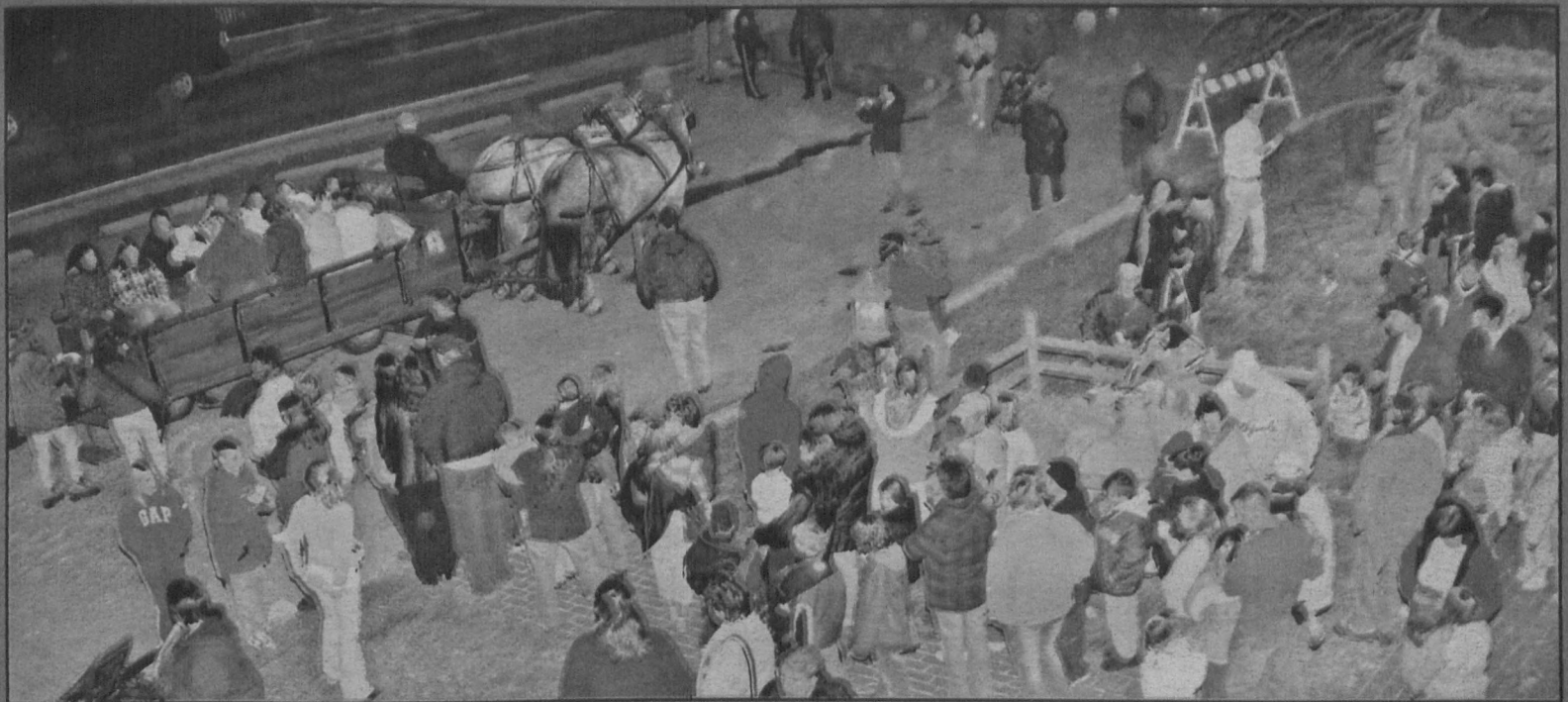
Emmitsburg selected as "best site"

Robertson told the commissioners that the entire county had been canvassed looking

-See **Fire Museum** on page 3

It's beginning to look a lot like Christmas

Hundreds of people turned out for the annual "Evening of Christmas Spirit" in downtown Emmitsburg on Dec. 11. Events included lighting the town Christmas tree, hay rides with Santa Claus, and an evening of music provided by several local choral groups. For more pictures of that evening and other Christmas events in the region, see "Images of Christmas" on pages 10-11.



- ROBERT A. ROSENSTEIN, SR. / THE DISPATCH

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Water/sewer tax increase for system depreciation

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

EMMITSBURG, Md. — Town staff is citing depreciation of value as the primary reason rates were raised in December for customers of Emmitsburg water and sewer services.

Mayor James E. Hoover had asked town staff to develop

rate increases that addressed the depreciation issue and also had the least impact on those who used the least water and sewer services.

Town Manager David Haller told the board of commissioners at their Dec. 4 meeting, "During the town's most recent budget audit we were informed that the depreciation on the water and sanitary sewer systems has risen

to approximately \$404,000 per year."

Prior to this finding he said the town has been funding for the systems' depreciation at a rate of \$310,000 per year.

Haller warned as the board prepared to consider adopting the new rates, "If the town were to decide to not fully fund the system depreciation, it would be

reverting to a time and a means of operation that allowed for these systems to so badly deteriorate ... the same means of operation that has resulted in an MDE consent order."

Haller explained that the depreciation factor is generated by the number of additions to the

-See **Tax increase** on page 3

Gaming Board votes 'No Casino' for Gettysburg

BY JAMES RADA JR.

News Editor
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GETTYSBURG, Pa. — Gettysburg won't be seeing a \$350 million slots parlor. The Pennsylvania Gaming Control Board chose locations in the Pocono and Lehigh Valley areas for the two at-large gaming licenses on Wednesday, Dec. 20.

"This is a day I think we've all

been waiting for for some time," said Chairman Tad Decker as he opened the meeting.

Hundreds of people attended the meeting at the Forum across the street from the state capital in Harrisburg to hear the decision.

The Crossroads Gaming Resort and Spa was one of five projects vying for the two Category 2 at-large gaming licenses in Pennsylvania. Crossroads proposed at \$300-million resort with 3,000

slot machines, 225 hotel rooms and a 30,000 square foot spa on 58 acres near the intersection of Route 30 and U.S. 15 in Straban Township.

The defeat is a victory for the active grassroots opposition

-See **'No Casino'** on page 3

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LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

The 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 *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 for verification purposes. The Dispatch reserves the right to edit letters for content and space.

"Yes, Virginia, there is a Santa Claus"

More than 100 years ago an eight-year old from New York City wrote a letter to the editor of *The New York Sun*, and his response has become a lasting reminder of the power of believing in what cannot always be proved. Here, from the editorial page of *The New York Sun*, are Virginia O'Hanlon's letter and veteran newsman Francis Pharcellus Church's response, printed first as an unsigned editorial on Sept. 21, 1897.

"We take pleasure in answering thus prominently the communication below, expressing at the same time our great gratification that its faithful author is numbered among the friends of *The Sun*."

'Dear Editor:

I am 8 years old. Some of my little friends say there is no Santa Claus. Papa says, 'If you see it in THE SUN it's so.' Please tell me the truth; is there a Santa Claus?

Virginia O'Hanlon
115 West Ninety-fifth Street'

VIRGINIA, your little friends are wrong. They have been affected by the skepticism of a skeptical age. They do not believe except [what] they see. They think that nothing can be which is not comprehensible by their little minds. All minds, Virginia, whether they be men's or children's, are little. In this great universe of ours man is a mere insect, an ant, in his intellect, as compared

with the boundless world about him, as measured by the intelligence capable of grasping the whole of truth and knowledge.

Yes, VIRGINIA, there is a Santa Claus. He exists certainly as love and generosity and devotion exist, and you know that they abound and give to your life its highest beauty and joy. Alas! How dreary would be the world if there were no Santa Claus! It would be as dreary as if there were no VIRGINIAS. There would be no childlike faith then, no poetry, no romance to make tolerable this existence. We should have no enjoyment, except in sense and sight. The eternal light which childhood fills the world would be extinguished.

Not believe in Santa Claus! You might as well not believe in fairies! You might get your papa to hire men to watch in all the chimneys on Christmas Eve to catch Santa Claus, but even if they did not see Santa Claus coming down, what would that prove? Nobody sees Santa Claus, but that is no sign that there is no Santa Claus. The most real things in the world are those that neither children nor men can see. Did you ever see fairies dancing on the lawn? Of course not, but that's no proof that they are not there. Nobody can conceive or imagine all the wonders there are unseen and unseeable in the world.

You tear apart the baby's rattle and see what makes the noise inside,

but there is a veil covering the unseen world which not the strongest man, nor even the united strength of all the strongest men that ever lived, could tear apart. Only faith, fancy, poetry, love, romance can push aside that curtain and view and picture the supernal beauty and glory beyond. Is it all real? Ah, VIRGINIA, in all this world there is nothing else real and abiding. No Santa Claus! Thank GOD! He lives, and he lives forever. A thousand years from now, nay, ten times ten thousand years from now, he will continue to make glad the heart of childhood."

Virginia O'Hanlon died in 1971. She had graduated from Hunter College at age 21, and received a Masters degree from Columbia University. She became a teacher, and later a school principal, retiring after 47 years. In 1933 O'Hanlon said, "It was a habit in our family that whenever any doubts came up as to how to pronounce a word or some question of historical fact was in doubt, we wrote to the Question and Answer column in The Sun." Her father felt the Sun's response would resolve the issue.

Francis Pharcellus Church was working as an anonymous editorial writer at The Sun, and was the son of a Baptist minister. He had covered the Civil War for The New York Times and had worked for The Sun for 20 years when he wrote this editorial.

100 Years Ago "In this place"
From *The Emmitsburg Chronicle*

This column offers a regular look back at Emmitsburg through the eyes of *The Emmitsburg Chronicle* which first appeared on June 14, 1879, published by Samuel Motter. In 1909 the paper became known as *The Weekly Chronicle*. It continued regular publication, allowing for a 5-year hiatus during World War II, until February 9, 1977.

December 7, 1906

Frederick County
Anti-Saloon League

On next Tuesday afternoon, Dec. 11, one o'clock, the Anti-Saloon League of this county will hold their annual meeting in the Reformed Chapel on East Church Street, Frederick. At that meeting the officers for the ensuing year will be elected. Reports will be made by the head those several departments having charge of the work of the league in this county.

Sanitorium Site

Governor Warfield, ex-Governor John Walter Smith, Comptroller Atkinson, and Drs. Jacob Ellis, Bruckler and Conley, constituting the Tuberculosis Committee of this state, on Tuesday morning visited a proposed site for the new hospital, to be known as the Maryland Tuberculosis Sanitorium, near Sabillasville.

The tract inspected embraces 200 acres and is 1,400 feet above sea level. The committee was disappointed to find a lack of spring water, all water being procured by means of wells. Another objection was found in the poor soil. It is hoped that when a site is chosen that the soil will be good enough to raise sufficient vegetables for the proposed institution.

Dr. Snively, of the Monterey Tuberculosis Sanitorium, met the party at Sabillasville and accompanied them to the proposed site.

Shot by his daughter

Rev. John Q. McAtee, one time a schoolmaster in this place, but now living in Philadelphia, was shot and probably seriously wounded last Monday, by his daughter, Miss Mary McAtee, a beautiful and cultured young lady of 26 years.

Rev. McAtee, who lived in this town some fifty years ago, was known to be a man with a violent, irascible temper. In this

respect he never improved, for his daughter said that as long as she could remember she had seen her mother abused and beaten by her father. On Monday he became so violent that the limit of her endurance was reached and after pleading with him to cease his abuse she shot him twice in the head.

The young lady after her arrest told the police that her father came home intoxicated shortly after 3 o'clock. He went at once to the kitchen, where his wife and the servant were at work, and began one of his usual tirades of abuse, such as always following his indulgence in liquor. He passed from words to blows, and then Mrs. McAtee, to scare him off, picked up a heavy poker, which was standing near the stove.

This only enraged him the more. With an oath he sprang at the woman, who was standing near the open door leading to the cellar stairs. She, frightened, threw the poker down the steps and turned away from him.

McAtee then tried to throw his wife down the steps after the poker. As he grappled with his wife his daughter fired. The first two shots did not deter him from his purpose. He had just reached the cellar door with his helpless wife in his arms when the girl's third and fourth bullets reached their mark and he fell to the floor.

Lost an Eye

On Friday, Henry Daywalt, a son of William Daywalt, while watching his older brother cut some cardboard, was accidentally cut in the eye. The child was standing very close to his brother and the knife slipped the point entering his eye at the side closest to the nose and cutting a gash directly across the iris.

A physician was called in and on his advice the child was taken to the Frederick Hospital.

The child will lose the sight of the one eye perhaps permanently although the eyeball was saved.



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January 8 - 12

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T - Rice krispie chicken, mashed potatoes, corn

W - Liver & onions, mashed potatoes, green beans

Th - Hog maw, coleslaw, applesauce

F - Baked chicken potpie, broccoli & jello

January 15 - 19

M - Hamburger steak, parsley potatoes, green beans

T - Turkey, stuffing, mashed potatoes, sauerkraut

W - Spaghetti, tossed salad, garlic bread

Th - Pot roast, biscuits, applesauce

F - BBQ pork sandwich, oven roasted potatoes, coleslaw

January 22 - 26

M - Lasagna, tossed salad, dessert

T - Beef stroganoff over noodles, peas, applesauce

W - Slippery ham potpie, green beans, fruit

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F - Salmon loaf, macaroni & cheese, peas

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Susan Star Paddock (center), chairperson of No Casino Gettysburg, speaks with former Pennsylvania Senator Rick Santorum during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Gettysburg battlefield visitor center on June 2, 2005. At that time Santorum's office told *The Dispatch* that the senator believed the proposed Gettysburg Gaming Resort and Spa was "clearly inappropriate and out of character" for the Gettysburg area.

'No Casino'

-Continued from page 1

campaign, No Casino Gettysburg, some of whom were present at Wednesday's meeting. No Casino Gettysburg had collected nearly 65,000 signatures in opposition to the project. One of the biggest concerns about the Crossroads project, specifically, was the nearness of the resort to the Gettysburg National Battlefield. Some opponents did not feel the resort was compatible with area tourist attractions.

"We are very, very grateful, and we see this as a triumph of the power of the people," said No Casino Chairman Susan Star Paddock. "We were just ordinary people who went up against some big money and some big muscle."

The two projects awarded the licenses are Bethlehem Sands in

Lehigh Valley and Mount Airy in the Poconos.

Discussion on the merits of the projects was held in an executive session. Although a supermajority of five "yes" votes was needed on the seven-member board, the board's decision for Bethlehem Sands and Mount Airy was unanimous.

Decker noted, "Today's proceedings are the initial step in licensing." Though the licenses were awarded, they were conditional on all appeals being settled, all conditions of licensure being satisfied and all fees being paid.

Wednesday's meeting was the culmination of three hearings over the past two weeks and nearly two years of sometimes-contentious debate over the location of Pennsylvania's slots parlors. The law authorizing slots in Pennsylvania was passed in 2004. It authorized 61,000 slot machines at 14 sites across the state.

Tax Increase

-Continued from page 1

system and increases in construction and replacement costs.

He told the board that by using a growth and inflation rate of three percent annually, "We will fall approximately \$675,000 short of fully funding the system depreciation over the next five years if we continue with the present rate structure."

The new rates ultimately approved by the board, with Commissioner William B. O'Neil Jr. abstaining, will spread the depreciation cost over a five-year period. O'Neil could not be reached for comment on the reason for his abstention.

Based on "confirmed" but

inaccurate information, *The Dispatch* reported incorrect third quarter (March 2007) increases for water and sewer service in the Dec. 7 issue of the paper. The correct combined rate increases for water and sewer will be:

Up to 10,000 gallon-per-quarter users: \$5 per quarter increase.

10,001 to 20,000 GPQ users: up to \$37 per quarter increase.

20,001 to 30,000 GPQ users: up to \$64 per quarter increase.

The average user generally consumes 14,305 gallons per quarter, which would represent a \$32 increase per quarter.

Richard D. L. Fulton is the former *Emmitsburg Dispatch* News Editor.

Commissioners and community support national fire museum

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

EMMITSBURG, Md. — Asked about the potential for a new national fire museum to be headquartered in Emmitsburg, Mayor James Hoover said, "I'd be very much in support of Heritage Hall coming to Emmitsburg ... (it would be) a great opportunity for us economically."

Board President Christopher Staiger, following a Dec. 4 presentation to the town of the museum plans, stated, "This (location) is sort of a gateway on entering Emmitsburg ... I think this project is a good

use ... as a board we need to be a little careful on what we authorize. I'm very comfortable a lot of local people are involved."

Commissioner Clifford Sweeney expressed his support, saying, "I think it's nice to have the museum brought here since the fire academy is so difficult to get into ... it will bring new visitors to town and should help the fire industry ... this would be a wonderful place for it to be."

Libby Briggs said, "On behalf of the National Emergency Training Center Alliance, they are delighted the national heritage (center) is even

contemplating being in Emmitsburg and the alliance will support them 100 percent. It's an honor."

She said the Emmitsburg Business and Professional Association called it "a wonderful gift."

The museum plans are still preliminary, and could involve using the ambulance company headquarters on South Seton Avenue, but plans have not yet been formally presented to the county board of commissioners.

Richard D. L. Fulton is the former *Emmitsburg Dispatch* News Editor.

Fire Museum

-Continued from page 1

for a potential site (including downtown Frederick City), but that Emmitsburg ultimately became the prime location.

The minutes of the board of directors for the proposed center, he said, "reflect that very clearly we see Emmitsburg as the site for this endeavor ... There's no better place in the country to have the development of this center."

The purpose of the museum, dubbed National Fire Heritage Center (aka Heritage Hall), would be "to archive the history of the fire service in America," and major fire service organizational and private collections have already committed to donating their memorabilia to the proposed center.

Robertson said the concept of the center "is based on Army Heritage Center in Carlisle, Pennsylvania ... We see it primarily to archive material referred to in the field as two-dimensional materials, (including) reports, manuals, correspondence, and photographs of the history, not only of the fire service in America, but the fire protection equipment field."

The proposed museum should "draw people in who have a great interest in the fields covered, and (being) within the U.S. 15 tourist traffic area, this would draw people in," Robertson pointed out.

Ambulance building could be used

Jewell told the commissioners, "This partnership has come together as a strong possibility and a strong reality. We are the heart of the fire service in the state of Maryland (because of the age of some of the fire companies)."

The BEC director stated, "We are hoping that building can be made to blend into the community ... possibly made-over as an old firehouse. It seems to be a natural

marriage to make that building more appropriate (rather than be demolished)."

"You have to have a beginning," Jewell added, "This will be a wonderful centerpiece for the fire service. What better place to put it than a block away from the fire academy?"

The director told the commissioners, "We have not formally gone before the county commissioners yet," but the knowledge "is in Winchester Hall," adding, "We're very enthusiastic."

Robertson said, "The progress is going to take a while. We hope the (fire-related) industries involved in it will support it," he said.

The board asked Robertson and Jewell to keep the town apprised of developments.

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EDITORIAL

The reason for the season

"[L]o, the star, which they saw in the east, went before them, till it came and stood over where the young child was.

"When they saw the star, they rejoiced with exceeding great joy.

"And when they were come into the house, they saw the young child with Mary his mother, and fell down, and worshipped him: and when they had opened their treasures, they presented unto him gifts; gold, and frankincense, and myrrh."

Matthew 2: 9-11

And this was the first Christmas. Joy, a star, gifts ... and most of all, a child; one very special child born of God and woman; one very special child who was born to "save his people from their sins."

His name is Jesus. He is the anointed one, the Christ, and he changed the world.

Over two millennia since his birth, the meaning, and even the date, of Christmas have changed. Elements of the celebration have been added making it less about him. Other holidays have crowded in to dilute the significance of the day. Things are reaching the point where the reason for the season is being forced out. The most-recent

example is the Chicago Christmas festival where the organizers were asked not to show scenes from *The Nativity Story* movie.

The reason Jesus' birth is celebrated is not because of who he was but because of who he is and what he came into the world to do. Because of Jesus, we all have hope for a life beyond death, a life that can be filled with exaltation and not sin.

How can X-boxes, jewelry and clothing compare to that?

They can't.

Perhaps that's why the world seems intent on making us forget why we celebrate this time of year. Anything this world can offer us

dims in the brightness of eternity and exaltation.

So go ahead and enjoy the season with its beautifully lighted trees, multitude of gifts, and cheerful carols. But when things get a little overwhelming, step back, take a deep breath and remember how the wise men followed the star in the brightly lit sky, the gifts they gave the baby Jesus out of love, and joyous songs the angels sang to the shepherds in the field.

Remember Christmas means *Christes masse* or Christ's festival.

Remember the reason for the season.

Merry Christmas!

A Word from the Mayor

Water and sewer rates increase to cover costs

Earlier this month town staff and I proposed new water and sewer rates for town council approval. Quarterly increase for in-town users: 10,000 gallons of water or less per billing cycle - \$5; 20,000 gallons - \$17. Since most residents use less than 20,000 gallons, most will have less than a \$17 quarterly increase.

While reviewing the town's general fund budget in May, staff informed me that the sewer and water enterprise system budget is not covering the necessary depreciation value. I directed staff to conduct a review and recommend new rates to take effect at the beginning of our third quarter billing cycle.

Three years ago, to meet the new state-mandated auditing practices, the town hired an outside consultant to inventory and assess value to the town's buildings and infrastructure. The firm also established an annual depreciation value of \$250,000 to our sewer and water enterprise system. Since then the town has added no cost escalation to that figure, although construction and material costs have

increased considerably.

The staff's first attempt to fully fund the depreciation cost included a \$37 increase for a user using 20,000 gallons. We must cover expenses, but I also realized a \$37 increase is substantial to many residents. Staff and I together established two new user brackets: in-town residents using between 6,001 and 10,000 gallons; out-of-town users using between 6,001 and 20,000 gallons.

In these new brackets, in-town users will only see a \$5 increase. Since out-of-town rates still exceed in-town rates, out-of-town users using 20,000 gallons or less will have no increase.

Since the town is now operating the sewer and water systems as an enterprise system with no income from tax dollars, in-town and out-of-town users will eventually be paying the same rates. As rates increase, in-town users will catch up to out-of-town users until they begin paying the same rates.

In another effort to keep the increase as low as possible, rather than

trying to meet our current shortfall in one or two years, town staff and I calculated a five-year projection to meet our current shortfall and our future estimated depreciation cost.

In our new rates, we calculated and included an annual three-percent increase that we hope will cover future increased construction and material cost. If those costs fall within the three percent projection, we should not see another rate increase for at least five years. If not, we will need to review the rates again.

Most town residents are aware that the town's sewer and water lines are very old and their replacement is long overdue. This is why budgeting a reasonable depreciation value is necessary. If properly budgeted the town will have sufficient funds available to replace sewer and water lines as well as be proactive about new sewer and water plants.

Up to this point the town has relied heavily on loans and grants to upgrade and maintain its infrastructure, putting us at the mercy of others with no guarantee that we

will receive loans and or grants when needed. Many projects would be delayed or canceled as they were in the past.

Over the past four years the town has spent more than two million dollars replacing sewer and water lines. About half that money has come from increased developer fees, surcharges and state grants. The remainder has come from low-interest loans that will take up to 20 years to pay off.

The South Seton Avenue sewer and water project will soon be complete. Town staff and our engineering firm are already working on the replacement plans for Lincoln Avenue sewer and water lines, and currently anticipate work beginning in fall 2007. Each of these projects also includes some curb, gutter, sidewalk and street light improvements. We are determined to improve the town's infrastructures and establish a long-range plan for future improvements.

James E. Hoover
Mayor of Emmitsburg

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Dispatch Change: As of Dec. 15, 2006, Richard D. L. Fulton is no longer *The Emmitsburg Dispatch* News Editor. Press releases and information regarding Emmitsburg should be sent to James Rada, Jr., *The Dispatch* News Editor, at jrada@thedispatch.us.

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NEWS ANALYSIS

Looking back ... Emmitsburg 2006

BY RICHARD D. L. FULTON

EMMITSBURG, Md. — This year Emmitsburg addressed or further defined a number of problematic issues that have been facing the community for years, such as environment-threatening sewage spills, while at the same time, endeavored to move its comprehensive plan forward.

The town's location in an area of significant natural assets caused outrage over the town's plans to kill off the local beaver population, and gave rise to concerns over logging practices on watershed lands.

The Dispatch has compiled a list of what it views as some of the major happenings for 2006:

Reinventing local government

One of the key components to accomplishing anything governmentally is the creation of a functional government. Emmitsburg took a few measures from minor to rather significant to achieve that end.

The board shortened the amount of time permitted for public comment at a town meeting, reducing it from eight minutes per person per issue to four minutes per person per issue. Emmitsburg still allows a much larger amount

of public comment than numerous other area municipalities.

A fifth seat on the board of commissioners was created, nullifying the mayor's right to vote as a member of the board of commissioners under the town charter. The first five-member board was subsequently filled in the April 25 election.

The commissioners ended earmarking town meeting agenda items as "action" or "discussion," a minor change initially promulgated by *The Dispatch*. Now, any item on a meeting agenda could potentially be acted upon at that meeting.

Infrastructure & public services

Water and Sewer: Repair and rehabilitation of a critical section of the wastewater collection system that produced severe sewage spills over the year was completed during the summer. There have been no reported spills from this section since the work was done. Work began on the South Seton water and sewer line upgrades in late July and continues. Similar work is proposed for Lincoln Avenue following the completion of the South Seton work.

Streets: Notable developments relating to transportation include the termination of the North Seton Avenue access to U.S. 15

North, and the SHA approval of a fully-functional stoplight for the Silo Hill Road/East Main Street (Rt. 140) intersection.

Sidewalks: Efforts continued through the year and will continue in 2007 to fix many sidewalk sections damaged by rampant tree growth. The town is presently working to determine which trees will be replaced once the sidewalk work begins.

Fire and Ambulance: Work began on the expansion and remodeling of the Vigilant Fire Company's headquarters on West Main Street, with completion planned for mid-2007. Work began and progressed on Emmitsburg Volunteer Ambulance Company's new facility on Creamery Road, with completion planned for 2007.

Planning and growth

Comprehensive Plan: After Town Planner Michael Lucas resigned a year ago, substantive progress on the town's comprehensive plan remained stalled until April 2006, when planning consultant Christopher Jakubiak of Jakubiak and Associates, Inc. was hired.

Emmitsburg Glass Company, owned by Sheridan "Dan" and Gregory Reaver, moved into its new facility on Creamery Court east of U.S. 15. The new facility

played a critical role in the town acquiring essential state monies for sewer line upgrading.

Emmitsburg East Industrial Park - Phase II, owned by Dan and Gregory Reaver, received conditional approval from the board of commissioners at a special meeting on Sept. 11. The 39-acre site, which will be home to an industrial park, is to be annexed into the town.

Bollinger headquarters progressed throughout the year. Construction on the 22,000 square foot consolidated headquarters of several businesses owned by the Bollingers continues. The facility is located in Emmitsburg East Industrial Park Phase I on Creamery Way.

W.F. Delauter & Son relocated from Thurmont to Emmitsburg in May, occupying the old Emmitsburg Glass Company building on Creamery Way after purchasing the Emmitsburg East Industrial Park Phase I structure from the glass company owners.

History and Environment

Heart of the Civil War Heritage Area: In September, the board of commissioners approved a resolution to insert a Civil War heritage management plan into the draft comprehensive plan. Participation could generate revenue for historic tourism, preservation and signage.

Founding a way out: The town's founding date continued to be hotly contested. Ultimately, the board of commissioners was asked to settle the issue. They did, by essentially avoiding it altogether. At its Aug. 17 meeting, the board voted, to recognize its less-arguable date of incorporation, Jan. 13, 1825.

Emmitsburg Library 100th Anniversary: The Emmitsburg Library celebrated in December its 100th year of service to the community.

Beavers and Turtleheads: Outrage over a planned kill-off of Rainbow Lake beavers led to the board of commissioners establishing themselves in an oversight role on any further proposed kills, although the board balked at founding a wildlife management area. Also involving Rainbow Lake land, in October, *The Dispatch* verified reports of Turtlehead plants growing along a logging trail near the lake. The plants often serve as a critical habitat for the state Baltimore Checkerspot butterfly, a species on the endangered and threatened watch list. The town manager claimed he turned reports of the plant over to the Catocin Land Trust to investigate.

Richard D.L. Fulton is the former Emmitsburg Dispatch News Editor.

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Town News Briefs...

Silo Hill traffic light installation begins

EMMITSBURG, Md. — The Silo Hill intersection will have a traffic light within the next three months.

Emmitsburg Mayor James Hoover announced during the town meeting on Dec. 18, "Notice to proceed was given this past Friday." He said installation of the light is a 60-90 day process.

The Emmitsburg town commissioners had voted 3-1 to support a light at the intersection in July, but the final decision had to be made by the Maryland State Highway Administration. SHA installed the current flashing yellow light in 2003 to monitor traffic at the intersection, but even with that, the intersection has still been averaging five reported accidents a year. In November, there were two accidents at the intersection. — J. Rada

Board approved emergency generator contract

EMMITSBURG, Md. — The board of commissioners has awarded a \$49,242 contract to Dixie Electric of Frederick to install a generator to provide power to keep the town offices functioning during a power outage.

The generator is to be purchased with money from Homeland Security through the Frederick County Office of Emergency Management. In order not to lose the money, the town must have the generator system in place by Feb. 28. The contractor assured the town that the project could be completed within that timeframe. — R. Fulton

Town releases remaining Pembroke escrow

EMMITSBURG, Md. — The board of commissioners voted 3-0-2 at their Dec. 4 meeting to release all remaining escrow money held for improvement assurances for the Pembroke Homes development.

The board voted, with board President Christopher Staiger and Commissioner William O'Neil Jr. abstaining, to release a total of \$10,000 to Buckeye Development previously held to ensure certain remaining improvements at the development were completed. Both Staiger and O'Neil live in Pembroke Woods.

Town Planning & Zoning Coordinator Frank Henry assured the town that the improvements had been satisfactorily completed. — R. Fulton

TOWN NEWS

Recreational trails task force - report expected in 2007

By RICHARD D. L. FULTON

EMMITSBURG, Md. — A task force created by Mayor James E. Hoover to study and make recommendations regarding a possible recreational trail system spanning town and Mount St. Mary's University lands is expected to make a final report this coming July.

The possibility of a trail system came before the town at their Aug. 15, 2005, meeting when resident Tim O'Donnell, now a town planning and zoning commission alternate member, encouraged the board to back a proposal to establish bike trails, and possibly multi-user trails, on town lands.

The task force is to look at a number of related topics ranging from liability issues to trail maintenance to project costs. The Mount may be prepared to go it alone, involving only university property, if the town opts not to participate in a joint effort.

Blazing the trail

Following up on a request that the town consider establishing a trail system, suggested by O'Donnell and supported by Commissioner Glenn Blanchard, Hoover created a mayoral task force to look into the possible development of a trail complex, possibly tied to a similar trail system that could be developed by Mount St. Mary's University.

Hoover told *The Dispatch* Nov. 18 that the reasoning behind establishing the Emmitsburg Area Trails Task Force was his concern that "a trail plan may be created with an insufficient amount of accurate information" and that important facets could be overlooked if the path toward completing a plan was blazed too quickly.

As a result, the mayor "requested the town manager (David Haller) to establish this task force to set the ground work, and that included the feasibility of putting trails up there on the (town) watershed property."

The mayoral-appointed task force includes Haller, local realtor Donald Briggs, O'Donnell and, Mount St. Mary's University Director of Institutional and Government Relations Joseph Leberherz.

The town owns about 1,300 acres of land outside the corporate limits, of which the task force is considering about 750 acres for inclusion in the trail plan. All of the land outside town that is owned by the town is watershed property.

The trail package under consideration may also include 600 acres of the Mount's land, and about 550 acres of town land under the auspices of the Catoctin Land Trust (which co-holds the easements with the Maryland Environmental Trust).

Paving the way

Being undeveloped, the lands involved could contain critical habitats for animals and plants, and also involve properties that recharge the town and the Mount's water supplies. Haller said the lands immediately surrounding Rainbow Lake, which serves as the town's reservoir, would likely be off limits for security reasons.

Developing an environmental resource inventory is, in fact, the current topic of discussion before the task force, as well as a way to finance such a study, and was one of the principal points of discussion at the task force's November meeting.

Briggs described the development of a resource inventory as one of the "key steps" that must be taken to move the project forward. "It's kind of a big plan," Briggs told *The Dispatch*, adding that it would "open up that recreational resource (mountain properties)."

According to the task force, some form of public recreational trail system could be opened by summer 2008, and could include some or all of the lands presently under consideration. At the very least, the Mount may opt to proceed with trails proposed on their lands.

Briggs said he would eventually like to see a trail system running from the Emmitsburg area "all the way down to Frederick."

The task force will continue to meet at the discretion of its members. Thus far, the meetings have generally been monthly in an effort to meet their July 2007 report deadline.

What is a watershed?

A watershed is any land surface subjected to rain or snowfall into which or from which water or melted snow runs, adding to the overall water supply.

The process by which water works its way down into the ground is called *percolation*, and is one of the primary ways underground water supplies (*groundwater or aquifers*) are replenished (*recharged*). Water that migrates off the land surface toward a water body (stream, river, pond, ocean, or artificial containment areas such as detention and retention basins, artificial lakes and ponds or a wastewater collection system) is called *runoff*.

While the entire surface of the planet above sea level is a watershed, the term is most frequently used to refer to sub or micro-watersheds, particular parcels of land that recharge aquifers or *replenish* water supplies of certain rivers and streams.

The idea behind *watershed protection*, whether local, regional, continental or global, is to attempt to capture (*retain*) as much water as possible before it escapes, especially through runoff, into another micro-watershed, or to allow as much percolation as possible within the desired watershed to recharge aquifers, while at the same time preventing the pollution of the waters involved. — R. Fulton

EBPA hosts Christmas dinner meeting

By JOYCE M. DEMMITT
Managing Editor
editor@thedispatch.us

Thanks to Bo Cadle and an energetic group of volunteers, the revitalization of the Emmitsburg Business and Professional Association (EBPA) is well underway. More than 60 people attended a Dec. 19 dinner meeting at the Carriage House Inn.

Cadle characterized EBPA as "knowing what ought to be done and doing their best in maintaining and building this place [Emmitsburg]."

Guest speaker Chris Horowicz,

Clinical Director of Maryland SportsCare & Rehab, located in Seton Place, shared his enthusiasm both for his rehab and wellness work and his business expansion into Emmitsburg. His ongoing therapeutic work with athletes from the Mount was part of his reason to open another facility.

The 10-member temporary EBPA board has been meeting several times a month. Within the next six months, the group plans to complete both a greater Emmitsburg Community Directory and a map of Emmitsburg, with the help of an intern from Mount St. Mary's.

Libby Briggs, government relations, enthusiastically described

EBPA as a "conduit for getting business and individual needs to government."

Alan Knott, acting treasurer, encouraged those attending Tuesday night's dinner to join EBPA, \$30 per year, and to make an additional \$20 donation to the Emmitsburg Scholarship Fund, which currently contains more than \$10,000. The fund has been in existence since the late 1990s and has given college scholarships to a number of Emmitsburg residents.

Guests left the dinner with a copy of Chronicle Press' 2007 Historic Emmitsburg calendar, courtesy of business owner's Lisa Elder and Chris Price.

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TOWN NEWS

Work on Emmitsburg's comprehensive plan continues

BY BRENDAN WEEKS
Special to the Dispatch

EMMITSBURG, Md. — From new development, to increased population size, to a possible collector road, the town Planning and Zoning Committee debated on Dec. 12 a variety of issues that will be laid out in the new comprehensive plan.

The meeting began on the topic of growth, with population size predicted to increase by 2,600 people over the next 30 years. Planning consultant Christopher Jakubiak said

the town should expect to have a 2.3 percent annual increase in dwelling units, "which is not aggressive by any means." He noted, "The town of Emmitsburg can expect about 1,100 new households from now until the year 2030."

The big question was how the town would accommodate the influx of residents. With little land left in the town that could be developed, it was decided that future development would have to occur through annexation.

Jakubiak pointed out three parcels of land, the Bollinger property,

Silver Fancy Farm, and the Fraley property, within the growth boundary that could be annexed for development. By developing 3.5 units per acre on these parcels, the town could accommodate roughly 800 of the 1,100 homes expected.

The next big topic of the night was possible inclusion in the plan of a bypass, or collector road, which would help divert traffic flowing from Pennsylvania to U.S. 15. The road would also ease new traffic from the potential developments. "I think it's an important road if development happens," said Jakubiak.

Other topics discussed were the importance of preserving a greenbelt around town and the creation of a trail system connecting outlying developments to Main Street as well as to each other.

Jakubiak also brought up, after speaking with a representative from Mount St. Mary's University, that they would like to see cooperation in developing a trail system that would give students walking access to the town.

With a projected increase of around 750 more students in the next 20 years, there would be an increased need for student housing. There was

also talk of a possible mixed-use zone developed for student housing as well as commercial facilities. "This may not happen in 20 years, but it may, and the plan would allow for that," said Jakubiak.

Jakubiak and Associates will take information gathered from the meeting and draw up a draft of the final chapter of the plan, expected to be completed in January. The committee invites the public to attend the next meeting and make comments on the draft. A specific date for the meeting will be posted on the town's Web site.

Sidewalk repairs should begin soon

BY JAMES RADA JR.
News Editor
jrada@thedispatch.us

EMMITSBURG, Md. — The Town of Emmitsburg will soon begin making temporary repairs on the sections of sidewalk that have been the most damaged by trees.

In a series of motions during the Dec. 18 town meeting, the commissioners laid out a plan to try to accomplish about \$250,000 worth of repairs in a reasonable amount of time, yet without causing either tax hikes or breaking the town's budget.

"There's probably \$250,000 to \$300,000 worth of work total so it's obviously going to be more than one year," Emmitsburg Mayor James Hoover said. "It probably needs to be phased in."

The initial town plan was to have a contractor remove broken sidewalk, but Commissioner Clifford Sweeney suggested having town staff remove the concrete and apply a cold patch. This would be a temporary fix to make the dangerous areas of sidewalk safer.

The proposed town plan also called for the project being done over three years in three phases. Town Manager David Haller told the commissioners that each phase would cost around \$75,000. The project could be done in smaller chunks, but it would also take longer.

"If you do 10 trees a year, you knock it off in six or seven years," Commissioner William O'Neil Jr. said.

However, the longer it takes to complete the project, the longer the town leaves itself open to liability issues should someone be hurt because of sidewalks damaged by trees.

"We're liable for the repairs because they should have been effectuated properly and they were not," O'Neil said.

The faster the project is completed, the larger the cost to the town.

"I think you would have to lean all other CIP (capital improvement plan) matters down or we'd have to borrow money," Haller said.

Hoover suggested that road maintenance and park equipment line items in the CIP could be trimmed to free up money to pay for the tree removal and replacement project. Board President Chris

Staiger also suggested that some of the needed funds could come from increased property tax revenues the town tends to receive each year because increasing property assessments.

"This is more than a 10-year issue for these sidewalks," Hoover said. "Sooner or later we're going to have to face it."

The commissioners decided to have town staff make cold patch repairs to the worst sections of sidewalk now and then next fiscal year (beginning July 1, 2007) start with the actual repair of the sidewalks. The commissioners allocated \$50,000, at this time, for that use. If the allocation remains at that amount, it would take about five years to fully repair the tree-damaged sidewalks.

Haller will return to the commissioners with a budget transfer once it is decided where the funds will come from.

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Emmitsburg, MD - Affordable Home Mortgage, a local mortgage lender, has stepped forward again to address the needs of the community. With an increase in job losses, divorce, and gas prices at an all-time high, many homeowners have found themselves deep in debt with nowhere to turn. Daniel Strong, a spokesperson for the company, stated that through a large volume of loans and a more "human approach" to underwriting, Affordable Home Mortgage is able to make loans banks and other lending institutions would never consider. **According to Mr. Strong the money should last through the end of December.** If you would like more information, please call Mr. Strong for a free consultation at **1-866-561-8079.**

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Proposed Emmitsburg tree removal and replacement plan

Based on the plan prepared by Emmitsburg town staff, the following are the costs involved with fixing the town sidewalks in three years versus five years.

| | Total | 3-year avg. | 5-year avg. |
|--------------------------|-----------|-------------|-------------|
| Number of trees: | 65 | 22 | 13 |
| Cubic yards of sidewalk: | 232.7 | 77.6 | 48.5 |
| Estimated cost: | \$225,000 | \$75,000 | \$43,000 |

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Parking enforcement suspended through Jan. 1

The Town of Emmitsburg has suspended enforcement of parking at meters from Dec. 11 through Jan. 1, 2007.

Meters will not be bagged, although signs may be posted around town noting the enforcement suspension. Any money deposited in meters will continue to go toward the Emmitsburg After-School Program, but no tickets will be issued for overtime parking.

SOUTH ADAMS COUNTY NEWS

News Briefs...

FREMA volunteers needed

CARROLL VALLEY BOROUGH, Pa. — Carroll Valley needs volunteers for Fairfield Regional Management Agency, according to Mayor Ron Harris.

FREMA, developed largely in response to recent tragedies such as the 9/11 terrorist attacks and Hurricane Katrina, is a local version of the Federal Emergency Management Agency. The agency has been developing a comprehensive plan that will coordinate the efforts of local law enforcement and other emergency personnel, citizen volunteers, and other officials in the event of a local, regional, or national emergency. Once this comprehensive plan is finalized, a mock emergency drill will be carried out. Residents interested in responding to this need should contact Harris or the borough office. — W. Reinke

Find information on public safety

CARROLL VALLEY BOROUGH, Pa. — The Fairfield Regional Management Agency is developing a "public safety portal" for the Internet. This portal will be found on the borough's Web site and will provide links to other Web sites containing relevant information on issues such as safety relating to family, home, hunting and firearms, travel and fire safety along with consumer protection and health protection.

People knowing of suitable Web sites are requested to bring them to the attention of Mayor Ron Harris. FREMA will review every potential site before including it in the public safety portal. This lengthy process is expected to be rolled out in conjunction with the National Night Out held in August 2007. — W. Reinke

279-lot development in the works

BY BRENDAN WEEKS
Special to the Dispatch

HIGHLAND TOWNSHIP, Pa. — The Highland Township Planning and Zoning Commission is currently reviewing a preliminary plan for a proposed 279-lot development known as Highland Overlook.

The plan, which was initially submitted in May, has been back and forth between the developers and the commission several times. "They've done many plans," said township secretary, treasurer, and supervisor Gil Pringle, "There have

been questions and comments and revised plans that have come back and forth."

According to Pringle, the commission is currently reviewing major parts of the plan such as traffic, water, and sewage. He says that water studies are taking place and a sewer module is being reviewed. "In order of magnitude, those are the three biggest hurdles," said Pringle.

"They have not failed to address any issues that have been brought up," said Pringle.

The Army Corps of Engineers

is currently surveying the 300-acre site. They are investigating the possibility that the property was used as a field hospital during the Civil War. The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission suggested that developers have the land surveyed by archaeologists before any construction began. The township, along with developers, is still waiting for the investigation findings, which they hope to see sometime in January.

According to Pringle, they would also like to see the preliminary plan completed in January.

Liberty Township and Carroll Valley Borough look to policing jointly

BY WILLIAM K. REINKE
Contributing Writer

CARROLL VALLEY BOROUGH, Pa. — In response to budget pressures resulting from the earned income tax dispute with the county, Liberty Township Supervisors Peter Fascato and Paul Harner approached Carroll Valley Mayor Ron Harris

regarding the possibility of sharing policing duties in each other's jurisdictions.

The idea is not without precedent: a 1994 agreement details joint policing efforts between Liberty, Carroll Valley, and Fairfield, although the collaboration has fallen out of practice somewhat in recent years. Liberty's request is the result of the

township cutting their police force from two full-time officers to one and a half, which prevents their desired on-call coverage. The request, if approved, would allow a Carroll Valley officer to respond to a Liberty call if a Liberty officer were not on-call. Likewise, a Liberty officer would respond to a Carroll Valley call in the event that a Carroll Valley officer was not on duty.

The police chiefs of both jurisdictions are said to be highly in favor of the suggestion, and currently the municipalities are negotiating a mutually beneficial agreement.

Councilman Thomas Fitzsimmons expressed concern over the financial and personnel impact to Carroll Valley and asked Police Chief Richard Hileman II how "this would affect the thinness of the scarce resources we already have" in light of recent requests from the police department for additional overtime funds and manpower. Hileman responded that those details are still being worked out, but he expected that the responsibilities and benefits of such an agreement would be shared equally by the two municipalities.

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REGIONAL NEWS

Local soldier returns home from Iraq

BY BRENDAN WEEKS
Special to the Dispatch

SABILLASVILLE, Md. - Colonel Tom Cantwell lives in a country house tucked back in the mountains in Sabillasville. Walking inside, the presence of a large American flag draped in the corner is an unmistakable reminder of sacrifices he was willing to make to protect that home.

In 1983, Cantwell enlisted in Frederick Company A 1st Battalion 115th Infantry. He worked as an Army Reserve officer and at the Pentagon for 18 months. He has served overseas in Iraq twice now. The first time was in 2003, working as a battalion commander for a little less than a year and then again in 2005 as a contractor.

On his second tour he was stationed at Camp Victory, a large headquarters base outside of Baghdad. There he lent technical support for tactical operations and advised commands.

It is hard for most people to imagine putting themselves in a dangerous position like that once, let alone twice, but Cantwell was more than willing. "Mostly I went back because I was, and am today committed," he said.

"The second time I went it was not a big deal," said Cantwell. "For many people, they work in very safe areas on very safe bases."

"It's when you go onto the streets; that's where it gets dangerous," he said.

Cantwell had his own coping methods when things did get risky. "I kind of always played the laws of probabilities in my mind. You're probably safer in Baghdad than in Baltimore," he said.

"I think everybody deals with fear in their own way."

Cantwell believes that families at home bear the real stress. "I think the deployments are harder on the families than the soldiers," said Cantwell. "My wife, she sent me there twice; God bless that woman."

Cantwell takes pride in

helping to purchase and distribute five generators to a series of towns on the Tigris River. This created a means for locals to irrigate their fields.

He well understands how the war may be losing support as time passes. "Both the Iraqi people and American people are suffering from war weariness," he said, "I understand the weariness."

But experiencing the war first-hand has allowed him to see the positive effects and the determination of the Iraqi people.

He recalls a moment that proved the commitment of the Iraqis to winning the war. While traveling with the Marines he remembers driving past a building set up for police recruitment. "One hour later a suicide bomber killed 60 civilians waiting in line to sign up for the Iraqi police," he said. Despite the bombers' attempt though, following the attack the number waiting in line tripled.

The change from a life of war to civilian life can be difficult according to Cantwell, especially as technology advances. "It's a little surreal," he said, "Guys went to war and came from war by ship, that gave them a month to transition."

Now that Cantwell is back, he wants to do nothing more than spend time with his wife and three kids. "The thing that matters most to me is just being with my family,"

said Cantwell, "That's all I want to do."

Cantwell is currently attending the U.S. Army War College in Carlisle, Pa., working toward a master's degree in strategic studies, which he plans to have sometime next summer. He is also working as a contractor for the Department of Defense, helping to develop technological solutions for problems identified by fighters.

While glad to be home, he knows that there is still work being done overseas. "I'm perfectly willing to go back tomorrow if they need me to go," he said.

"I'm so impressed by these young people. These are people who volunteer at such a young age when they had the whole world in front of them," said Cantwell.

"When I'm around these guys, I know I'm in the company of heroes. I'm very proud to be associated with them."

"I would like nothing more than to just live here (his home), but the world is a deadly serious place," Cantwell said.



-PHOTOS COURTESY TOM CANTWELL

Colonel Tom Cantwell returned home to his family in November, after serving a second tour in Iraq. Cantwell was stationed at Camp Victory outside of Baghdad where he worked as a contractor. He is pictured here with his eight-year-old son, Tommy Gray Cantwell.

Dog diaries available in Fairfield

The Frederick distribution company, Chatham Distribution and Fulfillment, has been donating dog diaries to the Blue Ridge K9 Training Center in Fairfield, Pa. The diaries are similar to baby books, with sections for photos and favorite treats. So far the company has donated 900 diaries, which are available for a \$5 donation. Proceeds are used to purchase small oxygen masks for animals, which are then distributed to local fire companies. For information about the Blue Ridge K9 training center, contact Pat Sutton at (717) 794-2717.

-B. Weeks

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-Benjamin Franklin

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IMAGES OF CHRISTMAS

Thurmont Elementary has a rockin' Christmas Eve

Thurmont Elementary's Chorus Concert at Catoclin High on Dec. 7 featured singing reindeer and elves and the 5th grade play, "Santa's Rockin' Christmas

Eve." The elves (left to right) are Cody Harmon, Olivia Barbour, Samantha Boening, Madison Harding, Sarah Angell and Steven Englar.



- PHOTO COURTESY OF THURMONT ELEMENTARY SCHOOL

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Emmitsburg's 'Evening of Christmas Spirit' attracts hundreds

More than 500 hundred people joined the Emmitsburg Christmas celebration held Dec. 11, which began with a tree lighting ceremony at 6 p.m., accompanied with caroling by the Mother Seton School Choir, in front of the South Seton Avenue Community Center.

The tree lighting ceremony,

kicked-off by Mayor Jim Hoover and Carriage House owner Bob Hance, was followed by a holiday décor tour at the National Emergency Training Center, and entertainment and treats at the Carriage House Inn.

Hance previously told *The Dispatch* that he had ordered 500 hot dogs, anticipating increased

attendance this year. There were also community-baked cookies and nearly 20 gallons of hot chocolate.

Entertainment groups at the Carriage House also included a local Girl Scout Brownie troop, the Mount St. Mary's Choir and the Fairfield Area High School Show Choir. There was a visit by Santa, horse-drawn hayrides, and a "living" manger. The revelers could enjoy their free refreshments inside in the comfort of one of the Carriage House's dining rooms, or outside among the festivities by the warmth of a fire barrel.

The Emmitsburg Lions Club collected canned goods and non-perishable food items for its Christmas food drive; and, as in past years, the Mount St. Mary's rugby team worked as volunteers for the event.

The 17th Annual Evening of Christmas Spirit was co-sponsored by the Carriage House Inn, the Town of Emmitsburg, the National Emergency Training Center and the Emmitsburg Business and Professional Association.



- ROBERT A. ROSENSTEEL, SR. / THE DISPATCH

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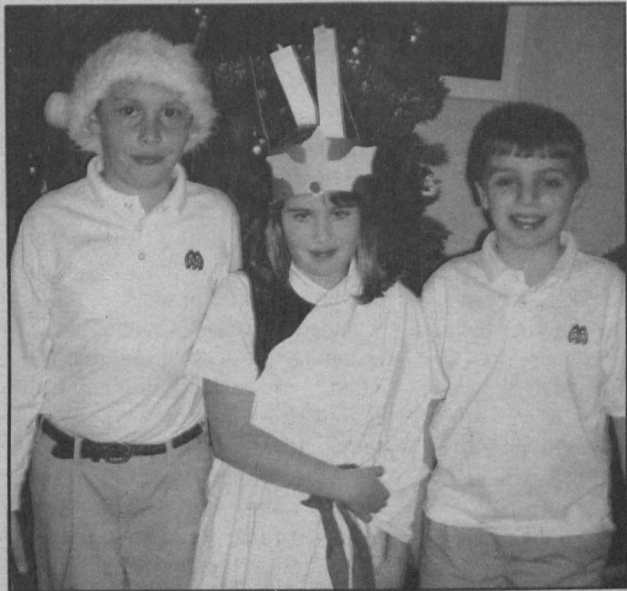
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Saint of Light at Mother Seton School



On Dec. 13, Aimee Martin's fifth graders brought the tradition of Saint Lucia to Mother Seton School in Emmitsburg.

Portraying St. Lucia, Colleen Carroll, draped in white fabric tied with a red sash, wore a paper wreath of green leaves and glowing candles on her head. She was accompanied by two Santas, Dylan Bell (R) and Garrett Williams (L). They walked from classroom to classroom, sharing the story of St. Lucia and distributing cookies from their baskets to students and staff.

"About 1600 years ago, St. Lucia brought food to Christians who were hiding in dark tunnels to escape the Roman emperor. To light her way in the tunnels, Lucia wore a crown of candles. Today in Scandinavian countries, it is tradition for the oldest daughter in the family to dress in white with a wreath of candles on her head, wake each family member, and serve them coffee and cakes."

Saint Lucia reminds us that her own light is only a reflection of the great "Light of the World" ... Jesus.

Jubilee Foods sponsors Kids' Day

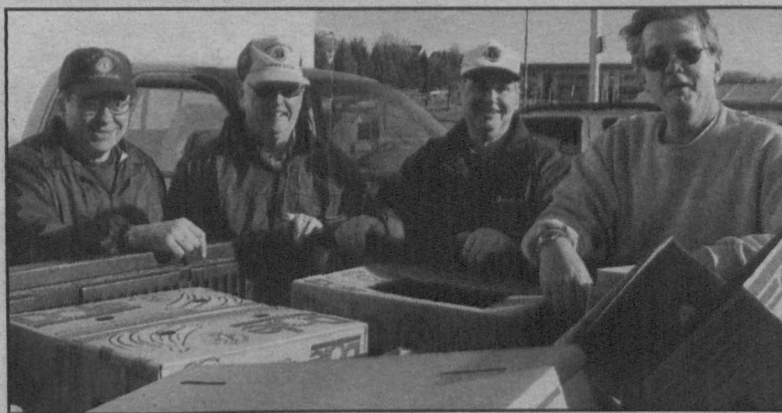
More than 150 children and their families attended Jubilee Foods Kids' Day on Dec. 16. There was cookie and ornament decorating, face painting, a guess the amount of candy in the jar contest, a goody bag for each child, and free samples. Santa paid a visit, posing for a free individual photo with willing children, and there were special prizes, in-store specials and lots for parents to do while the children were busy. The store gave away more than 25 prizes, including a DVD player, 10 gift certificates to Gettysburg outlets, movie passes, a portable basketball hoop, and a N. Y. Yankees jersey, and a Christmas ham.



- RAYMOND BUCHHEISTER / THE DISPATCH

Lions Club delivers annual food baskets

Citizens and businesses of Emmitsburg pitched in to assist the Emmitsburg Lion's Club in its annual Christmas food basket drive. Food donations were collected at the Carriage House Inn, the Jubilee, the Emmitsburg Library, the Vigilant Hose Company, and the National Emergency Training Center. The Emmitsburg Business and Professional Association also helped this year. Christmas baskets, containing turkey and all the trimmings for a festive Christmas dinner, were delivered to Emmitsburg families on Dec. 17. Pictured above are (L to R) Lions Joe Ritz, Dave Martin, John Kile and Willis Johnson picking up food.



Lions treat children at annual Christmas party

At least 80 Emmitsburg residents attended the Emmitsburg Lions Club 77th annual children's Christmas party held on Dec. 2 at the Vigilant Hose Company. Khan-Du the Magician entertained with magic, comedy, illusion, and live animals. Lions helped children with crafts, including birdseed and peanut butter pinecones to feed to their feathered friends during the winter. Face painting was a big hit too, along with the hot dogs, hot chocolate and a visit from Santa. Each child received a special photo with Santa and candy canes and an orange.

Santa House receives donations

For the second year, Kennies Supermarket has provided oranges and other fruit for Santa to give the children who visit the Taneytown Chamber of Commerce's "Santa House." The house, located in the Taneytown

Shopping Center, is offering free photographs with Santa, who will still be available Dec. 23 from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. Pictured above are Tracey and Ralph Flores, managers of Kennies, with Santa at his Santa House.

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The (retired) Ecologist

Of Aesop, and Gershwin, and feeding birds in winter



BY BILL MEREDITH

Dispatch Columnist

"I got plenty o' nothin', and nothin's plenty for me."

... Ira Gershwin, "Porgy and Bess"

Time continues to speed up; we have scarcely got used to writing 2006 in our checkbook, and December is here again. We are in that strange, unnamed season between fall and winter, when the leaves have come down but we haven't had a real snow yet. The first week of the month was warm enough to play golf in shirtsleeves; the second week, daytime temperatures struggled to get out of the 30s, and sometimes didn't make it. It will be like that for a while; the solstice will

come on the 22nd, but most creatures won't notice because it will keep getting colder until February. About the only ones that are having any fun this time of year are the great horned owls; this is their mating season, and one of them was in my back yard at 1 a.m. last week, advertising his availability. But even that won't last long; by Christmas they will be starting to incubate their eggs, and that's hard work even when it isn't so cold.

2006 was a mast year of moderate proportions; the local trees were preparing a hearty crop of nuts and fruit until the drought came in August. They still did pretty well; the trees in our yard were loaded with acorns and English walnuts, and the squirrels got busy back in September, running around with their mouths full of nuts and digging up the lawn to bury them. My wife was inspired by their industriousness and insisted that I plant garlic in the herb garden now instead of waiting until spring; then when it got cold this week, the squirrels forgot where

the nuts were and started digging up the garlic bulbs. They apparently didn't like the garlic after they got to it, but they kept digging it up just for spite.

The flowering crab outside my window was loaded with tiny red-orange apples after the leaves fell, and I spent a rainy afternoon watching a flock of cedar waxwings stuffing themselves until they were chased away by starlings. The starlings descended in a black cloud that would have made Alfred Hitchcock shiver, and by the end of the day the tree was nearly bare. The same thing happened to the honeysuckles a few weeks earlier. They were covered with bright red berries that looked like a supply sufficient to last all winter. One day the robins decided they were ready and began to feast; but they didn't have sense enough to do it quietly, and before long the starlings heard them, and that was that. They ate everything in sight, and when winter gets here in earnest, food will be scarce.

One of the books I learned to read before I started to school was *Aesop's Fables*. I'm not sure I actually read it, for it had been read to me so often that I had it memorized, but I can remember going through it and pointing to each word as I recited it. It was an illustrated child's version, of course, and every chapter ended with the phrase, "... and the moral of this story is..." In one of the stories, the industrious, provident ant worked all summer storing

food while the frivolous grasshopper played and slept in the sun; then winter came, with its inevitable results. The moral was obvious, and it applied personally; I could see my father working in the fields all summer to make hay and grow corn and potatoes, while my mother canned garden produce. We were ants, and so were most of our neighbors; we knew some people who were grasshoppers, and I saw how they lived. To a five-year-old, this was reality, not metaphor.

I was two years old when the Gershwins' opera, "Porgy and Bess," opened in Boston. I wasn't aware of it then, but some years later when the individual songs began to become popular, I thought "I got plenty o' nothin'" was offensive when I heard it on the radio. I knew nothing of the context of the song then ... I hadn't encountered poverty, segregation, or exploitation yet ... so the thing that came to mind when I heard it was the ant and the grasshopper. Growing up in a farming community where the central ethic was the value of work, I couldn't imagine how someone could sing, "nothin's plenty for me." I hadn't learned any academic biology yet and I assumed animals think like people do, so I was puzzled that squirrels seemed to be the only creatures of my acquaintance that made any effort to lay up supplies for winter. Rabbits and birds didn't plan ahead, and yet they seemed to get by just as well; appar-

ently, nothing was plenty for them. Things like this bothered me at the age of eight or ten.

How the mind makes connections between observations and memories is one of the last great unsolved mysteries in science. While I watched the waxwings and starlings stripping the crabapple tree, my mind went back to childhood and mused about how they would wish they had saved some crabapples later this winter, and Porgy's song came wafting through my mind again, just like it did 65 years ago. I was amused to find that it didn't bother me any more. Age probably has something to do with it ... few things bother me as much as they used to ... or maybe studying biology for 50 years has brought some understanding of animal behavior. I now know that squirrels don't consciously plan to store food for winter, any more than they consciously decide to grow thicker fur; it is all the result of hormones and instincts. Some creatures survive the winter because their ancestors developed an instinct to store food; others survive because their ancestors developed instincts for a variety of ways to find food, or to adapt to unusual foods in times of scarcity.

We humans started out the same way, but we spent the last 50,000 years or so learning to make fire and invent wheels and agriculture and language. What we store is ideas, and with them we control our environment in ways beyond the capabilities of animals. Somewhere along the line we invented the idea of giving gifts for Christmas. Most of the gifts are things the receivers don't really need, but we feel better for giving them. So when I filled the feeder with sunflower seeds last month, among the first of its visitors were nuthatches, whose normal diet consists of insects; they would survive without the feeder, but I feel better for feeding them. And they let me watch them; maybe that's their Christmas gift to me. So if anyone reading this is trying to think of a Christmas gift for children, give them a bird feeder and a copy of *Aesop*. That will have a better effect on them than the latest computer game, although you may have to wait a few decades to see the result.

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EDUCATION



- PHOTO COURTESY OF EMMITSBURG EARLY LEARNING CENTER

Emmitsburg Early Learning Center hosts 11th annual Thanksgiving dinner

Emmitsburg Mayor James Hoover, Emmitsburg Early Learning Center President Al Opack, and House of Delegates Representative Joseph Bartlett (pictured left to right) attended the 11th annual Thanksgiving dinner hosted by the center. Also in attendance were over 140 family members, friends, and invited guests of the center.

Montgomery County trade students tour Structural Systems

THURMONT, Md. — More than 30 students and teachers from the Construction Technology Program at Thomas Edison High School of Technology and Damascus High School, both in Montgomery County, toured Structural Systems, Inc.'s Thurmont manufacturing facility on Nov. 8.

Each year the students participate in the Young American Student Design/Build House project, where they design and build a house in the Silver Spring/Rockville/Bethesda areas of Montgomery County. The students in the program have built over 35 homes since the program began in 1976.

The program purchases its flooring material and roof trusses for the house from SSI. The tour helped the students understand how jobs are designed, built, and prepared for delivery. The students were able to see roof trusses being



-PHOTO COURTESY STRUCTURAL SYSTEMS, INC.

Gary Wood, Structural Systems Roof Truss Supervisor, explains the truss manufacturing process to Montgomery County trade students.

manufactured and were able to talk with SSI employees responsible for designing and manufacturing the structural components.

The tour and discussion "contributed to our series of career enriching experiences that we schedule for students in the

program," said Michael Fekete, Instructional Specialist for the program.

Structural Systems, Inc. is a building components manufacturer and distributor with Maryland offices in Thurmont, Frederick and Elkton; and a Culpeper, Va. office.

Thurmont students donate worry dolls to cancer patients

The 7th graders at Thurmont Middle School are making a difference for children with cancer at Johns Hopkins Pediatric Oncology unit. As part of the Language Arts curriculum, 212 TMS seventh graders, under the guidance of Candace Desonier, Kelley Fujii, Lori Sanders, Melanie Ware, and Sandy Zimmerman, participated in a service-learning project focusing on children with cancer.

Zimmerman spoke to the students about her daughter Emily's personal experience as a patient at Johns Hopkins Pediatric Oncology unit. The seventh graders learned about children with cancer, the Guatemalan culture, and the legend of the worry doll. Then they made over 260 worry dolls for the children at Johns Hopkins, in the tradition of the indigenous people of Guatemala who believe that the dolls can take away their worries

and concerns.

Throughout the community, the TMS students also sold smiley faces with the words, "I brought a smile to someone at Johns Hopkins Pediatric Oncology Unit," for \$1 each. The grand total raised was \$800! This money will be used for recreational items for children to use during their stay in the oncology unit at Johns Hopkins.

Catoctin High students named Local Skills USA Champions

Catoctin High School students were included among the winners of the Frederick County Career and Technology Center Local Skills USA Championship contests held Dec. 12. Many of these students will represent Frederick County in regional and state level competitions.

Ag Metals (Welding)
3rd - Andrew Eaves, grade 11

Architectural CAD (Architectural Drafting)
2nd - Brian Leatherman, grade 12

Carpentry (Carpentry)
3rd - Dan Hobbs, grade 10
Honorable Mention Jake Call, grade 12

CISCO (Networking)
1st - Anthony Butler, grade 12

Construction Electricity (Residential Wiring)
1st - Travis Herr, grade 12
Honorable Mention Seth Sweeney, grade 10

Criminal Justice (Criminal Justice)
Honorable Mention Deverule Shafer, grade 12

Culinary Arts (Cake Decorating)
3rd - Jessica Deeter, grade 11

Electronics (Electronic Technology)
1st - Michael Guariglia, grade 11
2nd - Bradley Wiles, grade 11
3rd - Christopher Stone, grade 11
Honorable Mention Joshua Roman, grade 11

Fundamentals of Nursing (Nursing Assisting)
3rd - Lacy McKenzie, grade 12

HVACP (Residential Plumbing)
2nd - Bobby Stouffer, grade 11

HVACP (Sheet Metal)
2nd - Camden Shorb, grade 12

Landscaping (Landscaping Career Development)
3rd - Randy Cool, grade 11

Masonry (Masonry)
2nd - Ryan Goodman, grade 11
3rd - Thomas Fry, grade 12

Professional Health Careers (Medical Assisting)
Honorable Mention Deidre Lowe, grade 12

Web Design
Shared 1st - Adam Willard, grade 12

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BY MARY
ELLEN
CUMMINGS

Dispatch
Columnist

The first week of October 2006, a news anchor on TV reminded us that we should "start early on our Christmas shopping to avoid last minute haste." That seemed to me like rushing things, even though I had a sister-in-law who always did her Christmas shopping in July when J.C. Penney stores had their "white sales." But guess what — it's here — the holiday season is here!

My parents and all the other close relatives raised their families during the Great Depression. There wasn't a lot of money for anything, so gifts were usually homemade. It was a valuable lesson that, in much of our world today, seems to have been lost or pushed aside by too many people. An electronic game system recently created a buying frenzy even though the game system cost \$600. There were camp-outs, fights and even robberies. That game system will soon be broken, passé or obsolete.

A handmade gift could last a lifetime and cost a lot less than \$600. One year my six-year old daughter made me a picture of a fish bowl with goldfish in it. She drew the picture, colored it with crayons, and set the color with a hot iron. It's still one of my most prized possessions.

One recent year, I decided to make each of my husband's nieces a quilt. I didn't want to give them as Christmas gifts, because I knew the girls would feel they had to return the favor. It's good that I planned it that way — it took almost two years to make each one.

There always seemed to be something else to do. There were quilt shows to attend. There were the projects to plan and materials to get and put it all in motion for our quilting group. Nothing pleased me more than visiting fabric shops and talking with the owners and other quilters there.

I planned several projects of a "how-to-do" nature and wanted to give you the details in my column. However, most of them required traveling — not far, but too far for me.

So I've made the decision we all have to make sometime — I'm retiring from writing.

It's been a long and pleasant journey, and I will miss all the wonderful people I've met on this journey.



JENNIFER BUCHHEISTER / THE DISPATCH

Mary Ellen at home with some of her quilting projects.

A sad farewell

Sadly we bid farewell to Mary Ellen Cummings' column with this issue of *The Dispatch*. For more than 10 years, "Quilters" has graced the pages of the paper, teaching us about Mary Ellen's passion for quilts and those who make them. She has taken us with her as she traveled to area quilting shows, and has taught us how to care for these handmade treasures. One of her columns even raised quite a bit of controversy when she wrote about the hidden meanings in quilts known to those who traveled along the Underground Railroad. We will miss her tips and good humor and honor her through our commitment to preserving the art and skills in pieced quilting, at the same time relishing the style and beauty of art quilts.

Thank you, Mary Ellen, from the staff of *The Dispatch* and all of your readers through the years.

My last advice to you — "Keep on quilting; keep the 'bees' alive. Do your quilted art, but don't let old-fashioned quilting die."

OBITUARIES



ROBERT A. ROSENSTEEL SR. / THE DISPATCH

Bus drivers pay their respects to long-time driver



Four buses formed a funeral procession for Herbert Gingell's funeral on Dec. 14. Gingell, 68, was a bus driver with Wolf's Bus Lines for 34 years. He died Dec. 10 in Gettysburg Hospital. He was a member of the Incarnation United Church of Christ, the Emmitsburg Lions Club, Francis X. Elder Post 121 of the American Legion.

Mr. Herbert Gingell

Herbert (Herb) Thomas Gingell, 68, of W. Main Street, Emmitsburg, died Dec. 10, 2006, at the Gettysburg Hospital, Gettysburg, Pa.

Born June 7, 1938, in Baltimore, he was a son of the late George W. and Effie Rebekah Hoke Gingell.

Surviving are five children, Thomas Kevin Gingell, Kelly Ann Conner and Shirley Kristin Watts, all of Emmitsburg, Herbert T. Gingell of Smithsburg, and George Michael Gingell of Easton; four grandchildren; and one sister, Rebecca Yoder. His wife, Shirley Anne (Small) Gingell, died Aug. 15, 2006.

Funeral services were held Dec. 14, 2006, from Incarnation United Church of Christ, W. Main St., Emmitsburg, with his brother-in-law, the Rev. Bud Yoder, officiating, assisted by the Rev. Reginald Rice. Inurnment was in Emmitsburg Memorial Cemetery.

Mr. Carl Montuori

Mr. Carl Felix Montuori, 86, of Rocky Ridge, died Dec. 3, 2006, at the Memorial Baptist Hospital, Beaumont, Texas.

Born Nov. 10, 1920, in Washington, D.C., he was a son of the late Felix Carl and Drusilla Kendall Montuori.

Surviving are five daughters, Drucilla McLane, Susan Montuori, Debra Montuori-McDonald and Karen Guinan, and their mother, Marilyn Montuori; ten grandchildren; one brother, Warren Montouri; and one nephew.

Funeral services will be private. Inurnment will be private in Resthaven Memorial Gardens, Frederick.

Mr. Julian Sanders

Mr. Julian Marion Sanders, 92, of Annandale Road, Emmitsburg, died Dec. 2, 2006, at St. Catherine's Nursing Center in Emmitsburg.

Born April 13, 1914, in Fairfield, Pa., he was a son of the late Jason and Lottie Reed Sanders.

Surviving, in addition to his wife of 67 years, Ruth Elizabeth Harbaugh Sanders, are one daughter, Judy Stambaugh; two grandchildren; six great-grandchildren; three brothers, Jason Sanders of Emmitsburg and Harold Sanders and Robert Sanders, both of Florida; and one sister, Maysie Riley of Gettysburg.

A memorial service will be held at a later date at the convenience of the family.

Mr. Mehrle Shriner

Mr. Mehrle Franklin Shriner, 67, of W. Lincoln Ave., Emmitsburg, died Dec. 9, 2006, at the Gettysburg Hospital, Gettysburg, Pa.

Born June 30, 1939, in Graceham, he was a son of the late Mehrle F. Shrine Sr. and Ruby Woodward Shriner.

Surviving are his wife, Marsha Clarke Shriner of Emmitsburg; a son, David F. Shriner of Mount Airy; two grandchildren; and a sister, Carol Martin of Thurmont.

Funeral services were held Dec. 12, 2006, from the Skiles Funeral Home, Emmitsburg, with the Rev. Jon Greenstone officiating. Interment was in Resthaven Memorial Gardens, Frederick.

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RELIGION

*A Word from the Pulpit*The Christmas story
for today

By Father Jack Lombardi

Chaplain, National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes, Emmitsburg

Become entranced by the beauty and mysticism of the Virgin or the fall and materialism of Miss U.S.A.

The Holy Family – Jesus, Mary and Joseph traveled on a donkey...are you traveling in a gas-guzzling luxury vehicle?

He was born in a manger and is now preparing a mansion in heaven for us...are you seeking a McMansion on earth to welcome Him?

He becomes the bread of life so that we can bring him to 800 million people who go hungry every year.

The Christmas story is as beautiful as it is beguiling. Read on, dear reader.

Christ was born of royalty, King David, (Matthew 1:1) and so we his sons and daughters are called to nobility...not to rip each other up like Shiites and Sunnis, Democrats and Republicans, Catholics and Protestants, but rather to unite under our King.

"You shall name him Jesus" (Matthew 1: 21)... the name Jesus means "He will save them from sins"...Are you appreciating God's blood as the reason for the season or simply focused on glitz and glitter?

The old priest Zachariah (Luke 1:5)...Do you honor and esteem the elderly in your family and culture or demean them? Currently, a famous Italian poet in Italy is now pushing, not Pushkin but rather euthanasia, in a landmark case. How can we preserve the dignity of all people?

Luke 1 12:13...Zachariah is confused and afraid...the angel responds to him like Pope John Paul II did when he said, "Be not afraid," about anxiousness and alienations in life.

The shepherds.. the Anawim (poor) are not the elite, the effete, or the neat, but rather today may be dishwashers, gas attendants and steel workers who would humbly seek the Lord and be attracted to Him.

Elizabeth is barren...many women and men are infertile today unfortunately. Instead of condemning them or inseminating them, let us help them today. The adoption-option is very popular, so remember the disguised Christ child in all the orphans of the world.

King Herod (Matthew 2:3) seeks the destruction of children

(perhaps today through abortion) and the family, but Christ comes to forgive all abortions and unite all families.

Wise men (Matthew 2:7)...today there is a rise of atheism with Richard Dawkins and his book, "The God Delusion," which denigrates God and religious persons. Yet, wise men still seek Him, like Francis Collins in his book, "The Language of God," by discovering "God's fingerprints" in the genetic code and language of life. Today Christ would help atheists and agnostics though, not harangue them.

Matthew 2:19. An angel appeared to Joseph in a dream. God is sending us "messengers" all the time to bring us to Him and help one another. Last week I met Matthew, a seminarian, and asked him if he wanted to help serve a poor family some food. He generously said yes, and added, "I would like to give them some money. People have been very generous to me." I asked him how much he would like to give so as to help in the matter, thinking maybe \$25 or so. He responded, "I would like to give them \$150." We had fun shopping for food for this family and he was cheery all along the way – a messenger to me. At the end of our pilgrimage, I said to Matthew, "Matthew, that was extremely generous, what you did." His response, "I've been given so much. Money – what's that for? These clothes I'm wearing have been given to me and God is good." I then realized an angelic-like figure was sent to me to give me, a Christmas gift before Christmas.



- Were you raised Catholic but do not come or seldom come to church anymore?
 - Would you like to know more about the Catholic Church as it is today?
 - Would you like to feel at home in the Catholic Church again?
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St. Joseph's Catholic Church, Emmitsburg, MD
beginning January 7, Sundays at 7pm

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Mary Myers (301) 447-2712 or Bill Steo (301) 447-3220

Catholics Returning Home

No one who comes to me will I reject. John 6:37

Emmitsburg area churches
Christmas services schedule

Christmas Eve falls on Sunday this year, and Emmitsburg area churches have scheduled a variety of services to celebrate the anniversary of the birth of Jesus. Please note some changes with usual morning services.

Basilica of the National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton

333 South Seton Avenue
Dec. 24 – Christmas Eve service, 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 25 – Mass at 9 a.m.

Elias Evangelical Lutheran Church

100 West North Avenue
Dec. 24 - Service of the Word and Song, 10:30 a.m.; Candlelight Holy Communion service, 7:30 p.m.

Emmitsburg Presbyterian Church

415 West Main Street
Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve service, 8 p.m.; no morning worship service.

Eyler's Valley Chapel

Corner of Eyler's Valley and Hampton Valley Roads

Dec. 21-23 - Services at 7 and 8:30 p.m.

Dec. 24 – Services at 5, 6:30, 8, 9:30 and 11 p.m.

Incarnation United Church of Christ

124 West Main Street
Dec. 24 - Worship with narrated musical drama for choir & congregation, 9:30 a.m.; Worship with Christmas play, carols & Holy Communion, 6 p.m.

Monocacy Congregation Church of the Brethren (Rocky Ridge)

13517 Motters Station Road
Dec. 24 - Christmas Eve morning service, 10:30 a.m.

Mt. Tabor Church (Rocky Ridge)

10043 Longs Mill Road
Dec. 24 - Sunday school program, 7:30 p.m.

National Shrine Grotto of Lourdes

Mount St. Mary's University
Dec. 24 - Mass at noon; Blessing of children & pilgrims, 1 p.m.; Adoration of the Blessed Sacrament, 1-4 p.m.; prayers in honor of Our Lady of Lourdes,

Benediction, 3 p.m.

Dec. 25 - Grotto open all day for pilgrimage, peace and blessings.

St. Anthony's Shrine Parish

16150 St. Anthony's Road
Dec. 24 - Mass at 4 p.m.
Dec. 25 - Mass at 9:30 a.m.

St. Joseph's Catholic Church

100 North Seton Avenue
Dec. 24 - Children's Christmas pageant at 4:30 p.m.
Dec. 24 - Vigil Mass at 7:30 p.m.
Dec. 25 - Masses at 8 and 10:15 a.m.

Tom's Creek United Methodist Church

10926 Simmons Road
Dec. 24 - Worship with children's program, 9:30 a.m.; Family candlelight service, 7 p.m.; Candlelight service with Holy Communion, 11 p.m.

Trinity United Methodist Church

313 West Main Street
Dec. 24 - Family candlelight service, 4:30 p.m.; Traditional candlelight service, 7 p.m.

Births

Jennifer and Richard Biser,
Emmitsburg, a son, Dec. 1.

Rebecca and Michael Pepper,
Emmitsburg, a son, Dec. 2.

Lisa and James Lilliech,
Fairfield, Pa., a daughter, Dec. 2.

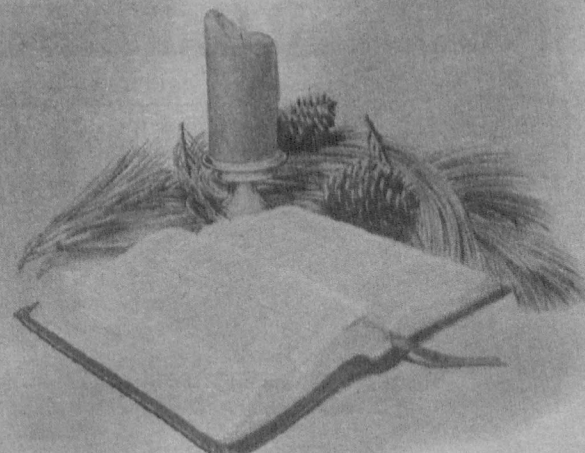
Lori and Carmen Alessi,
Emmitsburg, a son, Dec. 6.

CANDLELIGHT & CAROLS
CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

7pm Sunday, December 24th

FELLOWSHIP BAPTIST CHURCH

110 Mt. Hope Road
Fairfield, PA



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COMMUNITY NEWS

UpCounty Family Center gets a facelift



-PHOTO COURTESY OF UPCounty FAMILY CENTER

UpCounty Family Center's Advisory Board President Bob Hance presented a \$2,000 check to Catholic Charities Administrator Amy Collier and UpCounty Center Director Liza Frye. Hance raises funds through the JoAnn Hance Annual Golf Tournament to benefit UpCounty, the Emmitsburg Lions Club and the Sr. Barbara Hance Homeless Shelter. The UpCounty Family Center will use the donation for inside painting, some new tables and chairs and reading materials for adults and children.



- ROBERT A. ROSENSTEEL SR. / THE DISPATCH

Families, organizations and churches filled the gymnasium at the Seton Center with toys, food, clothing and household items to provide a joy-filled Christmas for around 140 families in north Frederick County. The Seton Center has been matching needy families with Christmas sponsors for more than 22 years.

Seton Center connects gift givers with families

BY JAMES RADA JR.

News Editor

jrada@thedispach.us

EMMITSBURG, Md. — The room was filled with toys; some wrapped, some waiting to be wrapped. Other boxes held clothing, household items and food. Some of the piles were tall, some smaller, but they all had a place even if the place was spread out across the floor.

Helpers scurried in and out between the piles, bringing gifts and adding them to the appropriate piles. At the door, someone stood checking the list twice to account for all the gifts that needed to be delivered.

But it wasn't Santa doing the checking, and not his elves helping. This is Emmitsburg, after all, and while Emmitsburg doesn't have Santa's workshop, it does have the Seton Center.

Each year the Seton Center connects needy families in northern Frederick County with sponsors who buy the family toys, household goods, clothing and food. This year 102 families received Christmas gifts and another 25-30 received food.

The families picked up their gifts on Dec. 18. Though the families remain anonymous, a few of them did share their feelings about

the program.

"This means everything to me. It gives my children hope," one person wrote.

Another wrote, "This means that God loves me and I don't have to worry."

A third person wrote, "The generous gift our family has received at this time is beyond words. Without this help we wouldn't have a Christmas. God bless the Seton Center and the volunteers."

Seton Center Director Ellen Eisenberger said, "We used to do with for just 50 families, but people's salaries aren't going up with the price of things they need to buy. A lot of these people make less than \$1,000 a month."

Liz Sjobert, outreach coordinator for the Seton Center, said, "We start in September conducting interviews for families and contacting previous sponsors."

Though some families sponsor other families, most of the sponsors are churches and organizations. This year, there were more than 40 sponsors. The Holy Family Catholic Church in Middletown sponsored 20 families and brought their gifts to Emmitsburg in a 25-foot-long truck.

"It just seems to keep growing every year," Sjobert said. "The more sponsors we have the more we can help."

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Community Foundation grants awarded

The Board of Trustees of The Community Foundation of Frederick County approved over \$63,000 in grants from unrestricted funds during a December meeting. Local recipients of grants from unrestricted funds for the 2006-2007 fiscal year include:

Emmitsburg Osteopathic Families Plus: \$1,200 for three family educational sessions

Interfaith Housing Alliance:

\$3,580.89 for facility repairs
Mission of Mercy: \$2,719 for computer equipment

Primary Care Center: \$2,139 for a defibrillator

Seton Center: \$3,000 for dental program

To learn more about the Community Foundation or to donate to any of its 550+ funds, visit www.cffredco.org or call (301) 695-7660.

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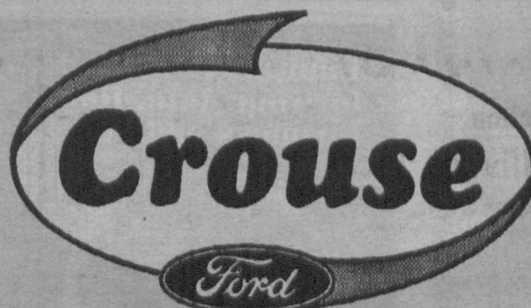
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Community Calendar

— LOOKING AHEAD —

Dec. 31 – Gettysburg New Year's Eve Celebration. 10 p.m. Entertainment at downtown venues, fireworks and party in Lincoln Square. Sponsored by Gettysburg Borough and Adams County National Bank.

Jan. 6 – White-tailed Deer Management plan meeting. 1-4 p.m. Catocin High School, 14745 Sabillasville, Road, Thurmont. Public review of the draft White-tailed Deer Management Plan/Environmental Impact Statement for Catocin Mountain Park. Plan is available online at www.nps.gov/cato.

Jan. 7 – Epiphany Sunday and the Feast Day Celebration of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton. National Shrine of Saint Elizabeth Ann Seton, 333 S. Seton Avenue, Emmitsburg, MD 21727. Mass at 1:30 in the basilica. Celebration to honor the first North American-born Canonized Saint. Light refreshments. Information: 301-447-6606.

Jan. 11 – Red Cross Blood Drive. 2-8 p.m. Emmitsburg Volunteer Ambulance Company, 300 S. Seton Avenue. Information: 301-447-2465.

Jan. 14 – Pancake Breakfast. 8 a.m. to noon. St. Mary's Church, 256 Tract Road, Fairfield. Cost: \$5; \$2 children 6-12. Information: 717-642-8815.

Jan. 17 – Slippery Pot Pie Dinner. Noon to 5:45 p.m. Lewistown United Methodist Church, Hessong Bridge Road. Ham and chicken pot pie, green beans, cole-

slaw, applesauce, beverage and dessert. Adults \$8, children (6-12) \$5, take-outs \$9. Information: 301-898-7888.

Jan. 15 – Emmitsburg Historical Society. 7 p.m. Emmitsburg Community Center.

Jan. 19 – Thurmont Lions Club Basket Bingo. GHC Activities Building. Doors open at 5 p.m.; games begin at 6:15. Dinner available at 5 p.m. Admission: \$20. Contact Susan Favorite at 301-271-4020.

Jan. 21 – Winter Photography Seminar. 1:30 p.m. Catocin Mountain Park Visitor Center, 6600 Foxville Road, Thurmont. Learn to capture the winter landscape using time-tested techniques for photographic success during winter. Information: 301-663-9388.

Jan. 25 – Annual Banquet. 7 p.m. Rocky Ridge Volunteer Fire Company Inc., 13516 Motters Station Road. Fire company activities building.

Jan. 31 – New Year's Eve Service. 11:30 a.m. St. John's Evangelical Lutheran Church, 8619 Black's Mill Road, Thurmont. Kick-off of the 275th anniversary of the congregation. Information: 301-898-5290.

Feb. 3 – Cash Bash. Doors open at 2 p.m. Our Lady of Mount Carmel Parish Center, Church Street, Thurmont. Games of chance, tip jars and music by "Back Roads." Tickets: \$25, no tickets at the door. Information and tickets: 301-447-2367 or 301-271-4439.

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A&E Calendar

— LOOKING AHEAD —

Events

Dec. 26 – Candlelight Tour of Historic Houses of Worship. 4-9 p.m. 20th anniversary of this self-guided walking tour in Frederick's historic district. Visit www.fredericktourism.org or call 301-644-4047.

Jan. 5 – Thurmont Thespians 10th Anniversary Gala Fund-raiser. 8 p.m. Cultural Arts Center of Frederick County, 15 W. Patrick Street. Evening's theme is "Baseball, Peanuts and Something Wicked." Information and tickets: 301-271-7613.

Jan. 6 and 7 – First Fling Wine and Cheese Tasting. Saturday 10 a.m. to 5 p.m.; Sunday noon to 5 p.m. Linganore Winecellars, 13601 Glissans Mill Road, Mt. Airy. Information: 301-831-5889.

Jan. 7, 14, 21, 28 – Frederick County Society of Model Railroad Open House. 1 to 4 p.m. 423 E. Patrick Street, Frederick. Visit a working HO scale model railroad, located in an authentic Chesapeake and Ohio railroad car. Information: 301-668-6371.

Jan. 8 – Historic Railroad Equipment and Model Train Displays. 1 to 5 p.m. Baldwin and Oklahoma Avenues, Sykesville. Information: 410-795-3157.

Jan. 20 – 20th Annual Central Maryland Farm Toy Show. 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. Westminster Agriculture Center, 700 Agriculture Center Drive. Information: 410-848-3247.

Concerts

Dec. 23 – Weinberg Winterfest. 2 p.m. Silent film accompanied by the mighty Wurlitzer, holiday sing-along; performances by singers from local elementary schools and dancers from

the Dance Unlimited Reparatory Company, Santa and Mrs. Claus. Free admission with donation of canned food item for the Frederick Community Action Agency. www.weinbergcenter.org or 301-228-2828.

Jan. 6 – Common Ground on the Hill Concerts Series. 9 p.m. Carroll Arts Center, 91 West Main Street, Westminster. "Cephas and Wiggins," blues. 410-857-2771.

Jan. 19 – Women of Windham Hill. Barbara Higbie, Lisa Lynne and Liz Story. The Majestic, 25 Carlisle St., Gettysburg. 717-337-8200 or gettysburgmajestic.org.

Jan. 20 – The Hot Club of San Francisco. 8 p.m. Weinberg Center for the Arts, 20 W. Patrick Street, Frederick. Music of Django Reinhardt and Stephane Grapelli's pioneering Hot Club de France. www.weinbergcenter.org or 301-228-2828.

Jan. 21 – Aulos Ensemble. Five Julliard graduate play Baroque music on original instruments. The Majestic, 25 Carlisle St., Gettysburg. 717-337-8200 or gettysburgmajestic.org.

Stage

Dec. 22, 23 – "A Gettysburg Stage Christmas." Kefauver Center, 157 Lefever St., Gettysburg. Tickets: \$10-\$12. Information: 1-866-859-5912.

Dec. 22-23, 28-31, Jan. 4-7, 11-13 – "Mrs. Bob Cratchit's Wild Christmas Binge." Maryland Ensemble Theater, 31 W. Patrick Street, Frederick. A new twist on the Dickens classic. Tickets: \$17-\$20. Information: 301-694-4744.

Dec. 23, 30, Jan 6, 13 – "My Father the Elf." Maryland Ensemble Theater, 31 W. Patrick Street, Frederick. A new holiday tale for the whole family, presented by The Fun Company. Lorrie discovers that her father is one of Santa's

elves. When he is kidnapped, she must save him in time for Christmas morning.

Jan. 19 to March 10 – "Forever Plaid." Four young, eager male singers, killed in a car crash in the 1950s on the way to their first big concert, are miraculously revived for the posthumous chance to fulfill their dreams and perform the show they never did. Way Off Broadway Dinner Theater, 5 Willowdale Drive, Willowtree Plaza, Frederick. Tickets: 301-662-6600, www.wayoffbroadway.com.

Jan. 26, 27, and Feb. 2, 3, 4 – "Amadeus." Jack B. Kusmaul Theatre, Frederick Community College. The classic confrontation between the mediocrity of Antonio Salieri, established composer in the court of the Austrian Emperor, and genius and child prodigy Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart. Fredericktowne Players. Tickets: \$6-\$20. Information: 240-315-3855. www.Fredericktowneplayers.org.

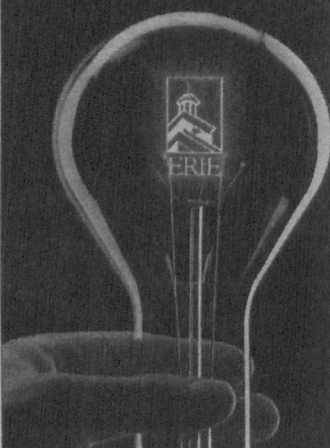
Film

Dec. 23 – Tivoli 80th Anniversary Party. Weinberg Center for the Arts, 20 W. Patrick St., Frederick. Celebration of the grand opening of the Tivoli held on Dec. 23, 1926. Come see 1920s comedy, "The Strong Man." www.weinbergcenter.org or 301-228-2828.

Jan. 6 – Cartoon Festival. 2 p.m. Weinberg Center for the Arts, 20 W. Patrick St., Frederick. www.weinbergcenter.org or 301-228-2828.

Jan. 12 – "Tsotsi." 8 p.m. Weinberg Center for the Arts, Story of a teenage Johannesburg delinquent who develops an unexpected paternal side in this drama from South Africa. Tickets: \$4-\$6. www.weinbergcenter.org

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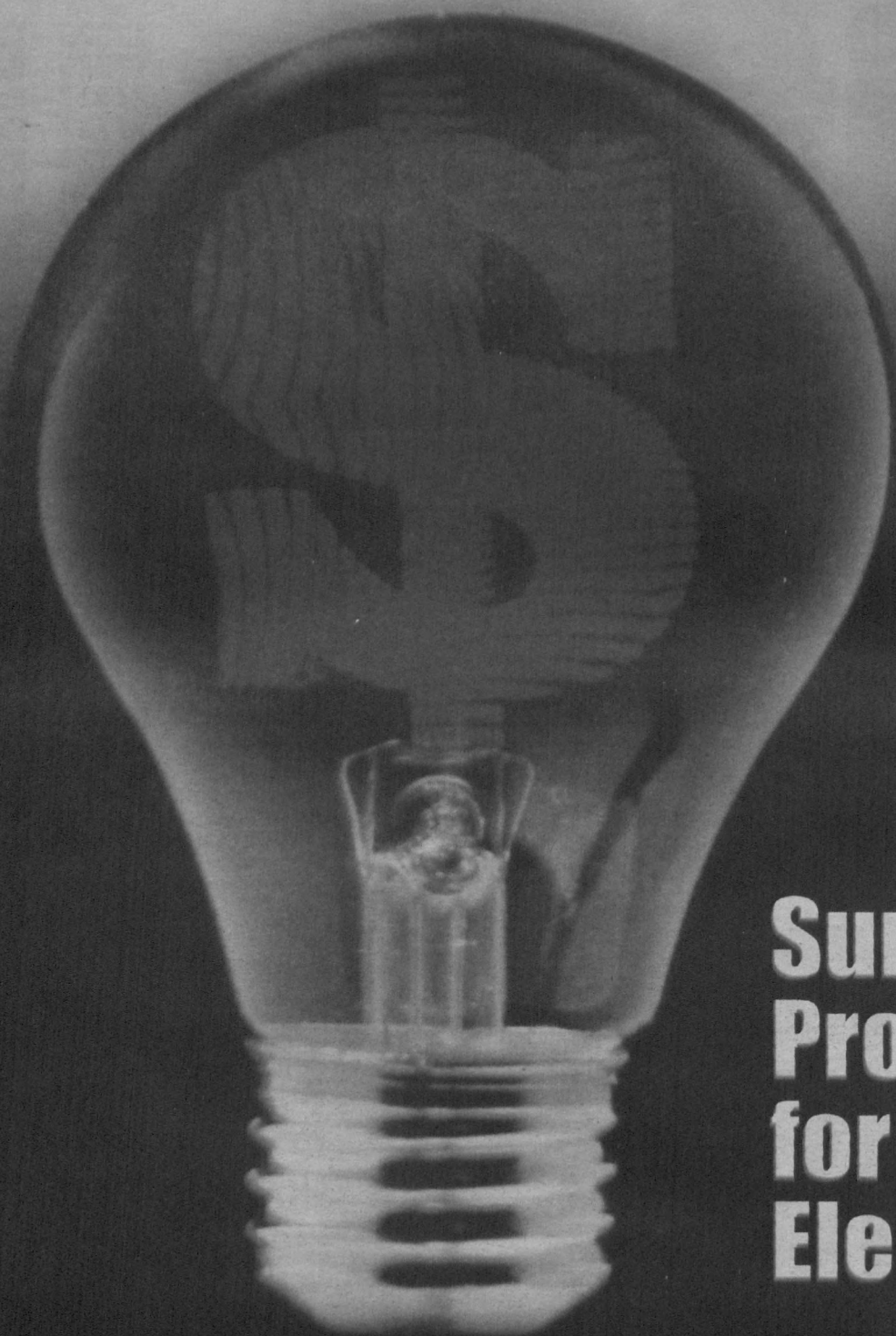
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